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Revolutionary Waves: The International Effects of Threats to Domestic Order

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Revolutionary Waves: The International Effects
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Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

by

Chad Elkins Nelson

2014
ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Revolutionary Waves: The International Effects of Threats to Domestic Order

By
Chad Elkins Nelson

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science
University of California, Los Angeles, 2014
Professor Arthur A. Stein, Chair

When do leaders fear the domestic repercussions of revolutions abroad, and how does the prospect of such revolutionary waves affect international affairs? I argue that the fear of contagion is not primarily derived from the infecting agent – whether the revolutionary state serves as a model or acts as a platform. Instead, the fear of contagion is largely driven by the characteristics of the host, namely the presence of significant preexisting opposition groups in the host of the same character as the revolution. And I argue that when leaders fear revolution spreading, it will have a discernible effect on patterns of international cooperation and conflict: they will be hostile towards the revolutionary state and they will align with other states that face the same threat, sometimes in contrast to geopolitical pressures. I examine the reaction to the democratic revolutions under the ancien régime (the American Revolution and the Dutch Patriot Revolt), the wave of liberal revolutions in Europe in 1820-1, and the Iranian Islamist Revolution in the Middle East. The findings not only address the international effects of revolutions, but also the larger issues of when, why, and to what extent ideological differences between states
affect international relations and how domestic instability interacts with international politics.
The dissertation of Chad Elkins Nelson is approved.

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University of California, Los Angeles
2014
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Chapter 1: Revolutions, Regime Types, and International Politics

In 1775, the tension between the American colonists and their British overlords broke into open revolt. From the beginning of what would be dubbed the American Revolution, Americans were supported by the French, at first covertly, and from 1778 on in an open alliance. Their help was decisive in securing American independence and an end to the conflict in 1783. In that same year, the Dutch patriots revolted against the stadtholder, who had aligned himself with England. The absolutist French monarchy again supported the patriots, but the Revolution was eventually crushed in 1787 by Prussian military intervention. The response of states to these revolutions is consistent with realist expectations – states exploiting revolutions for geopolitical gain, taking sides with the opposing side of one’s rival, regardless of ideological differences between states.

In 1820-21, revolutions broke out in Spain, Portugal, Naples, Piedmont, and Greece. Besides Portugal, which was protected by the British, the continental powers eschewed exploiting these disturbances and instead coordinated their policies to suppress the revolutions. For example, the powers, only a few years after the experience of the Napoleonic wars, put aside their fears of French expansion and allowed the French army to invade Spain to restore the rule of King Ferdinand VII. This outcome is impossible to explain without understanding the fear of leaders that these revolutions would inspire similar movements in their own realm. A change in the legitimating principles of a state threatened the internal security of other states in the system and initiated a pattern of conflict and cooperation directly contrary to realist expectations.

Existing theories of international relations do not explain the differences in these cases. While realist theory cannot explain the latter case, theories of international relations based on
regime type or ideological difference fail to explain why differences between types seemed not to matter in the former cases. Even theories specifically on the international effects of revolution are of limited utility in understanding these cases because they have not directly address this issue of domestic spillover – when and how it affects international politics. This dissertation seeks to fill that void. The anticipation of domestic spillover helps explain policies that are otherwise puzzling, such as unusually restrained relations between states of the same type and shifts in alignments based on ideological changes rather than changes in the balance of power. This subject also has implications for international relations theory. It elucidates why ideological differences between states become salient in certain times and places. And it illustrates how states have foreign policies to shape the international environment so that it favors their rule – an interaction between domestic and international factors that is absent from much of the theorizing about how domestic stability affects foreign policy.

**Literature Review**

A long-standing debate in international relations theory is whether or to what extent ideological differences between states matter in international politics. The clearest answer is from neorealist theory – such differences do not matter. Even if ideological differences between states could be conceived in systemic terms rather than a reductionist domestic characteristic of states, what drives international politics for neorealist theory is the distribution of capabilities in the system. For other traditions, such as the English school or constructivism, ideological differences are fundamental to relations between states. A better question than whether ideological differences matter in international politics is when, why, and how much they matter.
Most of the literature on the subject, however, does not have theories that explain why ideological differences seem to matter at some times and not others.

There is a large literature on the effect of different regime types on international relations. Most of the work examines two different regime types, democracies and autocracies, and their purported differences in foreign policy (e.g., the democratic peace). Although an examination of the attributes of states may reveal an institutional bias towards particular policies, this work is limited in its ability to explain outcomes: relations between states. An even more important weakness given the question at hand is that the ideological differences between states are not adequately captured in a framework that simply categorizes states as democracies and autocracies. Ideological differences are best thought of as perceived differences in ways to rule, or how power is legitimated. The dichotomous classification of “democracy” and especially “autocracy” based on measurements such as polity scores, ubiquitous in political science research, are often not coherent categories in this regard.¹

A more neglected approach to how different types of regimes affect international relations are works that characterize systems as heterogeneous and homogeneous based on

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¹ For example, differences between communist and fascist states or rivalries in the Arab cold war between secular nationalist regimes and conservative monarchies are subsumed under the class of authoritarian states. The research on regime types and international relations often uses categories of regimes that were created for different purposes and are at best a flawed approximation of the theory being tested and at worse an attempt to find correlation with no underlying theoretical justification. For example, Conrad and Souva use polity scores and Geddes’s classification of authoritarian regimes to assess whether democracies, single party regimes, military regimes and so forth are less likely to experience rivalries among themselves without a cogent justification for why these categories should be meaningful. Justin Conrad and Mark Souva, "Regime Similarity and Rivalry," *International Interactions* 37, no. 1 (2011).
ideological differences between states. The claim in the literature is that heterogeneous systems, “where the states are organized according to different principles and appeal to contradictory values,” are more conflict prone. Haas’s *The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics* is the most developed work in this vein. This framework overcomes some of the limitations just mentioned. It deals with relationships between states rather than just attributes of states and incorporates different regime types beyond the autocracy/democracy categories.

The heterogeneous-homogenous framework clearly cannot by itself explain international conflict, as evidenced by periods in international history that were homogenous and were very conflict prone. But even given a particular heterogeneous system, there is often significant variation in the amount of conflict between states with ideological differences. The flaw in the


4 For example, war prone eighteenth century Europe convinced some thinkers that the cause of the conflict was the ubiquity of monarchies.
homogenous framework is its static nature. The same flaw exists in the literature focusing on regime types – for example, the work on ideology and alliance formation. Neither approach explains why the international impact of ideological differences seems to vary.

5 What determines the level of conflict in this framework is whether (and how much) the system is heterogeneous or homogenous, not, for example, a transition from a homogenous to a heterogeneous one. Haas mentions the ‘wave of the future’ effects – that an ideology on the march will seem particularly threatening – but his theoretical framework, where the independent variable is ideological distance and the dependent variable is perception of threat, cannot capture this. Haas, The Ideological Origins of Great Power Politics, 1789-1989, 37. A similar critique is made against theories based on the distribution of material capabilities that are static, such as neorealist theories. More dynamic theories include Gilpin’s hegemonic stability theory, Organski’s power transition theory, Copeland’s dynamic differentials theory, and especially Doran’s power cycle theory, which not only emphasizes change, but its rapidity. Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981); A. F. K. Organski, World Politics, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968); Dale C. Copeland, The Origins of Major War (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Charles F. Doran, The Politics of Assimilation: Hegemony and Its Aftermath (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971).

6 The focus of this literature has been the narrow empirical question of whether democracies are more likely to ally with each other, and the results have been ambiguous. See, for example, the contrasting findings of Suzanne Werner and Douglas Lemke, "Opposites Do Not Attract: The Impact of Domestic Institutions, Power, and Prior Commitments on Alignment Choices," International Studies Quarterly 41(1997); Michael W. Simon and Erik Gartzke, "Political System Similarity and the Choice of Allies: Do Democracies Flock Together, or Do Opposites Attract?," Journal of Conflict Resolution 40, no. 4 (1996); Brian Lai and Dan Reiter, "Democracy, Political Similarity, and International Alliances, 1816-1992," Journal of Conflict Resolution 44, no. 2 (2000); Douglas M Gibler and Scott Woldford, "Alliances, Then Democracy: An Examination of the Relationship between Regime Type and Alliance Formation," Journal of Conflict Resolution 50, no. 1 (2006). One problem with the work is that sometimes the tests do not match the theories presented (i.e. a social identity theory tested based on groups derived from their polity score), but another problem is that the major theories that purport to explain why states ally with like states – the audience costs and social identity models – have empirical problems because they do not have a
An examination of revolutions and how they can affect international relations provide a particularly useful window into the general question of the ideological differences between states, which also addresses the issue of why the affect of ideological differences may vary. Revolutions are in some respects “natural experiments.” While certain attributes of the system, such as the distribution of power, often remain relatively constant, there is a stark change in the principles upon which one of the states is organized, which creates ideological differences between that state and others in the system. But revolutions also point to a dynamic that helps to explain why ideological differences might be salient at particular times and not others: one reason why heterogeneous systems may at times be conflict prone is because the different types fear the possibility of the other type spreading. This prospect is not something that is constant throughout time; it is salient in particular periods, when it is alternately hoped and feared that an ideology is on the march, and a revolution associated with the ideology is simply the beginning of a larger wave that will sweep up other nations.

The theoretical literature on revolutions is overwhelmingly devoted to the causes of revolutions – the consequences, especially the international consequences, are neglected. Most of the focus in this literature examines why revolutions precipitate war. The most prominent work is Stephen Walt’s *Revolution and War*. He uses the “balance of threat theory” to explain


7 For an overview of revolutions as an international phenomenon, see Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).
why revolutions always increase security competition between states and often lead to war.\(^8\) Walt’s framework, including the broad term, “threat,” is used to cover any possible conflict of interest, including instances of opportunism, where the motive is clearly not one based on threat. When revolution does not lead to war, he claims it still supports his theory if one or more of the factors he posits were absent, or the predicted factors for war were there but other factors intervened.\(^9\) Thus, no case of non-war can falsify his theory, and any case of war can be explained by his theory. Although he elucidates some interesting causal pathways to war, his theory does not adjudicate between the myriad of pathways presented, and makes no clear predictions, besides the empirical claim that revolutions always increase the security competition between states, which is false.

Conge uses the bargaining perspective to argue that revolutions lead to war when adversaries expect a favorable military outcome based on relative military power and assessments that there can be no political compromise.\(^{10}\) He examines the change in state strength that accompanies revolutions and how ideology can inhibit political compromise. His

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\(^8\) Walt claims that states perceive threats based on capabilities, perceptions of intent, and the offense/defense balance. He describes how revolutions create windows of opportunity as they weaken the state in the short run and strengthen it in the long run. Revolutions also create spirals of suspicion between the revolutionary state and its opponents because, given the uncertainty of the intentions of the other side, they view the other through the prism of their ideology. Walt interprets the offense/defense balance not in terms of whether military conditions favor the offense or defense but how revolutions encourage both sides to exaggerate their own vulnerability as well as that of their opponents. He also adds that revolutions create changes in preferences that create new conflicts of interest.


\(^9\) Ibid., 44.

theory, however, leaves undeveloped when and why actors feel there is no room for political compromise.

One way to view how revolutions can lead to conflict is how it changes the variables of power and ideology. Revolutions sometimes cause a rapid change in state strength. The hypothesis that revolutions cause wars because they weaken the revolutionary state and thus precipitate opportunistic invasions may explain a few cases well,\(^\text{11}\) but it does not work well as a general theory. The opportunistic hypothesis implies that the more weakened a state is by the revolutionary process, the more likely we are to see neighbors opportunistically invading. There are, however, many revolutions that profoundly weaken the state which do not provoke war and vice versa. In addition, the logic of this argument should apply equally to cases of civil war, and yet there is no finding in the civil war literature that suggests the variable of state weakness has a strong correlation with the likeliness of foreign intervention.\(^\text{12}\) Another power theory that is unique to revolutions is that the change in state strength will provoke preventative war if it is feared that revolution will temporarily weaken the state but strengthen it in the long term.\(^\text{13}\) The windows/preventative war hypothesis supposes a pattern of revolutions temporarily weakening

\(^{11}\) For example, Somalia’s invasion of Ethiopia in 1977 and possibly Japan’s invasion of the Soviet Union in 1918 fall under this category.

\(^{12}\) Even given cases where a revolution causes both state weakness and interstate conflict, it is not necessarily the weakening of the state that is the cause of interstate war. One would expect, given the opportunistic thesis, that surrounding states would be ready to pounce on states that are weakening. In fact, conflict often correlates with radicalization, not state weakness. Paul Ewenstein makes an unconvincing argument that social revolutions in particular lead to war because of the widows of opportunity logic. Paul Ewenstein, "Offensive Realism and Revolution," in Midwest Political Science Association (Chicago, IL 2010).

\(^{13}\) Walt, Revolution and War, 44.
but ultimately increasing a state’s strength beyond its prior levels, but this pattern does not often exist, and even when it does, it is doubtful the windows logic was the motive provoking war.¹⁴

Revolutions sometimes cause a rapid change in state strength, although the degree to which the state is weakened varies widely. But revolutions always cause a rapid change in the ideology that justifies power. They are inherently transformations in “the political institutions and the justifications for political authority in a society.”¹⁵ And most accounts of the international effects of revolutions see this ideological change as critical to explaining their outcome. The reasons posited in the literature for why the change in the ideology of the revolutionary state might effect international relations dovetail with the different causes explicated as to exactly why heterogeneous systems are more conflict prone. One cause is the misperception mechanism. The presence of states with different values creates a signaling/information problem, as states misperceive the intentions of others because, in the absence of information, they view the other through the prism of their ideology. This leads to “spirals of suspicion,” in which each side perceives the other as hostile.¹⁶ Another cause is the lack of agreement as to how states should relate with one another. The English school approach,

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¹⁴ A revolution may increase a states’ strength vis-à-vis society, as scholars of revolutions from Tocqueville on have noted, but not necessarily vis-à-vis other states. Even when it did, as was the case in the French Revolution and the innovation of the mass army (from which the theory was probably derived), the logic of the theory is irrelevant as a motive influencing statesmen if they did not know at the time that they were in such a window.

¹⁵ Jack A. Goldstone, "Toward a Fourth Generation of Revolutionary Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science* 1(2001): 142. By definition this is what makes them revolutions, in addition to how that change happens – the usual characteristics are rapid, mass based, and violent.

with its focus on “international society,” emphasizes this factor. Heterogeneous systems cannot agree on the “rules of the game,” so to speak, particularly because revolutionary states reject these rules.\(^ {17}\) Yet another reason why heterogeneous systems are more conflict prone is that, for social or psychological reasons, states with different identities separate themselves into in-groups and out-groups, and the presence of these competing groups creates conflict.\(^ {18}\)

These causes are, for the most part, unconvincing in explaining the international effects of revolutions. The claim that misperception causes conflict assumes that both sides have benign intentions but cannot effectively communicate those intentions.\(^ {19}\) But when there is conflict between a revolutionary state and others, it is usually because the parties have correctly assessed the hostility of one or the other side or both. Concerning the international society approach, it is not convincing that states with different bases of legitimacy, even the subcategory of revolutionary states, would necessarily be unable to agree as to how they are to conduct international affairs.\(^ {20}\) The international society argument is specifically applied to


\(^{20}\) One can make true by definition that a revolutionary state is one that rejects the rules of the game. Armstrong, for example, defines a revolutionary state as one that adopts a posture of confrontation with the society of states, meaning the state-to-state practices and norms. See Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order: The Revolutionary State in International Society; Armstrong, Revolutionary Diplomacy: Chinese Foreign Policy and the United Front Doctrine*. But the consequence is that a revolutionary state is not necessarily a state that has had a revolution and
heterogeneous systems, but it only indirectly addresses the distinctiveness of those systems –
states organized according to different domestic principles – and the centrality of what
revolutions represent – a new way to order *domestic* society, and how that, in turn, affects state
to state relations. Finally, the identity mechanism supposes cooperation between like states and
conflict between unlike states, but this principle is routinely violated in international politics.

Recent work on revolutions and international politics points to a mechanism particular to
revolutions rather than the homogenous/heterogenous mechanisms. Colgan finds that, since
1945, revolutionary states are more likely to instigate conflict than nonrevolutionary states, and
he argues this finding is the result of the type of leadership that emerges as the result of
revolutions.\(^{21}\) He contends that revolutionaries are inherently risk takers with an ambition to
alter the status quo, and thus more belligerent abroad. Colgan’s findings, however, are based on
comparing revolutionaries not with their potential counterrevolutionary peers, but the whole set
of states that are nonrevolutionary. Even when revolutionary states initiate the open fighting it is
not always obvious who the aggressor is. Colgan and Weeks argue revolutions increase the
likelihood that personalist dictatorships emerge where revolutionary leaders face few constraints
are thus more likely to be involved in international conflict.\(^{22}\)

While these findings have value, the focus on the propensities of particular leaders or the
institutional constraints of particular regimes does not capture the larger context in which
revolutions operate. Central to the explanations of why some revolutions seem to be so


\[^{22}\] Jeff Colgan and Jessica L. Weeks, "Revolution, Personalist Dictatorships, and International Conflict,"
*International Organization* (Forthcoming).
disruptive of international order while others are not is the issue of whether the revolution is a part of a larger process of ideological struggle concerning the nature of regimes. This is the great contest of ideologies, or “isms” – monarchism, liberalism, communism, fascism, Islamism – that plays such a prominent role in the historical literature of the last two centuries but is almost absent from the literature on international relations.

There are some notable recent exceptions. Bukovansky explains how the American and French revolutions shifted the parameters of political legitimacy "from dynastically legitimated monarchical sovereignty to popularly legitimated national sovereignty."23 Her dependent variable is the international political culture; Owen more directly engages in the international effects of the struggle over regime types in his explanation of the patterns of foreign imposed regime change.24 In his “ecological” account, a mutation occurs in the form of radicals capturing a regime, which kicks off a transnational ideological struggle, and does not end until one regime type has proven its superiority and spread throughout the system.25 Owen’s work is a step

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25 His evolutionary explanation suggests that new types provide advantages vis-à-vis other types, and he cites Waltz in this regard. But his account whereby old regimes fall into crisis when they fail to meet certain changing political
forward. He brings the struggle over regime type back to international relations, though questions remain about the initiation and process behind the transnational struggle. The emergence of a new regime seems neither necessary nor sufficient to initiate a transnational ideological struggle, and Owen does not fully develop why there is this ideological struggle – why states care that there are other types of regimes. He mostly suggests that there is a fear that the ideology of the other type will spread, but he does not develop exactly why revolutions in one place can lead to revolutions elsewhere, when leaders have that fear, or how this affects international politics besides sometimes initiating foreign imposed regime change.

There is thus a need to develop how the contest over regime type and in particular how the anticipation of spillover from revolutions has affected international relations. This study seeks to meet that need. But it is important to note the strengths and limitations of such a study. First of all, it does not attempt to explain the international effects of all revolutions. Attempts to explain the international effects of all revolutions in one framework will stretch that framework to a conceptual breaking point, as previously illustrated in Walt’s use of the balance of threat to explain why revolutions lead to war, where an already expansive term is extended to even include opportunistic invasions. There is at least a plausible claim that the potential spread of revolution abroad accounts for a significant amount of the international effects of revolutions. As such, there is ground to study the effects of this cause, even if it does not explain it its entirety the causes of the effect of revolutions on international politics.

And social demands (that are presumably shared by the system as a whole) could be demands that have little to do with the advantages they give the state vis-à-vis others and more about other values such as liberty or equality. Fukuyama provides an account more explicitly along these lines. He stresses the teleological, rather than cyclical, nature of the struggle. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1992).
On the other hand, the study of the spillover effects of revolution has several strengths. It not only has salience in understanding the broader issue of when and why ideological differences between states become salient for international politics, but also the increased interest in the subject of waves and diffusion in the study of politics. Observers have noted that particular outcomes are not always distributed evenly but often seem to cluster in time and space.  

Scholars have found, for example, wave like patterns in the spread of democracy, as well as the general phenomena of contentious politics/collective violence. Diffusion in particular has received increasing attention, especially by those studying the spread of liberalism – free markets and democracy. Scholars of various types of conflict have also examined the diffusion mechanism in regard to wars, coups, ethnic violence, terrorism, strikes, and riots.  

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reached the literature on revolutions, and has gained recent attention given the events of the “Arab Spring.”

Scholars of domestic outcomes have been increasingly open to international factors not captured in single country studies and many statistical analyses. What remains underdeveloped in this literature is how these factors affect international politics. If leaders are cognizant of this dynamic, one might expect it would affect their foreign policy behavior.

Leaders can fear revolutionary waves for two conceptually distinct reasons. They can fear it for geopolitical reasons – that the wave will displace the regime of an ally, and they can fear it for domestic reasons – that it will envelop their own polity. There is particular reason to


31 During the Cold War, for example, American policy makers feared states falling to communism more out of concern for their geopolitical contest than the effect it would have on American domestic politics. There were concerns, especially in the early Cold War, about the domestic effects of the spread of communism elsewhere, but the primary concern of the domino theory was the fate of American allies rather than America itself. Though the
focus on how fears of domestic disorder affect relations with other states. Leaders are faced with various challenges to their rule – some are direct, in the form of armed conflict, some are indirect. Some of these challenges emanate from abroad, and others from within the state. The way such indirect challenges to leaders’ rule coming from abroad affects foreign affairs has not been directly addressed in the international relations literature. International effects of the fear of revolutionary spillover on domestic politics posits interesting ways in which international and domestic factors interact, causing outcomes that are anomalous from a geopolitical perspective.

The focus of leaders is the interests of the regime, which does not always coincide with the interests of the state.\textsuperscript{32} Using somewhat similar assumptions to neorealism – that leaders act


\textsuperscript{32} There is a growing literature explaining international politics in terms of the security of regimes or leaders. See, e.g., Giacomo Chiozza and H. E. Goemans, \textit{Leaders and International Conflict} (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Etel Solingen, \textit{Nuclear Logics: Contrasting Paths in East Asia and the Middle East}, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al., \textit{The Logic of Political Survival} (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003). The rationalist perspective has turned attention toward the incentives of leaders rather than states. This corresponds with the growing consensus among scholars of the international relations of third world states that regime stability
strategically to, first and foremost, survive – highlights factors that are the mirror image of neorealism: domestic ideological factors.

This topic also sheds light on the relationship between domestic instability and international conflict. Much of what is written in international relations theory about domestic politics has no interaction between the domestic independent variable and the international dependent variable. The principle that actors anticipate or experience the second image reversed effect\textsuperscript{33} – how international factors shape domestic politics – and therefore advocate a foreign policy that shapes international politics in a way that benefits them domestically is relatively obvious in political economy issues, such as trade policy.\textsuperscript{34} But it also applies to security issues.

\textsuperscript{33} The term “second image reversed” comes from Peter Gourevitch’s influential essay, which encouraged scholars to consider the effect of international factors on domestic politics. He specifically targeted the effects of war and the effects of trade. Peter Gourevitch, "The Second Image Reversed: International Sources of Domestic Politics," \textit{International Organization} 32, no. 4 (1978). Much work has been done in both these areas, especially in the political economy field.

\textsuperscript{34} For example, Ronald Rogowski discusses how domestic cleavages are formed based on who wins and loses from trade. His assumption that “beneficiaries of a change will try to continue and accelerate the change while victims of the change will try to retard our halt it” is straightforward; the novelty of his book was his argument about how cleavages are formed. Ronald Rogowski, \textit{Commerce and Coalitions: How Trade Affects Domestic Political Alignments} (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 4-5.
If international factors play a role in preserving or eroding the type of regime they want, leaders have a strong incentive to shape those factors.\(^{35}\)

This type of interaction has been neglected in the literature on domestic instability and international conflict, which has been dominated by the diversionary thesis.\(^{36}\) Most work on the diversionary thesis are empirical attempts to find a relationship between domestic instability and external conflict, but the findings have been mixed.\(^{37}\) A prominent critique of recent years is that

\(^{35}\) This general point applies not only to the security of regimes. For example, the American vision of the type of international system that would support a liberal, relatively weak state has had a profound impact on its foreign policy – the impetus has been to create such a system.

\(^{36}\) The basic logic behind the diversionary thesis is that rulers engage in external conflict as a means of diverting internal pressure on their regimes. The traditional mechanism has been variously dubbed as the in group/out group effect, the rally around the flag effect, or the conflict-cohesion logic: that external conflict promotes internal cohesion. Other mechanisms include the idea that international conflict diverts attention away from an issue, successful action abroad wins support at home, and initiating conflict abroad allows for repression at home. For a review and still salient critique, see Jack S. Levy, "The Diversionary Theory of War," in *Handbook of War Studies*, ed. Manus I. Midlarsky (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1989). Fravel cites much of the current literature. M. Taylor Fravel, "The Limits of Diversion: Rethinking Internal and External Conflict," *Security Studies* 19, no. 2 (2010): 309-10.

\(^{37}\) Many of the cross-national studies have failed to find a relationship between internal and external conflict. See, for example, Rudolph J. Rummel, "Dimensions of Conflict Behavior within and between Nations," *General Systems* 8, no. 1 (1963); Brett Ashley Leeds and David R. Davis, "Domestic Political Vulnerability and International Disputes," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41, no. 6 (1997). Scholars have investigated whether certain regime types are more prone to diversionary tactics, but their results have been contradictory. For example, Gelpi asserts that democracies are more prone to diversionary conflicts, Miller asserts that it is authoritarian regimes, Mansfield and Snyder, democratizing regimes, and Pickering and Kissangani suggest mature democracies, consolidating autocracies, and transitional polities are more susceptible. Christopher Gelpi, "Democratic Diversions:
the empirical work does not take into account the role of strategic interaction in formulating their hypotheses: states with internal conflict will be expected by potential target states to behave more aggressively, and thus the target state will be more willing to avoid disputes. As a result, one should not expect the empirical data to demonstrate a clear relationship between internal and external conflict.\textsuperscript{38} While this may be true, another reason why there is no clear relationship is because there is more than one way in which internal conflict may be related to external conflict. To advance our understanding of the relationship between these factors, more theories are needed that explain the contexts in which instability tends toward or against external conflict. The outbreak of revolution is heavily studied because it provides us with clues about what constitutes domestic order. The effects revolutions can have on international politics likewise give us an insight into what constitutes international order, and how these realms interact.\textsuperscript{39}

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Argument

This dissertation addresses the question, when and what are the international effects of the anticipation of spillover from revolutions? Revolutionary states can encourage the spread of revolutionary outcomes in two ways: they can act as platforms and they can act as models. When a revolution serves as a platform, the state directly acts to foment revolutions abroad. Most directly, it can invade other states and impose similar regimes. Less directly, it can engage in subversion – organizing and aiding opposition groups, disseminating propaganda, even attempting to assassinate leaders in other states. When revolutions serve as models the cause is indirect – the appearance of a revolution in one place makes it more likely that revolution in other places will occur, but not because of the direct action of the revolutionary state. There is a “demonstration effect” or diffusion of revolutionary ideology.40

There are a variety of mechanisms by which revolutions could diffuse that, to varying degrees, can fall under the terms “learning” and “inspiration.” The first cluster of mechanisms is

40 I use the terms “diffusion” and “demonstration effect” interchangeably. The term “demonstration effect” originates from the economist James Duesenberry’s discussion of how the dissatisfaction with one’s habitual set of goods after observing higher consumptive patterns of one’s neighbors drives consumption expenditures up. James Duesenberry, Income, Saving and the Theory of Consumer Behavior (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 27-32. It has been used (infrequently) to describe how revolutions are a catalyst for similar revolutionary movements. See, e.g., Thomas H Green, Comparative Revolutionary Movements (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984), 116-18; Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, In the Path of Hizballah (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 17. Diffusion is characterized by “uncoordinated interdependence”: interdependence, because the effect of something happening somewhere changes the probability it will occur somewhere else, and uncoordinated because it is specifically set apart as a mechanism distinct from when there is direct coordination. Elkins and Simmons, "On Waves, Clusters, and Diffusion: A Conceptual Framework," 35.
about emboldening a preexisting opposition. Opposition groups in other states can learn
techniques or tactics from the experience of other revolutions that make it easier for them to
revolt successfully. Of course, this narrow sense of learning can cut both ways – opposition
groups can learn strategies of revolt but states can learn strategies of repression from how the old
regime fell and more successfully stifle the opposition. More significantly, revolutions could
cause opposition movements to reassess the plausibility of their regime toppling after seeing a
similar regime crumble. Also, the occurrence of revolutions elsewhere can enable the opposition
by providing something of a focal point in time – an opportunity for opposition to act
simultaneously and overcome collective action problems.41

Diffusion can cause not just the emboldening of existing opposition, but the creation of
new opposition, enlarging the opposition, which further emboldens the existing opposition, as
more actors decide the regime must go. In other words, opposition can mount as it becomes
perceived as more probable that a regime will fall, but a prior cause to this may be because the
regime is seen as increasingly illegitimate – the old ideology justifying the ruler’s right to rule is
increasingly discredited and new ideologies are seen as the wave of the future – powered by the
example of a revolution somewhere else.

It is this latter mechanism that is particularly salient if it is the case that rulers fear the
spillover effects from a revolution that has already succeeded. Much of the learning mechanisms
take place when a regime falls. From this perspective, after the fall of the old regime, there is no
new information that affects the fear of a spillover effect. But the focus on the eroding

41 The discussion of focal points in terms of coordination began with Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*
legitimacy of the state and the corresponding inspiration of new opposition is affected by the continuing presence of the revolutionary state.

Rulers often face challenges to their rule, but the assumption here is that the frequency and nature of these challenges vary over time and space. In some periods and places the very basis of political authority is called into question. Rulers obviously have vested interests in seeing that these challenges do not arise, or at least remain contained. This involves crushing resistance and, more commonly, deterring those opposed to their rule from taking action. It also involves preserving their legitimacy among the population that accepts their rule. Rulers do not rely on coercion (or the threat of it) alone to provide order and preserve their rule. As one scholar has stated, Machiavelli “gave a misleading account of the choices open to rulers when he advised that it was better to be feared than to be loved. Certainly if rulers are not feared they cannot rule, for the law depends upon the ultimate sanction of enforcement. But fear works best when clothed in authority.”

The more regimes lose even a veneer of legitimacy, the more they risk losing consent even by sources within the regime, the more governing becomes a risky and dangerous game. Rulers thus go to great lengths to preserve their legitimacy. They attempt to keep any contestation within certain bounds – not questioning the fundamental right of the rulers to rule. And part of preserving their legitimacy is maintaining an international system that supports rather than casts doubt on their regime type.

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43 This may seem commonplace, but the concept of legitimacy has largely been ignored by comparative scholars, including the scholarship on revolutions. Legitimacy has been characterized as amorphous and difficult to measure; it also assumes a type of political support that is grounded in shared moral evaluations, which does not fit with the assumptions of many scholars’ models. Both structuralist and rationalist accounts of revolt assume actors are only waiting for their opportunity to pounce – they are not motivated by new goals or values. For an elaboration and
The fact that states would react with hostility to revolutionary states attempting to militarily invade and impose their regime type on them is obvious, but it is as uninteresting as it is uncommon. The instances of this occurring to a major regional power are basically limited to the most prominent case – the French Revolutionary Wars. Revolutionary states often desire that their regime type spreads, but they are not in a position to be the cause of the spread in such a matter. More common are revolutions acting as a platform in less direct ways, and revolutions acting as models – doing little more to spread their regime type beyond their mere existence.

When will leaders fear spillover effects? They may fear spillover affects only when revolutionary states are directly fomenting revolution abroad. It may be argued that leaders are only concerned with what states do rather than who they are – that the indirect mechanisms outlined above are simply too peripheral to have much of an effect. On the other hand, the response of states often seem to be disproportionate to the attempts of revolutionary states to expand, which suggests that they fear the more indirect means revolutionary states contribute to the spread of revolutionary outcomes. Whether and to what extent states fear revolutions as platforms or models is one of the principle questions addressed here. My hypothesis is that,

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critique on this point, see Jeffrey Berejikian, "Revolutionary Collective Action and the Agent-Structure Problem."
_American Political Science Review_ 86, no. 3 (1992). The best recent work on legitimacy in domestic politics is Bruce Gilley, _The Right to Rule: How States Win and Loose Legitimacy_ (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2009). He makes a strong argument for a return to the concept. The loss of the legitimacy of a regime is often explicit or implicit in descriptive accounts of revolution, including the historiography of particular revolutions as well as an older scholarship on the causes of revolutions that focused more on describing the pattern of the revolutionary process, for example, Crane Brinton, _The Anatomy of Revolution_ (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1957). It has been understandably cast aside by scholarship that attempts to be more predictive. But just because a concept is not as amenable to prediction does not mean that it is not important or regarded so by leaders.
while of course leaders will not be indifferent to the policies of the revolutionary state – they will not appreciate attempts of subversion and such policies will increase their hostility towards the revolutionary state – their fears of domestic spillover, and thus the international effects, are not dependent on such policies.

To draw an analogy from the field of epidemiology, as leaders themselves do when discussing “revolutionary contagion,” fear of contagion involves characteristics of the infecting agent and characteristics of the host. The infecting agent can be what the revolutionary state does or what the revolutionary state is. Regarding the latter, the heterogeneous perspective supposes that ideological differences between states create antagonism; presumably the more difference the more antagonism. But the fear of contagion does not increase with ideological distance. In fact, regimes of a completely different nature probably do not pose a serious threat of contagion. Ideological differences are not inherently threatening. At minimum, an ideology must make some claim to target some other state, e.g. ideologies that are universal or based on religious/ethnic “imagined communities” that spill across borders. But even if ideologies target other states, the threat will not necessarily be salient. One must examine characteristics of the host.

An ideological threat is salient when rulers fear it will inspire movements within their country to subvert the existing order. It is not ideology per se that they fear, but how ideologies translate into social power when revolutions threaten to embolden and enlarge opposition groups. A useful, if imperfect, proxy for the salience of the ideological threat is the presence of

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44 This one factor alone explains a good deal of the variation among revolutions concerning their international effect rather than, say, whether revolutions are mass or elite, as Walt suggests. Walt, Revolution and War, 309. For example, the Egyptian revolution had a much greater international impact than the Turkish or Mexican revolution simply because Arab nationalism was more threatening to surrounding states than Turkish or Mexican nationalism.
significant preexisting opposition groups of the same character as the revolution. This presence of such groups captures characteristics of the agent and the host – that the ideology is targeting the other state, and that the state is already somewhat vulnerable. Some of the mechanisms above presuppose a significant opposition. What it does not capture is the possibility that leaders might consider an ideological movement a salient threat and act to preempt such opposition from forming in their country in the first place.

To summarize, I argue that rulers fear revolutionary threats to their regimes when revolutions are associated with preexisting opposition groups. Already challenged, the revolution threatens not just to embolden but greatly enlarge this opposition. I argue that this fear exists irrespective of the actual policies of the revolutionary state.

Determining when leaders will fear of a spillover effects is a necessary part of this dissertation, but even more important is what affect this fear has on international affairs. One possibility is that it does not have much of an effect. There is policy substitution – leaders can repress opposition while maintaining their usual geopolitical priorities. I argue, however, that ruling class strategies will extend not just to domestic but international affairs. When leaders fear revolution spreading, they will not be content with internal policies. It will have a discernable effect on patterns of cooperation and conflict: they will align against the revolutionary state and they will align with other states that face the same threat, which are often states that are of a similar regime type. Leaders will fear that revolutionary states will act as platforms and models that will encourage the spread of revolutionary instability to their own polities. They will thus try to reverse or at least contain revolutions, which entail policies of hostility ranging from an invasion of the revolutionary state to diplomatic isolation. They will cooperate with states that face the same threat in order to coordinate their policies against the
revolutionary state as well as coordinate their policies of suppressing the transnational ideological movement.\(^{45}\)

When arrayed with the options of aligning with, remaining neutral towards, or aligning against states, leaders facing this spillover effect will engage in hostility towards the revolutionary state and align with states facing similar threats. In these instances, it is not the balance of power that determines patterns of conflict of cooperation and conflict, but the anticipation of revolutionary waves. There are policies that are inexplicable otherwise: states shifting their alignments based on ideological changes rather than changes in the balance of power, states intervening in revolutions they do not have much geopolitical interest in, or unexpected restrained relations with regimes of a similar nature. The hostility toward the revolutionary state is driven by a desire to “kill the baby in the crib” – to prevent a successful revolution or to reverse an already successful revolution. But even when leaders recognize that they will not be able to entirely suppress a revolution, they are hostile as a means of isolating the state and preventing it from becoming a successful model and/or acting as a platform.

\(^{45}\) The threat of revolution also encourages cooperation in general in order to prevent revolutions from erupting in the first place because war, and the preparation for war, can make regimes more vulnerable to upheaval. War can weaken the state, providing opportunities for revolutionary movements to strike. Scholars of revolution have paid increasing attention to the cause of interstate competition since Skocpol’s landmark work. Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Rulers, especially in the aftermath of major wars, have been aware of the strain interstate competition can place on the stability of the state. This has at times been a powerful factor in preventing conflicts between states. States also often face tradeoffs of efficiency in whether their armed forces are structured to internally repress or to engage effectively in interstate war, which also promotes cooperation. Stanislav Andreski, "On the Peaceful Disposition of Military Dictatorships," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 3, no. 3 (1980). I touch on these issues, but not systematically address them in here.
Data and Method

This dissertation addresses two interrelated questions: When do leaders fear the domestic repercussions of revolutions abroad? How does the prospect of such revolutionary waves affect international affairs? I will elaborate the observable implications of my argument in a general sense, and then discuss how I plan to test my hypotheses in specific cases.

Observable Implications of the Theory

Based on my proposed answer to the questions above, I am interested in the following evidence: the nature of the opposition in states, changes (or lack thereof) in patterns of conflict and cooperation given a revolution or revolt, and how leaders’ fear of revolutionary spillover derives from the former, in conjunction with a revolution elsewhere, and leads to the latter. I am also examining attempts (or the lack thereof) by the revolutionary state to spread upheaval abroad, and what role this played in leaders’ fear of spillover effects. I will elucidate four hypotheses and the evidence needed.

Hypothesis 1.1: Given a revolution, leaders anticipate revolutionary waves affecting their own regime only when they perceive there is a preexisting significant revolutionary movement in their state of the same character as the revolution.

Opposition groups are revolutionary when they are bent on radically changing the nature of the regime. In many cases, whether opposition groups are revolutionary is easy to determine because they are partaking in violent attempts to take down the regime, and the regime type advocated by the opposition movements are fundamentally inconsistent with the ruling regime.
In other cases, differences may not necessarily be fundamental, but depend on the strategies of the opposition and ruling regime. For example, western European communist parties during the interwar period openly advocated the downfall of existing regimes (even while participating in elections), while those same parties during the Cold War accommodated themselves to democratic regimes. On the other side, the monarchies of France and Britain in the 1830s and 1840s accommodated themselves to liberal movements, whereas for the absolute monarchies of Austria, Prussia and Russia these movements were revolutionary. Thus, the strategies of the government and the opposition are examined to determine whether these groups are revolutionary. If there is significant ambiguity over whether these groups are committed to overthrowing current regime, I classify them as revolutionary because leaders will most likely consider them as such.

Revolutionary movements suppose a certain level of organization dedicated to overthrowing the state, rather than isolated intellectuals haranguing against the regime. But given that the opposition in question is revolutionary, these groups tend to be outlawed and heavily suppressed, so judging their level of support and thus significance can be difficult. In those instances, one can infer, based on revolutionary upheaval in the recent past, that revolutionary movements exist but are lying dormant. I treat states as having a significant revolutionary opposition movement by the relatively arbitrary cut point that there is either straightforward evidence of revolutionary organizations with significant followings or indirect evidence via a revolutionary disturbance (major protests or revolts of a political nature) in the last 5 years. This assessment is obviously imperfect, and does not consider trends. A single set of measurements is bound to be limited when the form of opposition and what is considered significant is different in particular historical contexts.
Evidence that regimes fear revolutionary waves can be partially gleaned from private discussions of leaders, but also their domestic policies. When revolutions occur and a ruler’s domestic opposition is significantly magnified, one can assume a ruler fears revolutionary spillover. But increased visible resistance to the regime may be muted if the regime anticipates the threat and at least temporarily contains it. More reliable evidence is a change in policy towards opposition groups: increased repression including a marked increase in political prisoners, sometimes in combination with concessions, depending on the strategy. There are also other indicators of a threat to the regime, such as increased surveillance and censorship of the population at large, efforts to censor or distort reports of the revolution abroad, a restructuring of the security services to ensure loyalty, and a shift in public rhetoric.

The criteria above are a rough way of getting at the distinction of whether these movements exist and are not isolated and marginal. Objective indicators alone will not be decisive in some cases, given the nature of the evidence. Historians still debate, for example, the level of support for revolution in Britain in the 1790s. If it is not clear to us over two hundred years later, it was probably not obvious to leaders at the time. Leaders’ subjective judgments are of course what determine their policies. But objective indicators are pursued in order to assess whether policymakers’ judgments had a reasonable basis and were not merely paranoia requiring a psychological explanation or whether they were disingenuously claiming the presence of revolutionary movements for other purposes. Whether the presence of preexisting revolutionary

46 In other words, there might be what Jervis calls a “domino theory paradox”: the mechanism is present, but its very anticipation provokes countervailing policies. Jervis, System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life, 266-71.

47 For a summary of this debate, see Edward Royle, Revolutionary Britannia? Reflections on the Threat of Revolution in Britain (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2000), 1-10.
groups is a reliable predictor of the fear of revolutionary waves given a revolution will be assessed by examining cases in which there were such groups and in cases where there was not. Part of the strategy of the case selection elaborated below is to choose cases where there clearly is or is not such opposition so that ambiguous coding can be avoided.

Hypothesis 1.2: Assuming the domestic opposition in hypothesis 1.1, leaders will fear revolutionary waves irrespective of the policy of the revolutionary state.

This claim is most clearly evidenced in cases where revolutions do not attempt to export their movement to the state in question, yet alarm that state. Even in cases where the revolutionary state attempts to spread the revolution abroad, the revolution’s ability to act as a model can be evidenced if fears of revolutionary waves predate the revolutionary state’s policies or the attempts are extremely paltry compared to the fears, in states so small or weak that, regardless of their intentions, they are not acting as much of a platform. “Irrespective” does not mean that their fear might be to a degree a function of the revolutionary state’s policy, rather that their fear will not be dependent on it.

Hypothesis 2.1: States that fear revolutionary spillover will engage in hostilities towards the revolutionary state.

The most direct international effect of the anticipation of revolutionary waves is the policy towards the revolutionary state. I hypothesize regimes with such fears will be hostile to that state, as opposed to a neutral position or active cooperation. That hostility could include the initiation of war, some lighter form of intervention, such as aid to opposition groups, or a
containment policy – economically or diplomatically isolating the state.\textsuperscript{48} I will examine instances where states anticipate revolutionary waves and instances where they do not. In the latter case, my theory would not expect hostility towards the revolutionary state, but there might be unrelated reasons for a policy of hostility. In other words, my hypothesis is sufficient for hostility, but not necessary. The converse case, however, when states anticipate revolutionary waves and nevertheless align with those revolutionary states, is an anomaly for my theory, and indicates that other factors are overwhelming the factors I deem most salient. Again, the strength of this claim is not that, all else being equal, states will be hostile to such revolutionary states, but that the fear of revolutionary spillover is having a predominant influence on their foreign policy towards that state despite other countervailing factors.

Hypothesis 2.2: States with similar oppositions and thus fear of revolutionary spillover will align with each other.

I argue that the anticipation of revolutionary waves not only initiates conflict, but cooperation – cooperation against the revolutionary state and against the revolutionary wave elsewhere. This cooperation can consist of formal alliances, or more informal alignments, indicated by military or economic aid, intelligence sharing and other such coordination. I argue that cooperation, not mere neutrality or outright hostility, will exist between states that fear revolutionary spillover. There will usually be cooperation among like states, because like states usually face similar threats. But, in contrast to the social identity mechanism, there can be

\textsuperscript{48}I assume that various factors will determine what form the hostility will take, but one critical factor determining whether there will be intervention is the assessment of the relative ease with which the revolution can be reversed. A protracted conflict may radicalize the revolution and increase the risk of unrest at home.
cooperation between unlike states, because they might nevertheless share the same revolutionary threat.

These hypotheses make the claim that when leaders fear revolutionary spillovers, that factor will be their predominant foreign policy concern, prompting patterns of conflict and cooperation that would be otherwise difficult to explain. Several methods will be used to determine whether these patterns of conflict and cooperation are directly related to possibility of revolutionary waves. One is timing – the onset of a revolution that inspires waves initiates cooperation and conflict that differs from previous periods when the factor was absent. Another is whether the pressure for the policies of hostility toward the revolutionary state varies among states and within states to the extent that they anticipate they will be the targets of the revolutionary wave. Also, the extent to which states embark on foreign policies that are at best not relevant, and at worse detrimental to a state’s geopolitical interests, such as mobilizing against states that pose no conceivable military threat or aligning with a traditional adversary/refusing to align with a traditional ally, or unambiguous expectations of realist theory, is an indication that other factors are at work.⁴⁹

The aim of this dissertation is to assess when these ideological conflicts are likely to emerge, why, and how much of an effect they have on international relations. For the latter purpose, I make a strong assumption to draw into relief to what extent these issues play a role in

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⁴⁹ States mobilizing against what have become very weak actors may also be treated as evidence of the power shift thesis – either for opportunistic or preventive motives. There are several ways to distinguish this thesis from my own: looking for a credible geopolitical rationale, examining private statements, and examining the timing of the action. States that have a moderate revolution followed by a more radical phase help distinguish these competing theses because if the power thesis is correct then the initiation of hostility should track with the state’s weakness and not when the revolution radicalizes.
international politics. I suppose that the anticipation of revolutionary spillover will have a large enough effect on the foreign policy behavior of other states to determine conflict and cooperation based on these regime security fears. Sometimes this factor will be overwhelmed by other factors. My claim is that even indirect domestic political threats have had a profound effect on international relations, creating interactions that are counterintuitive from a geopolitical perspective. Given the neglect of these issues in international relations theory, what might be surprising is not that the factors I identify are at times overwhelmed by other concerns, but that they have much causal weight at all.

Case selection

This dissertation selects cases of revolution and revolt from two of the major ideological movements of the past several hundred years: liberalism and Islamism.⁵⁰ These cases exhibit a range on the independent variables of interest: the fear of spillover effects based on the perceived presence or absence of significant revolutionary movements and the extent to which the revolutionary state acts as platforms to spread the revolution abroad.⁵¹ I do not just examine

⁵⁰ An expansion of this dissertation will included communist and fascist revolutions.

⁵¹ The cases I propose to select are not simply based on variation on the independent variable given the universe of cases of revolutions because I am not proposing a theory that applies to all cases of revolution. As discussed, revolutions can have a variety of effects. Instead, the strategy is to pick cases based on variation in the independent variable given a level of plausibility that leaders could fear the spillover of revolutionary ideology. See James Mahoney and Gary Goertz, "The Possibility Principle: Choosing Negative Cases in Comparative Research," American Political Science Review 98, no. 4 (2004). This is the same logic behind selecting politically relevant dyads for quantitative testing of conflict, where politically relevant dyads are pairs that are contiguous or one of which is a great power. Here the relevant dyads are revolutions that might credibly be a model to another state because the revolution espouses a universal ideology or one based on the religion or ethnicity shared by the other
instances of successful revolution because, given the logic of the theory, one would expect rulers would not only be adverse to revolutionary states – they would also do what they could to prevent those revolutions from succeeding in the first place. The players responding to these events that I focus on are the primary regional powers. These are the states that dominate the region’s international politics and are more in a position to be able to respond to revolutionary states. The cases are from different historical eras and places, which show that the dynamic I outline is not limited to the content of particular ideologies or historical eras. I will briefly elaborate the cases below.

I first examine in detail two sets of democratic/liberal revolutions: the American Revolution, the Dutch Patriot Revolt, and the wave of revolutions in the 1820s in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece. I examine the responses to these revolutions by the principle powers of the period: Prussia, Russia, Austria, France and Britain, and, in the case of the American Revolution, Spain. These cases of revolution/revolt provide a useful comparison for hypothesis testing. They are roughly similar in that they occurred in lesser powers that were not acting as platforms to spread uprisings abroad, but served as potential models. Thus variable of the


52 The literature on the international effects of revolutions does not examine unsuccessful cases of revolution. Instances of states intervening in these revolts are a subset of the larger phenomenon of interventions in civil war. This burgeoning literature usually does not distinguish between different types of civil war, and usually has post-World War Two, especially post Cold War, ethnic civil wars in mind when they construct their general theories. A prominent work is Patrick M. Regan, *Civil Wars and Foreign Powers: Outside Intervention in Intrastate Conflict* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000). The distinction between revolutionary and other types of civil wars is advocated by Nicholas Sambanis, "Do Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes? A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part 1)," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 3 (2001).
revolutionary state acting as a platform or a model is held constant, while the degree to which there were revolutionary opposition movements within the great powers varies. In the first set of cases there were not; in the later set of cases there were. Whether rulers anticipated revolutionary waves irrespective of the policy of the revolutionary state is evidenced if they are alarmed at potential revolutions in insignificant states, or in states too distant to meaningfully act as a platform for spreading the revolution abroad.

Finally, I examine the wave of political Islam in the Middle East and the Iranian Revolution. I examine the response to this revolution by the principle powers of the region: Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. Significant Islamist revolutionary opposition movements existed in these states prior to the Iranian Revolution, with the exception of Saudi Arabia. Whether the fear of spillover was driven by the policy of the revolutionary state is evidenced in several ways – whether the fear the revolution spreading predates substantial Iranian involvement with these communities or, even more strongly, whether there was a demonstration effect on Sunni Islamist opposition groups, most of which never developed any significant tie with Iran.

As discussed, I predict that states with significant opposition groups will be hostile towards revolutionary states and cooperative amongst themselves. In these eras there is a range of outcomes – states aligned with revolutionary states, remaining neutral, and engaging in hostility towards the revolutionary states. And there is a range of outcome in terms of cooperation between states. The diachronic analysis of multiple powers’ relations with the state before and after the revolution in several cases provides a robust degree of inferential leverage. I begin with an analysis of the proverbial “dog that did not bark,” the ancien régime’s response to democratic revolutions.
Chapter 2: Democratic Revolutions and the Ancien Régime

In the late eighteenth century, a series of revolutions swept Europe and its colonial empires. This was later termed the “age of democratic revolutions.”¹ The American Revolution, the Dutch Patriot Revolt, and other disturbances were a prelude to the French Revolution and the uprisings that attended it. After the Napoleonic wars, there were three main revolutionary waves on the European continent that occurred in the early 1820s, in 1830, and in 1848. There were many differences in these revolts, but at their core they shared the same basic struggle: sovereignty vested in kings verses sovereignty vested in people. In other words, it was a struggle between the traditionally constituted bodies dominated by the aristocracy and/or king and groups that wished to broaden the political space by smashing the stranglehold these bodies had on power.

This chapter examines the international response to the American Revolution and the Dutch Patriot Revolt. The following chapter examines the revolts of 1820 in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece. These cases of revolution/revolt provide a useful comparison for hypothesis testing. They are roughly similar in that they occurred in lesser powers that were not acting as platforms to spread uprisings abroad, but served as potential models. The variable of the revolutionary state acting as a platform or a model is held constant, while the degree to which there were revolutionary opposition movements within the great powers varies.

The two most prominent cases of democratic revolution/revolt prior to the French Revolution were the American Revolution and the Dutch Patriot Revolt. They present a puzzle: In both these cases, the oldest monarch in Europe, France, supported the self-styled patriots – those fighting for the rights of people over kings. One German source proclaimed at the beginning of the American Revolution, “Since the interest of every sovereign is to suppress rather than to support a rebellion, the Americans cannot hope for foreign aid.”

Why would a monarch support a popular uprising against a king? What explains French policy? Did they have any hesitations because of the example these revolutions could set for their own polity? Was French policy an anomaly? What dictated other states’ policy towards these revolutions? Did the reaction to the revolts have an effect on relations between states?

This chapter analyzes the response to the American and Dutch uprisings by addressing the following questions: Did leaders have a fear of the spillover effects these revolutions could have on their own rule? Is this fear correlated with the presence of preexisting revolutionary movements within their polities? Did the fear of spillover effects prompt hostility to the revolution and cooperation amongst states with similar fears? I first assess the independent variables: the extent to which these revolutions acted as platforms and models, and whether there was a significant revolutionary opposition movement in any of the major powers analyzed. I then assess the international effects

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3 The great powers remained the same set of players throughout the period covered in this and the next chapter: Britain, France, Prussia, Austria, and Russia. The policies of these powers are examined with the
of the revolution/revolt by analyzing the policies of the great powers toward each other and the revolutionary state before and after the revolution.

I find that the reaction of the great powers to the American Revolution and the Dutch Patriot Revolt is largely a negative confirmation of my theory. In these states there was no significant revolutionary movement prior to the revolts, and therefore there was no significant fear of the demonstration effects of these revolutions, with the exception of Spain. Likewise, although there is some acknowledgement of how these revolutions could serve as dangerous models, the powers’ reaction to these revolts are explained mostly in traditional geopolitical terms. Ideological factors had little salience.

The American Revolution

The American Revolution germinated in the tension that developed between king and colonies after the Seven Years War. The war had drained the British state and King George III attempted to reform the empire, particularly in regard to increasing revenue. The colonists bitterly resented measures such as the Stamp Act and Townsend Acts. The Coercive Acts of 1774 attempted to consolidate royal authority and stifle dissent, especially in restive Massachusetts, but instead it provoked widespread open rebellion. Royal authority dissolved and local communities organized popular governments. The exception of the American Revolution. Because the American Revolution was also a revolt against the British Empire, Britain had an obvious motive to suppress the revolt. Therefore an analysis of British policy will be excluded for this case. An analysis of Spanish policy, however, is included. Spain was no longer considered a European great power in the late eighteenth century, but its navy and colonial possessions ensured that they were a major maritime power; indeed, France’s policy toward the Americans is intertwined with Spanish policy.
First Continental Congress was called, which recognized these local authorities but did not yet call for independence. But British policy was uncompromising and an increasing number of colonists were radicalized. Military hostilities broke out in 1775, and the Second Continental Congress issued the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

*Model*

There are two basic ways in which the United States served as a model, first for what it opposed and second for what it was for. The American Revolution was an anti-colonial revolt. It was not the first successful uprising against empire in modern European history – the Dutch had achieved independence from Spain over a century earlier. But it was certainly Europe’s first overseas colony to successfully revolt and could be considered a dangerous example for other colonies, especially Europe’s New World possessions.

It was also clear from the beginning what kind of government the rebellious colonists wished to form: a republic, or more accurately, a confederation of republics. The basic distinction between this regime type and the old was that sovereignty would lie with the people rather than a king, or a king and a consociated body that represented the aristocracy, as in England. Moreover, the rebelling colonists spoke in universal terms. The Declaration of Independence declared that there were “self-evident” truths “that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights… That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed, that whenever any Form of
Government becomes destructive of these Ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and institute new Government.”

Platform

The Americans obviously did not expect – and were not expected – to act as a platform in the strongest sense of the word – carrying on military expeditions to spread republics abroad. Even after they secured independence they were weak, internally divided, and on the other side of the ocean from Europe. They did harbor ambitions to expand their holdings in North America. Part of the colonists’ umbrage at British control before the Revolution was the fact that the British had attempted to restrict them from colonizing beyond the Appalachians. Their aggressive negotiations concluding the War of Independence secured them a huge swath of land up to the Mississippi, but their ambition did not stop there. Many envisioned an American continent without colonies or monarchies.4 Beyond the British, this aspiration most obviously affected Spain. But American expansion into Spanish lands either by the spread of their confederation or the

4 For example, in a widely distributed geography textbook, Jedidiah Morse elaborated on a common sentiment: “The God of nature never intended that some of the best parts of his earth should be inhabited by the subjects of a monarch, 4000 miles from them. And may we not venture to predict, that, when the rights of mankind shall be more fully known, and the knowledge of them is fast increasing both in Europe and America, the power of European potentates will be confined to Europe, and their present American dominions, become like the United States, free, sovereign, and independent empires.” Jedidiah Morse, The American Geography (Elizabethtown, NJ: Shepard Kollock, 1789), 469.
emergence of other republican empires was a future possibility that they were obviously not emphasizing to the Spanish.⁵

Even though the Americans were not capable of acting as a military platform to spread republics abroad, did they engage in less direct steps to encourage republican movements or sentiments in other lands, such as disseminating propaganda or organizing opposition movements? Almost without exception, the extent to which they acted as a platform was the dissemination of propaganda concerning their own cause rather than advocating the overthrow or even the reform of other regimes.

The most important American diplomat, Benjamin Franklin, spread propaganda for the American cause, but he studiously refrained from suggesting that the ideals that motivated the Americans should be applied in Europe.⁶ One possible exception, his

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⁵ The instructions for the American commissioners going to France in 1776 illustrates this sensitivity:


⁶ Franklin wrote several articles and provided material for the French Government backed journal, Affaires de l’Angleterre et de l’Amérique, whose purpose was to provide news of the war of independence and support the American cause. His famous printing press at his residence in Passy “produced little more than government documents, legal forms, and pieces for amusement.” Jonathan R. Dull, "Franklin the Diplomat: The French Mission," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 72, no. 1 (1982): 26. A full account of Franklin’s press is provided by Luther S. Livingston, Franklin and His Press at Passy (New York, NY: The Grolier Club, 1914). One of the more well known pieces of anti-British satire commonly
behind the scenes effort to derail the Society of the Cincinnati, a veteran’s organization founded in the United States in 1783, exhibits his caution and restraint. He considered the hereditary and quasi-aristocratic nature of the group a dangerous precedent for the American republic. Although limited by his official position, he helped Honoré Mirabeau, the French writer and future revolutionary, write an attack on the Society and had it translated into English and printed. Franklin had his own essay translated and circulated it among his French friends, but he did not dare publish what was in essence an attack on the existing social order in France. The only reason he took action was because of its implications for the United States; he remained silent, for example, during


the democratic revolution in Geneva. Franklin’s fraternizing with the elite “reassured the French privileged classes that the American Revolution posed no threat to them.”

The closest the Americans came to fomenting unrest abroad was John Adams’ mission to the Netherlands. Adams came into a situation much different than that in France. The stadholder, the hereditary head of state of the Dutch Republic, was closely aligned with the British, and the opposing Patriot movement used the recognition of Adams and of the American cause as a weapon against him. There to solicit loans and recognition from the Dutch during the American Revolution, Adams took a different tact than Franklin, attempting through his writings and associations to win popular support for the American cause and thus force the stadholder’s hand. He even on one occasion uttered explicitly subversive statements against the stadholder. But his subversiveness

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8 Franklin was apprised of the situation, having sent his grandson to study there, “intending him for a Presbyterian & a Republican.” But he offered no comment, even as French and other troops besieged the city and crushed the revolution. Some of his associates such as Mirabeau, on the other hand, criticized the king for aiding the revolutionaries in America and Holland while crushing them in Geneva. Barbara B. Oberg, ed. The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, Volume 34: November 16, 1780 through April 39, 1781, vol. 34 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 140; Jonathan I. Israel, Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights, 1750-1790 (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 869.


10 Edward Handler, America and Europe in the Political Thought of John Adams (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 110. For more on Adams in the Netherlands, see James H. Hutson, John
was not so much a particular statement as the cause he represented, and the language of representative democracy that he introduced. Adams explicitly stated he “was not an enthusiast who wishes to overturn empires and monarchies for the sake of introducing republican forms of government.”

On the whole, there was not any significant an attempt by the Americans to spread their doctrines abroad. They promoted their own cause, which they thought would be an implicit cause for reform in Europe. But they mostly left the regimes of Europe undisturbed. If their diplomacy was relatively conventional, their aims were not. The Declaration of Independence has been portrayed as “decidedly unrevolutionary” because it was signaling that the United States would abide by the norms of European interstate conduct so that it would be granted independence. But the document was not just about signaling future diplomatic conduct. It was arguing that the colonies were now rightfully


11 Handler, America and Europe in the Political Thought of John Adams, 102. “If he came close in Holland to exerting direct influence on a revolutionary movement,” Handler notes, “his activity was prompted less by a missionary impulse to propagate revolution as such than by zeal to promote his country’s interests.” Ibid., 110.

12 There was a notion among Americans that their cause was “the cause of all mankind,” but they were not expecting a significant amount of change in Europe in the near term, let alone revolution. See John C. Rainbolt, “Americans’ Initial View of Their Revolution’s Significance for Other Peoples, 1776-1788,” The Historian 35 (1973). There was a consensus among American revolutionaries that, although they would exploit European rivalries to secure their independence, they wanted to keep out of the cockpit of Europe as much as possible, for the sake of their democracy.
“free and independent states,” and using quite radical language to do so. The United States was not acting as much of a platform, but it was certainly a revolutionary model. Its independence was in itself a potential challenge for imperial rule, and the form of government that it was establishing was a potential challenge to monarchies.

The Dutch Revolt

In the Dutch Republic there was a longstanding antagonism between the stadholder and the regent class. The stadholder was the chief officer in charge of public order and upholding the law. After 1747, the position was pseudo-monarchical: it was hereditary, passed down through the House of Orange, and the stadholder served simultaneously as chief of all seven provinces that made up the United Provinces. The regents were urban oligarchs, an unusual aristocracy that earned their income in large part through finance and trade. They exercised influence in their respective provinces and through the States-General, an assembly of delegates from each of the seven provinces.

David Armitage argues that the authors of the Declaration “couched their appeal to the powers of the earth in terms that those powers would understand and, Congress hoped, also approved.” David Armitage, The Declaration of Independence: A Global History (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 65. If this is so, then it is puzzling why the document begins with establishing a right to revolution when one’s universal rights of equality are violated. Armitage stresses that the Declaration’s primary audience was an international one, but the Declaration’s content and the careless way it was transmitted to France, what one would expect to be the primary overseas audience, brings this claim into doubt. Maier argues that the Declaration was “first and foremost for domestic consumption.” Pauline Maier, American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence (New York: NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), 131. At least a fundamental purpose of the Declaration was to justify what they were doing to an internal audience.
The American Revolution brought renewed criticism of the stadholder, William V. The British were the traditional protectors of the stadholder, and William V wanted to comply with British requests for assistance against the Americans. The regents, however, wanted to end their dependency on Britain and profit from trade with the Americans. The American Revolution also inspired a “democratic” movement – those especially of the upper middle class (burghers) who had been excluded from the political system and called for a broader system of participation. Those advocating popular sovereignty and the anti-stadholder regents together made up what became known as the Patriot party, united in their opposition toward the stadholder.

Anti-Orangist sentiment was fueled by what was considered the incompetent performance of William V in the Anglo-Dutch war of 1780-84. The stadholder was blamed for the Netherlands’ lackluster showing and his tepid leadership was explained as

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loyalty to England over the Dutch Republic. The reaction against the defeat grew to a broader set of demands. Measures to curtail the stadholder’s power in the various assemblies multiplied, and the burghers began organizing “free corps” militias. In 1783, the Patriots scored a major victory by forcing the stadholder’s main advisor/executive from office. However, the decentralized nature of political power in the Dutch Republic that enabled the Patriots to initially flourish by seizing one municipal council at a time also prevented them from decisively consolidating power. There was no Bastille to storm, although the Patriots had done the closest equivalent in September 1785 by forcing William V and the Princess from The Hague, which was the headquarters of the stadholder and housed the assemblies of Holland and the States-General.15

Also beginning in 1785 the coalition between the regents and the burghers began to fall apart – many of the oligarchs began to fear the stadholder less and the “democrats” more. The more radical Patriot movement spread nevertheless, taking on a much broader geographic and demographic character than traditional disputes with the stadholder. By the summer of 1787, there was a low level civil war. The Patriots had garnered control of three provinces, the stadholder had two, and the two others were disputed. There seemed to be a stalemate, though many assumed that the Patriots would ultimately prevail, including at times the stadholder himself, who was widely regarded as a weak and vacillating figure. Most assumed that the victor would be determined by the policies of the Great Powers.16

15 Schama, Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813, 104.

16 One of the principle older works on the Patriot Revolt dismissed the revolution as merely the machinations of outside powers. H. T. Colenbrander, De Patriottentijd, 3 vols. (S-Gavenhage [The Hague]: Martinus Nijhoff, 1897-1899). There has been a strong push back against this view. See Wayne P.
Model

The revolt against the stadholder could be considered, like all revolts, as a negative model in the general sense of encouraging rebellions against traditional authority. But the Patriots were also pushing a novel product – a republic based on popular sovereignty. Patriot ideology has been described as “a mélange of old and new attitudes towards the Dutch constitution.” The regent class pined for the Dutch Republic of old where the oligarchs exercised the decisive power. This in itself, like the other old republics of Europe ruled by aristocracies, such as Venice, Genoa, and Geneva, stood in marked contrast especially with the monarchies of the great powers. But the radicals who came to dominate the Patriot movement and who had significantly expanded the idea of popular sovereignty stood at an even greater contrast with the monarchies. They more often spoke in universal terms to justify their republic based on the rights of people over kings.

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Te Brake, "Polular Politics and the Dutch Patriot Revolution," Theory and Society 14, no. 2 (1985); Annie Jourdan, "The Netherlands in the Constellation of the Eighteenth-Century Western Revolutions," European Review of History: Revue europeenne d'histoire 18, no. 2 (2011). No one, though, denies the obvious importance of outside powers in determining the final outcome, as discussed below.

17 More specifically, in the context of the larger dispute occurring at the time, the revolt could be seen as encouraging the aristocracies to resist the centralizing demands of the monarchies.

18 Schama, Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813, 68.

19 The British hybrid – rule by aristocracy and king – was less of a contrast with the old Republic, but dramatically different than the developing Patriot ideology.
The Dutch Republic had weakened considerably since the “Golden Age” in the seventeenth century. Although it remained to a lesser extent an important trading and financial center, it was clearly a second rate power. The Republic’s role was more to manage its decline or at best uphold the status quo rather than to expand its holdings. But although the Dutch Republic was not much of a military threat, it was well suited to act as a platform in more indirect ways. The Dutch had been disseminators of potentially subversive materials. For example, because of their looser restrictions on the press, some of the books by the “philosophes” that were banned in France were available via the Republic. However, by the time of the Patriot Revolution, Dutch publishers were no longer significantly involved in exporting books and pamphlets to other countries.\(^{20}\) The Revolt did not reverse this trend. There does not seem to be any evidence that the Patriots spent their energy specifically targeting other states with revolutionary propaganda. They were consumed with their own unfinished revolution.\(^{21}\) In conclusion,


\(^{21}\) The Patriots did not restrain their activities because of their dependence on France; as seen below, they were not in the habit of moderating their radical policies to please the French. One factor that explains their lack of missionary zeal was is the nativist emphasis of the revolt. Especially at first, and certainly among the regents throughout, the revolt was conceived as regaining traditional Dutch rights particular to the Dutch. But even after 1785, when the radicalism of the democrats had been sufficiently developed to split the Patriot movement into two irreconcilable parts, there was not much in the way of proselytism among those speaking in more universalist terms because they were preoccupied with their still incomplete revolution.
the Patriot Revolt was not acting as a platform towards any of the powers, but it did serve as a potential model.

**Domestic Opposition in the Ancien Régime**

What was the nature of the domestic opposition in the great powers in the 1770s and 1780s, prior to and during the American Revolution and the Dutch Patriot Revolt? More specifically, was there a significant revolutionary opposition movement in the great powers of a similar character as these revolts? I treat the period as a whole, and describe the impact of the American Revolution because it illuminates the nature of the opposition.

European conservatives in the nineteenth century, reacting to the French Revolution, perpetuated the idea that the Enlightenment had propagated antimonarchical ideas that had hastened the French Revolution and revolutionary movements throughout Europe. In fact, if the Enlightenment had a political impact in this period, it worked largely in the service of enhancing the consolidation of monarchical rule. A principle struggle of the eighteenth century was the battle between the constituted bodies of the feudal order, particularly representing the aristocracy, and the power of the absolute monarchies. Enlightenment thinkers were strong allies of the monarchy in this regard. Many of the “philosophes” were less concerned with the form of government than the reforms they advocated. Men such as Voltaire or the physiocrats held the (well-grounded) opinion that enlightened policies such as religious toleration or free trade were best brought about by absolutist monarchs. Many of the monarchs of the age – Catherine the Great, Maria Theresa, Joseph II, and Frederick the Great – were attracted to some of
these ideas, as well as the general mantel of “enlightened monarch,” because it legitimized the consolidation of their states against the aristocratic reaction.

There was, however, a “Radical Enlightenment,” a set of works that advocated more far reaching change, among them, more democratic principles.22 Writings of this ilk were marginal, but began to burst out into the open in the 1770s and 1780s. Philosophes such as Diderot and Raynal, who once endorsed enlightened absolutism, rejected it.23

But it would be a mistake to regard the “Radical Enlightenment” as constituting a significant revolutionary movement in Europe. First of all, as evidenced below, there was a marked variation in the extent to which such ideas had spread in Europe. However, even in France, the epicenter of the Enlightenment, those seeking more radical reform were a small minority, nor were they an organized political resistance. The extent of organization and mobilization were the reading groups and freemasonry clubs where ideas were exchanged. Neither of these associations in this period had overtly revolutionary goals, or were perceived as having such.24

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24 For an exposition on freemasonry in this context, see Margaret C. Jacob, Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1991). She notes that those who emphasize the democratic elements of Masonic organization miss how “the lodge mirrored the old order” even as they were creating a new form of civil society (8). The Masonic language emphasizing liberty, universality, fraternity, and equality would meld with the revolutionary rhetoric spread
Opposition in France

The most developed movement for political reform on the Continent was in France. In the 1770s and 1780s there was increasing disgruntlement over the international and domestic problems the country faced and some considered political reform as an answer to their problems. There were three basic sources from which Frenchmen drew as the basis of reforms. One was the thinking of the Enlightenment. As discussed, one strand of the Enlightenment was in favor of increasing the power of the king, which would give him the ability to enact the reforms needed. The radical strain, however, advocated the constriction of the king’s power, in favor of a more limited monarchy or more. Another source of inspiration was French constitutional history. This was especially popular among conservative members of the aristocracy who wished to restore their power vis-à-vis the king. The final source of reforms was the example of other nations. Most often, this was Great Britain, France’s rival who had surpassed it as of late. Among the anglophiles who saw Great Britain as worthy of imitation were the “liberal” reformers who yearned for the political rights enjoyed on the island as well as those aristocrats who envied the power of the aristocrats in Britain.

One of the effects of the American Revolution was to displace England as the nation worth emanating among the small set of radicals. French interest in the New Throughout the continent by the French Revolution, but prior to 1789, nothing subversive of the established order was meant by it: “Whether speaking in the Dutch Republic or the Austrian Netherlands, in the French monarchy or Vienna and Berlin, freemasons in the first instance identified with power” (160). Following the French Revolution, however, Masonic lodges were condemned by conservatives as revolutionary cabals.
World, the British colonies in particular, had quickened as of late, and the American Revolution dramatically increased interest. The Revolution had widespread support in France, in part due to the French government’s propaganda efforts to provide support for French policies toward the Revolution. The government even covertly backed a journal, the *Affaires de l’Angleterre et de l’Amérique*, which published narrations of the conflict, translations of the state constitutions, and critiques of England. The journal exercised prudence concerning political matters that could apply to France, but it even published long extracts of Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*, albeit with an editorial critique of Paine’s diatribe against monarchies.  

The American Revolution has been described as opening up a Pandora’s box in France out which poured revolutionary ideas that were subversive of the political and social order. The Revolution certainly got many Frenchmen and women thinking about ideas that would have subversive implications, and it provided a safe means by which they could at least indirectly consider ideas such as liberty, equality, constitutionalism, and popular sovereignty. But the revolution’s effects in encouraging radicalism should

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27 Condorcet, writing years later, noted that “Men whom the reading of philosophic books had secretly converted to the love of liberty became enthusiastic over the liberty of a foreign people while they waited for the moment when they could recover their own, and they seized with joy this opportunity to avow publicly sentiments which prudence had prevented them from expressing.” Ibid.
not be exaggerated. First of all, the bulk of public support for the Revolution and the policies of France were for nationalistic reasons – getting back at the hated English. Even those who were inspired by the liberal ideals of the American Revolution stopped well short of being revolutionary. The Comte de Ségur, who fought in the American war and would go on to participate in the French Revolution, in 1782 expressed a common sentiment among progressives: “The liberty for which I am going to fight inspires in me great enthusiasm, and I would like my own country to possess as much of it as is compatible with our monarchy, our status, and our customs.”

Even Condorcet, a great admirer of America and republicanism, declared at the time, “France will remain a monarchy, because it is the only system of government suitable to her wealth, to her population, to her extent, and to the existing political system in Europe.” Both in terms of ends and means, these were not revolutionaries. Few were calling for the overthrow of the monarchy by violent means or otherwise. The few critics – the philosophes and the

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31 Acomb notes that one of the French critiques of England was the perception that its history was soaked in civil strife, which both French liberals and conservatives found repellent. Acomb, *Anglophobia in France, 1763-1789: An Essay in the History of Constitutionalism and Nationalism*, 5-6. There were a few exceptions. Some of the most incendiary words were written by Diderot in his section on the American Revolution for Rayal’s famous *Historie Philosophique des Deux Indies*, where he explicitly approved insurrection against tyrannical monarchs by oppressed people. Israel makes the case that the radical
frondeurs – do not meet the threshold as a significant revolutionary movement, and there is no evidence that the king or his advisors thought that there was a significant revolutionary movement in France. As has been observed, it was the French Revolution that made revolutionaries in France, rather than revolutionaries making the Revolution.

**Opposition in Austria and Prussia**

In German lands, including Prussia and Austria, there was extremely wide support for monarchy. Germans of this period have often been considered “unpolitical,” a mischaracterization, but nevertheless there was a general acceptance of monarchy. This characterized not just those who were content with the existing order, but the reformers, who not only thought that political institutions were sufficiently open to reform but thought absolute monarchy was the best system to bring Enlightened reforms about.32

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Enlightenment reforms were particularly embraced by Joseph II of Austria, to a lesser extent, Frederick of Prussia, and lesser so, Maria Theresa of Austria. In fact, Joseph II was to face stiff opposition in the 1780s as he pressed forward far-reaching reforms, including an attempt to abandon the special rights enjoyed by the estates. Most notably, the Austrian Netherlands teetered toward open revolt in 1787. The aristocracy did not reject monarchy; they rejected Joseph’s radical reinterpretation of monarchy. Neither Maria Theresa nor Frederick attempted such radical reforms of the social structure.

In Germany there was widespread coverage of news from America, though political and constitutional issues were usually neglected. Even so, the way that the vocabulary of the Revolution was translated into feudal terms – state assemblies, for example, were translated as estates – illustrates the degree to which the Germans did not comprehend many of the ideals that motivated the American Revolution. Some Germans expressed approval of the American Revolution, and considered that Americans were now exercising rights that Germans already enjoyed. In 1784, a minister in Frederick the Great’s government wrote an essay for the occasion of the king’s birthday: “On the Forms of Government, and Which One Is the Best?” The birth of the new American Republic, he said, “has given us a new phenomenon.” But he considered republics as passé. “We have to wait at least a half century in order to see whether this new Republic or confederated body will consolidate its form of government. At the

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Dippel, Germany and the American Revolution, 1770-1800: A Sociohistorical Investigation of Late Eighteenth-Century Political Thinking, 38.

Ibid., 69-70.
moment, its existence is not yet evidence in favor of the republican form.” The lecture indicates the tone of philosophical speculation that existed at the time rather than alarm over political agitation.

**Opposition in Russia**

In the Russia, Catherine II had her share of opponents. She had just finished repressing the Pugachev revolt when the American Revolution broke out. But this revolt was more characteristic of peasant revolt, representing local grievances and lacking ideological content. There is little evidence of opposition of a more revolutionary nature in Russia. The Enlightenment had begun to penetrate the top stratum of Russian society. In fact, a leading thinker of the Russian Enlightenment was Catherine herself. In her work she considered liberty as a crucial component of just rule, though she was clear that the sovereign power of Russia “must rest in the hands of an absolute ruler.”

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There were some thinkers of the Russian Enlightenment who began to critique Catherine’s policies. The most radical was Alexander Radishchev, who penned an ode to the American Revolution in the 1780s, and published in Russian extracts of some of the American state constitutions.\textsuperscript{38} Among educated circles, there was cursory access to news about America.\textsuperscript{39} But those such as Radischev were in a distinct minority. David Griffith notes that one may count on one’s fingers the number of progressive thinkers who looked with favor upon the American Revolution: “Either the intelligentsia was indifferent to the events in America, or else it was an insignificantly small group. The latter explanation is most probable.”\textsuperscript{40} Russia had few thinkers espousing revolutionary ideals, let alone explicitly organizing for revolution.

\textit{Opposition in Spain}

In Spain, Charles III presided over a period of cultural and economic revival; his steady leadership was widely popular. There was no political group that advocated a

\textsuperscript{38} For more on Radishchev, see David Marshall Lang, \textit{The First Russian Radical: Alexander Radischev, 1749-1802} (London, UK: George Allen and Unwin, 1959), 171-75, passim.

\textsuperscript{39} Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, \textit{The Beginnings of Russian-American Relations, 1775-1815}, trans. Elena Levin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 47-53. For those who spoke French, common among those few that were educated, there were other sources of information, such as Raynal’s famous \textit{Histoire des deux Indes}, which provided information on the American Revolution mostly written by Diderot. The Declaration of Independence was not printed in Russia for another 80 years after it was issued. Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, “The Declaration of Independence: A View from Russia,” \textit{The Journal of American History} 85, no. 4 (1999): 1390.

\textsuperscript{40} David M. Griffiths, "American Commercial Diplomacy in Russia, 1780 to 1783," \textit{The William and Mary Quarterly} 27, no. 3 (1970): 410.
departure from absolute monarchy.\textsuperscript{41} To the extent that Enlightenment ideals penetrated Spain, they circulated among the very top stratum, particularly the king and his advisors. Charles III implemented extensive reforms advocated by Enlightenment thinkers to make the state bureaucracy more efficient and centralized, which brought about resistance in Spain’s American Empire. The weakness of the Spanish state had left the Spanish American elites largely autonomous; the centralizing tendencies of the Bourbon reforms prompted resistance among the creoles. The resistance for the most part stopped well short of outright independence movements. Rebellion was certainly not unknown in the Spanish Empire, especially among the lower classes. These were, however, localized and for the redress of specific grievances, mostly resistance against paying taxes. The disturbances generally operated within the political culture, as a form of bargaining, much the same way urban riots operated in early modern Europe.\textsuperscript{42} They were usually confined to particular classes and had no wider revolutionary dimension.\textsuperscript{43}

However, there were several large-scale rebellions, culminating in the 1780s with the Comunero Rebellion in New Granada and the Túpac Amaru II and associated

\textsuperscript{41}Richard Herr notes that “Absolute monarchy was the ideal political constitution of all parties; the progressives cheered enlightened despotism, the conservatives cried that the throne was in danger; neither advocated a change from the present political system.” Richard Herr, \textit{Eighteenth-Century Revolution in Spain} (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1958), 231.


insurrections in Peru, the latter of which was the largest rebellions ever to face Spanish rule. These rebellions combined the lower class and creole resentment of Bourbon fiscal and administrative reform. Several Spanish officials asserted a connection between the revolts and the American Revolution. The revolts may have had in common a reaction against reforming imperial bureaucrats, but the ideology that imbibed the American Revolution had not much affected the Spanish Empire, and does not seem to have played a role in the revolts at all. The republican ideas of the Americans were only beginning to penetrate a few thinkers. Although there is a tendency to view the colonial revolts in hindsight, as precursors to the independence movements that would sweep the empire a few decades later, Anthony McFarlane argues they are better thought of as the aristocratic resistance to enlightened reform going on in Europe. In sum, Spain had no significant revolutionary opposition movement at home, and there was no significant republican movement in the colonies – whether there was an anti-colonial revolutionary movement is more ambiguous, but it seems not, particularly before their involvement in the American revolution.


Opposition in Britain

The British obviously had a revolutionary opposition in America, although they underestimated its extent at first. But was there such an opposition the mother country? The nature of the British regime was different than that of the great powers on the continent, something contemporary Britons emphasized. While absolute monarchy was the model for the latter, in Britain since the Glorious Revolution of 1688 the aristocracy held much more power than elsewhere. But as in Europe, there was fear amongst the opposition that the king was centralizing power. This was the case in both wings of the opposition – the conservatives and the radicals. The conservatives, much more prominent than the radicals, looked to a past where the aristocracy was more in balance with the king. Radicals wanted to expand the political space. They were alarmed that the size of electorate and regularity of elections were decreasing, which was evidence of an oligarchy was firmly in control.

Radicalism in Britain got a boost from the American Revolution – there was an increased call for greater representation.\(^46\) The extent to which the British public endorsed the Americans or their government has been a matter of extended debate.\(^47\)

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\(^{47}\) The assessment by Americans and Whigs was that the masses largely opposed the war, despite the Government’s majority. Louis Namier and others, on the other hand, asserted that the public was passive, with the exception of prominent radicals such as Joseph Priestley and Richard Price. Other scholars argued that the public was largely supportive of the Government’s measures against the Americans. More recent works stress the difficulty in deciphering public opinion and that there was no predominant trend in either
What is clearer is that the radical movement in Britain, both in terms of ends and means, was not revolutionary. The radicals’ goals were to enact reforms, most notably strengthening the House of Commons against the king, and insisting on greater representation. And the limited political mobilization that occurred generally tried to work within the system and eschewed violence.48

**Summary**


48 H. T. Dickenson notes that the radicals of this period “did their best to use the existing political process.” Even in the demonstrations of the followers of the radical John Wilkes, “violence [was] not usually seen as a means of applying pressure to the ruling elite. There was certainly nothing revolutionary about these disturbances… Wilkes himself and nearly all the radicals of the period had a horror of mob violence.” H. T. Dickinson, "Radicals and Reformers in the Age of Wilkes and Wyvill," in *British Politics and Society from Walpole to Pitt, 1742-1789*, ed. Jeremy Black (London, UK: Macmillan, 1990), 139, 144.
bring about that possibility. Reform was the order of the day, but most who sought reform wanted the king to implement it, and the biggest reaction to monarchical authority was the aristocratic resistance to the centralizing reform of monarchies. More radical ideas were aired, particularly in France, but they were still in the realm of ideas rather than organized political action. In the New World, there were revolts in the Spanish Empire; whether these were full blown independence movements is somewhat ambiguous, but seems doubtful.

**International Relations prior to the American Revolution**

Having assessed the independent variables of interest – the degree to which the revolutions acted as a model and a platform and the extent of revolutionary opposition prior to the revolutions, I first turn the international relations of the American Revolution, and follow that with an analysis of the Dutch Patriot revolt. To assess whether the American Revolution affected patterns of international politics, I first examine relations amongst the Great Powers prior to the Revolution.

Prior to the American Revolution, relations between the great powers in Europe were shaped by the aftermath of the Seven Years War. Britain had emerged from that conflict dominant over France, having entirely eradicated the French from North America. Britain was, however, relatively isolated from the Continent. Britain’s focus was on internal and overseas matters. Although it tepidly searched for allies in Europe, among other problems, it was no longer able to exploit the threat of France because of her weakened position. France had not only lost much of her overseas empire, it was saddled with debt. Both powers had little influence on the eastern powers, and sat back as
Prussia, Austria and Russia engaged in the first partition of Poland in 1772. Relations on the Continent were still shaped by the “Diplomatic Revolution” during the War of Austrian Succession, which had brought about an alliance between Austria and France – Austria had partnered with France as the best means to wrest back the province of Silesia from Prussia, and broke with Russia. France had also previously repaired their relations with Spain – they had renewed their “Family Compact” during the Seven Years War. The Spanish Navy nicely complimented the French Army, and they shared the common enemy of Britain. But most recently Spain had felt abandoned in its conflict with Britain over the Falklands. A Russian-Prussian alliance was the core of what was called the “Northern System.” Britain was affiliated with these states, but not in an alliance. Among other reasons, Russia required as price of the alliance British support of Russian conquests of the Ottoman Empire, which the British refused.

The system then had two basic poles of antagonism: Britain-France, and Austria-Prussia. It was also characterized by the decline of France and the rise of Prussia and especially Russia. France in particular was alarmed at their deteriorating influence in the east and the rise of Russia.49

**International Relations of the American Revolution**

Did the American Revolution incite fears of contagion? Did this factor have any impact on policies toward the American Revolution or relations between the Powers? I now investigate the international response to the American Revolution.

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The possibility of rebellion breaking out among Britain’s American colonies was not something that was foreign to French statesmen. Foreign minister Choiseul, in the aftermath of the Seven Years War, realized the French cession of Canada would only encourage Americans toward independence, and he sent spies to assess the military and political situation. Independence was regarded as inevitable and mainly a question of timing.\textsuperscript{50}

On the eve of the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1774, the comte de Vergennes became the Minister of Foreign Affairs under the new king, Louis XVI. He would be the primary architect of French policy during the Revolution. Vergennes drafted a memorandum on foreign affairs for the young king that stressed France’s current position of weakness and the need to rectify the situation. France was becoming marginalized in central and eastern Europe. Britain was a “restless and greedy nation.” Although relations were currently peaceful, it was only due to their American troubles. A war with Britain was only a matter of time. Britain had abdicated their role as arbitrator of the balance of power in Europe and France must elevate herself to fill this role, which would not be welcomed by the British.\textsuperscript{51} Vergennes began building up France’s naval strength. He acted with restraint towards Britain, though – France was not ready for war.


When relations between Spain, France’s ally, and Portugal, Britain’s ally, deteriorated over border disputes in South America, Spain proposed they attack Portugal directly, while Britain was distracted. Louis XVI wrote to Charles III, tactfully refusing to support Spain.

Upon the outbreak of open rebellion among the American colonists, Vergennes acted with caution, not knowing how serious the Americans were about becoming independent, or their ability to maintain a military. However, after receiving a favorable report from an envoy, Vergennes forwarded to the king a justification for aiding the Americans and wrote one of his own, which was debated in the king’s council. Vergennes’s memoir warned that Britain and America might end their war and attack the French West Indies. It argued that it was desirable that the war last at least another year so that Spain and France could rearm, which could be accomplished by aiding the Americans in secret. Most likely Vergennes did not believe that the French Indies were threatened, but sought to portray his proposal as defensive to win the king’s approval. His only warning of the danger of American independence in the document was that it would provoke in Britain a desire for compensation by seizing French colonies.

The king asked his chief minister and advisors for position papers. Vergennes’s second memoir was explicit about the opportunity France faced: cutting America free could weaken Britain and alter the balance of power in favor of France. Using mercantilist assumptions common in France (and also Britain), Vergennes argued that the

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British monopoly of American trade was a great source of her strength, and denying that trade would the harm the British economy and thus their ability to finance war and provide subsidies. America was also a source of military strength for the empire – for example, providing ports and naval stores. The memoir dismissed the fear that the independent colonies would behave aggressively in the New World, because the war would wear them out for quite a while, and it was presumed that they would establish a republic, or many small republics, and republics did not have the spirit of conquest.53

The only resistance to Vergennes’s plan among the ministers was Turgot, the controller-general of finances. Among other matters, Turgot dismissed the British threat to French colonies, and dismissed the economic benefits derived from maintaining colonies in general. The greater threat to France was her fiscal situation – a risky foreign policy could derail the reforms Turgot was attempting to implement. Besides, Britain would be more weakened if America did not win their independence: they would have to forcibly hold onto America, which would further drain their resources.54

In the discussion France’s policy towards the American Revolution, there was no expression of concern that the Revolution could have a demonstration effect on France’s


54 The king did not accept Turgot’s arguments. In fact he soon dismissed Turgot, probably not because of his resistance to preparing for war, but because he was attempting to assert too much power in the cabinet. As Hardman and Price say, the problem the king had with Turgot was not the nature of his foreign policy, but the fact that the finance minister had a foreign policy in the first place. John Hardman and Munro Price, eds., Louis XVI and the Comte De Vergennes: Correspondence 1774-1787, vol. 364, Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1998), 54.
internal politics. Some have detected a resistance from Louis to aid the rebels, and supposed the king was not fond of the implications of aiding rebel subjects. There is some evidence that he was not as enthusiastic as Vergennes. But there appears to be no evidence that the king thought there would be negative repercussions to aiding the rebels and bringing about the existence of a republic. To the extent that he had hesitations, they seem to be based on his ethical qualms about secretly aiding the Americans while France and Britain were at peace. The playwright Beaumarchais had written a letter to the king to get him to overcome his scruples against providing the Americans secret aid: “The national policy which preserves states differs in every respect almost entirely from the civil morality which governs individuals.” At any rate, he noted, England was not due any good faith given its past actions.

The king got over his scruples. In May of 1776, Louis XVI approved one million livres worth of munitions to be shipped to the Americans under the front of a private trading company run by Beaumarchais. Vergennes had previously asked Gramaldi, the Spanish minister of state, whether they would join them in providing secret assistance to the Americans. Grimaldi responded, “It is certainly desirable to us that the revolt of these people keep up, and we ought to want the English, and them, to exhaust themselves

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55 This should not be overemphasized. Hardman and Price, on the basis of newly surfaced letters between the king and Vergennes, note: “There are no signs whatsoever of friction or testiness on the king’s part towards Vergennes over the policy towards England’s American colonies. The most we can find are traces of procrastination on the part of the king.” Ibid., 53.

56 Edward S. Corwin, French Policy and the American Alliance of 1778 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1916), 72-73. The king also initially had a general unwillingness to engage in aggressive policies given France’s financial situation, but this was quickly put aside and he embraced rearmament.
reciprocally." Spain was involved in a conflict with Portugal, and they had a clear interest in keeping Britain occupied so that it did not openly aid its ally. Charles III matched the French funds. Beaumarchais and Silas Deane, an American agent in Paris posing as a trader, set up an arrangement that bought “on credit” supplies often directly from the French arsenals, worth many times the initial funds provided. The French also allowed American merchant ships to port at French possessions, which greatly assisted contraband trade. Meanwhile, the Spanish Governor of Louisiana, Bernardo de Gálvez, provided munitions to the Americans.58

In August of 1776, Vergennes proposed to Spain a war against Britain. The Americans were proving the strength of their resistance (the British had withdrawn from Boston), the French military was in a better state of readiness, and he was now convinced that Britain was behind the Portuguese aggressions against the Spanish. While Vergennes only in the previous year had rejected Spain’s logic for preventative war against Portugal and Spain, he now advocated it to the Spanish. Spain countered that the plan had to include its designs on Portugal. Because this could, in Vergennes’ perception, risk a general European war, he dropped the matter. In addition, the news of Washington’s rout on Long Island brought momentary doubts that the Americans could keep the revolt going.59


59 Bemis, The Diplomacy of the American Revolution, 45; Corwin, French Policy and the American Alliance of 1778, 117; Murphy, Charles Gravier, Comte De Vergennes, French Diplomacy in the Age of Revolution: 1719-1787, 240-41.
In the meantime, France continued to build up their arms and approved another clandestine loan for the Americans. Both France and Spain allowed American privateers to enter their harbors, and increasing pressure from Britain over the issue had Vergennes worried about a British ultimatum. When he again felt out the Spanish position in the summer of 1777, he found the Court was much less receptive. They had reconciled with Portugal, so conflict with Britain was less urgent. The British, long aware of French and Spanish aid to the colonists, were willing to overlook it rather than precipitate open warfare.

In January of 1778, however, France openly allied with the Americans. There is some debate as to what was the catalyst. Traditionally, the American victory at Saratoga was thought to have convinced the French of the American competence. It also prompted a British attempt at reconciliation with the Americans. The American ministers in Paris played up the possibility to cajole the French. Reconciliation in addition brought the threat of a joint attack on the French West Indies. Dull, however, convincingly argues that, while a certain amount of capability was reassuring, what the Americans had also proved by recent losses is that they could not get the job done without overt assistance, especially from the French navy, which was now ready to enter into battle. The issue of reconciliation was not taken seriously, because if the British were willing to offer independence, France’s goals could be achieved without war, and the Americans were not about to accept less than independence. He argues that British-American reconciliation was exaggerated probably to place the Franco-American alliance in a more defensive light for the sake of the king, and to convince Spain to join the alliance.60

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The Spanish, however, for a variety of reasons thought it was still better to let both the British and the Americans bleed. Spain had its own reasons to dislike British. They had been the biggest threat to the Spanish empire, having taken over Florida in 1763, which put them in a prime position to control the Gulf of Mexico, and had infiltrated the Central American coast. British contraband trade to the colonies was also a major threat to the closed Spanish imperial trading system. In Europe, they controlled former Spanish territories such as Gibraltar and the Minorca. But most importantly, Portugal, its enemy next door and across the ocean, was supported by Britain. Spain suspected that the British were encouraging their ally’s belligerence in South America, though the British went out of their way to convince them otherwise. Spain’s initially aggressive policies towards England, and the aid rendered to the United States, was derivative of their conflict with Portugal.

But since its dispute with Portugal was settled, Spain’s primary rationale for conflict with Britain had disappeared and its interest in intervening in the American revolt was much less clear. In terms of colonial matters, an independent America would possibly be just as aggressive as the British, although the French tried to convince them that they would be a weak confederation of republics, consumed with their own divisions. Spain considered that one benefit of an independent America would be a weakened Britain. Their aid can be thought of as a “divide and rule” strategy like they

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practiced on their imperial subjects. The Spanish minister in Paris, Aranda, had from the beginning advocated an open alliance with America to cut down the English. But an independent United States would also set a dangerous precedent for Spain’s own colonial empire. This concern was expressed from the initial rejection of Aranda’s proposal to ally with the United States to the end of the conflict, by all the major figures in Spanish statecraft. After it made peace with Portugal in 1777, Spain decided that the negatives of intervention in the American war outweighed the positives; it refused to join the French in their alliance with the United States, and even discontinued its secret aid to the Americans.

63 Aranda would later supposedly pen a memoir in 1783 warning about the dangers of the United States, proposing far reaching colonial reform, and claiming to have opposed aid by France and Spain to the United States. There are doubts about the authenticity of the memoir, but if it is authentic, Aranda is misrepresenting his previous position. See Aurthur P. Whitaker, "The Pseudo-Aranda Memoir of 1783," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 17, no. 3 (1937): 295; Almon R. Wright, "The Aranda Memorial: Genuine or Forged?", *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 18, no. 4 (1938); Liss, *Atlantic Empires: The Network of Trade and Revolution, 1713-1826*, 270-71. On Aranda’s initial proposal to ally with the United States, see Chávez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States: An Intrinsic Gift*, 56-57.


The French pursued their alliance with the United States anyway. They engaged in a calculated risk – attempting to knock the British out of the war with one campaign. When this did not work, they desperately needed Spain and her ships of the line to join the fight. Spain was not about to do any favors for France, having felt it had again been left to fend for itself in the recent war with Portugal. Minister of State Floridablanca in particular was insistent that France not take advantage of the Family Compact for purely French interests. “We do not wish to commit Spain,” he told Vergennes, “to commit Spain to entering the war merely in order to frighten England into making a peace from which nothing but the independence of the United States would be obtained.” Spain’s attitude towards American independence ranged from ambiguity to hostility; it certainly was not worth getting involved in a war to bring about.

But their ally, France, was committed to American independence, and if they were going to be cajoled into a war, at least they should get something out of it. They proceeded to skillfully bargain, under the guise of mediation, with the British and French for the price of their neutrality. Britain was not willing to pay the price of Gibraltar for Spanish neutrality, so they turned to France. Floridablanca in late 1778 and early 1779

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66 It is somewhat puzzling that the French decided to strike out on their own when the king had long been insistent that action in regard to the Americans be only taken in concert with Spain. Hardman and Price speculate that not just the timing of the alliance, but the final factor that convinced the king to make an alliance was driven by the king’s desire for a pretext not to support their ally Austria in the conflict over Bavarian succession. Hardman and Price, Louis XVI and the Comte De Vergennes: Correspondence 1774-1787, 65, 72.

proposed an invasion of England: the war would end quickly and the theatre of war would be Europe, which would help them preserve their colonies, and they could exchange London or some other city for Gibraltar. Vergennes thought that this plan would probably rope in other powers, and the Spanish plan to leave only Canada for England in the Americas would continue the cycle of revenge. France should tie up English forces with the threat of invasion while they secured American independence – France’s first priority – through fighting in the New World. Vergennes suggested Spain should get Gibraltar, Mobile and Pensacola, and expel English from Hondouras. Spain was to recognize the United States the day she entered the war. Floridablanca insisted on fighting until Gibraltar was secure, added Minorica, all of Florida, and said it would not acknowledge American independence. The king, “fearful of the ‘example he would give to his own possessions,’ would ‘not recognize the independence of the United States until the English themselves would be forced to do so by a treaty of peace.” Because France was in desperate need of Spanish resources, Vergennes capitulated on all demands. Thus Spain entered the war on the side of France, although not formally allied with the United States.

Spain worked not only to secure their possessions, but to make sure that the United States was contained. Spain re-conquered Florida and sent expeditions up the Mississippi to lay claims as far as the Ohio Valley. If they could control the Mississippi, they could limit Americans mostly to the Atlantic seaboard – any settlement across the mountains would be limited to a small population of subsistence farmers if they could not get their

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goods to market. Floridablanca at one point even proposed to Vergennes that America be a feudal dependency of England – they could be reduced to a “sort of anarchy which would render them absolutely nothing.”\textsuperscript{70} The Americans, at one point desperate to obtain an alliance with Spain, sent John Jay with the instructions to part with the Mississippi if necessary. The Spanish rejected the proposal because they thought they could hold on to the Mississippi anyway. Their fortunes changed when Cornwallis surrendered in Yorktown. France, financially depleted, wanted the war to end, and hoped it could get Spain to abandon Gibraltar if France supported Spain’s claims to the Mississippi and Ohio valleys, which the Americans had little claim over. The Americans, getting suspicious of a deal between France and Britain, made their own deal with Britain, and France and Spain eventually conceded.

To what extent then was there among French statesmen a fear of a spillover effect of the American Revolution, and did this have any impact on French policy toward the Revolution? Did it seem odd to contemporaries that the oldest monarchy in Europe was playing a pivotal role in bringing about the republic’s existence? This sentiment was not unknown at the time. When Vergennes asked diplomat Jean Louis Favier to write a legal justification of the alliance the king had just made with the Americans, Favier instead questioned the wisdom of the alliance: “Would it be proper to put into the mouth of a King of France or his minister paradoxical assertions concerning \textit{natural liberty}, \textit{inalienable and inadmissible rights of the people and its inherent sovereignty}, which have not ceased to be repeated, commented, ransacked, and compiled for two centuries,

from François Hottoman’s *Vindiciæ contra tyrannos* to J.J. Rousseau’s *Contract social*? Would it be prudent even? … If the King, if the government, appeared to profess such maxims, would we ourselves be exactly safe from their application and from their being turned against us?”71 Some of the radical philosophe and conservatives expressed similar reasoning.72

But the extent to which the government exhibited these concerns was an effort to tone the antimonarchical rhetoric down. The king himself noted in the margin of a memorandum by Vergennes justifying the French government’s involvement in the American Revolution, in which he had asserted that France had only recognized a people already free, “This observation could authorize... England to openly help the malcontents


72 Even before the Revolution began, Diderot expressed surprise that a translation of John Dickenson’s *Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania* would appear in France: “Because Dickenson was writing for Americans they did not conceive that his Letters were addressed to all men… They allow us to read things like this, and they are amazed to find us ten years later different men. Do they not realize how easily noble souls must drink of these principles and become intoxicated by them?” Echeverria, *Mirage in the West: A History of the French Image of American Society to 1815*, 35. Liguet, a conservative, expressed the same sentiments: “In calling the English Crown to account, it is the abuses of all monarchies that they are attacking… The blind hope of being able perhaps to imitate them some day and even of being aided by them in breaking our own chains, this is what wins the insurgents so many friends among us.” Fäy, *The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America: A Study of Moral and Intellectual Relations between France and the United States at the End of the Eighteenth Century*, 94.
so often agitated in Brittany, our Protestants, and all the French opposing royal authority."73 This concern, however, did not have an effect on French policy.

Some historians have even maintained that the France-American alliance was at least in part the result of a movement in France in favor of liberty and the king’s desire to court public opinion, but this has been thoroughly discredited.74 The assertion that France aided the American cause because of French fear of a British or perhaps joint American-British attack on French colonies has somewhat more merit. It certainly was stated as a concern in both the public and private ruminations over French policy. In fact, the only evidence that Vergennes feared a contagion effect from supporting American independence was the model it would serve as an anticolonial revolt to French colonies in the New World.75 But if this was a genuine concern of Vergennes, it was not serious

73 Corwin, French Policy and the American Alliance of 1778, 8, my translation.


75 In 1775, Vergennes had written to the French ambassador in London that, “Far from seeking to profit by the embarrassment in which England finds herself on account of affairs in America, we should rather desire to extricate her. The spirit of revolt, in whatever spot it breaks out, is always of dangerous precedent; it is with moral as with physical diseases, both may become contagious. This consideration should induce us to
enough to prevent him from securing American independence. A consensus has emerged that the French intervened in the American Revolution mainly to recover, at the expense of Britain, their international position – in other words, to restore the balance of power. Any other negative consequences were brushed aside.

Spain probably cared even less than the French that the Americans were establishing a republic, but the example it set as an anti-colonial revolt was a much bigger issue. It certainly inspired caution, although it is too much to assert that “the possibility that the spirit of independence might spread to her American possessions was at all times the prime consideration which determined Spain’s policy in America.” After all, Spain did not have to give secret aid to the Americans, and it could have sat back and watched take care that the spirit of independence, which is causing so terrible an explosion in North America, have no power to communicate itself to points interesting to us in this hemisphere.” M. Guizot and Madame Guizot de Witt, The History of France from the Earliest of Times to 1848, trans. Robert Black, vol. 5 (Boston, MA: Aldine Book Publishing Co., n.d.), 450. Slightly different translations of the same document are in George Bancroft, History of the United States from the Discovery of the American Continent, vol. VII (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1864), 351-53; Claude Manceron, The French Revolution, Volume II: The Wind from America, trans. Nancy Amphoux (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knoph, 1978), 153. It is not clear how seriously this statement should be taken, given his policy was to profit from the embarrassment of England.

76 This is the basic position of the leading scholars on the issue: Corwin, French Policy and the American Alliance of 1778; Bemis, The Diplomacy of the American Revolution; Dull, The French Navy and American Independence: A Study of Arms and Diplomacy, 1774-1787; Dull, A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution; Murphy, Charles Gravier, Comte De Vergennes, French Diplomacy in the Age of Revolution: 1719-1787.

its ally fail to secure American independence. But Spain had its own reasons to oppose the British. And once the British and the French were courting Spain, they had significant carrots, especially Gibraltar, dangled before them, as well as the opportunity to constrain a future American state. They took a calculated risk, and although they achieved some success, such as capturing Florida and Minorica, they did not get Gibraltar, or contain the United States, owing to the generous British terms.

What is curious is the degree to which Spanish leaders felt that the problem of American independence would be mitigated by the strategy of not openly backing the rebels. Gramaldi had told Aranda that “The rights of all sovereigns to their respective territories ought to be regarded as sacred, and the example of a rebellion is too dangerous to allow of His Majesty’s wishing to assist it openly.”78 The king was insistent that there be no recognition of the United States. If the United States became independent, at least they would not acknowledge the Spanish role in bringing that about, which would to some extent delegitimize the king’s rule.79

*The Eastern Powers and the American Revolution*

At the very outset of the American Revolution, in the fall of 1775, Catherine II was forced to take a position. Britain requested Russian troops to help suppress the rebellion, but it was rebuffed. Catherine responded to George III that her troops could


79 Anthony Hull notes that a formal alliance “would have mocked Charles’s own imperial position,” but covert aid had the effect of “preserving the dignity of a monarch while at the same time delivering heavy blows against the common enemy.” Anthony H. Hull, *Charles III and the Revival of Spain* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1980), 252.
use a rest, having just concluded a war with the Turks and suppressed the Pugachev revolt. She also had no desire to be the only power to intervene, which could prompt other powers to jump in and enmesh her in a larger conflict. Privately, she thought that George had provoked a useless conflict and that American independence was inevitable. Catherine and her foreign minister, Nikita Panin, did not necessarily see the humbling of Britain as a bad thing.\textsuperscript{80}

Britain and Russia were regarded as having similar interests and enemies, and there were attempts by both sides in the early 1770s to draw up a formal alliance, but relations had notably cooled since Britain had rebuffed Russia’s efforts to form an alliance in 1773.\textsuperscript{81} Russia had no desire to get bogged down in the American revolt, especially as the Bourbon powers got involved, and it rejected a British proposal for an alliance in 1778. Catherine and Panin were irritated at the British policy of detaining neutral ships. Catherine wanted to free Russian foreign trade from its dependence on the British merchant navy and make use of the heightened demand for Russian goods, primarily naval stores, during a maritime war. She needed other nations to have access to Russian ports. In 1780, Catherine issued a declaration of “Armed Neutrality,” which outlined principles to govern neutral trade, and was joined by Sweden and Denmark, Prussia, Austria, the United Provinces, and Portugal.

\textsuperscript{80} Bolkhovitinov, The Beginnings of Russian-American Relations, 1775-1815, 5-6; Nikolai N. Bolkhovitinov, Russia and the American Revolution, trans. C. Jay Smith (Tallahassee, FL: The Diplomatic Press, 1976), 6-12; Scott, British Foreign Policy in the Age of the American Revolution, 217-20.

\textsuperscript{81} Scott, British Foreign Policy in the Age of the American Revolution, 156-59, 195-97.
The League of Armed Neutrality favored the Americans. The Continental Congress thought they spied an opening and sent Massachusetts politician Francis Dana to Russia to negotiate recognition and a treaty of commerce. Instead, he sat in his hotel room and was ignored for two years. Russia looked after its own interest, which only incidentally benefited the Americans. Panin wanted to mediate a peace deal that would secure American independence, which he thought would be in Russia’s commercial interest. He was also concerned that a prolonged war might affect the Northern System he had devised, especially if the war spread to the rest of Europe. Catherine was less concerned about a prolonged conflict. When, in 1779, Britain suggested Catherine as a mediator of the conflict, she declined, indicating that Britain had not been sufficiently humbled. She proposed mediation in concert with the Austrians the following year, but both sides eventually rejected this. In truth, by 1780, Catherine had no interest in a settlement. Panin had been marginalized, and because of her new aggressive plan – the “Greek Project”, expelling the Turks from Europe – she did not want the war to end. She wanted the other powers occupied, and certainly did not want to provoke the British by associating with the Americans.

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82 The key work on the subject is Isabel de Madariaga, *Britain, Russia, and the Armed Neutrality of 1780* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1962). She argues that it played a bigger role in the diplomacy of the era than supposed – frustrating British efforts to find allies on the continent (466).


84 Ibid.
Soviet historians portrayed Catherine was as against the American Revolution because of the political ideals it represented. But the evidence does not bear this out. An historian writing before the Russian Revolution outlined well her position: “Catherine neither liked nor disliked the Americans. She probably knew none of them personally, and carried little about their theories of government. She took an interest in the American Revolution because it affected English and European politics.” Catherine compared the American war for independence to that of the Dutch against the Spanish and, occurring only a few years earlier, the Corsicans against the French. She had intervened in the latter to thwart French expansion into the Mediterranean. But she did not have similar interests in opposing the British. Foreign Minister Panin did think that revolting colonists set a dangerous precedent for those who had colonies in the New World, but Russia was not considered in this category. At one point he did tell the British

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85 For example, a Soviet scholar stated: “To think that Catherine II could actually sympathize with the American republicans, or fail to comprehend the social and political significance of the revolution across the ocean would be to underestimate her as one of the most educated and far-sighted representatives of the ‘old regime’ in Europe.” Quoted in David M. Griffiths, "Soviet Views of Early Russian-American Relations," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 116, no. 2 (1972): 155. Griffiths’ article provides a historiographic review and critique of the role of Marxism in distorting US-Russian Relations in this period.


88 Russia did have a few trading posts in Alaska at the time, but this was not an object of concern.
representative that Catherine could be trusted as a mediator to watch over Britain’s interests because “she disapproved of French recognition of the Americans as a blow to monarchical solidarity.”  

89 But the British rightly did not think she was moved by this sentiment.  

89 Madariaga, Britain, Russia, and the Armed Neutrality of 1780, 99.

80 They emphasized to the Russians how America would be an economic competitor and that it was in Russia’s interest that Britain remained strong. Regarding Panin, Griffiths notes, “Never in his talks with various diplomatic representatives did Panin evince any sort of legitimist sentiment.” Griffiths, “Nikita Panin, Russian Diplomacy, and the American Revolution,” 4.

81 Henry M. Adams, Prussian-American Relations, 1775-1871 (Cleveland, OH: The Press of Western Reserve University, 1960), 5 ft. 5.

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81 Henry M. Adams, Prussian-American Relations, 1775-1871 (Cleveland, OH: The Press of Western Reserve University, 1960), 5 ft. 5.
was not ripe. As Frederick’s foreign minister told the American representative, “I can assure you, sir, that the king is very much disposed to please your constituents; but, on the other hand, his majesty in the present circumstances, as you well know, cannot embroil himself with the court of London.” Prussia at this point was only days away from war with Austria over its attempt to control Bavaria. But even in times when there was not an acute crisis, Frederick could not afford to antagonize the British out of fear that they would court the Austrians, and because of the substantial trade connections between Prussia and Britain.

Prussia’s neutrality on the whole was not unfavorable for the Americans – Frederick sent clear signals to the French that he would not side with Britain to encourage France’s pro-American policy. But Frederick’s policy was not driven by sympathy for the American colonists, or by what he thought of the American form of government. Though he closely followed the American crisis, he took “no note whatsoever of the domestic development of America.” He was interested in the revolt insofar as how it

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93 Dippel makes the case that commercial motives were important, in addition to those of “classical diplomacy.” He also argues that the instance of Frederick refusing to allow the transport through Prussia of German mercenaries bound for America has been overblown as pro-American. It was only a “pinprick” in response to a variety of British policies that was subsequently reversed. Horst Dippel, "Prussia’s English Policy after the Seven Year's War," *Central European History* 4, no. 3 (1971): 205, passim.


affected international politics, and how Prussia could profit. He was probably aware of American political ideals, but he “apparently did not attribute to these ideals a direct political meaning as far as Germany was concerned.”

Of all great powers, Austria was least involved in the diplomacy of the American Revolution, and has thus garnered little scholarly attention. The Revolution was on the periphery of the foreign policy concerns of Maria Theresa, her son, Joseph II, the coregent until Maria’s death in 1780, and Kaunitz, the longstanding State Chancellor. The Austrian court kept relatively well abreast of the events in America. The court physician, Jan Ingenhousz, was a personal friend of Benjamin Franklin’s and was reporting on the situation for the court. Austrian policy was not warm to the American cause. Arthur Lee, attempting in 1777 to gain recognition for the American rebels while in Vienna, could not even get an audience with the Court. “There is a cold tranquility here that bodes us no good”, he reported. “It is not possible to quicken this German indifference.” A year later his brother William met the same fate. Austria never recognized the Americans and forbade the Austrian Netherlands from trading with the rebels. Their most significant foray into the conflict was their mediation proposals,

96 Ibid.


98 Wharton, The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States, 2, 327.

99 Ibid., 714.
which were rebuffed and then bypassed when the belligerents chose direct negotiations.\textsuperscript{100}

Why were the Austrians unsympathetic to the American cause? One explanation is that the Austrians feared that the Americans could be a dangerous model. While traveling in France in 1777, Joseph II was supposedly asked his opinion of the American revolt and responded, “My trade is to be a royalist.”\textsuperscript{101} Horst Dippel doubts the authenticity of this statement, noting that “this kind of interpretation of the American Revolution was much more characteristic of the period of the French Revolution,” and not surprisingly the remark is handed down from the 1790s. He concludes that Joseph II “was not cognizant of the revolutionary character of American ideas and of their antimonarchichal trend.”\textsuperscript{102} However, the British ambassador in Vienna reported that Joseph told him he was “extremely concerned for the difficulties which embarrass the King’s government. The cause in which England is engaged, is the cause of all

\textsuperscript{100} For the Austrian mediation efforts, see Morris, \textit{The Peacemakers: The Great Powers and American Independence}, 153-58, 173-90. There was apparently only one advocate for the American Revolution in a senior governmental position, Viennese count Karl con Zinzendorf. See Dippel, \textit{Germany and the American Revolution, 1770-1800: A Sociohistorical Investigation of Late Eighteenth-Century Political Thinking}, 225.

\textsuperscript{101} See Derek Edward Dawson Beales, \textit{Joseph II: In the Shadow of Maria Theresa, 1741-1780}, vol. 1 (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 385. Beales, a leading biographer of Joseph, sees this as evidence of his larger point, that Joseph II’s progressiveness had its limitations – the extent to which he supported free thinking and constitutionalism has been greatly exaggerated in English and French works.

\textsuperscript{102} Dippel, \textit{Germany and the American Revolution, 1770-1800: A Sociohistorical Investigation of Late Eighteenth-Century Political Thinking}, 62-63.
sovereigns, who have a joint interest in the maintenance of due subordination and obedience to law, in all the surrounding monarchies.”

These remarks seem to indicate that there was an ideological antipathy toward the Americans, at least from Joseph. But there is no evidence that this sentiment was the decisive factor affecting Austrian policy towards the Americans. The predominant influence seems to have been Austria’s grand strategy and how England fit into that scheme. Ever since the “Diplomatic Revolution” orchestrated by Kaunitz in 1756, Austria was allied with its former enemy, France, to aid them against the Prussians, who had become their primary enemy. This prohibited an outright alliance with England, but the Austrians and English remained on good relations. H. M. Scott argues that there were two reasons behind Kaunitz’s cultivation of English friendship: prevention against a British-Prussian rapprochement, and an insurance policy to retain the possibility of a British alliance should the French alliance collapse. Both Prussia and Austria then had a similar approach – because of their mutual antipathy they felt there were strong incentives for keeping up cordial relations with Britain (and thus, a strict neutrality vis-à-vis the American situation) so that it did not side with their rival.

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104 Scott, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of the American Revolution*, 86.
The American Revolution and the Ancien Régime

In 1854, Leopold Von Ranke claimed that the American Revolution was more important all earlier revolutions because it was a complete turnover in principles. But did contemporaries recognize this? More specifically, did they see the revolution as a potential threat from spillover effects, and did that affect their foreign policy? Some have said that it did. The historian Lawrence Kaplan, for example, claims that the French alliance with the United States was a dangerous departure from typical eighteenth-century statecraft. Prussia, Russia, and Spain “appreciated the dangers to all monarchies in the success of the American experiment.” He is wrong on both counts.

Concerning the claim that the American Revolution was regarded as a danger to monarchies, my theory asserted that the presence of a preexisting revolutionary movement would trigger fears of spillover effects, which would in turn prompt patterns of hostility toward revolutions and cooperation among those states which had similar movements. There was no significant revolutionary opposition movement and likewise there was little or no fear of the spillover effect. That fear was expressed in France, the country that had the strongest antimonarchical sentiment, but this fear was still peripheral among policy makers. Consequently, the American Revolution did not affect any change in patterns of cooperation and conflict; the international reaction to it, rather, is explained by preexisting patterns of conflict and cooperation. Thus, the reactions of France, Russia, Prussia, Austria, and to some extent Spain is a negative confirmation of the theory.

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105 Dippel, *Germany and the American Revolution, 1770-1800: A Sociohistorical Investigation of Late Eighteenth-Century Political Thinking*, x.

My theory, however, only imperfectly captures the matter of America having a negative demonstration effect on other colonies in the Americas. As we have seen, concern was voiced in France but especially in Spain on this matter. I assessed that there was no significant revolutionary movement in Spain itself, and there was no concern among Spanish policymakers regarding the fact that America was going to be a republic, either because republican principles would prove contagious in Spain or the Empire. Whether there was a significant revolutionary anti-colonial movement in the Spanish Empire is somewhat ambiguous. The literature on the subject indicates that there was not; the rebellions were mostly protests within the framework of Spanish Empire. But this point can be contested. However, the noted fear by Spanish officials of a contagion effect from the American Revolution on the Spanish Empire seems more driven by the structural weakness of the Empire – how overextended Spain was – rather than whether significant revolutionary groups already existed. Officials thought more preemptively, wanting to prevent these groups from developing in the first place, given the weakness of the Empire. The Intendant of Venezuela, who was witness to one of the biggest rebellions in Spanish America, said in 1781 that if Britain could not subdue its relatively close colonies, “What prudent human would not fear greatly an equal tragedy in the astonishingly extended dominions of Spain in these Indies?” ¹⁰⁷ These spillover fears, however, did not have a decisive effect on Spanish foreign policy. Spain’s rivalry with Portugal, and then their desire to for a variety of prizes once their ally was committed to the American cause, dominated their concerns. In the end, Spain helped ensure American independence. Their concession was that they would not openly recognize America.

¹⁰⁷ Liss, Atlantic Empires: The Network of Trade and Revolution, 1713-1826, 128.
Regarding Kaplan’s claim that the French response to the American Revolution was a departure from eighteenth century diplomacy, this also is not the case. The other powers’ policies were not driven by such ideological concerns. The great powers’ response to the Dutch Patriot Revolt provides further data points to show that France’s intervention was not a departure from eighteenth century statecraft – it exemplified the statecraft of the ancien régime.

**International Relations prior to the Dutch Patriot Revolt**

To assess whether the Patriot Revolt affected patterns of international politics, I first examine the relations amongst the Great Powers and with the Dutch Republic prior to the Patriot Revolt.

*Relations amongst the Great Powers*

As discussed, the American Revolution did not affect any change in patterns of conflict and cooperation among the great powers, although the French were now vindicated and the British seemed more isolated from the Continent than ever, and also in a state of decline. A big change on the Continent was that, with Maria Theresa’s death in 1780, Joseph II emerged as sole ruler of Austria. Prussia, as well as France, worried about the consequences, as it was widely assumed that he would engage in a more aggressive policy. Relations between France and Austria were strained because Joseph rightly believed the French were trying to use the alliance to restrain him, but they remained allies for the simple reason that Joseph could not afford a rupture, which would inevitably bring about an alliance between Prussia and France. Joseph had allied with
Catherine in order to get Russian support for Austrian policies in Germany and perhaps the Balkans, and to slowly wean Russia from Prussia. Russia, on the other hand, simply wanted Austrian support against the Ottomans. The British, set back by the American loss, were trying to gain allies, sounding out Russia and Austria.

*Relations between the Great Powers and the United Provinces*

The Republic’s general policy in the eighteenth century, especially after the threat of France receded, was to steer clear of the rival European power blocks and focus on its role as a commercial and communications center, although with a tilt towards Britain. Britain traditionally regarded the United Provinces as their sphere of influence – they had a commercial, security, and an imperial interest in preventing the Republic from coming over the sway of other powers, particularly France. Dutch neutrality in the Seven Years War had angered Britain when Dutch trade had aided France, but conflict was avoided. This was not to be the case in the next round of conflict.

*International Relations of the Patriot Revolt*

Did the Patriot Revolt incite fears of contagion? Did this factor have any impact on policies toward the Dutch Republic or relations between the Powers? I now investigate the international response to the Patriot Revolution.

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108 For a brief overview of Dutch foreign policy for the period, see Alice Clare Carter, *Neutrality or Commitment: The Evolution of Dutch Foreign Policy, 1667-1795* (London, UK: Edward Arnold, 1975), 72-97. For the Dutch Republic and the Seven Years War, see Alice Clare Carter, *The Dutch Republic in Europe in the Seven Years War* (London, UK: Macmillian, 1971).
The Dutch involvement in the War for American Independence was both a cause and consequence of the increasing division internally, as the pro-British stadholder and the merchant oligarchs diverged on matters of internal and foreign policy. The traditional consensus among historians has been that Britain went to war against its traditional ally over neutral rights during the War for American Independence.\footnote{See the citations in H. M. Scott, "Sir Joseph Yorke, Dutch Politics and the Origins of the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War," \textit{The Historical Journal} 31, no. 3 (1988): 572, ft. 4.} The British had been annoyed with Dutch trade with the Americans, but were especially concerned that the Dutch not supply France with Baltic naval stores when the French allied with the Americans. When the Dutch were about to join Russia’s newly created League of Armed Neutrality in 1780, the British were eager to declare war before the Republic could call on the Russians for support. They found a convenient pretext when an American agent was captured with a treaty between the city of Amsterdam and the Americans. H. M. Scott, however, uncovered evidence to suggest that, perhaps even more important than neutral rights, the British declared war on the Dutch as a means to shoring up support for the stadholder against the regents. War had after all been a means of strengthening the stadholder against the Regents in 1672 and 1747.\footnote{Ibid., especially 587. Of course, the issue of neutral rights and the position of the stadholder was related. The British assessed that the stadholder’s party only had the upper hand in three of the seven provinces, and would therefore be unable to prevent the Dutch accession to the League of Neutrality. The Dutch position on neutral rights was a symptom of the weakening of the stadholder and, in British eyes, the Republic’s deviance from its proper role as a client state.} This obviously was a miscalculation, as the war only expanded opposition towards the stadholder.
The French had welcomed the growth of opposition toward the pro-British stadholder as well as Dutch neutrality. The Patriots had reached out to the French, but France did not want the responsibility of more allies to defend while they were involved in the American conflict. The Dutch were more valuable to them as trading neutrals. They urged the Republic to join the League of Armed Neutrality. But even by 1783, when the Patriots had scored major victories against the stadholder and the American conflict was over, the French had remained aloof. The Patriots again the following year reached out to the French for an alliance.

The potential alliance held out several advantages for France. They would wrest the state from the British sphere of influence, which would increase their sway over the English Channel. Dutch overseas colonies, especially the Cape of Good Hope, could allow action against British India. The Dutch also had a sizable navy, although the French had not been impressed with its military contribution in the American war. And a commercial alliance would perhaps help the struggling French economy. Vergennes at one point wrote the king that, “Of all the alliances, that with the [Dutch] Republic is the most advantageous and the least subject to drawbacks.”

However, Vergennes was initially hesitant to a commitment beyond a commercial alliance. This was not, however, due to concerns that the Patriots might set a negative example for France. One reason for pause was that he was aware he would be taking the

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side of one faction in a dispute. And Frederick of Prussia might oppose that faction, given that the stadholder’s wife was his niece. But also, he feared that the alliance was too much of an affront to Britain. There was an ambiguity in Vergennes’ policy toward the British during this period that one might say, following Paul Schroeder’s thesis, represented the instability caused by the diplomatic rules of ancien régime diplomacy.113 On the one hand, Vergennes desired stability and the status quo. His policy toward the American conflict can be defended on these grounds as an attempt to restore the balance between France and Britain. On the other hand, there was an opportunistic temptation to take advantage of Britain while they were weak.114 Vergennes at first moved cautiously on the Dutch matter, fearing that kicking the British while they were down might provoke

113 Schroeder’s thesis that the system of rules under the ancien régime dictated aggressive behavior that was ultimately unsustainable is developed in Paul Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763–1848* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994).

114 Dull makes the strongest case for the defensive inclination of Vergennes’ policies, and notes that after the balance of power was corrected following American independence, Vergennes told Louis that “the power of France should be used to not to gain extra territory, but rather to maintain the public order of Europe and to prevent the destruction of the different powers with form the equilibrium of Europe.” Dull, *The French Navy and American Independence: A Study of Arms and Diplomacy, 1774-1787*, 340. Britain perhaps could share France’s goal of restraining the predatory eastern powers. Vergennes pursued a trade treaty with Britain in large part as a means to Anglo-French reconciliation. Murphy, *Charles Gravier, Comte De Vergennes, French Diplomacy in the Age of Revolution: 1719-1787*, 433. On the other hand, Vergennes’ willingness to consider aggressive policies in the Netherlands and in India put into doubt his conciliatory policies. See Jeremy J. Whiteman, *Reform, Revolution and French Global Policy, 1787-1791* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 52; Hardman and Price, *Louis XVI and the Comte De Vergennes: Correspondence 1774-1787*, 87-88; Price, "The Dutch Affair and the Fall of the Ancien Régime, 1784-1787," 895.
further recriminations when he above all desired stability. Nevertheless, the Patriots were demanding a general alliance, and many in the French council were actively pressing the matter. Vergennes went along, and even acted as though he was in favor of aiding the Patriots all along, probably because he did not want to put up a fight given his weakened position in the court.115

Before the alliance could be signed, though, France had the complication of their Austrian allies to deal with. The Dutch Republic was a neighbor of the Austrian controlled Netherlands (roughly modern Belgium). Joseph II used the Dutch embroilment in conflict with the British to push his demands on the Republic now that the Dutch were isolated.116 Joseph abrogated the “Barrier Treaties” which had allowed Dutch garrisons on the Austrian Netherlands, and had long been a source of irritation. He also wanted to open up the river Scheldt. The river passed Antwerp in the Austrian Netherlands and through Dutch territory to the sea. The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 had closed it for navigation, which had had a deleterious effect of the trade of Antwerp. Joseph’s threats, however, faced stiff resistance from the Patriots. When he set a ship through, the Dutch fired on it, and begin flooding Belgium. Joseph’s frustration with “these insolent cheese-mongers” was growing.117 He was getting encouragement from


116 When allied with the Dutch, the British had been obligated by treaty to aid them if they were attacked.

the British, who sought out the Austrians for an alliance, while the Prussians were encouraging the Dutch to remain firm. The French were not pleased that war was about to break out between an ally and a potential ally. They regarded the crisis as primarily the result of Joseph’s “torrent of ambition.” The king’s cabinet all agreed to support the Dutch against Austria – there was resentment that Joseph was possibly deliberately sabotaging the alliance with the Dutch; moreover it was France’s interests to preserve the current system and support the small powers.

Facing French disapproval of opening up the Scheldt, Joseph raised not for the first time the possibility of trading the Austrian Netherlands for Bavaria, which was probably his primary goal all along. Louis XVI responded that this would “derange” the balance of power. The French had no desire to destroy the balance between Austria and Prussia, and without the Austrian Netherlands Joseph would be less dependent on France for his security. In addition to French opposition, Frederick

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118 Cited in Murphy, Charles Gravier, Comte De Vergennes, French Diplomacy in the Age of Revolution: 1719-1787, 408.

119 If he opened the Scheldt, it would make the Austrian Netherlands “a more desirable object of exchange” and it would draw attention to Joseph’s desire to develop the Netherlands and away from the Bavarian exchange. Munro Price, Preserving the Monarchy: The Comte De Vergennes, 1774-1787 (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 190; Derek Beales, Joseph II: Against the World, 1780-1790, vol. 2 (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 390.

120 Murphy, Charles Gravier, Comte De Vergennes, French Diplomacy in the Age of Revolution: 1719-1787, 412.
organized a league of German princes, the Fürstenbund, to oppose the exchange.\textsuperscript{121} Given the difficulties, Joseph backed down and France brokered a settlement that granted Joseph a few secondary demands. Despite the vigorous protests of Marie Antoinette, the French queen who was also Joseph’s sister, Louis XVI had essentially abandoned Austria.\textsuperscript{122} Joseph recognized that his alliance with France was more of a means by which France contained him, but dared not break with the French, even though Britain was courting him – as many other contemporaries did, he overestimated French strength and British weakness. A peace treaty between the Emperor and the United Provinces was signed in France on November 9\textsuperscript{th}, 1785. The next day, an alliance was struck between France and the Dutch Republic.

\textit{The British and Prussian Reaction}

With the Austrian problem out of the way and the alliance with the Dutch Republic and France concluded, the British policy was at a low. The seasoned, enterprising, ambassador to The Hague, Sir James Harris, had been requesting funds to organize a pro-English, pro-stadholder party. Prime Minister Pitt’s cabinet’s initial

\textsuperscript{121} The British king, George III, as possessor of Hanover, joined the Fürstenbund, which complicated potential rapprochement between Britain and Austria. Jeremy Black, \textit{British Foreign Policy in an Age of Revolutions, 1783-1793} (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 93-98.

\textsuperscript{122} Vergennes in particular was a target of her wrath. “Always remember, Monsieur”, the Queen supposedly said to Vergennes, “that the Emperor is my brother.” Vergennes is said to respond, “But I recall, above all else, that Monseigneur le Dauphin is your son.” As Murphy says, the exchange illustrates well their positions, even if it is apocryphal. Murphy, \textit{Charles Gravier, Comte De Vergennes, French Diplomacy in the Age of Revolution: 1719-1787}, 416.
response was that nothing could be done to reverse the loss, but they began to provide Harris with funds in the hope that events would eventually work to their favor. The funds through 1786, however, were still modest – they were considerably outspent by the French funding of the Patriots.

There were several obstacles Britain faced in winning back the United Provinces. First of all, the stadholder, William V, was well known as a weak figure. Harris had attempted to delicately get around the problem by dealing with his wife, the Princess of Orange, who was Frederick the Great’s niece. When Harris met with her in July of 1785, he had suggested that if Britain and Prussia took joint action, they could restore the


\[125\] See, for example the descriptions provided by Cobban, ibid., 22-24. Frederick referred to him as “my booby of a nephew” and Britain doubted his resolution. Harris reported that the stadholder had talked of selling his estates and retiring to Germany, “a resolution”, he said, “which, if he ever carries it into execution, will compleat [sic] his character.” A. W. Ward and G. P. Gooch, eds., *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1919: Vol 1: 1783-1815* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1922), 161. He complained that if the Prince would only lift a finger three quarters of the county would follow him. Cobban, *Ambassadors and Secret Agents: The Diplomacy of the First Earl of Malmesbury at the Hague*, 59.
stadholder. But the Princess replied that this was not possible – the influence of France was too strong. She added this was also the view of her uncle.126

Frederick had told his niece that the stadholder would have to concede to the Patriots’ demands. He was relatively unconcerned with the position of the stadholder, as long as he was allowed to hold some honorific title.127 What drove his policy toward the United Provinces was not his familial relation with the Princess, but Prussia’s foreign policy agenda. There were two factions in the Prussian court, a pro-French and a pro-British, respectively represented by Frederick’s two secretaries of state: Finckenstein and Herzberg. Frederick, who firmly controlled policy, was in the French camp. He viewed the British as a sinking ship and not really a Continental power. In the spring of 1785 the British had sounded out Frederick on a proposal that they would back him in the Bavarian matter if he would help him with the Dutch Republic, but he demurred. An Anglo-Prussian alliance would be no match against the alliance of France, Spain, Austria and Russia, he said, and the republic was under France’s firm control.128 Frederick’s most important foreign policy aim was resisting Austria, and this was better accomplished via an alignment with France.

The British recognized that Frederick had his eye on a French alliance. Britain was still in 1786 courting Joseph for an alliance. It was taken as a given that if the British


127 Ibid., 56.

had their pick of alliances, they would choose Austria.\textsuperscript{129} This tempered Britain’s approach to Prussia, which was reciprocated. But even if the British could court Prussia, it was not clear that would be enough. In September 1786 Foreign Secretary Carmathian told Harris that it was impossible for Britain to intervene in the Republic with just the support of Prussia against France and possibly Austria.\textsuperscript{130} Britain had no desire to go to war with France. Prime Minister “Pitt’s priorities were peace, reconstruction and commercial expansion.” The British signed a trade treaty with France in September of 1786.\textsuperscript{131} Prussia then was willing to let France have the free reign in the United Provinces; the British were not as complacent, but their policy largely consisted of “sitting on their oars.”

\textsuperscript{129} Black, \textit{British Foreign Policy in an Age of Revolutions, 1783-1793}, 96. Carmarthen wrote that “my own manner of thinking, with respect to Austria and Prussia remains, and probably ever will remain unshaken: the first ought to be the perpetual, as it is the natural ally of England; the second can, I apprehend, be but an occasional one.” Lodge, \textit{Great Britain & Prussia in the Eighteenth Century} 163-64; Malmesbury, \textit{Diaries and Correspondence of the Earl of Malmesbury}, II, 211. As Harris observed, they could not warm to Prussia until the Austrian door was shut, and only wanted to do this when Austria was irrevocably cemented to France.

\textsuperscript{130} Ehrman, \textit{The Younger Pitt: The Years of Acclaim}, 524.

The Revolt Radicalizes; the Powers Watch

While Britain waited, the revolution progressed to the brink of civil war. It became clear that France did not have control of the Patriots; rather, the Patriots were leading French policy. The regents had been splitting from Patriot ranks as the movement radicalized. In July, William V was removed from command of the garrison at The Hague. The French expressed their surprise but did not want to apologize for the Patriots, and suggested that Berlin advise the stadholder to accept the situation. In August and September the Patriots were able to take control over a large part of armed forces that were traditionally under the control of the stadholder, who was surprisingly firm against Patriot demands. The French risked alienating Prussia by supporting the Patriot’s agenda. Both Prussia and Britain were under the assumption that the French would moderate the Patriot’s aims. But the French had largely bought in to those aims. The French ambassador in Berlin was told by Vergennes, “It is more important for us to preserve the alliance of Holland than to show compliance to the King of Prussia by favoring a Prince who is by his sentiments, and even by his instinct, an enemy of France.”

The French assumption that they could take Prussia for granted was at least initially correct. Frederick the Great had died in August of 1786, and some British officials thought that his successor, Frederick Wilhelm, the brother of the stadholder’s wife, would be more sympathetic with the Orangist cause. But there was no appreciable change in Prussian policy. Frederick Wilhelm sent an envoy, Görtz, to facilitate Franco-

Prussian cooperation. The French accepted this because of his friendship with the French ambassador there. But Götz advocated the British/stadholder side, possibly thinking he was adhering to Frederick Wilhelm’s wishes by supporting his sister. When this was revealed to Frederick Wilhelm, he rebuked his envoy. Finckenstein, the pro-French secretary of state, concluded that Frederick Wilhelm had decided to leave Dutch affairs to the French. Frederick Wilhelm wrote to the Princess that the provinces that support the stadholder should appeal to Britain; it was more of a concern to them. Whatever obligation he may have felt to his sister, he had the traditional Prussian concern of Austria; he did not want to alienate France given rumors of Austrian and Russian plans to revive the Bavarian exchange, or even attack Prussia.134

France sent its own envoy, Joseph Mathias Gérard de Rayneval, to the Dutch Republic. Vergennes was concerned about limiting French policy to one faction. He wanted a combination of the aristocratic and democratic factions for stability’s sake. While he thought the elimination of the stadholder would be the best means of getting rid of British and Prussian influence, he did not think the Patriot party was strong enough to impose that solution.135 Rayneval instead took the view that the French should operate through the leaders of the Patriots, who were dependent on France, and proposed a solution that essentially left the Patriots in charge and the stadholder striped of his

133 Ibid., 96-97.
134 Black, British Foreign Policy in an Age of Revolutions, 1783-1793, 135; Lodge, Great Britain & Prussia in the Eighteenth Century, 169.
135 Cobban, Ambassadors and Secret Agents: The Diplomacy of the First Earl of Malmesbury at the Hague, 98.
power.136 Frederick William accepted the plan, but the Princess of Orange did not and called for negotiations to end. Rayneval accepted this – the Patriots would now impose their will and it would relieve France of her obligations to Prussia. Frederick Wilhelm’s response was that, “if the stadholder chose to ruin himself he could not prevent him.”137

The situation was bad for Britain, whose policy depended on the cooperation of Prussia, but they could at least console themselves that France was increasingly weakened and distracted by domestic problems. Louis XVI announced in December of 1786 his decision to call the Assembly of Notables to deal with the state’s fiscal problems. Although there was disagreement, some British officials thought that France’s economic problems would mean a hesitancy to get involved in Dutch issues.138 Pitt, taking a real interest in the Dutch affair the first time, wrote a letter of support to Harris, outlining his position: “The great object,” Pitt said, was “to keep together a party which may act with advantage, both for their own country and for us, on some future day, if it should arrive.”139 Pitt reiterated to Harris on this and later dates not to over commit.140

136 They had, said Rayneval, “no other existence but that which France gave them” and thus would do their bidding. Murphy, Charles Gravier, Comte De Vergennes, French Diplomacy in the Age of Revolution: 1719-1787, 471.


138 Black, British Foreign Policy in an Age of Revolutions, 1783-1793, 131-32.

139 Malmesbury, Diaries and Correspondence of the Earl of Malmesbury, II, 254-55, emphasis in original.

140 Pitt approvingly noted that “The situation of the United Provinces seems by your latter dispatches to open every day more and more a prospect of... cultivating a useful party which may at least fetter the operations of France whenever that court takes a hostile turn, and which, in the mean time may neither commit us nor itself.” Ibid., 262.
Pitt wanted maneuverability to take advantage of opportunities that arose but also extricate himself if need be.

Harris’s attempt to rally pro-stadholder forces in the first half of 1787 made progress. The Patriots were driving more regents into the stadholder camp. The French were having difficulty controlling the Patriots, partly because of the lack of clear direction coming from the many French agents. There was a policy drift even before Vergennes died in February. In May, Harris came to London to get direction on the Dutch issue and pass on requests for funds from one of the pro-stadholder provinces and from the Princess of Orange. Pitt made clear in a cabinet meeting that he was not willing to go to war over the issue.\textsuperscript{141} The king was more reluctant: he was concerned about costs and felt that Britain had best steer clear of Continental affairs. But Pitt, who had declared the “\textit{immense} consequence of Holland being preserved as an Independent state,”\textsuperscript{142} convinced the king that they would not be overcommitted by spending money, and France was unlikely to get involved. Pitt approved of the funding, although he would not

\textsuperscript{141} The king and some members of the cabinet would have resisted him if he had advocated such a course. Lord Chancellor Edward Thurlow advocated war, but it is unclear whether he was sincere or whether he was bringing the issue up to kill it by pointing out that war would “entail expensive and politically contentious subsidies to German powers.” See Black, \textit{British Foreign Policy in an Age of Revolutions, 1783-1793}, 138. Harris’s notes of the meeting where the issue was discussed (one of the few ministerial meetings recorded) is found in Malmesbury, \textit{Diaries and Correspondence of the Earl of Malmesbury}, II, 303-06. See also Ehrman, \textit{The Younger Pitt: The Years of Acclaim}, 528; Black, \textit{British Foreign Policy in an Age of Revolutions, 1783-1793}, 133-34; Cobban, \textit{Ambassadors and Secret Agents: The Diplomacy of the First Earl of Malmesbury at the Hague}, 132-33.

\textsuperscript{142} Malmesbury, \textit{Diaries and Correspondence of the Earl of Malmesbury}, II, 304.
commit himself further. Harris had hoped that a well-timed insurrection might spur British policy forward. He soon got his catalyst.

The Arrest of a Princess and Foreign Intervention

In the summer of 1787 the Princess of Orange attempted to break the stalemate by going to The Hague to rally Orangist forces and propose a moderate settlement to force the Patriot’s hand. This launched a series of unanticipated events. The Princess was captured and temporarily detained by the Patriot Free Corps forces until she retreated. The supposed indignity of her treatment prompted outrage in Prussia that she and Harris used to their advantage to press for Prussian intervention. Holland appealed to France to mediate, while the Princess appealed to Prussia and Britain for protection. Frederick William demanded an apology from the States General and assembled a force of 20,000 men, but was still at this stage hesitant to get involved for the same reasons he had declined in the past. The French, meanwhile, spread rumors that they were amassing troops on the border of the Austrian Netherlands while they tried in private to get their Patriot allies to apologize and accept mediation. The Patriots, convinced of their strength and the backing of France, refused. As one of the speakers in the assembly of Holland declared, “a sovereign body cannot apologize to the wife of its first servant.”

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143 Ibid., 262.
144 Cobban, Ambassadors and Secret Agents: The Diplomacy of the First Earl of Malmesbury at the Hague, 152. Harris’s initial response was pessimistic: “Check to the Queen, and in a move or two check mate is, I fear, the state of our game. Malmesbury, Diaries and Correspondence of the Earl of Malmesbury, II, 329.
145 Lodge, Great Britain & Prussia in the Eighteenth Century, 173.
There was in the mean time a game of brinkmanship going on between Prussia, Britain and France over the Republic that France was gradually loosing. No power wanted war, but France least of all. Britain and Prussia became increasingly convinced that French threats of intervention were a bluff. The position of Britain was hardening as a result. This encouraged the Prussians, which had not wanted to be left in the lurch by a wavering Britain. The two began coordinating their policies. But the decisive factor that prompted the Prussians to intervene was the Ottoman declaration of war against Russia. A necessary condition for Prussian intervention was that they not go to war with the French, but even with that satisfied, Prussia did not want to intervene at the risk of leaving themselves open for an Austrian attack. The Russo-Turkish war, however, ensured that the Austrians would be tied up elsewhere. In September 1787, Prussian forces invaded the United Provinces, handily defeating the Patriot Free Corps, and reinstalled the stadholder.

France, Prussia, and Britain and the Question of Contagion

Did the fear of revolutionary contagion to any extent influence policymakers in their approach to the Dutch Revolt, either the Prussians in their decision to crush the Patriots, the British in their decision to support the Prussians, or the French in their decision to abandon the Patriots? For France, two prominent scholars of French policy of the period have claimed that this factor did play a role. Orville Murphy, states “Louis XVI soon began to doubt the wisdom of supporting the Patriots when he learned more

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about their liberal political ideals. It was one thing to support Republicans in far away America; it was another thing to encourage them so close to home.”

Munro Price makes a similar claim about Vergennes.\footnote{Murphy, The Diplomatic Retreat of France and Public Opinion on the Eve of the French Revolution, 1783-1789, 83.}

The king did tell his foreign minister that he would rather renounce the Dutch alliance “than see the country given over to a pure democracy.”\footnote{“Having set aside his principles and supported the American insurgents in 1778, he was clearly not prepared to extend the same favor a second time to the Dutch Patriots.” Price, “The Dutch Affair and the Fall of the Ancien Régime, 1784-1787,” 904. “In the 1780’s,” Simon Schama also says, “the French government knew full well that it was one thing to applaud the advent of liberty thousands of miles away across the Atlantic, quite another to foment sedition on the doorstep of their own kingdom.” Schama, Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813, 126.}

Part of the king’s concern may have been because of the negative example the democratic revolution was setting. Just as he did during the American Revolution, Louis was said to have criticized the tone of a report for French officials favoring the Patriot cause – he disliked any language that was “revolutionary.”

A bigger concern among French officials seems to have been whether a democratic ally would be reliable. Rayneval reported in March of 1787 that “the king has

\footnote{Cobban, Ambassadors and Secret Agents: The Diplomacy of the First Earl of Malmesbury at the Hague, 139.}

\footnote{Piere de Witt, Une Invasion Prussienne En Hollande En 1787 (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit et cie, 1886), 186. Interestingly, Vergennes himself sometimes lapsed into the language of the Patriot cause. For example, he praised an agent of France as playing a great role as a defender of liberty. Cobban, Ambassadors and Secret Agents: The Diplomacy of the First Earl of Malmesbury at the Hague, 108.}
no interest, nor any reason to promote democracy; I could even say that such a government would lose the Republic or at least render the ally useless, because it is impossible to devise and undertake anything with the democrats.” Vergennes had expressed the same concern to Rayneval in his last letter before he died. In 1786, the French ambassador to The Hague had written to Vergennes, attempting “to show that the ideas of the Patriots were not as alarming as they might seem at first sight.” While they appealed to the rights of the people, “by this word people is not meant the most wretched part of the nation, men deprived of the means of living in a condition of comfort. Only the class of bourgeois possessing a certain capital and contributing in a certain proportion to the expenses of the Republic is included in this term.” Of course, the French constituent assembly established a few years later during the French Revolution had similar restrictions – the alarm the Ambassador was attempting to ameliorate was not over whether Patriot ideology would be replicated in France but whether the allies that France was committing themselves to were reliable, just as, at the same time, the French were expressing alarm at the disorder in the United States, which was due to the “phantom of democracy.”

The reliability of the Patriots, from the French perspective, ended up being a major problem, although an arguably bigger problem was the increasing dysfunctional


153 Ibid., 71-72.

nature of French policy. But Versailles did not give up on the Patriots until the
economic crisis constrained them. In the summer of 1787 there was a divide in the
French cabinet concerning Dutch policy, and the debate was dominated by what policy
would help resolve France’s domestic crisis. The Secretary of State for War, the comte
de Ségur, and the Secretary of State for the Navy, the marquis de Castries, advocated
military intervention. Castries told Louis, “present the idea of la gloire to Frenchman and
you will effect the most useful… diversion from the present turmoil. Give the
appearance of necessity to taxation, the mood will calm and perhaps you will see
government recapture a part of what it is ready to loose.”

This was not the predominant sentiment in the ministry. Vergennes’s replacement, Monmornin, occupied
a middle position – he wished to avoid committing France to war, but he thought that it
could get away with bluffing and Britain and Prussia would back down. But Louis
took the opinion of the finance minister, Loménie Brienne: “France was not in a position
to interfere in the quarrels of her neighbors.” It is not credible, wrote the Austrian

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155 There was no a clear signal coming from France as court factions and French agents multiplied. Despite
the increasing desperation by some officials such as Rayneval to get the Patriots to compromise, the French
did not tell the Patriots they would not intervene on their behalf until the Prussians were already on Dutch
soil. Ibid., 91. British discipline was a marked contrast.

156 Hardman, Louis XVI, 128-29; Black, British Foreign Policy in an Age of Revolutions, 1783-1793, 148.

157 Whiteman, Reform, Revolution and French Global Policy, 1787-1791, 56-61. His misreading of
Prussia’s willingness to intervene was why he was not urging the Patriots to back down.

158 Jean Egret, The French Prerevolution, trans. Westley D. Camp (Chicago, IL: The University of
Chicago Press, 1977), 42. See also Cobban, Ambassadors and Secret Agents: The Diplomacy of the First
Earl of Malmesbury at the Hague, 165.
diplomat in Paris, “that the Versailles ministry, in such straits, would risk getting involved in a war that would make bankruptcy inevitable.”

Missing from the debate over intervention was the notion that the French should abandon the Patriots because they were setting a dangerous example. There does not appear to be much evidence that French officials viewed the domestic developments in the Dutch Republic beyond the lens of French foreign policy interests. Price notes that Vergennes was the minister most attached to absolute monarchy in France, and most sympathetic to the stadholder, while other ministers who supported the Patriots also tacitly condoned the noble revolt against the king during the French pre-revolution. However, Vergennes was not particularly sympathetic to the stadholder – he specifically said that he was indifferent to his fait. France gave up on the Patriot cause not because they thought their ideology was a threat to France’s internal stability, but when they determined they did not have the resources to continue.

There is also little evidence that the British government supported the suppression of the revolution because of its domestic consequences. For the British, like the French, domestic developments in the Dutch Republic had relevance only insofar as it affected British foreign policy. Foreign Secretary Carmarthen had even on several occasions been willing to abandon the stadholder and support the Patriots if it would serve British

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160 Murphy notes that “Neither Rayneval nor Vergennes saw that the Patriots were not simply the creatures, or pawns, of international politics.” Murphy, *Charles Gravier, Comte De Vergennes, French Diplomacy in the Age of Revolution: 1719-1787*, 470.

161 Price, "The Dutch Affair and the Fall of the Ancien Régime, 1784-1787," 904-05.

interests. A contemporary history of the Patriot Revolt written by a British radical accused King George of wanting to crush the Patriots: “The sovereign… is doubtless much attached to the cause of a prince, whose prerogatives so nearly resemble his own, and whose house has so long been connected with the royal family of Britain.” In fact, as noted, it was the king that was pushing against involvement in the Patriot Revolt. Harris, the British official most familiar with the Patriots, did tell the foreign minister that “This leveling spirit which has gone forth will if left to itself produce a total subversion of good order and good government.” But he did not use this as any kind of lobbying point for British intervention. The British had a problem with the Patriots not because of their ideological agenda for the United Provinces, but because they were pro-French, while the stadholder was pro-British.

For Prussia, Frederick Wilhelm was certainly no fan of democratic ideals. But there is no evidence that he suppressed the revolution out of fear for the domestic consequences for Prussia. The arrest and detention of the Princess of Orange and the lack of an apology from the Patriots is often noted as the reason for Prussian intervention.

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166 Ibid., 212.
John Adams had assessed before the Princess was arrested that the Patriots would prevail, but by September he scorned that Prussia will intervene in “a Romantick quarrel to revenge an Irreverence to a Princess, as Silly a Tale as the Trojan Wars on Account of Helen.”\(^{167}\) The arrest of the princess was not the only factor in his decision to intervene. As discussed, he had to be reasonably sure that France and Austria would stand aside and Britain would support him, which accounted for the significant delay of the Princess’s arrest and his decision to invade. But the arrest was his motive that was expressed when the opportunity arose.\(^{168}\) Frederick William does not seem to fear that he could face a similar treatment; it was rather that the treatment of his sister was an insult to his honor.\(^{169}\)


\(^{168}\) Another possible motive of intervention was to increase British-Prussian cooperation. Secretary of State Hertzburg had long advocated a new “Northern System” involving Prussia and Britain. George III proposed a Triple Alliance between the British, Dutch, and the Prussians shortly after the invasion, and the treaty was signed the following year. Blanning suggests Hertzburg’s advocacy of this plan won the case for intervention, but does not provide evidence for this claim. T. C. W. Blanning, The Origins of the French Revolutionary Wars (New York, NY: Longman, 1986), 52.

\(^{169}\) The arrest and detention of Princess Wilhelmina was widely regarded as an indignity and insult to Frederick William that he would have to respond to. British Foreign Minister Carmarthen, for example, told Harris that “if the King her brother is not the dirtiest and shabbiest of Kings, he must resent it, [cost what it may].” Malmesbury, Diaries and Correspondence of the Earl of Malmesbury, II, 329. The concept of honor, prestige, and face in international politics is explored by Barry O’Neill, Honor, Symbols, and War (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1999).
Russia and Austria, the Onlookers

The Russians did not play any direct role in the Dutch Revolt, or appear to have much interest in it. Catherine had dealings with the Dutch Republic in the past when it touched on her larger foreign policy interests: she sought Dutch entry into her League of Armed Neutrality (though she was not willing to intervene when the Republic got tangled up with Britain) and she had supported her ally Joseph in his schemes concerning the Bavarian exchange.\textsuperscript{170} But otherwise Russia was not involved in the region. The fate of the United Provinces was peripheral to her major concerns. She was not particularly close with either the British or the French.\textsuperscript{171} Her conflict with the Turks was her major concern, which nevertheless had a critical indirect effect on the Dutch Revolt. Her war with the Porte brought in Austria, which gave Prussia the freedom to crush the Dutch Revolt without having to worry about Austria. But this of course was a byproduct, not a plan of Russian policies.

Presumably Austria had a greater interest in the fate of the Dutch Republic, but Joseph was also not directly involved. From a foreign policy perspective, one might expect that he would be supportive of the French against the Prussians. On the other

\textsuperscript{170} Madariaga, \textit{Britain, Russia, and the Armed Neutrality of 1780}, 310; Madariaga, \textit{Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great}, 390-92.

\textsuperscript{171} Russian relations with the British cooled, particularly after the Turks declared war on Russia, because Catherine suspected they had been encouraged by the British; a possible alliance with France, meanwhile, was floundering. Catherine told Potemkin in November 1787 that “it is better to cope with France and England without an alliance.” Madariaga, \textit{Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great}, 395, 398, 634 ft. 23; Black, \textit{British Foreign Policy in an Age of Revolutions, 1783-1793}, 126-30.
hand, one might expect him want to see the revolution crushed, given that a revolt was brewing in his neighboring province. In fact, a report from Brussels to Kaunitz in May 1787 claimed that the disturbances in the United Provinces were exciting discontented elements in Belgium.\(^{172}\) Joseph was, rather, indifferent, as exhibited in a revealing interview he had with the British minister to Austria, Robert Murray Keith, in July of 1787. Joseph explicitly stated that the fate of the stadholder was of no concern to him, and when Keith pressed Joseph with the assertion that the revolt was emboldening his rebellious subjects in the Austrian Netherlands, he minimized its effects.\(^{173}\) He even

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\(^{173}\) After Keith relayed King George’s sympathy for Joseph’s problems in the Austrian Netherlands, Joseph responded that the king knew from experience “that it is the unhappy lot of monarchs to see their upright intentions” misunderstood. The Americans had abandoned their duty and allegiance from “false notions of liberty” and only gained anarchy and confusion as a result. He noted his own problems in the Netherlands with “new-fangled dabblers in what they call patriotism.” But when Keith asserted that the “independence of [the Dutch] Republic and the maintenance of its ancient constitution… were matters of very essential importance to the House of Austria,” Joseph pushed back: “Whatever concern foreign powers may have in keeping the Dutch Republic from falling to pieces, it can be of little, very little, importance indeed, to any other crowned heads save those who are related by blood or affinity to the Prince of Orange, whether there is, or is not, a stadholder in Holland” or “whether his powers are enlarged or curtailed.” Keith responded that the lawless Patriots would seek to “spread the same infections spirit of licentious democracy and wild innovation among their neighbors the Flemings” if they “remained masters at home.” Joseph granted that the Patriots have been “extremely desirous to make proselytes… But it is not from them alone that my subjects in the Netherlands have borrowed the spirit of turbulent and mistaken patriotism.” He listed instances of aristocratic resistance to monarchs, most notably condemning Louis’s calling the Assembly of Notables. Gillespie Smyth, ed. *Memoirs and Correspondence (Official and Familiar) of Sir Robert Murray*
encouraged the Patriots fleeing the Republic after the Prussian invasion to settle in Belgium for economic reasons.¹⁷⁴

Joseph did not think the Patriot Revolt was a big factor encouraging rebellion among his subjects, and he thought (mistakenly) he had the situation under control. He also did not have strong foreign policy preferences on the matter. His hostility towards the Prussians had subsided – he now considered Austro-Prussian reconciliation a priority. And especially after France had abandoned him, he was not about to go out of his way to further their aims where he had no immediate interest. At any rate, his attention was directed elsewhere, to the Balkans, in light of the Russo-Turkish war.¹⁷⁵

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¹⁷⁴ R. T. Turner, "Europe and the Belgian Revolution, 1789-90" (University of California, Los Angeles, 1944), 152.

¹⁷⁵ Joseph even turned around his troops sent to deal with the troubles in the Austrian Netherlands and marched them towards the Balkans to catch the spoils of the Ottoman Empire. Jeremy Black, "Sir Robert Ainslie: His Majesty's Agent-Provocateur? British Foreign Policy and the International Crisis of 1787," *European History Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1984): 263. Kaunitz did not share Joseph’s goal of reconciliation with Prussia, and had killed Joseph’s proposed outreach to Prussia, but he advocated action in the Balkans to shore up a Russian alliance that could then be used against Prussia. Karl A. Roider, Jr., *Austria's Eastern Question, 1700-1790* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 170-71. The episode in the Republic in fact encouraged Austria’s activities in the Balkans because it was assured that France would not intervene and Prussia and France were now at odds with each other. Turner, "Europe and the Belgian Revolution, 1789-90," 46.
The Patriot Revolution and the Ancien Régime

Some thinkers in the late 1780s viewed the Patriot Revolt in a larger framework, as part of a movement towards democracy. A British radical was confident that, even if the revolt was crushed, the cause would go on: “The Northern Hercules may cut off the heads of the Lernaean Hydra, but they will infallibly sprout again more fierce and numerous than ever. Thus a new republic of the purest kind is about to spring up in Europe; and the flame of liberty, which was first excited in America, and has since communicated itself in a manner more or less perfect to so many other countries, buds fair for the production of consequences not less extensive than salutary.”176 This type of view was prescient, but rare, and not shared by statesmen. Even though the Patriot Revolt culminated at the same time as what would later be regarded as the preliminary events of the French Revolution, the great powers saw the Revolt through the prism of traditional ancien régime diplomacy.177

There is not much evidence that there were any fears of the revolution as a source of contagion among statesmen. And the few fears that were expressed did not affect policy. Again, the reaction to the revolt reflected international politics rather than altered

176 History of the Internal Affairs of the United Provinces, from the Year 1780 to the Commencement of Hostilities in June 1787, 345.
it. The most striking policy is that of France, which effectively committed to the Patriots and their radical agenda right on their doorstep. Given the lack of significant revolutionary movements, my framework does not expect leaders would be fearful of contagion, and thus these fears would not dictate policy. The cases are largely a negative confirmation of the theory.

The one possible exception is Austria. The brewing rebellion in the Austrian Netherlands was of a very different character than the revolt in the Dutch Republic. Put simply, the disturbance in the Austrian Netherlands was a revolt of the right – a conservative reaction – whereas the Patriot movement was a revolt of the left. But Joseph does not seem to perceive the differences. He saw both disturbances as part of a broader trend of subjects unjustly resisting the will of their monarchs. Nevertheless this did not affect his foreign policy toward the Republic or the other powers. The Austrian uprising he could crush on his own.

Conclusion

The beginning of this chapter posed a puzzle: Why did the oldest monarchy in Europe support the patriots in America and the Dutch Republic? Was there any fear that

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these revolts would embolden its own opposition? What about the other powers? It may seem foolhardy, especially of France, to encourage a movement that would engulf France and then Europe in only a handful of years.\(^\text{179}\)

From a realist perspective, the policies of the powers seem natural, even inevitable. France sided with the Americans and the Dutch Patriots to weaken the

\(^{179}\) As has been discussed, the American Revolution served to bolster the view of the radical Enlightenment and the general feeling among Frenchmen that they were in a new age and French political institutions needed radical reform. The model of America was used to further the radical agenda in 1789. See Joyce Appleby, "America as a Model for the Radical French Reformers of 1789," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1971). There is also evidence that the Dutch Patriot movement emboldened French reformers. For example, Jeremy Popkin uncovered that the *Leidse Ontwerp*, an important Dutch Patriot manifesto of political rights, was originally written in French, published in France in 1788, and may have influenced the drafting of the rights of man in 1789: "The similarities between the two documents are evidence that the Dutch patriot movement of 1780 to 1787 had generated a political atmosphere in which ideas about how the rights of citizens should be defined and articulated that were very similar to those that would triumph in France in 1789 had already crystallized." Jeremy D. Popkin, "Dutch Patriots, French Journalists, and the Declarations of Rights: The Leidse Ontwerp of 1785 and Its Diffusion in France," *The Historical Journal* 38, no. 3 (1995): 553-54.

Beyond the ideological link, the American Revolution’s role in weakening the French state by draining the finances was a concern at the time, and has been commonly cited as a reason for the financial collapse that preceded the French Revolution, but this seems to be overblown. The amount France spent on the American war is often exaggerated and it has been argued that it was the fiscal policy of the Monarchy of abandoning reforms in the 1780s rather than the debt acquired by the American war and before which brought on the crisis. See Robert D. Harris, "French Finances and the American War, 1777-1783," *The Journal of Modern History* 48, no. 2 (1976); Eugene Nelson White, "Was There a Solution to the Ancien Régime's Financial Dilemma?," *The Journal of Economic History* 49, no. 3 (1989).
British, the British tried to wrest the United Provinces back from the French, and the
Prussians invaded to restore the Stadholder.\textsuperscript{180} In fact there was a good deal of
contingency in these policies: it was not inevitable that France would side with the United
States, especially ahead of Spain, or that the British or Prussians would not abandon the
Stadholder.\textsuperscript{181} But in the end the policies of the powers looks quite like the realist
playbook that seems to fit the diplomacy of the ancien régime well: states exploiting
revolutions for geopolitical gain, taking sides with the opposing side of one’s rival,
regardless of ideological differences between states.

However, the idea these revolutions could serve as models was by no means
absent. Reformers cheered the revolutions on. The American Revolution, for example,
was considered to be “a new lesson for despots.”\textsuperscript{182} Condorcet claimed, “it is not enough
that the rights of man be written in the book of philosophers and the hearts of virtuous
men; the ignorant and weak man must be able to read them in the example of a great
people. America has given us this example. The act that declared American
independence is a simple and sublime statement of these sacred and long-forgotten

\textsuperscript{180} The motive of prestige that I have argued drove the Prussians to crush the Patriots is not commonly
considered a realist variable, although see Hans J. Morgenthau, \textit{Politics among Nations: The Struggle for

\textsuperscript{181} Scott, \textit{British Foreign Policy in the Age of the American Revolution}, 208; Cobban, \textit{Ambassadors and

\textsuperscript{182} Dippel, \textit{Germany and the American Revolution, 1770-1800: A Sociohistorical Investigation of Late
Eighteenth-Century Political Thinking}, 196-97.
Turgot wrote to Richard Price that the Americans “are the hope of the human race; they may well become its model.” This is exactly what conservatives feared. A German thinker declared, “God help all monarchs if their subjects should agree with the Americans’ principles, which arise from a perverted and fanatical interpretation of liberty.” A Frenchman expressed that, despite his wish to humiliate England, “I cannot desire that rebels should exist or be successful.” The lines between reformers and conservatives were being drawn even before the French Revolution.

Among statesmen, the more robust their own opposition movements, the more they voiced concerns of contagion. For example, of all the monarchs, Gustav III of Sweden had the most antipathy toward the American Revolution on such grounds. When France openly allied with the United States, he wrote to his ambassador in Paris that “the action of the French ministry, it seems to me, has deviated from the principles of justice and practical interests, and from state principles of nations that have been in force for centuries. I cannot admit that it is right to support rebels against their king. The example will find only too many imitators in an age when it is the fashion to overthrow every

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bulwark of authority.”\textsuperscript{187} Gustav admitted that his hostility toward the American cause was no doubt due to his own experience as a monarch struggling to establish an absolutist system.\textsuperscript{188} But these concerns were not enough to trump geopolitical interests; he set aside his apprehensions to help his French ally.\textsuperscript{189}

French foreign minister Vergennes had stated why he crushed the revolutionaries in Geneva while he aided the Americans: “The insurgents whom I am driving from Geneva are agents of England, while the American insurgents are our friends for years to come. I have dealt with both of them, not by reason of their political systems, but by reason of their attitudes towards France. Such are my reasons of state.”\textsuperscript{190} His statement exemplifies the foreign policy priorities of the ancien régime. On the other hand, Vergennes also commented, “I study the Genevese disputes as a politician; for it is to be feared that, after their writings have sown discord at home, they may spread fanaticism


\textsuperscript{188} Gustav’s father had been more of a figurehead presiding over the Diet, but fearing that Sweden would end up like Poland, which had recently undergone its first partition, Gustav and Vergennes orchestrated a coup and dissolved the Diet. For this, he had many critics.

\textsuperscript{189} The king’s hostility, however, remained. He refused the Swedish colonels in French forces from accepting membership into the American Society of the Cincinnati, because he considered it unwise to allow them to be honored by subjects who had revolted against their legitimate sovereign: “Too recently having ourselves escaped from our troubles that there should not still exist, no doubt, some germs of our former divisions, it is my duty to avert anything which could reawaken such ideas.” Barton, "Sweden and the War of American Independence," 426-27.

\textsuperscript{190} Murphy, \textit{Charles Gravier, Comte De Vergennes, French Diplomacy in the Age of Revolution: 1719-1787}, 400.
which characterizes them abroad, and their neighbors may pass from curiosity to imitation.” Albert Sorel noted that “This was unusual language for a statesman of the old régime,” a penetrating political insight of an upheaval that was to be the French revolution in miniature. The king had expressed similar concern: “While the political differences at Geneva were confined to matters of mere dispute, it was to be doubted whether France had any right to take notice of them. But now, when principles, destructive of all society, have established there… I owe it to Genevese government, who I am protective, to give them relief.” The fear of contagion may have been a motive for the French crushing the Geneva uprising, but it also happened to coincide with their geopolitical goals, because the revolutionaries were also viewed as agents of England. The situation was the reverse in the Dutch and American cases, where the revolutionaries were the enemies of England.

Although there may be more fear of contagion among statesmen than is expressed in the evidentiary record, ultimately geopolitical concerns prevailed in France and elsewhere. There was some concern about contagion, but it proved too abstract, too much of a distant probability that was overwhelmed by immediate, concrete geopolitical interests. In sum, these cases are largely a negative confirmation of the theory. With the

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possible exception of the Spanish New World and the Austrian Netherlands, there was no significant revolutionary movement in these powers, and thus the fear of contagion was not an important factor in international politics. Investigating the reaction to these revolts help us assess when ideological differences become salient and what effect they have on international politics. The following chapter tells a very different story.
Chapter 3: Liberal Revolutions and the Concert of Europe

In 1820-21, revolution gripped Spain and continued to Italy, Portugal, and Greece. The revolutions stood for, in a somewhat milder form than the American Revolution and Dutch Patriot Revolt, sovereignty of the people against the sovereignty of kings. As in the cases of the last chapter, the revolutions were also in weak states that were not attempting to spread their revolution abroad in any significant way. There were also the same great powers responding to these revolutions: Austria, Britain, France, Prussia, and Russia. In this period, however, there was a change in the nature of the opposition. Each state, with the partial exception of Russia initially, was perceived to harbor revolutionary movements. Thus, there is an opportunity to assess our theory in comparison to the last chapter. Did leaders have a fear of the spillover effects these revolutions could have on their own rule? Is this fear correlated with the presence of preexisting revolutionary movements within their polities? Did the fear of spillover effects prompt hostility to the revolution and cooperation amongst states with similar fears?

As in the previous chapter, I first assess the independent variables: the extent to which these revolutions acted as platforms and models, and whether there was a significant revolutionary opposition movement in any of the major powers analyzed. I then assess the international effects of the revolution/revolt by analyzing the policies of the great powers toward each other and the revolutionary state before and after the revolution. The results are largely a positive confirmation of my theory. The preexisting perception of revolutionary movements at home was associated with a fear of the
spillover effect of the revolution, which prompted hostility towards the revolutionary state and cooperation among states. There were disagreements about the correct solution to the revolutions, and a fear that other states would exploit these revolts for geopolitical gain, but what is more remarkable is that the great powers did not, as had been the case in the previous chapter.

Revolutions of 1820-21

On the first of January, 1820, several military detachments that were preparing to disembark to the New World to suppress the rebels in Spanish America rose up against the absolutist king, Ferdinand VII. At first, the revolt seemed to sizzle, but what might have been a mere military sedition became much broader. Uprisings occurred throughout Spain, and forces sent to put down the uprising joined their ranks. The revolutionaries called for a reinstatement of the Spanish Constitution of 1812. This constitution, established in Cadiz while Napoleon’s forces occupied much of Spain and the king was held in captivity, had created a constitutional monarchy subject to a parliament elected with universal male suffrage, as well as other freedoms. When Ferdinand VI was restored to power he had declared the constitution null and void. But in the face of uprisings and a disloyal army, the king was forced to accept the constitution in March of 1820.

In neighboring Portugal there was a similar military revolt in the north in August of 1820. They demanded the return of King John VI from Brazil, where he had been residing since the Napoleonic invasion, and the adoption of a constitution. The Regency ruling in place of King John rejected those demands, but was soon ousted by an uprising
in Lisbon that joined with the rebellion in the north. A constitution was drawn up based on relatively broad suffrage, though not as broad as the Spanish constitution. King John was compelled to sign an oath to the constitution when he returned.

Shortly after word reached the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies of the Spanish events, there was an uprising by the army in Naples, who joined with the Carbonari, a clandestine revolutionary organization, and forced King Ferdinand to adopt a constitution modeled on the 1812 Spanish version. In March of 1821 a revolt broke out in Piedmont. King Victor Emmanuel abdicated in favor of his brother, Charles Felix. Victor Emmanuel’s nephew, ruling in Charles Felix’s absence, adopted the Spanish constitution, subject to the King’s approval.

Also in March of 1821, an officer in the Russian army that was of Greek decent, Alexander Ypsilantis, entered the Danubian Principalities with a contingent of soldiers and called on all Christians to overthrow the Ottoman Empire. He was the leader of a secret organization whose purpose was to overthrow Ottoman rule of Greece. While his own efforts faired poorly, the rebellion spread to the Greek Islands, and Ottoman rule of Greek lands was cast in doubt. These were the first revolutions of post Napoleonic Europe, and the fact that they followed one after the other in imitation was ominous to many statesmen.

Model

The revolutions in 1820-21, like all revolutions, served as a model for overthrowing the existing order. But they also stood for something. In a basic way, they all stood for the principle of popular sovereignty over the rights of kings. The goal of the
revolts in the Iberian Peninsula and in Italy was to change the institutions of existing polities by limiting the king’s power to a constitution. There was an array of opinion amongst the revolutionaries, from the moderate liberals to the radicals, as far as the extent to which they wished to further curtail the powers of kings and expand political rights. Very few were advocating the abolishment of monarchy altogether, and thus the movement was not as radical as the American Revolution, the Dutch Patriot Revolt, or France in 1792. But the 1812 Spanish Constitution that inspired the revolts provided a system of universal male suffrage and a unicameral parliament. This was a radical contrast to the absolute monarchies of the Eastern Powers and, to a lesser extent, the constitutional monarchies of Britain and France.

The conflict in Greece was not directly about the existing form of government, but a separatist revolt, motivated especially by religion – the Greek Orthodox against the Muslims, which was conjoined with nationalism – Greek against Turk. The revolt, however, had a liberal dimension. Liberals within the independence movement proclaimed republican constitution in January of 1822, although it only existed on paper.\(^1\) The Greek national cause also had a liberal hue; although nationalism later became a conservative force in European politics, it was at this early stage to an extent interchangeable with liberalism, given the joint emphasis on popular sovereignty. Greece’s position in the historical consciousness of Europeans as the founders of democracy rallied liberals to the cause.\(^2\)

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\(^2\) This movement was not limited to liberals and radicals, though its most famous devotee, Lord Byron, was one. For an exposition, see C. M. Woodhouse, *The Philhellenes* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton,
Platform

The revolts of 1820-21 occurred in the relative periphery of Europe in weak states that did not act as much of a platform abroad, and were not expected to, either against the great powers or other neighboring states. The exceptions prove the rule. The Kingdom of the Sicilies, when facing eminent Austrian intervention, in desperation attempted to invade the neighboring Papal States in order to ignite Italian nationalism and support of the other Italian states against Austria.\(^3\) But this was a response to great power intervention rather than what provoked it. They had been at pains previously to earn the good will of their neighbors. The minister of foreign affairs even tried to portray the revolution as a mere reorganization of government to convince the powers of its unquestionable legitimacy that warranted their continued recognition.\(^4\)

Spain engaged in


\(^{4}\) Romani, *The Neapolitan Revolution of 1820-1821*, 105. The Carbonari wanted to spread constitutionalism covertly through Italy. There were some isolated Carbonari volunteers that helped the Carbonari in the Papal states revolt. But the moderate government was straining to convey that they were not in the export business, even shutting down a newspaper that was critical of Austria. Paul W. Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy at Its Zenith, 1820-1823* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1962), 95-96; Alan J. Reinerman, *Austria and the Papacy in the Age of Metternich: Between Conflict and Cooperation, 1809-1830*, vol. I (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 1979), 77.
some propaganda directed at Portugal, but their activities were probably exaggerated by Portugal in an appeal from outside powers for help. The Piedmont revolution seemed to have a foreign policy concern: resisting Austrian domination in Italy, although they had not yet acted on this impulse. Even if the revolutionaries desired the spread of liberal institutions, these states were too concerned with their own survival to offer much in the way of proselytizing directed at their neighbors or the great powers themselves. Beyond their domestic situation, they knew they were operating in an environment whereby acting as a platform would only give the great powers a better excuse to crush them. In conclusion, these revolts acted as a model, but not in any significant way as a platform in spreading revolution abroad.

Domestic Opposition after the Napoleonic Wars

What was the nature of the domestic opposition in the great powers after 1815? Was there a significant revolutionary opposition movement in the great powers of a similar character as these revolts? The French Revolution and subsequent upheavals had transformed the domestic political landscape. Although there were differences amongst the powers, there were developments that were common to all of Europe. The previous chapter discussed how the principle source of contention during the late ancien régime was the aristocratic resistance to the centralizing monarchs. By the period after the Napoleonic wars, this struggle had been profoundly transformed. Monarchy and aristocracy were now united in their rejection of the principles of the French Revolution.

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Differences remained, including the old debate over the society of orders versus the centralizing state, and to what extent the goal should be one of conservation, to preserve what remained of the old older, or reaction, to return to the old regime. But these differences mostly paled in comparison to their opposition to the new forces unleashed by the French Revolution. There was a renewed emphasis on using religion to bolster the political and social order – the marriage of throne and alter. In many quarters there was an anti-Enlightenment attitude, which was now seen as undermining the thrones rather than supporting them, replaced by a romanticism that glorified the past.

In contrast to the late ancien régime, where centralizing monarchs had been the principle instigator of social and political change, the ruling classes for the most part defended the status quo. Now the principal instigators of change were groups variously dubbed as liberals or radicals. Their basic aim was to make the state more accountable to the people, but how that goal of popular sovereignty was interpreted varied widely, as well as the means to achieve it. A common objective of liberals was to limit monarchies to constitutions that would institute parliamentary systems with a limited franchise and various limitations on the monarchy. The goal of liberals was akin to the initial phase of the French Revolution. The radicals were considered decedents of Jacobinism. These groups advocated of democracy – full equality under the law and universal male suffrage. 

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6 There were some exceptions. For example, the ultra-royalists in France who wanted to roll back the centralizing power of the state advocated using legislative control over the ministry, even universal suffrage, to get their way. Gordon Wright, France in Modern Times (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995), 94.
They tended to be even more anticlerical than the liberals, and many were explicitly antimonarchical. Liberals and radicals, with their emphasis on popular sovereignty, were also at this stage in European history associated with another political ideal: nationalism. In post-Napoleonic Europe, radicals were more explicitly revolutionary, both in ends and means. Whether the groups advocating liberalism were revolutionary depended partly upon what regime they operated under, which helped determine whether they would be working within the system for reform or provoking revolution to institute such changes. But all of the great powers had a significant revolutionary opposition movement.

**Opposition in Russia**

The system of governments among the great powers ranged from the autocracy of Russia to the oligarchy of Britain. All the Eastern powers – Austria, Prussia and Russia – were absolute monarchs, but Russia was the absolute monarchy par excellence, where the tsar’s will alone carried a considerable amount of weight. Ironically, the man who occupied that position had liberal, even republican sympathies. Alexander had ascended

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7 The focus of radicals in this period was mostly juridical equality rather than equality of outcome. Communist and socialist thinkers (terms used interchangeably in this period) were emerging who attacked private property, but at this stage it was a radical intellectual trend rather than a concrete political movement. See, e.g., Albert S. Lindemann, *A History of European Socialism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 25-61.

8 As motioned, nationalism and liberalism.radicalism shared the goal of popular sovereignty, and were considered part of the same movement. Conservatives later in the century appropriated nationalism as a useful focus on nation and state rather than class.
to the throne in 1801 with plans for reform, including the notion that the autocracy should be based on law rather than whim. Various attempts at reform were mostly sidetracked. His liberal advisor, Michael Speransky, even pressed for a constitution with a national legislative assembly. However, Alexander rejected Speransky’s plans as undermining the autocracy.\(^9\) When Alexander granted a constitution to Poland in 1815, it suggested to many that he was about to introduce one for Russia as well, and he said as much on a few occasions.\(^10\) He requested a draft of a constitution for Russia, which was largely based on the Polish model, but nothing came from it.\(^11\)

\(^9\) Gooding convincingly argues that Speransky was a closet revolutionary that wished to transform the system from within to a constitutional monarchy on the pattern of Britain. Alexander became convinced of this. Speransky’s suggestion that Alexander should, in the event of war with Napoleon, turn power over to a special council convinced him that Speransky “was indeed intriguing with his ministries and intriguing against the autocracy,” and he was deposed. John Gooding, ”The Liberalism of Michael Speransky,” The Slavonic and East European Review 64, no. 3 (1986): 423. Raeff, on the other hand, without the benefit of some of Speransky’s political writings, argues rather that Speransky was a believer in enlightened absolutism. Marc Raeff, *Michael Speransky: Statesman of Imperial Russia, 1772-1839*, Second ed. (The Hague, NL: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969).


\(^11\) This was not made public until Polish rebels found a copy in Warsaw in 1830 and published it. Nicholas not only suppressed the Polish revolt; he gathered all but two of the 1,580 not yet distributed copies of the constitution and burned them. George Vernadsky, ”Reforms under Czar Alexander I: French and American Influences,” *The Review of Politics* 9, no. 1 (1947): 60-64. The proposal is reproduced in Marc Raeff, *Plans for Political Reform in Imperial Russia, 1730-1905* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1966), 110-20.
Alexander said that the time was not yet ripe for such reorganization, given the opposition he faced from his advisors over the idea of a constitution and the financial difficulties in Russia at the time.\textsuperscript{12} But Alexander himself was becoming cooler to the idea of such reform. In the tradition of an “enlightened” absolutist monarch, he was in favor of reforms that produced a more rational, efficient administration. And he was committed to what he regarded as constitutionalism, an orderly system of government based on the rule of law.\textsuperscript{13} But he did not exhibit any desire to limit his own authority. The tension between his need for control and the consequences of his limited reforms was becoming more manifest, particularly in Poland, where the parliament increasingly angered the Tsar when it bucked his will. He authorized his Polish king to take extra-constitutional measures, and did so himself, to tame the opposition in the Parliament.\textsuperscript{14} This caused some of the Polish opposition to turn revolutionary.\textsuperscript{15} There were, in addition, revolutionary secret societies that plotted to overthrow Russian tyranny, which the government attempted to stamp out.\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Hartley, "The 'Constitutions' of Finland and Poland in the Reign of Alexander I: Blueprints for Reform in Russia?," 41-45.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Frank W. Thackeray, \textit{Antecedents of Revolution: Alexander I and the Polish Kingdom, 1815-1825} (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1980), 54-78.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} When reminded by Alexander’s “delegate” to Poland, Nikolai Novosil’stov, that the constitution had been granted to them, and that it was possible to take it away, a leader of the liberal opposition responded, “Then we will become revolutionaries.” Ibid., 76, passim.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} The significance of these secret societies were often exaggerated by Novosil’stov in his many reports to Alexander on the subject, but it helped convince Alexander to ban all secret societies in the Kingdom
\end{itemize}
As it became increasingly clear that Alexander would not enact liberal reforms, opposition hardened amongst a small set of secret societies in the Russian army. Army officers, having been deeply affected by their time spent abroad during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, hoped to see liberal reforms at home. The first organized group was the Union of Salvation, founded in February 1816.\textsuperscript{17} There were disagreements over both the means and ends of the organization, whether a constitutional monarchy or even republic should be achieved through legal or extralegal means, including regicide.\textsuperscript{18} In 1820, a meeting of some of the leading members in Moscow decided to formally dissolve the organization because the government had caught wind of its activities through some defectors.\textsuperscript{19} The news of their disbanding reached the government, as anticipated, but in reality the group continued under two secret organizations, a northern and a southern branch. The northern branch, despite the adoption of a republican platform in 1820, became a stronghold of more conservative liberals, whereas the radical republican, Pavel Pestel, dominated the southern society.\textsuperscript{20}

November 1821, which was soon extended to the Empire itself. Alexander even took the step of publishing the Pope’s condemnation of secret societies. Hartley, "The 'Constitutions' of Finland and Poland in the Reign of Alexander I: Blueprints for Reform in Russia?,” 56; Thackeray, Antecedents of Revolution: Alexander I and the Polish Kingdom, 1815-1825, 125.

\textsuperscript{17} This was patterned after the Prussian Turgendbung, with the important exception that the members did not pledge their loyalty to the monarch.


\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 83.

\textsuperscript{20} For more on Pestel, see Patrick O'Meara, The Decembrist Pavel Pestel: Russia's First Republican (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
The year 1820 was a watershed both for the revolutionary movements in Russia, and Tsar Alexander’s perception of them. The inspiration from the revolutions abroad, combined with disappointment in the Tsar – his failure to enact any meaningful liberal reforms, together with his role in suppressing the revolutions, especially in Spain – spurred the revolutionaries on.21 These groups, known as the Decembrists, launched an aborted revolution when Alexander died in 1825. It was not the Decembrists, but a relatively minor incident that convinced the tsar he had revolutionaries in his midst. In 1820, there was a mutiny amongst the Semenovsky Regiment, the Tsar’s most favored regiment. Although the mutiny seems to have been driven by the treatment they received at the hands of their new commanding officer, among the regiment two seditious notes were found condemning the Russian regime. Alexander could not be dissuaded in his view that the Semenovsky Revolt had revolutionary intentions, and were linked to the broader revolutionary movement that needed to be immediately crushed before it threatened the Russian government.22 Alexander was never in favor of revolution at home or abroad. His interpretation of ‘liberalism’ did not include limiting his own authority. When liberal reforms became associated with bottom up pressure, revolutionary demands from the army no less, he became decidedly reactionary. After 1820, any attempt at reform was over.


Opposition in Prussia and Austria

Prussia had gone further in the direction of reform than Russia. After defeat at the hand of Napoleon, Prussian statesmen enacted reforms including creating a draft army and dismantling feudal obligations in an attempt to mobilize the population behind the state. King Frederick William promised a constitution with representative institutions several times, the last in May of 1815, as the allied armies were preparing for their last battle with Napoleon.\(^\text{23}\) When the war was over, the king’s (always tepid) enthusiasm for reform cooled markedly. Petitions were directed at the king, and various organizations promoted liberal reform, such as those that organized around the gymnasiums. Most significant were the German university students and faculty, many of them veterans, who formed student unions (Burschenschaften) advocating liberal rights and democratic constitutions. These groups were growing rapidly, and in October of 1817, they organized a festival at Wartburg Castle outside Jena, and proceeded to burn symbols of conservative oppression. Even an advocate for reform was taken aback by the rhetoric: “The demand for a constitution is getting dangerously out of hand, and some Jacobin yeast is mixed in with it.”\(^\text{24}\) Prince Karl von Hardenberg, prime minister and orchestrator of Prussian reforms, wrote Klemens von Metternich, the foreign minister of Austria,


expressing the need to “suppress the revolutionary tendency … and Jacobinism, which is almost everywhere raising its head.”

The Emperor of the Austrian Empire, Francis II, had never contemplated the far-reaching reform that the Prussians had considered. Austria had used means of diplomacy and war in the face of Napoleon. Early in his reign, Francis II had faced the execution of his aunt by revolutionaries in Paris and faced what he considered to be a Jacobin conspiracy in his own realm. His modus operandi was repression rather than reform. When several South German states preempted demands in 1818 with limited constitutions, it increased the pressure for reform. For Austria, Prussia was the key to stemming the tide. Metternich put strong pressure on Prussia to suppress the agitating groups, and connected it with the constitutional movement – “A national assembly composed of representatives of the people would mean the dissolution of the Prussian state…because such an innovation cannot be introduced in a great state without revolution or preparing for revolution.”

This was not just the concern that Prussia might increase its sway with the German states to the exclusion of Austria if they shared the same domestic institutions. A democratic constitution in Prussia, Metternich wrote Francis, would result “in the complete overthrow of all existing institutions.”

The threat both Prussia and Austria perceived from revolutionary activity brought them together. In 1819, a radical theology student assassinated a conservative playwright

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and publicist. This was thought to be part of a larger conspiracy of university radicals. Metternich won Prussia’s support to pass the Carlsbad degrees in the German Confederation, a series of acts that, among other things, coordinated and enforced strict censorship of the press and created a central investigating committee to repress “revolutionary agitation discovered in several states.” The Confederation was strengthened to allow the Federal Diet to provide troops to ensure state governments kept the lid on revolutionary activity. Although most of the movement to institute more democratic constitutions, a potentially revolutionary change, was not explicitly advocating the overthrow of the state, there was a perception amongst Austrian and Prussian leaders that a revolutionary movement was at hand, both because they feared what they did not know, and because they feared even milder reform processes could get out of hand, as had happened in France in 1789. “I tell you,” Metternich told his wife in 1819, “the world was in full health in 1789 in comparison with its state today.”

Austria also had to worry about revolutionary movements elsewhere in the empire, especially in Italy. While the revolutionary movement in Germany was perhaps exaggerated, in Italy, it was underestimated. Metternich had been quite concerned about the secret fraternities that had revolutionary aims. In 1816 he said that “The troubled temper of Italy in general necessitates a ceaseless watch on the efforts of agitators in all


29 Levinger, Enlightened Nationalism: The Transformation of Prussian Political Culture, 1806-1848, 144.

30 Paul R. Sweet, Fredrich Von Gentz: Defender of the Old Order (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1941), 221.
parts of the peninsula."^{31} By the time he and Emperor Francis traveled through Italy in 1819, he reported "some revolutionary dispositions which are common to a great mass of the population," but he did not consider that the situation was ripe for revolution. Among other matters, there was no leadership and plenty of divisions amongst the sects.^{32} He would shortly be proven wrong.

**Opposition in France**

France in this period is described as having a “protoparliamentary” system with a “pseudoconstitution.”^{33} After the allies twice deposed Napoleon, they reinstated the Bourbons to the throne. King Louis XVIII issued a charter that proclaimed the divine right of kings and the King’s decision to grant a constitution. Under the charter, the King embodied executive power and had initiative of legislation, though the Chamber of Peers and Chamber of Deputies, the latter an elected body limited to the very wealthy, could

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^{33} The phrases are from Wright, *France in Modern Times*, 89, 92.
vote on taxes and laws.\textsuperscript{34} Louis XVIII recognized merely reinstituting the ancien régime was not feasible, despite the demands of the ultraroyalists who wanted to turn back the clock. But his concessions were hardly satisfying to those on the left, a range of actors from the (more dominant) liberals who advocated constitutional monarchy on the order of Britain, to republicans. Another opposition group was the Bonapartists, who were joined by many of the liberals and republicans during Napoleon’s hundred-day rule, which was something like a revolution modeled on 1789. All of these groups were persecuted during the “White Terror” that followed the uprising.\textsuperscript{35}

There were no shortage of groups unhappy with the regime, but in the immediate aftermath of the second Bourbon restoration, stability was mostly welcomed. The King’s ministry took a relatively moderate course, which convinced many liberals to work within the system. The Indépendants, as the collection of Bonapartists, liberals, and republicans were known, increased their power in the elections held in the fall of 1819. The government also reached out to Bonapartists officers that had been banished from the army, and attempted to mold a more monarchist, elitist army.\textsuperscript{36} There were nevertheless rumblings: secret societies were established, such as L’Union, founded by Joseph Rey.

\textsuperscript{34} Only about 1.8\% of the population, the largest taxpayers, were enfranchised. The state actually granted tax rebates to reduce those eligible to vote.


who in 1816 attempted a republican coup. There were minor army uprisings, and unrest at the universities.  

In 1820, the level of revolutionary agitation increased significantly. In February, a Bonapartist assassinated the Duc de Berri, the only Bourbon considered likely to produce an heir to the throne. The ultraroyalists seized the moment. They blamed the center and left for creating the climate for the assassination. “The hand that struck the blow does not bear the heaviest guilt,” Chateaubriand wrote. They forced the resignation of the centrist head of the government, strict censorship was reinstated, and the government was given the authority to arrest without trial. Moreover, after violent debate, electoral reform was passed, which assured the conservatives a hold on power.

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39 The amount of deputy seats was expanded from 258 to 430, with the new 172 members selected by the richest quarter of the electorate in each district of France. Because this group also voted on the original 258 seats, it was dubbed the ‘law of the double vote.’ Consequently, the left lost heavily in the elections of November 1820. The assassination and political consequences for the Bourbon Restoration is elaborated in David Skuy, *Assassination, Politics and Miracles: France and the Royalist Reaction of 1820* (Montreal, QB: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).
This convinced many on the left that they could no longer work with the regime. Lafayette, for example, at this stage began actively plotting against the monarchy.40

La Charbonnerie, a collection of revolutionary secret societies, several formed before 1820, was inspired by the Italian carbonari, and founded by revolutionaries who had fled to Naples following prosecution of an earlier attempt at an uprising. It perhaps boasted 50,000 members. The aim was to infiltrate the army and use it against the regime. Several conspiracies were launched from 1821 to 1823, but were successfully repressed.41

**Opposition in Great Britain**

The political system that some of the more moderate liberals in France aspired to was Great Britain. Even given the French charter, Britain stood out amongst the great powers, as it had confirmed the ascendancy of the parliament vis-à-vis the monarchy in 1688. Future French king Charles X stated after his experience in exile in England that he would rather make a living as a woodcutter than be King of England, a sentiment his brother shared.42 The parliament and the cabinet had grown more autonomous from the monarchy in the preceding decade, as George III became incapacitated and his son


George IV had character deficits that undermined the monarchy.\textsuperscript{43} The King still retained some power – he could pick his ministers and his opinions on certain matters, such as Catholic emancipation, could not be ignored. But he was severely limited in contrast to his royal brethren.\textsuperscript{44} On the other hand, compared to the standards of parliamentary democracy, Britain was more similar than different from its Continental peers. Only 2.5\% of the population was enfranchised to vote for the lower house of Parliament; landed aristocracy still overwhelmingly dominated the government.\textsuperscript{45} Some English men and women wanted this to change.

Britain had faced serious political agitation in the aftermath of the French Revolution in the 1790s. Severe repression and the war with France, which roused patriotic sentiment as well as tainted the radicals with sedition, were among the factors that reduced the agitation to a simmer. But the grievances remained, and postwar economic difficulties only added fuel to the fire. The Corn Laws of 1815 were

\textsuperscript{43} Besides his debauchery, his lack of seriousness in political matters reduced the prestige and power of the monarchy.

\textsuperscript{44} For example, he objected to recognizing the Latin American republics because of the dangerous precedent of such liberal ideas, and threatened to dismiss his ministers unless they changed their policy, but in the face of a united cabinet, he was forced to back down. E. A. Smith, \textit{George IV} (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 228; Arthur Wellesley Wellington, \textit{Despatches, Correspondence, and Memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur Duke of Wellington, K. G.}, vol. 2 (London, UK: John Murray, 1867), 401-04.

particularly problematic. They forbade the importation of foreign cereals unless the
domestic price was at a certain level, thus benefiting the aristocratic landowners against
the mass of consumers. Passage of the law met wide scale popular protests and increased
pressure for political change.

There were many factions on the left that varied according to ends and means.
After the Corn Laws, associations agitating for reform called the Union societies or
Hampton clubs sprang up, but they were soon declared illegal. Reformers such as
William Cobbet advocated universal suffrage and annual parliaments, but he explicitly
advised against “secret Cabals” and instead to “trust to individual exertion and open
meetings.” The most popular radical orator of the day, Henry Hunt, used mass rallies of
dubious legality to pressure the government for change. He would reiterate his peaceful
intent, but warn the government to adopt the demands of the movement or it would face
revolutionary consequences. The Spenceans, named after revolutionary Thomas
Spence, had even more radical aims that included land redistribution. A minority in that
group aimed to create a spark that would ignite revolution across the country.

46 Malcom I. Thomis and Peter Holt, Threats of Revolution in Britain, 1789-1848 (London, UK: The

47 John Belchem, 'Orator’ Hunt: Henry Hunt and English Working-Class Radicalism (New York, NY:

48 An overview of the radicals and their activities for this period is in Thomis and Holt, Threats of
Revolution in Britain, 1789-1848, 29-84; Royle, Revolutionary Britannia? Reflections on the Threat of
Revolution in Britain, 42-60; David Worrall, Radical Culture: Discourse, Resistance and Surveillance,
1790-1820 (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 77-200; T. M. Parssinen, "The
(1972); Iain McCalman, Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries and Pornographers in London,
Revolutionary agitation seemed to build up steam in the second half of the decade. Spenceans utilized a mass rally in December of 1816 in Spa Fields outside of London to orchestrate an armed march and attack on the Tower of London. Three months later, the “Blanketeers,” thousands of blanket carrying weavers from Manchester, gathered to march to London to petition the Regent before they were dispersed. Several months later, there was an armed uprising by textile workers in Pentrich in Derbyshire.\(^{49}\) The wave of unrest continued in 1819, when a crowd between 60,000 to 100,000, the largest mass meeting in British history, gathered to hear Henry Hunt in a meeting at St. Peter’s Field outside of Manchester. Yeomanry cavalry dispersed the gathering, killing 11-15 people and injuring over 400.\(^{50}\) Dubbed the Peterloo massacre, a radical later wrote that he made up his mind on that day “that the time for Reform was past and the hour of Revolution had come.”\(^{51}\)

In the aftermath of Peterloo, there was revolutionary activity in the manufacturing areas of the north and London. In February of 1820, a group of Spenceans in London plotted to murder the entire Cabinet, but government spies foiled their plans. The leaders of what became known as the Cato Street Conspiracy were hung and decapitated. At the


\(^{50}\) See Donald Read, *Peterloo: The 'Massacre' and Its Background* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1958).

same time in the Glasglow area, authorities arrested members of the “Committee for Organizing a Provisional Government,” who had been causing unrest. A determined minority plowed forward, but an attempted march on Glasglow failed.52

There has been debate among historians over the extent to which revolutionary groups threatened Britain. An older position, which has since been largely dismissed, viewed much of the disturbances in postwar Britain as apolitical protests against economic conditions. Some still consider those who had revolutionary aims to be a relatively insignificant minority. Recent historical work, however, has challenged this view partly by taking governmental reports of seditious activity seriously.53

What has never been questioned, however, is that the government regarded the revolutionary threat as significant, as indicated by their actions. After the Spa Field riots, habeas corpus was suspended, shortly followed by the Seditious Meeting Act, which made it illegal to hold a meeting with over 50 people. Following Waterloo, the government passed the reviled Six Acts, which, among other things, further restricted public meetings, imposed heavy fines on seditious literature, increased the tax on newspapers and pamphlets to decrease their circulation, prohibited unauthorized military

53 Royle makes the assumption that “those responsible for policy at the Home Office were not stupid and that the evidence presented to them was neither wholly fabricated nor distorted beyond credibility.” Royle, Revolutionary Britannia? Reflections on the Threat of Revolution in Britain, 6. Some have played down certain uprisings as the product of spies and agents provocateurs, but Royle and others point out that these agents merely brought to light and in some cases led what was already a genuine movement. See his review of the historiography, ibid., 1-10.
drilling, and empowered the magistrate to search private property for arms. The government also heavily infiltrated radical organizations with spies.

No doubt the extent of revolutionaries was exaggerated because the government did not discern the sometimes thin line between advocating radical reform and revolution. As Lord Sidmouth, home secretary and former prime minister, stated, “An organized system has been established in every quarter, under the semblance of demanding parliamentary reform, but many of them, I am convinced, have that specious pretext in their mouths only, but revolution and rebellion in their hearts.”

The assumption of both the authorities and the revolutionaries was that some revolutionary spark could tip much of the populace. Castlereagh, whose job it was to shepherd bills such as the one suspending habeas corpus through the House of Commons, made a provision in his will so that his wife could sell her diamonds if necessary in the event of a revolution. After the Cato Street conspiracy, he carried two loaded pistols in the pockets of his breaches.

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55 Prime Minister Liverpool despaired that the economic difficulties they were facing would not have accounted for the political disturbances had it not been for the French Revolution, which had “shaken all respect for established authority and ancient institutions… I am sanguine enough to believe that the great body of the population is still sound, but it is impossible to say how long it will remain so.” Charles Duke Yonge, ed. *Life and Administration of Robert Banks, Second Earl of Liverpool, K.G., Late First Lord of the Tresury: Compiled from Origional Documents*, vol. II (London, UK: Macmillian and co., 1868), 431.

Summary

It is useful to contrast the nature of the domestic opposition among the great powers of Europe in the last chapter with this one. Prior to the French Revolution, there was a growing number of thinkers, in France and Britain in particular, that were questioning the foundations of the ancien régime. But this was still in the realm of philosophical speculation. Political contestation was within a certain system. After the French Revolution and subsequent upheaval, the nature of the system was called into question. Leaders were aware that their legitimacy, their right to rule, was rejected by some and tenuous among others. To be sure, revolutionaries explicitly organizing and agitating for changes were a small minority, like revolutionaries always are, but they were considered a dangerous threat in all the great powers – the possibility that they could tip the scales against the regime could not be ruled out. The concerns of the ruling class were exhibited in the state system of repression they established. Measures such as employing secret police and censorship to control the public atmosphere were hardly unknown during the period of the ancien régime, but those activities were greatly expanded.57

International Relations prior to the Revolutions

Having assessed the independent variables of interest – the degree to which the revolutions acted as a model and a platform and the extent of revolutionary opposition prior to the revolutions, I turn the international relations of the revolutions. To provide the context and assess whether these revolutions affected patterns of international politics, I first examine relations amongst the great powers and towards the revolutionary states prior to the revolts.

Great Power Relations

The basic outline of relations between the great powers was established at the end of the quarter century period of fighting and upheaval that made up the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. The great powers that emerged from the conflict were the same that existed twenty-five years prior: France, Great Britain, Russia, Austria and Prussia. With the exception of France, the allied powers were even more predominant in the international system than before the revolutionary period.

Napoleon had exploited differences between the powers, but his utter unwillingness to compromise had finally united the powers against him. The Treaty of Chaumont between the four powers opposing France in March of 1814 called for a reduction of France to her 1792 borders. Napoleon’s refusal to take their proposal seriously led the allies to call for the removal of Napoleon and a Bourbon restoration under Louis XVIII. After the fighting, Napoleon was exiled to the island of Elba. Napoleon’s return from exile and his one hundred days’ campaign revived the military alliance. After the second defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo a harsher settlement was
imposed on France. According to the Second Treaty of Paris, France was limited to the borders of 1790, had to pay an indemnity, and undergo a military occupation by the allied powers.

Prussia was still the weakest of the powers, though it had gained a portion of Saxony and territory on the left and right banks of the Rhine to help strengthen it as a barrier against French expansion. One of the notable features of the post war settlement was that there was no renewal of the rivalry between Prussia and Austria. Prussia cooperated with Austria, even followed its lead. The German Confederation was established, a defensive league with a federal parliament of the territories that included most of the German speaking peoples and a few others. Austria led the confederation, though in practice it conceded Prussian hegemony in North Germany. In Italy, the province of Lombardy was returned to Austria and the province of Venetia was added to it. The Italian states not under direct Austrian control were understood to be under Austrian protection.

Austria had worked closely with Britain at the Congress of Vienna to determine the shape of the post war world. Britain emerged from the conflict as the leading naval and commercial power. Its rights of searching neutral shipping remained, and it had acquired overseas territory from the Dutch and the French, as well as commercial privileges with Spanish America. On the Continent, however, Russia was the predominant power. Its occupation of Paris in 1814 was a display of that power which particularly alarmed Austria and Britain. When the Tsar demanded in Poland an autonomous constitutional kingdom under his protection, there was little the other powers
could do, given that Russia’s armies were already occupying Poland. In addition to

The other powers feared France and Russia from both a power political and
ideological perspective.\textsuperscript{58} In France there was the fear of what had happened before –

In France there was the fear of what had happened before another revolution occurring, leading to an expansionist France spreading their ideals across Europe. There also was a fear of the ideological predispositions of the Tsar, Alexander I. Alexander at times seemed to favor implementing liberal ideals, as evident in his establishment of an autonomous constitutional monarchy in Poland. The Tsar believed before 1820 that every nation should have the type of government that best suited it, which was not necessarily an absolute monarchy. The Tsar had even suggested that the Bourbon collapse upon the return of Napoleon meant the old charter was not liberal enough to reconcile throne and people.\textsuperscript{59} Austria in particular feared that Russian aims were to block Austrian influence in Germany and Italy, and that his agents were promoting liberalism in Germany and Italy.

Russia’s diplomacy did not entirely soothe their fears. The Tsar helped block an effort of Metternich to make an Italian confederation modeled in the German one, and, under the influence of his liberal foreign minister, Count Ioannis Capodistria, he did not endorse the Carlsbad Decrees but rather sounded out Castlereagh on a joint demarche.

\textsuperscript{58} Prussia, however, was more willing to cooperate with Russia in order to achieve its own aims, as is seen in their acceptance of Russia’s control over Poland provided it received Saxony, a demand that threatened to break the alliance apart.

\textsuperscript{59} Schroeder, \textit{The Transformation of European Politics, 1763–1848}, 523.
against them, infuriating Prussia and Austria. While the Powers were negotiating the Second Treaty of Paris in 1815, Alexander had proposed an alliance among the four allied powers where they would commit to shun the selfish diplomacy of ancient regime. Instead, sovereigns and peoples would unite to defend the sacred principles of the Christian gospel. Metternich revised the final version, eliminating the condemnation of the past and the future vision of merging states, attempting to shape it into conservative alliance of sovereigns committed to Christian principles. Descriptions of the alliance in historical works are almost invariably followed by Metternich and Castlereagh’s respective dismissals of the alliance as a “loud-sounding nothing” and a “piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense.”

The Quadruple Alliance was more practical, an alliance restricted to maintaining the terms of the Second Treaty of Paris. The Tsar had proposed that the powers should guarantee the whole Vienna settlement, as well as meeting occasionally to survey the internal affairs of European states, but he was rebuffed by Britain and Austria. British Foreign Secretary Castlereagh argued that no British government would accept such a

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61 Although the Holy Alliance would become known as an enforcer of conservatism, to the Tsar at this stage, it was pact of rulers to peoples. It did not uphold one regime type – the Tsar even invited the United States to join, though they declined.

commitment in the Continent, particularly in the support of absolutist governments. Metternich, on the other hand, feared the possibility of a Tsar with liberal proclivities meddling in Germany and Italy. In the Treaty the powers did, however, agree to “renew their Meetings at fixed periods... for the purpose of consulting upon their common interests... and for the maintenance of the Peace of Europe.”

The first meeting of what was dubbed the “Congress System” was in 1818 at Aix-la-Chapelle in Prussia, the main purpose of which was to deal with the problem of France. The Allies had been relatively generous with France, but there was significant resentment within France and fear among the Allies that discontent could lead to further upheaval in France. The allied occupation of France was very unpopular and in danger of completely discrediting the Bourbon monarchy. There was also fear that Russia would ally with France in order to gain Polish territories denied him at Vienna. Metternich had proposed to Castlereagh in 1817 an Austro-British alliance to check the Russians. Castlereagh instead was confident that the Tsar was in favor of the territorial and political status quo. The Quadruple Alliance agreed at the meeting at Aix-la-Chapelle to withdraw their troops and fix the final sum of reparations.

Alexander again proposed a general alliance, guaranteeing not only the existing territorial settlement between states, but the political order within states, backed up by an international army with the Russian army at its core. The Prussians, who were most fearful of French ambitions towards the Rhineland, were keen on this idea, but Austria and especially Britain were not. Castlereagh again could not sell that kind of

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63 Edward Hertsl, *The Map of Europe by Treaty Showing the Various Political and Territorial Changes Which Have Taken Place since the General Peace of 1814* (London, UK: Buttersworth, 1875), 375.
involvement on the Continent. Metternich was attracted to the idea of an alliance that preserved the political order. But neither Britain nor Austria was comfortable with giving Russia an excuse to meddle across the continent. The Tsar instead settled for a renewal of the Quadruple Alliance. But they also, in a second treaty, invited France in to the alliance system, so that the Quadruple Alliance became the Quintuple Alliance.

Before the revolutions in 1820, then, all the powers were allied with each other. The alliance was not without tensions. Austria and Britain were most content with the status quo, with Prussia following Austria’s lead. They cast a wary eye on Russia and France, but France had been successfully reincorporated into the alliance and Russia appeared content. The peace of 1815 had been maintained.

**Great Powers’ Relations with Spain and Portugal**

Spain and Portugal in the eighteenth century had been enemies allied with rival great powers. Spain was a colonial rival with Britain and it had joined in an alliance with Bourbon France, as discussed in the last chapter. This alliance reinforced the long-standing relationship between Britain and Portugal. Following the French Revolution, however, France declared war on Spain, and Portugal joined Spain against France in the First Coalition. After Spain was defeated, it allied with France and declared war on Britain. Following the brief peace between Napoleon and his opponents, Charles IV of Spain wanted to remain neutral, but Napoleon demanded a neutral subsidy while Britain attacked its shipping. Spain declared war on Britain again, and negotiated a treaty with France to conquer Portugal. Napoleon forced the Portuguese monarchy to flee to Brazil. He deposed the Spanish monarch and placed his brother on the throne, prompting a
national revolt. The British eventually beat back the French presence in Portugal and then Spain. Both countries emerged from the wars weakened and consumed with maintaining order at home and in their empires. Portugal remained an ally of Britain, while Spain attempted to move closer to the continental powers, particularly Russia, because of its dissatisfaction with British mediation between Spain and its Empire. Like all other of the neighboring states to France, its sovereignty was guaranteed by the powers in the Treaty of Vienna.

*Great Powers’ Relations with Piedmont/Sardinia*

On the other side of France, the Kingdom of Sardinia was ruled by the House of Savoy, which had expanded their holdings in the eighteenth century by cleverly picking the stronger side in conflicts between Spain, France, and Austria. The Diplomatic Revolution in 1748 that brought Austria and France together was a blow to their strategy, and from that date the dynasty was very cautious given their position as a vulnerable, second-tier power. The Kingdom moved into the French camp after they feared Britain would not protect them from becoming victims of Austrian expansion under Joseph II. The French Revolution turned Austria against France and the House of Savoy joined the First Coalition in 1793 against France, but they were beaten. The Kingdom was eventually dismantled and annexed to France, with the exception of Sardinia. With the defeat of Napoleon, the Congress of Vienna reestablished the Kingdom, including Piedmont, Savoy, and Sardinia, and also added the territory once ruled by the Republic of

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64 The Kingdom included the island of Sardinia and more importantly Piedmont, Nice, Savoy in northwest Italy/southeastern France.
Genoa to strengthen it as a barrier against French expansion. It still, however, was vulnerable to France without the help of Austria, though it also was wary of Austrian domination.

*Great Powers’ Relations with Kingdom of Two Sicilies*

The Kingdom of Two Sicilies consisted of the Kingdom of Naples and the Kingdom of Sicily, and was in Bourbon hands after Spain regained the territory from the Hapsburgs during the War of Polish Succession in 1734. Future Spanish king Charles III ruled the kingdom, and pulled its foreign policy from being subordinate to the Bourbons, especially Spain, to maintaining an “equilibrium” among the Bourbons and Hapsburgs. His son, Ferdinand, took the Kingdom to war against Revolutionary France in 1793, but was eventually beaten and consigned to rule over Sicily, which was under British protection. Napoleon put his brother Joseph on the throne until Napoleon’s flamboyant general, Joachim Murat, replaced him. The Allies allowed Murat to remain the King of Naples as a condition of defecting from Napoleon, but when Murat joined Napoleon during the Hundred Days, Metternich had his excuse to depose him and restore Ferdinand as King of the Two Sicilies. Like other Italian states, the Two Sicilies was in the Austrian sphere of influence.

*Great Powers’ Relations with Greece/Ottoman Empire*

Prior to the Greek revolt, what became modern Greece was part of the Ottoman Empire, which had been in long-term decline since its defeat at Vienna in 1683. The eighteenth century saw an erosion of its holdings to the Hapsburg and Russian Empires.
Russia emerged as the predominant threat toward the end of the century. The Ottoman Empire showed little ability to resist Russian advances. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca concluding the Russo-Turkish war of 1768-1778 gave the Russians a foothold on the Black Sea and provided Russia the responsibility to protect the Ottoman subjects of Orthodox faith. Russia annexed Crimea in 1783 and with Austria fought another war against the Ottomans. Catherine II’s “Greek Project” was to partition the Ottoman dominions in the Balkans between Austria and Russia, establish an independent kingdom in Romania, and restore the Byzantine Empire under Catherine’s grandson. The dream was deferred when Joseph II died and Austria became consumed with the effects of the French Revolution. France had been the traditional protector of the Ottoman Empire against Hapsburg and then Russian aggression. Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt caused the Turks to join Britain and Russia against France, but they soon switched sides to the French. In the course of the Napoleonic Wars, they allied with all the major protagonists at some point, and their strategy of picking the winning side was successful – the Empire had avoided partition and emerged with only a minimal loss of territory. They were still weak, and dependent on the restraint or balancing of Great Power rivalries to prevent partition. Britain and France had no designs on the Balkans, and Austria too, reversing its old position, did not want to extend its territory south. Whether Russia would resume its aggression toward the Ottoman Empire was an open question, one that would come in to play when revolutions swept the continent.

During the conflict, the Russians instigated an insurrection in Greece, which, although ultimately unsuccessful, weakened the Turks and contributed to a Russian victory.
International Relations of the Revolts of 1820-21

Did the outbreak of revolutions in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece inspire fears of contagion among leaders that affected their foreign policies, namely in a manner that was hostile to the revolutionary state and cooperative with other states? I turn first to Spain, where revolution first broke out.

Initial Response to the Spanish Revolution

The news of the revolt in Spain was treated with varying degrees of alarm in the capitals of the great powers. The initial military insurrection did not garner much attention in Britain, France and Austria. They expected that the Spanish government would easily suppress the uprising and besides, these powers were consumed with domestic matters. But when the revolution spread and the king was forced to restore the radical constitution of 1812, the anxiety of these powers increased dramatically. Metternich feared a chain reaction across Europe; Wellington told Richelieu that the revolution was a catastrophe greater than Napoleon’s return from Elba. The Tsar was not so much against the 1812 constitution, but he instinctively recoiled from military insurrections. He had been alarmed at the outset. Even before the triumph of the

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67 Had the principles of the 1812 constitution emanated from the throne, the Tsar said, they would be “conservative” and thus legitimate. Arising from an insurrection, they were “subversive.” Russell H. Bartley, *Imperial Russia and the Struggle for Latin American Independence, 1808-1828* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1978), 135.
revolution he sent a dispatch to the Allies anticipating the need for intervention should
the king not be able to suppress the revolt. Prussia heartily seconded the Tsar’s
concern. 68 Russian foreign minister Capodistria proposed a Quadruple Alliance meeting
to discuss the internal situation of both Spain and France.

Castlereagh objected to the Alliance interfering in the affairs of Spain both
because he thought it would be ineffective and because on a broader level he did not want
the Alliance to have a general policy of regulating the internal affairs of other states. He
outlined his position on the Russian proposal in his State Paper of May 5th. 69 Castlereagh
provided a litany of reasons why it was unwise and impractical to intervene in Spain
either militarily or diplomatically: There was as yet no one to negotiate with, and a
meeting and statement from the Allies would likely inflame rather than mollify the
revolutionaries. There was already a faction of moderates in Spain trying to reform the
1812 constitution, and an Allied declaration containing the same demands would simply
make their job harder. The Allies had to be reserved with their words, and be willing to
back them up with force, but that was not an option in this case. The Spanish would

68 Lawrence J. Baack, Christian Bernstorff and Prussia: Diplomacy and Reform Conservatism, 1818-1832
(New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1980), 80; Charles William Vane, Third Marquess of
Londonderry, ed. Correspondence, Despatches, and Other Papers, of Viscount Castlereagh, Second
Marquess of Londonderry, vol. 12 (London, UK: John Murray, 1853), 223-24; Webster, The Foreign
Policy of Castlereagh, 1815-1822: Britain and the European Alliance, 227-33; Schroeder, Metternich's
Diplomacy at Its Zenith, 1820-1823, 26.

69 The document is reprinted in A. W. Ward and G. P. Gooch, eds., The Cambridge History of British
never accept Allied occupation.\textsuperscript{70} It would also be dangerous to militarily intervene because troops would not be available to suppress internal dissidents, the armies would get contaminated by revolutionary ideals, and it would further weaken states with debt, making them more vulnerable to revolt.

Castlereagh made clear that intervention in the internal affairs of Spain went beyond the original intention of the Alliance, and would be destructive for the Alliance. We may all agree that the Spanish revolt is a dangerous example, inconsistent with “monarchical Government,” Castelreagh said, and we “may also agree, with shades of difference, that the consequence of this state of things in Spain may eventually bring danger home to all our own doors, but it does not follow, that We have therefore equal means of action on this opinion.”\textsuperscript{71} King Ferdinand and his cause were not popular with the British public, and the populace did not regard Britain’s immediate interests at stake as long as Spain was not attempting to expand abroad. “In this country at all times, but especially at the present conjuncture, when the whole Energy of the State is required to unite reasonable men in defense of our existing Institutions… public sentiment should not be distracted or divided, by any unnecessary interference of the Government in events, passing abroad, over which they can have none, or at best but very imperfect means of control.”\textsuperscript{72} The “purely monarchical” states such as Russia, on the other hand, did not have to contend with such public opinion. The Alliance was never meant to be a world government. Beyond the impracticalities of implementation, the states would not be able

\textsuperscript{70} Castlereagh used Wellington as his authority, and the context was the fierce Spanish resistance to Napoleon’s occupation a decade earlier.

\textsuperscript{71} Ward and Gooch, \textit{The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1919}, 627-28.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 628-29.
to agree to a general principle upon which to intervene in the internal affairs of other
states. The solution at this point was to preserve harmony among allied states and
exercise vigilance with the secret police. The Allies could confer amongst each other
privately and act if something more immediate and specific, an acute danger that
everyone could agree on, were to arise. The State Paper did not announce a general
policy of nonintervention, as is sometimes portrayed. Rather it held that there should not
be a general system of intervention as a part of the alliance system, which would rip it
apart. They needed to limit themselves to what they could agree on.\(^{73}\)

Metternich followed Castlereagh’s lead. He rejected Allied intervention using
many of the same arguments. His fear of contagion from Spain had subsided a bit, but
more to the point he regarded the intervention of Russia and France in Spain as
unacceptable. He did not want Russian troops marching through Germany on their way
to Spain, and he did not trust the French army – if it was loyal, it should remain to protect
Louis XVIII and if not a Spanish expedition would be the excuse to overthrow the king.
He also did not favor their solutions to the problem. Both France and Russia had
proposed not merely that the revolution should be suppressed but that a moderate

\(^{73}\) Thus the State Paper was merely saying more forcefully what had been the British response to the same
Russian proposal at Aix-la-Chapelle to expand the alliance into a body to regulate the internal affairs of
states, as well as the discussions in 1819 over Germany and France. Castlereagh’s memorandum on the
Russian proposal is reproduced in C. K. Webster, *The Congress of Vienna, 1814-1815* (London, UK: G.
Bell & Sons, 1934), 166-71. See esp. pp. 170-71, as well as Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh,
1815-1822: Britain and the European Alliance*, 149-52. Castlereagh nevertheless deplored the
revolutionary activity in Germany and had approved of the Austrian’s actions in private, including the
Carlsbad Decrees, but felt he could not do so publicly.
constitution, like the French Charte, could be granted by royal will rather than insurrection, and thereby reconcile King and subjects. Metternich welcomed what he regarded as the Tsar’s newfound zeal against revolution, and sought to steer him in a more conservative direction. But at this stage he was content to let the Spanish Revolution burn itself out, and only assist Spanish royals with money and arms at their initiative.⁷⁴

*Revolution in Naples*

Metternich was shocked, however, when the Spanish revolt spread to Naples. As might be expected, Austria, as the most proximal power, was immediately alarmed. Metternich “varied his metaphors between conflagrations, torrents, and earthquakes.”⁷⁵ The outbreak at Naples was a surprise – the kingdom was regarded as relatively well governed, in contrast to Spain. Metternich had considered it the most stable of all the Italian states he visited on a tour the previous year. One option was to let the Neapolitans stew in their own juice and hope for a counterrevolutionary coup d’état, but waiting on that possibility was considered simply too dangerous given the fear of contagion. Metternich decided that the revolution must be crushed. On the military front, he began reinforcing his army in Lombardy-Venitia. But the diplomatic front was just as important – he wanted the moral support of the other powers. For the most part, the German and Italian states fully supported Metternich. Whatever fear they had of Austrian hegemony

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⁷⁵ Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, 1815-1822: Britain and the European Alliance*, 264.
was superceded by a fear of revolutionary contagion.\textsuperscript{76} Their concern was rather that Austria might not send enough troops to fully crush the revolution.\textsuperscript{77} The Prussians fully concurred with Austria’s policy.

The British representative in Naples expressed alarm at the effect the revolution would have on Italy and sympathized with the security of Austrian possessions. Where Cabinet members could express themselves more freely, in private letters and conversations, they went much further. Wellington, for example, stated “It is time to make and example.” He insisted that the Austrians “must march.”\textsuperscript{78} Although the British encouraged Austria to take care of it, Castlereagh was clear from the outset that Austria could not expect direct British assistance or even moral support. Certainly the Alliance should not be summoned for the cause.

\textsuperscript{76} Schroeder, \textit{Metternich's Diplomacy at Its Zenith, 1820-1823}, 44. There is a parallel with the Gulf states accepting Saudi hegemony through the formation of the GCC in the face of threats from the Iranian Revolution, discussed in chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{77} One partial exception of enthusiasm was the Papal States, which Austria would have to march through to invade Naples. Cardinal Consalvi, the secretary of state for the Papal States, desired to see the revolution crushed but did not want to openly support Austrian policy to uphold his position of neutrality in disputes between Christian princes, and so as to not provoke a Neapolitan invasion. He was also wary of Austrian domination, but did not want to be an obstacle to counterrevolution. Rather than formally grant Austrian troops passage, he requested that Austria not ask so that he could accept a fait accompli and preserve his neutrality. See Reinerman, \textit{Austria and the Papacy in the Age of Metternich: Between Conflict and Cooperation, 1809-1830}, 1, 78-81; Brady, \textit{Rome and the Neapolitan Revolution of 1820-1821: A Study of Papal Neutrality}, 57-63, passim.

\textsuperscript{78} Quennell, \textit{The Private Letters of Princess Lieven to Prince Metternich, 1820-1826}, 41; Webster, \textit{The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, 1815-1822: Britain and the European Alliance}, 263.
Metternich was pleased at Britain’s private endorsement, the best he could get under the circumstance. A bigger concern was the Tsar. Metternich had been complaining about Alexander’s support of liberals the past five years, particularly in Italy, and indeed the Tsar had been encouraging some of their ends, though not their means.\(^79\) It was this encouragement from Russia that convinced some revolutionaries they would be protected from Austrian repression. Metternich worried that if the Tsar gave them encouragement, the emboldened revolutionaries would arise throughout Germany and Italy.

Both Russia and France had a similar reaction to the revolution – both condemned it, but neither wanted to simply let Austria have its way.\(^80\) They pushed for an Allied forum to deal with the problem, which would give them a say in the intervention and what the outcome would be for the Neapolitan government. Metternich had no desire for such input, principally because there were elements in both France and Russia that wanted to modify the constitution in Naples to resemble the French charter, to which he was totally opposed. He wanted an absolute monarchy. Also, working through the Alliance would alienate Britain. Metternich proposed an informal allied conference, committed in advance to the moral support of Austria. Castlereagh let it be known that he could not even publicly announce their policy of refusing recognition to the revolutionary regime for fear of the public reaction.\(^81\)

\(^79\) Reinerman, "Metternich, Alexander I, and the Russian Challenge in Italy, 1815-20."

\(^80\) France in particular had fears that Austria would use this as an excuse to extend their rule in Italy. Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy at Its Zenith, 1820-1823*, 48.

\(^81\) Ibid., 51.
Metternich could successfully ignore France and even Britain, but not Russia. He needed Russia’s blessing to act unilaterally in Naples. Russia insisted on an Allied conference, and Metternich tried in vain to bring Castlereagh around to the idea, arguing that without the Alliance the revolution would triumph and Alexander would be unrestrained, but to no effect. Castlereagh, worried that Metternich’s plans would embarrass him and his government, said that Britain was now forced to take a position of neutrality on the Naples question. This in turn had ripple effects on France. The French foreign minister admitted, “We find ourselves in a certain way forced by the conduct of England to modify our original intensions.”

Both constitutional powers could not be seen cavorting with the Holy Alliance against a revolution. Thus Austria, Prussia and Russia arranged a conference to be held at Troppau in Austria in October 1820, with Britain and France only sending observers.

With Prussia completely backing Austria, the question was whether Metternich could win Russia over to his position. His threat was Capodistria and the possible sway he held over the Tsar. Capodistria was no revolutionary, but he thought the anecdote to revolution was to provide liberal constitutions. He was against Austria’s proposals to

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82 Ibid., 57.

83 Capodistria told his diplomats “the infection which menaces all the states of Europe is formidable only to the extent that governments open an access to it by unpardonable improvidence.” Governments had to choose between the “wise and reasonable establishment of liberal ideas or the reversion of old institutions.” Metternich’s advisor, Frederick Von Gentz, assessed that Capodistria “mistakenly believes that the maintenance of order is compatible with the ascendency of liberal ideas.” Woodhouse, Capodistria: The Founder of Greek Independence, 243; Grimsted, The Foreign Ministers of Alexander I: Political Attitudes and the Conduct of Russian Diplomacy, 1801-1825, 235.
reinstall Ferdinand in Naples as absolute ruler. Metternich played his hand well. He justified intervention on the secret treaty the Kingdom of Two Sicilians had made with Austria not to change their form of government without Austria’s consent and on the general danger the revolution posed to Europe as a negative example. Regarding the form of government that would be set up in the intervention’s wake, Metternich sidestepped a debate on the merits of forms of government by simply insisting it was up to the legitimate sovereign, not coerced, to decide what form of government he preferred. He added a provision that the government established must not be one that would be “in opposition to the internal tranquility of neighboring states.”

This of course meant the reinstatement of the King on absolutist terms. Metternich reminded the Tsar that neither Russia nor Austria were constitutional states.

At this point, the Tsar did not need much convincing. Already souring on liberal causes given his frustrations in Poland and the internal developments in France, his alarm at the military revolts in Spain and Naples was greatly magnified by the Semenovsky Revolt. He backed unilateral Austrian action to crush the revolution; Capodistria was sidelined. The preliminary Protocol of Troppau stated the matter in more general terms: “States which have undergone a change of government, due to revolution, the results of which threaten other States, ipso facto cease to be members of the European Alliance, and remain excluded from it until their situation gives guarantees of legal order and stability. If, owing to such alterations, immediate danger threatens other States, the

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84 Schroeder, Metternich’s Diplomacy at Its Zenith, 1820-1823, 77.
Powers bind themselves, by peaceful means, or if need be by arms, to bring back the guilty State into the bosom of the Great Alliance.”

Metternich had risked his close relationship with Britain, geopolitically, the more natural alliance, in favor of Russian support against revolution. He hoped at least the British would hold their tongue. Castlereagh made public his arguments in the 1820 state paper to distance his government from the actions of the Eastern powers as Parliamentary members railed against the government for cavorting with the “Holy Alliance.” But the Austrian ambassador to London accurately described him as “like a great lover of music who is at Church; he wishes to applaud but he dare not.” In France, some, particularly on the left, eyed a chance to restore French influence in the Italian peninsula, as well as support a more radical regime. Conservatives backed Austrian actions for the opposite reason. French policy in the face of these forces was to do nothing, and hope the Austrians completed their work quickly, while they, like Britain, publicly distanced themselves from Austria’s actions.

Revolution in Piedmont

While the powers reconvened their conference in Laibach, the revolution in Piedmont broke out. The Piedmont government appealed to Austria for support. The local representative for Russia pushed for mediation to prevent Austrian intervention, but

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86 Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, 1815-1822: Britain and the European Alliance*, 326.

87 Bertier de Sauvigny, *The Bourbon Restoration*, 175-76. The divide in French foreign policy was not entirely left-right. Ultra-royalist Count Pierra Blacas wanted to check Austria and draw closer to Russia. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763–1848*, 609.
Tsar Alexander completely supported crushing the revolution, and proposed to march 100,000 men to do so. This was in part to discourage the French from meddling. Some thought that France was behind this revolution, and in fact the French representative in Turin urged his government to support the uprising. But the French government refused. France proposed to mediate, but they were not supported by the British. Castlereagh preferred that the revolt be suppressed by the French or Austrians, if it could not be put down internally. 88 All the powers, France and Britain more discretely, approved of the quick work made of the revolution – loyal Piedmontese troops assisted by the Austrians troops crushed the revolution in April.

_Revolution in Greece_

Word of the Greek Revolt reached the great powers as they were conferring at Laibach. Much more than the other revolutions, this revolt had major geopolitical implications. At stake was not just the nature of a regime, but the fate of the Ottoman empire and the implications for Russian power. The officer in the Russian army who initiated the revolt in fact intended to incite a Russo-Turkish war, which would enable the liberation of Greeks from Ottoman rule. It was feared that such a war could lead to the collapse of Ottoman rule. This had been the aim of Alexander’s grandmother, Catherine II.

The initial response of Alexander provided some comfort to the other powers. He disavowed any involvement, and gave the Turks a green light to repress the revolts. The revolt in the Danubian principalities ruled by Greeks was relatively easily taken care of,

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88 Webster, _The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, 1815-1822: Britain and the European Alliance_, 329-31.
but there was a genuinely popular revolt in Greece. The Turks’ brutal manner of suppressing the revolt, including the massacres of Greeks and the hanging of the Patriarch of Constantinople, increasingly raised the ire of the Russians, along with their violations against Russian treaty rights: direct Turkish occupation of the Danubian Principalities, interference with Russian trade through the straights, and their allowance of Russian property to be destroyed in Constantinople. Russia broke ties with the Turks in July of 1821, but the Turks were uncompromising.

For Austria, the best solution was for the Turks to crush the revolution as quickly as possible. Metternich feared that a war could stimulate revolutionary activity, and he supported Turkish rule because “the interest of Europe pronounces against any major political change.”\(^89\) He was funneling reports to the Tsar that the revolutionaries were only waiting for the outbreak of war between Russia and Turkey to make their move.\(^90\) He pressed the Pope to condemn the Greek revolt, not wanting Alexander or other Catholic states an excuse to favor Greek independence.\(^91\) And he conferred with

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\(^90\) Whether it was due to Metternich’s reports or not, the Tsar accepted this view: “If we reply to the Turks with war the Paris directing committee will triumph and no government will be left standing. I do not intent to leave a free field to the enemies of order. At all costs means must be found of avoiding war with Turkey.” Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923: A Study in International Relations*, 72.

\(^91\) Metternich’s strong efforts to get the Pope to condemn the Greek revolt and also the Carbonari shows how he viewed the Pope as playing a critical role in supporting the established order, the so called union of throne and alter, and the importance Metternich placed on preserving a larger moral climate that would
Castlereagh to restrain Alexander. Britain had no interest in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and an expansion of Russian influence, and Castlereagh was not sympathetic to the Greek revolt. Alexander did not appreciate the Austro-British collusion against him, and at one point reached out to the French for an alliance against the Porte. There was some support on both the left and right in the Chamber to exploit the Greek situation, but the cabinet under Richeleau declined, and the new ultra-royalist cabinet under Villéle continued that policy. Prussia was the most outwardly sympathetic to Russian aims, though it too urged restraint.

The Alliance had thus made clear their position favoring Russian restraint, but they had nothing more than moral leverage to use against Russia. The British took the strongest stance against the Russians, and they merely threatened to remain neutral in a possible Russo-Turkish war. Russia knew there would not be any significant resistance by the great powers for Russian action against the Ottomans, and moreover the Tsar and most other government officials assumed that a war with Turkey would be relatively easily won. And the Tsar had a compelling list of reasons to fight: geopolitical advantage, Russian economic interests, and as a protector of his fellow Orthodox Christians, whose plight found sympathy among Russians. Given the ease and interests,


it is not surprising that many Russian officials advised Alexander to take action, not the least of which was one of his foreign ministers, Capodistria.93

Alexander, however, refused to intervene, leading to the resignation of Capodistria. Why did Alexander not take action? However he despised the Sultan, Alexander had to admit that he was the legitimate ruler and the Greeks were usurpers.94 And any conflict with the Porte would only aid the revolutionary cause. To the British ambassador he said, “I am sensible of the danger which surrounds us all. When I look to the state of France and the new Ministry – when I see the state of Spain and Portugal, when I see, as I do see, the state of the whole world, I am well aware that the smallest spark which falls upon such combustible materials may kindle a flame which all our efforts may perhaps hereafter be insufficient to extinguish.”95 Paul Schroeder pointedly

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94 Ones, he thought, with Jacobin ideas. “I could have permitted myself to be swept along by the enthusiasm for the Greeks,” he told the Prussian envoy, “but I have never forgotten the impure origin of the rebellion or the danger of my intervention for my allies.” Cited in Henry A. Kissinger, A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812-1822 (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), 308.

95 Webster, The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, 1815-1822: Britain and the European Alliance, 388.
claims that Alexander’s policy was driven by the desire to preserve the Alliance rather than an anti-revolutionary strategy. But Matthew Rendall rightly critiques this as a false dichotomy. In the Tsar’s view, the major purpose of the Alliance was to ward off revolution. He told the French ambassador in 1822, “The only aim of the Alliance is that for which it was formed: to combat revolution.”

_Dealing with the Revolution in Spain_

With the Italian revolts contained, the increasing polarization in Spanish politics between extreme right and extreme left, which led to a state of anarchy, brought the issue to the forefront of the great powers. After the failure of a royalist coup in 1822, Ferdinand VII repeatedly appealed to the Tsar or the French to come to his rescue. Frenchmen, conservative and liberal, had been slipping over the border to aid their respective sides. The government had already sent troops to the Pyrenees supposedly to contain an outbreak of yellow fever in Spain; in June of 1822 these forces were reinforced and organized as a cordon sanitaire. There were three camps in the French government: one that wished to crush the revolution in concert with the Allied powers, another that desired France crush the revolution on her own, and a third that wanted to

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97 Rendall, "Russia, the Concert of Europe, and Greece, 1821-29: A Test of Hypotheses About the Vienna System," 71.


stay out. The government had largely been in the third camp.\textsuperscript{100} There were several reasons for this position. There was dissatisfaction with the Spanish king, and a concern that once he was restored he would continue his gross misrule, which would foment radicalism. More importantly, the potential venture was regarded as too costly and especially too dangerous, given the unreliability of the army and the potential for French forces to get bogged down in Spain. Along with foreign observers, government officials worried that a military intervention in Spain would provide an opportunity for liberal elements in the French army to turn on the monarchy.\textsuperscript{101} However, in the new Villéle ministry, the new foreign minister Montmorency was an ardent royalist, and pressed for a ministerial conference to consider how to come to Ferdinand’s aid.

Tsar Alexander advocated creating a European army to put an end to the revolution. He first suggested this could be done directly, but when Austria objected, he proposed that the army could stand by to protect France from revolution in the event that they intervened in Spain.\textsuperscript{102} Metternich tried to gently point out the difficulties in this position. Alexander demanded that a deliberation on Spanish intervention be a major part of the upcoming great power conference in Verona.

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., 195-97.

\textsuperscript{101} The French had ample evidence that the reliability of the troops specifically intervening in Spain was a cogent problem, including propaganda being circulated, uncovered conspiracies, and defections to Spain. At a review of troops in 1820, an officer had stepped out of line and told the Duc de Berri, heir to the throne, that if he wanted to send them to Spain, they would refuse to obey. Savigear, "Carbonarism and the French Army, 1815-1824," 204, passim.

\textsuperscript{102} Schroeder, Metternich's Diplomacy at Its Zenith, 1820-1823, 203.
Metternich, with Prussia at his side, was hostile to the Spanish Revolution, but he was even less satisfied with the solutions on the table to solve the problem. For both geopolitical and ideological reasons he disliked the idea of either Russia or France marching into Spain. He was uncomfortable with encouraging either Russian or French ambitions, and he feared that they would encourage Ferdinand to grant a constitution as a compromise. “A king must never make the sacrifice of any part of his authority whatsoever,” Metternich claimed. “The only sense of the word Constitution that is admissible in the monarchical system is that of an organization of public powers under the supreme, indivisible, and inalienable authority of the monarch… In every other sense, Constitution is the equivalent of anarchy and the supposed division of powers is the death of monarchical government.”

While Metternich gingerly rejected the Russian proposal as impractical, at the same time he suggested that the French were not to be trusted with intervention. To France, he warned of Russian interference in French affairs should they march.

Metternich counted on Castlereagh to help restrain Russia and France. He considered Castlereagh’s suicide just before the Verona conference as a personal blow. His replacement was Canning, whom Metternich despised as a shameless opportunist who would undermine the principles of European peace for the sake of popularity at home. In fact, the differences between Castlereagh and Canning were more of style than substance. Their position on intervention in Spain was essentially the same. They hoped that the revolution would burn itself out and a moderate government would emerge from internal unrest. And they were irritated at French meddling in Spain that encouraged the

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103 Ibid., 201 ft. 22.
polarization of the situation. It has been suggested that Canning actually favored French intervention in Spain as a means to separate France from the continental powers and break the great power concert system, which was disliked by British public opinion and thought to restrain British freedom of action. But this has been shown not to be the case. Canning consistently opposed French intervention in Spain. There were a variety of reasons, the biggest was that he thought France would get bogged down in Spain and it would incite revolution in France itself.\textsuperscript{104} Canning sent Wellington to Verona as an observer to help prevent French intervention.

Metternich tried to keep the discussion away from French intervention, and initiated a plan of joint moral action – to get all the five powers to break their relations with Spain. French foreign minister Montmorency was sent to Verona with instructions not to broach the issue but feel the allies out on their view of Spain. But Montmorency exceeded his instructions, thinking it was better to cloak French policy in the alliance, and if they were going to lead the operation, they needed to broach the topic. Alexander had still entertained the idea of a European army but shifted and supported a French intervention. Austria and Prussia waffled. Metternich tried to tie the French down to an Allied policy of breaking relations with Spain and supporting French aid to the royalist rebels.\textsuperscript{105} Prime Minister Villèle, however, did not want to break relations with Spain

\textsuperscript{104} The view of Canning favoring French intervention propagated by the influential work of Temperley, \textit{The Foreign Policy of Canning, 1822-1827: England, the Neo-Holy Alliance, and the New World}. This view is decisively refuted by Norihito Yamada, “George Canning and the Spanish Question, September 1822 to March 1823,” \textit{The Historical Journal} 52, no. 2 (2009).

\textsuperscript{105} Minus Britain, who thought the strategy would only embolden the radicals and marginalize the moderates.
until they were ready to march, which they were increasingly ready to do. The counterrevolution in Spain was collapsing, and there was a corresponding increasing support for a more belligerent French policy in the government.

By January of 1823, King Louis XVIII had decided on war. Metternich threatened withdrawal of allied support, but he dropped his opposition when he realized that his fear of France imposing a moderate constitution was misplaced – foreign minister Chateaubriand had similar views.106 Canning still opposed French intervention, and attempted to get the Spaniards to modify their constitution, but when they refused, he gave up. The French army crossed the border into Spain in the spring of 1823, quickly crushed the revolution and reinstalled Ferdinand on the throne. Metternich wrote Chateaubriand a congratulatory note: “I regard it as one of the happiest chances, as much for the consolidation of matters in France, as for the weal [sic] of the entire social body, that it has been part of the destiny of a country, which has been the asylum of so many insurrections, to be called upon to strike a blow at revolution, from which, if struck with vigour [sic], it can never revive.”107 Canning, obviously pleased his fears were not realized, remarked, “Never had an army done so little harm and prevented so much of it.”108 French troops remained in Spain until 1827.

106 Metternich still made a secret agreement between Ferdinand and the Eastern Powers that he would not promise any changes while in captivity. Schroeder notes that he kept the spirit if not the letter of the agreement by making many promises to the revolutionaries and repudiating them all once French forces liberated him. Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy at Its Zenith, 1820-1823*, 235.


Great Power Response to Portugal

When revolution spread to Portugal in September 1820 after the Spanish Revolution, the great powers reacted negatively. But, in contrast to elsewhere, any kind of direct action by the Continental powers in Portugal was never considered. They respected Britain’s longstanding ties with Portugal. By virtue of geography, there was little they could do directly, anyway. Portugal was isolated, and Britain had control of the seas. Castlereagh put pressure on King John to come back from Brazil to deal with the situation, but he warned the king that he should not rely on the Holy Alliance to “reconquer” Portugal by force, nor would Britain support the reestablishment of his absolute authority. The king retuned in July of 1821 and accepted the new constitutional regime, but the domestic crisis remained. There were counterrevolutionaries in the Court and liberals in the Cortes pulling in opposite directions. Castlereagh hewed a middle line – he would not support an absolutist reaction by King John, but he would not be tied to the increasingly radical agenda of the liberals, even when they pressed for a British guarantee against the Holy Alliance and alternatively threatened to bind themselves to Spain.109

The conservative reaction within Portugal gained strength and, emboldened by the French invasion of Spain, the son of King John, Dom Miguel, and a portion of the army rose up in May 1823. They compelled the king to dismiss the Cortes and withdraw the constitution. The king immediately afterward promised to grant another constitution, though he did not. He did appoint moderates to his cabinet, among them a pro-British

109 Webster, The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, 1815-1822: Britain and the European Alliance, 250-55.
foreign minister, who called on British help to repress the reactionaries. Canning refused. Oftentimes portrayed as a defender of liberalism, Canning wrote in private that the counterrevolution “is just what one could wish.” “Those revolutionists,” he said, were “the scum of the earth”… “fierce, rascally, thieving, ignorant ragamuffins, hating England and labouring with all their might to entrap us into war.”

All four continental powers were pressuring King John revoke his promise to issue a constitution. In the spring of 1824 he did issue a decree to reassemble the ancient Cortes, a relic of the ancien régime estate system, far from a democratic parliamentary system. Nevertheless, Dom Miguel used this as a trigger for a coup against his father. He assembled troops and surrounded the king’s palace. The diplomatic corps forced their way in and insisted on the safety of the king. Eventually the standoff broke and Dom Miguel backed down – he was sent into exile.

With the reactionaries gone, there were two main factions in the Court: the pro-French and the pro-British. The French ambassador was aggressively courting the king and promising French military aid. The pro-British faction asked for British troops. Canning assessed that he was on the horns of a dilemma – if he refused to send troops, he would lose Portugal to French influence, but if he sent troops, he would either have to do so “in concurrence with France, and the powers of the Continent; and then behold us associated with their schemes, and converts to the principles of the Holy Alliance, or we must do (as at all we should do it) without their leave, and then who shall say to what this

first step may lead?” Fortunately, he did not have to pick between abandoning an ally, an embarrassing situation, and a dangerous escalation. The French foreign minister let Britain know that the French ambassador in Portugal was making unauthorized steps, and he approved a statement that stated the French had no designs on Portugal. The French ambassador further got himself into trouble by approving of King John’s summoning of the Cortes, which infuriated Spain and the Holy Alliance. He was sent on a leave of absence. Britain eventually sidelined the pro-French faction through diplomatic means. King John’s “moderate” absolutism reigned, with British support – he never issued another constitution.

When the king died in 1826, a council of regency he had appointed determined that his eldest son, Dom Pedro, would ascend the throne. Dom Pedro, king of Brazil and genuine liberal, disconnected from the concerns of European monarchs, renounced the crown for himself and gave it to his eight year old daughter, who was to marry his younger brother, Dom Miguel, and a council of regency was to govern until she came of age. But he also granted Portugal a relatively liberal constitution, as he had done in Brazil. The monarchs on the continent were flabbergasted and infuriated. Metternich


112 The liberalism of Dom Pedro is elaborated in Neill Macaulay, *Dom Pedro: The Struggle for Liberty in Brazil and Portugal, 1798-1834* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1986). The constitution was a modified version of Brazil’s 1824 constitution. Knowing he had to give up Portugal to keep Brazil, he decided to strike a blow for liberty, though he deliberately devised the Portuguese constitution as less liberal, granting a house of lords for the hereditary nobility and absolute veto power for the king. Ibid.,
declared that “it threatens with death and destruction the social order, for it would be
difficult not to regard the revolution sanctioned in Portugal as a true unchaining [of
forces].” He predicted there would be a chain reaction on Spain and from there France,
Italy, and all of Europe.\(^{113}\)

Canning was himself annoyed by the upheaval. He thought the constitution was
too democratic, and he had to explain to the other powers that Britain was not responsible
for Dom Pedro’s actions, despite the role of a British diplomat in conveying the message.
But he felt he could not reverse course: he desired to keep a policy of nonintervention in
internal affairs, and besides, Britain was hardly in a position to reject the right of a king
to issue a constitution. The Holy Alliance was in a bind. They had previously skirted
debates over the merits of the liberal constitutions put forth by the revolutions in Spain
and Italy by simply arguing that the compacts were not granted by the legitimate monarch
and therefore unacceptable. But in this case, it was the legitimate monarch that granted
the constitution.\(^{114}\)

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114 Canning noted the situation to the British representative in Portugal: “It will indeed be singular if after
having put down the constitutional systems (however little worth maintaining) of Naples and Spain, not for
their worthlessness, but simply and declaredly because they were not octroyés by the sovereign, the same
powers should now combine against the Constitutional Charter of Portugal which (whatever else its merits)
is decidedly and unquestionably the emanation of the grace and free will of the lawful sovereign of
The Continental powers warned Portugal to not engage in propaganda, particularly towards Spain. Metternich committed Austria to defending Spain if her internal security was menaced from Portugal. The Russian ambassador in France and the French prime minister thought Portuguese isolation would prompt civil upheaval, which could do away with the constitution and resolve the matter internally.\footnote{Temperley, \textit{The Foreign Policy of Canning, 1822-1827: England, the Neo-Holy Alliance, and the New World}, 370.} Portugal remained quiet – Britain had also made clear that it did not want Portuguese actions to provide any excuse for outside powers to take steps against Portugal, as it had made clear that it would not tolerate attacks on Portugal. Nevertheless, Spain began to arm Portuguese dissidents and place them at the border. Portugal demanded Spain disperse the dissidents to no avail. It appealed to Great Britain for help, and Canning at first refused, but multiple incursions into Portugal itself compelled Canning to act. He had to defend his alliance partner; he decided to dispatch troops to Portugal.

Canning’s speech on December 12, 1826 in Parliament justifying this action is his most famous. He reminded the body that on the occasion of the French occupation of Spain he had stated that Britain was neutral not only between contending nations, but between conflicting principles, and that he feared the “next war which should be kindled in Europe, would be a war not so much of armies, as opinions.” Now Spain is engaging in war against Portugal, “commenced in hatred of the new institutions of Portugal.” He said he personally supported Portugal’s institutions, even declaring, “May God prosper this attempt at the establishment of constitutional liberty in Portugal!” But “we go to Portugal, not to rule, not to dictate, not to prescribe constitutions – but to defend and to
preserve the independence of an ally.” The speech was a sensation at home and denounced abroad. His claim that, if war came, Britain “could not … avoid seeing ranked under her banners all the restless and dissatisfied of any nation with which she might come into conflict” was seen by Continental powers as dangerously seditious.\textsuperscript{116} And despite Canning’s insistence, certainly correct, that the fundamental motive of intervention was to support an ally rather than to uphold a set of institutions that that he had showed no sign of defending previously, his rhetoric in favor of the constitution, calculated for British public opinion, convinced many at home and abroad that Canning was a defender of liberalism.

On the whole, then, the Continental powers supported absolutism in Portugal as far as they could – they were dependent on British policy given the situation. Britain was quite content with a moderate absolutism. Their real concern was not so much the nature of Portuguese institutions, provided it was not too radical, as the perseverance of a Portugal that was free of outside influence and allied with Britain. In the end, this required that they support a moderate constitutional monarchy, which Canning sold to great effect at home.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The European politics of the period analyzed in this chapter, both domestic and international politics, were fundamentally different than that described in chapter two. It is taken as given amongst historians that the nature of political contestation within

\footnote{\textsuperscript{116} R. Therry, ed. \textit{The Speeches of the Right Honourable George Canning}, vol. 6 (London, UK: James Ridgway & Sons, 1836), 90, 82, 92, 90-91.}
regimes had changed; whether this was true between regimes is more controversial. But even for those that accept international politics changed, there is a resistance to attribute this to the change that occurred within states. This, however, is the basic premise of the theory laid down in chapter one.

My theory asserted that leaders fear the spread of revolutionary contagion when there are preexisting significant revolutionary movements within their own borders. This is indeed what occurred. In all the great powers, in contrast to the previous chapter on the ancien régime, there was a significant revolutionary movement of the same character as revolutions abroad, and this was directly tied to their fear of contagion. Unlike the previous era the fear of contagion was no longer distant and hypothetical. There are a few borderline cases that highlight the criteria mentioned in the theory. Russia had one of the smallest revolutionary opposition movements – liberal political ideals had made the least impact on that nation. But after the Tsar became convinced that such a movement existed as a result of the Semenovsky revolt, his fear of contagion effects from revolutions increased significantly, as did his emphasis on a counterrevolutionary foreign policy. Britain and France did not regard revolutions that instituted a constitutional monarchy as inherently threatening, because from the British and French perspectives, these states were not very revolutionary – they already had to a greater and lesser extent, a monarchy limited by a constitution and a parliamentary body. They were still alarmed at revolutions more radical in nature – the revolutions that greatly expanded the “democratic” nature of the state, which is what some of their domestic opposition was pressing for.
The theory asserted that, given fears of contagion effects, a policy of domestic suppression would not be sufficient for their domestic stability. States would be hostile to a revolutionary state and cooperate with states that had similar opposition movements. This is by and large what occurred. Despite the increased capacity of surveilling and suppressing domestic opposition, leaders did not consider that these domestic measures provided adequate security for their regimes. States were uniformly hostile towards the revolutions of 1820-21, in contrast to the old regime. Britain is sometimes regarded as an exception here, but it is not so. They did not mind moderate constitutional regimes – those with a very restrictive franchise like their own – but they loathed the more radical regimes. Canning, the supposed apostle of liberalism, even expressed in private a preference for the opposite. Rather than “free” states established on the Continent, it was “much better and more convenient for us to have neighbors, whose Institutions cannot be compared with ours in point of freedom.”¹¹⁷ Canning, who opposed any parliamentary reform at home, found it useful to draw out how distinctly free Britain already was compared to the Continent.¹¹⁸

Hostility towards revolutions did not prescribe the same strategy. The powers initially hoped that the revolution in Spain would burn itself out and the matter would be


¹¹⁸ On the other hand, conservative constitutional monarchies were preferred as an anecdote to Jacobinism that could develop in the face of a strict absolutism. See Günther Heydemann, “The Vienna System between 1815 and 1848 and the Disputed Anti-Revolutionary Strategy: Repression, Reforms, or Constitutions?,” in *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848*: *Episode or Model in Modern History?*, ed. Peter Krüger and Paul W. Schröeder (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillian, 2002), 188-91.
taken care of internally. France and Russia initially in Italy and Britain on the Peninsula pressed for reforms, a way of subverting the revolution that would take the more revolutionary aspects out of it. The more common strategy was to crush the revolution, or let it be crushed by another power.

This raises another tenet of my theory, that states with similar revolutionary movements and thus the same fear of contagion will cooperate with each other, sometimes in contrast to geopolitical pressures. The conflict of this period, particularly between Britain and to a lesser extent France and the absolutist powers, is often highlighted rather than the cooperation. Indeed, even if they could agree upon the undesirability of revolution, leaders could not always agree on a common solution. This division led to the demise of regular conferences between the powers. There was rivalry and mistrust, despite similar aims. But to focus on this discord is to lose sight of the forest for the trees, to focus on the conflict that did happen verses the conflict that did not.

The contrast between how even more liberal revolutions were treated during the ancien régime is notable. In that period, revolutions were a means to exploit other powers, irrespective of ideological considerations. Competition between great powers did not vanish after the Napoleonic wars, but what is much more striking than the conflict is the cooperation. It is not difficult to imagine how these revolutions could have been exploited for the geopolitical gain of the great powers. France – considered a revisionist state, a belligerent, frustrated power – could have exploited liberal sympathy in Germany and Italy to break up Austrian hegemony. Russia could have had a similar policy. They could have cooperated in this regard. However, a Franco-Russian alliance, Metternich’s
worse nightmare, never materialized. Britain could have used the revolution in the Two Sicilies to establish a British protectorate regime in Sicily. The fact that the powers, only a few years after the experience of the Napoleonic wars, put aside their fears of French expansion and allowed the French army to invade Spain to restore the rule of King Ferdinand VII, an unsympathetic figure to say the least, is remarkable. Even Canning, who actively resisted the French sojourn in Spain, did so for antirevolutionary reasons. He feared the French would get bogged down and perhaps provoke a revolution within France. France also could have exploited the revolutionary situation in Portugal to push Britain out.

Sometimes antirevolutionary strategy and geopolitical aims overlapped. The old thesis that Metternich wanted a German confederation as a tool for domination and used revolution as a ruse has been discredited, but it did have the effect of securing Austrian hegemony. The Prussian and lesser German and Italian states’ acceptance of Austrian hegemony out of concern for the general social order was a remarkable turn in international affairs. A most spectacular case of the antirevolutionary strategy and aggressive geopolitical aims diverging is the instance of the Russian response to the Greek revolt. Alexander had every incentive but the antirevolutionary one to support the revolt.

The issue of Russian restraint, not just in regard to the Greek case, but more generally, given its history of expansion and its unparalleled position of power vis-à-vis the continent after the Napoleonic wars, points to what Paul Schroeder has described as a
“transformation” of European politics. Unrestrained self-aggrandizement was replaced with a relatively cooperative international order. One need not take Schroeder’s position that the balance of power constructed after Napoleon played no role in restraining powers to nevertheless acknowledge that the simple distribution of power does not explain the restraint with which the powers operated, in contrast to the previous period. The policies of the great powers towards revolutions illustrate this point, as well as the claim that the fear of revolution undergirds that transformation.

Schroeder himself, in keeping with his purely systemic argument, strenuously objects to the notion that statesmen moderated their behavior to avoid internal revolution. According to Schroeder, statesmen did not fear revolution; they feared war. He goes as far as to say that the great powers were lax about stamping out revolutions, and “one of the distinguishing features of the Vienna era, compared to the earlier and later ones, was that it was relatively easy and safe to promote revolution.”


121 Schroeder, The Transformation of European Politics, 1763–1848, 673.
He does not support his claim, and he cannot. Schroeder unsuccessfully strains to separate international conflict and domestic order. He claims that “When someone like Metternich said, as he did at every turn at every crisis, that the existence of the social order was at stake, he meant first and foremost [the] international order.” His own earlier work on Metternich amply evinces that Metternich saw war and revolution as two sides of the same coin, and feared both. The domestic order was dependent on a stable international order.

It is most likely true that that the great powers feared the domestic consequences of great power war even more than they did the domestic consequences of revolutions in relatively peripheral places. They feared even the preparation for such a war could lead to serious domestic consequences. The French Revolutionary wars had proven the effectiveness of mass armies, and yet after the Napoleonic Wars, that successful innovation was dropped. The great powers saw the effectiveness of mass armies abroad but also considered the political change they could cause at home, and decided they were

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122 As Blanning notes, 19th century revolutionaries rotting in jail would surely be surprised to learn that it was “easy and safe” to promote revolution. T. C. W. Blanning, "Paul W. Schroeder's Concert of Europe," *The International History Review* 16, no. 4 (1994): 711. For an overview of the repressive measures of European states, see Goldstein, *Political Repression in 19th Century Europe*.


124 Another recent theoretical perspective uses the same events as an example of how face-to-face diplomacy is what established the restraint between the powers. See Jennifer Mitzen, *Power in Concert: The Nineteenth-Century Origins of Global Governance* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 102-41. The forum of the concert certainly facilitated cooperation, but does not explain the underlying reason for why they wanted to cooperate.
better off without them.\textsuperscript{125} Mass armies were thought to be less reliable in suppressing revolution at home, and perhaps would conduct the revolution themselves. Universal service also implied a set of political demands, and mass armies were costly. The last these rulers needed was further strain on the state. The policy of the great powers towards revolutionary states acting as models is an observable variable that helps us assess to what extent statesmen feared contagion, but it does not exhaust the ways in which their antirevolutionary goals put constraints on the types of international policies they pursued, and how it buttressed a remarkable cooperation among the powers.

The theory laid out in chapter one also asserted that leaders’ fear of contagion was driven more by the characteristics of the host – the presence of preexisting revolutionary movements affiliated with the revolution – than characteristics of the infecting agent – whether revolutionary states acted as platforms or mere models. This chapter and the last provide solid evidence for this claim. The extent to which revolutionary states acted as platforms is held constant – the American Revolution, the Dutch Patriot Revolt, and the revolutions in Spain, Portugal, Naples, Piedmont, and Greece all acted as models and not platforms. And yet there is a striking difference in the way these sets of revolutions were

treated, that corresponds to the change in the opposition facing these powers. Even revolutions in peripheral places were a problem.

There was a notion that the mere example of these revolutions could erode the order and the legitimacy of existing institutions, and inspire revolutionaries, regardless of actions of the revolutionary state. Chateaubriand, arguing for French intervention in Spain, declared that “People say that [the Spanish] revolution is isolated, confined to the Peninsula whence it cannot spread. As if, in the state of civilization that the world has reached, there were any states in Europe that were strangers to each other!”¹²⁶ That these states did not act as platforms made it more difficult for some leaders to justify intervention against them. Metternich actually hoped that Naples would engage in a more belligerent foreign policy so that he would have a better excuse to crush the revolution.¹²⁷ This points to the fact that the problem with the revolutions of 1820 was not what they were doing, but their mere existence.


In 1979, the Iranian Revolution brought to the fore political Islam. The basic goal of the Islamist movements was to displace secular regimes and regimes of insufficient religiosity with those that would make Islam and Islamic law the basis of their legitimacy and conduct. While the Iranian Revolution did not initiate the wave of Islamist movements that the Middle East faced, it certainly gave a boost to the surge.

This chapter examines the international response to the Iranian Revolution, and assesses whether the model laid out in chapter one applies to a different region of the world and a different political ideology than examined in previous chapters. Another difference is that the revolution in this case occurred in one of the principle regional powers rather than a peripheral, weak state. Iran also became a revolutionary state that acted as a platform to spread revolution abroad, although the extent to which they did so varied widely over time and space.

As in previous chapters, I examine the following questions: Did leaders have a fear of the spillover effects this revolution could have on their own rule? Is this fear correlated with the presence of preexisting revolutionary movements within their polities? Did the fear of spillover effects prompt hostility to the revolution and cooperation amongst states with similar fears? I first assess the independent variables: the extent to which the Iranian Revolution acted as a platform and a model, and whether there was a significant Islamist revolutionary opposition movement in any of the major powers of the region – Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. I then assess the
international effects of the revolution by analyzing the policies of these powers toward each other and the revolutionary state before and after the revolution.

The reaction to the Iranian Revolution finds mixed support for the model proposed in chapter one. The case of Syria shows a clear falsification of the theory. But the model explains well the sea change of alliances caused by the Iranian Revolution, otherwise difficult to explain by realist theory, and the origins of the Iran-Iraq war.

The Iranian Revolution

The Iranian Revolution stunned outside observers and even the participants themselves.\(^1\) In the mid-1970s, the shah’s regime seemed solidly intact. After weathering earlier threats to his rule, he was now awash with wealth in the wake of the OPEC’s manipulation of the oil market and firmly in control of the security services. Although President Carter infamously described Iran as an island of stability in December of 1977, the shah was already facing increasing domestic opposition. By the fall of 1978, demonstrations escalated in such a manner that the country was virtually paralyzed. The shah proved unwilling to make bold concessions and as the protests grew he determined a massive crackdown to be futile. In early January 1979 he fled the country. On the first day of February a massive crowd of Iranians welcomed the Ayatollah Khomeini, the symbol of the opposition and outspoken critic of the shah and his regime, back from exile in Paris as the armed forces and the government in general

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\(^1\) This is highlighted by Charles Kurzman, *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).
began to dissolve. By the middle of February the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces declared their neutrality and the shah’s caretaker government disbanded.

While the downfall of the shah was stunning, what surprised observers further was the theocratic nature of the “Islamic Republic” that was established. Islamic institutions played a crucial role in the mobilization against the shah’s regime, and it helped legitimize revolutionary activity to a largely religious people. But there was certainly no consensus on the system of “velayat-e-faqih” – guardianship of the jurist – whereby clerics would exercise direct political power that was eventually established by Khomeini. Uniting the various revolutionary groups – liberals, leftists, and Islamists – was their opposition to the shah. Many inside and outside the country assumed Khomeini was more of a charismatic figurehead. The Ayatollah, however, proved to be much more than a figurehead, and from his return until 1983 he systematically removed all opposition to his vision of Islamic government. The most critical step has been described as a clerical coup d’etat or second Islamic revolution: in the aftermath of the takeover of the American embassy in November of 1979 the moderate prime minister, Mehdi Bazargan, resigned, and Khomeini used the charged atmosphere to gain the assent to critical articles of the new constitution that granted the jurist – Khomeini – extensive powers.

Model

The Iranian Revolution served as a model, as all revolutions do, of a people overthrowing the established order. It potentially had particular salience for regimes that were similar to Iran: the monarchical, pro-Western regimes of the Persian Gulf.
However, the Revolution was not just against something. In the broadest of terms, it was for bringing Islam into politics. Different ideas existed in Iran as to what an Islamic republic consisted of, most notably over the role of clerics in government, but its Islamic character was undeniable. As the Ayatollah Khomeini marginalized his distracters, it was his vision of the Islamic republic that was implemented. The particulars of this model, a product of Khomeini’s idiosyncratic interpretation of Shi’ism, had limited appeal even among Shia communities, although the Revolution would change that.² If the Iranian Revolution was to serve as a broader model, though, it would be via the more general notion of what was wrong with Muslim societies and how to overcome it. Common to both Shia and Sunni radicals was the diagnosis that the Muslim world was in a state of apostasy given their infatuation with Western idea and norms, and the prescription that the faithful must return to politics, specifically by overthrowing the existing regimes and enacting Islamic law.

Platform

In Iran, the call to export the revolution was often portrayed as integral to the Revolution itself. “The Iranian Revolution is not exclusively that of Iran,” Khomeini insisted, “because Islam does not belong to any particular people. Islam is revealed for mankind and the Muslims, not for Iran.”3 There was in Iran, as in other revolutionary states, an altruistic missionary motive for exporting the revolution as well as the belief that if the revolution did not spread it would be squelched. As Khomeini said in March of 1980, “We should set aside the thought that we do not export our revolution, because Islam does not regard various Islamic countries differently and is the supporter of all the oppressed peoples of the world. On the other hand, all the superpowers and the powers have risen to destroy us. If we remain in an enclosed environment we shall definitely face defeat.”4

The particular targets were Muslims under the rule of tyrants in what were considered non-Islamic systems. Khomeini called for the unity of all Muslims and at


times used language that suggested he rejected the nation state system.\textsuperscript{5} More often, however, he accepted the state system but insisted that Iran should help other states implement an Islamic system. In a widely distributed tract produced by Khomeini while he was in exile, for example, he had insisted “it is our duty to remove from the life of Muslim society all traces of kufr [the rejection of divine guidance] and destroy them” but this was “a duty that all Muslims must fulfill, \textit{in every one of the Muslim countries}, in order to achieve the triumphant political revolution of Islam.”\textsuperscript{6}

Khomeini and others felt Iran’s role in this process was chiefly as an example to Muslims in their own countries to rise up and depose their leaders just as Iranians had done with the shah, but they also were eager to use propaganda, or “sound advertising,”

\hspace{1em}\textsuperscript{5} The “boundaries drawn around the [territories of] the world to designate a country or homeland,” he stated, “are the product of the deficient human mind.” Rajaee, \textit{Islamic Values and World View: Khomeini on Man, the State, and International Politics}, 77.

\hspace{1em}\textsuperscript{6} Khomeini, \textit{Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini}, trans. Hamid Alger (Berkeley, CA: Mizan Press, 1981), 48, emphasis mine. It has been observed that despite his occasional rhetoric, Khomeini “both implicitly and explicitly accepted the existence of the territorial nation state” and often resorted to symbols of Iranian nationalism. Ervand Abrahamian, \textit{Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic} (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 15, passim. Khomeini utilized nationalism as a sense of patriotism, though he was against nationalism as an alternative to, or taking precedence over, Islam as a legitimating ideology. He saw the state as a means to furthering Islam. He did not explicitly acknowledge a possible tension between the Iranian state and revolutionary Islamic goals. James Piscatori notes that while Khomeini would suggest “that the goal of all present-day Muslims is to return to the medieval juristic hostility towards \textit{dar al-harb} and to give primary political allegiance to the \textit{umma},” this kind of thinking “coexists with nationalist thinking, and often in practice takes second place to it.” James P. Piscatori, \textit{Islam in a World of Nation-States} (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 116.
as Khomeini called it, to encourage emulation.\footnote{Rajaee, Islamic Values and World View: Khomeini on Man, the State, and International Politics, 83.} What became known as the Ministry of Islamic Guidance invited Islamic groups to visit Iran and published and distributed works via student unions, activists, and cultural sections of Iranian embassies.\footnote{Shireen T. Hunter, "Iran and the Spread of Revolutionary Islam," Third World Quarterly 10, no. 2 (1988): 743.} The revolutionaries also used the state controlled media, such as radio stations broadcasting in Arabic, to spread their message.\footnote{Christian Marschall, Iran's Persian Gulf Policy: From Khomeini to Khatami (New York, NY: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 28.} One of the more visible means of exporting the revolution was the dissemination of propaganda via Iranian pilgrims on the Hajj to Mecca.\footnote{For an overview of Iranian efforts to disrupt the Hajj see Martin Kramer, "Khomeini's Messengers: The Disputed Pilgrimage of Islam," in Religious Radicalism and Politics in the Middle East, ed. Emmanuel Sivan and Menachem Friedman (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990).} The new clerical regime also had a preexisting infrastructure of influence via the transnational network of Shia religious figures in Iraq, the Persian Gulf, and Lebanon.\footnote{Laurence Louër details these networks and argues for their importance in explaining the diffusion of revolutionary fervor from the Iranian Revolution. Laurence Louër, Transnational Shia Politics: Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2008).} In fact, it was not just the various official organs of the state that were involved in exporting the revolution. An early example was Ayatollah Sadeq Rouhani’s call for Iran’s annexation of Bahrain in August of 1979, which the Foreign Ministry dismissed.\footnote{Marschall, Iran's Persian Gulf Policy: From Khomeini to Khatami, 34-35.}
Iran took more active steps than merely spreading the word. The Office of Liberation Movements, originally connected with the Revolutionary Guards, operated by Mehdi Hashemi under the supervision of Ayatollah Montazeri, seems to have had a more actively subversive role, although the extent of their activities is not clear. Though it is difficult to assess the precise level of Iranian support, the revolutionary regime aided Shia groups, most notably those in Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, and Lebanon in the form of financial assistance, military training, and as a refuge for their leadership. The most spectacular example is the creation of Hezbollah in Lebanon with the help of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. The regime also hosted the Supreme Assembly of Islamic Revolution of Iraq, and were involved in supporting the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, as well as having ties with other Shia organizations such as the Movement of Vanguards’ Missionaries and the Islamic Revolution Organization in the Arabian Peninsula.

13 See ibid., 30-32.


Khomeini insisted that “when we say we want to export our revolution we mean we would like to export this spirituality which dominates Iran…We have no intention to attack anyone with swords or other arms.” But his decision to counter invade Iraq in 1982 was just that – the goal was clearly to set up an Islamic state in Iraq, which would, it was believed, be the first step in a chain reaction. If Saddam was deposed, he stated, the Iraqi people would establish an Islamic government, and “if Iran and Iraq unite and link up with one another, the other, smaller nations of the region will join them as well.”

Nevertheless, the principle means of spreading the revolution was Iranian propaganda. The notion that Iran was orchestrating Shia groups across the region is exaggerated, and they had no direction over Sunni groups that had a similar basic message. These groups were independent actors who nevertheless benefited from Iran in direct and indirect ways. Khomeini was keen to emphasize the similarities and downplay the differences between Shia and Sunni in particular. Iranian propaganda not only emphasized the commonalities, Khomeini took steps to bridge the divide. For example, he prohibited the common Shia practice of criticizing Abu Bakr and Umar. But his ecumenism had certain limits. He was not about to renounce the doctrine of *velayat-e-faqih*. The Iranian strategy of providing more particular propaganda for the home audience and a more ecumenical kind to the population abroad faced the problem that

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16 Rajaee, *Islamic Values and World View: Khomeini on Man, the State, and International Politics*, 83.
these compartments were not tightly sealed – the regime wanted to appeal to Shia communities abroad, and also what was propagated at home became known abroad.\textsuperscript{18}

In sum, the revolutionary state of Iran acted as a model and a platform. But the degree to which it acted as a platform varied over time and space. It did not act as a platform against Syria and Egypt. It did so against Saudi Arabia and Iraq. In Saudi Arabia, this was mostly confined to the dissemination of propaganda. In Iraq, although the uprising there was organic, there were more extensive ties to the Islamists, and of course Iran eventually was acting as a platform in the most direct sense – invading Iraq with the purpose of establishing an Islamic regime.

\textbf{Domestic Opposition in the Middle East}

What was the nature of the domestic opposition in the Middle East prior to the Iranian Revolution? Was there a significant revolutionary opposition movement in Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia of a similar character as the Islamic Revolution in Iran?

The 20\textsuperscript{th} century in the Middle East witnessed a host of revolutionary movements. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the incursion of Western power and ideologies in the Middle East had amplified the intellectual ferment. Strands of liberalism, nationalism, socialism/communism, and political Islam developed, clashed, and merged.

But the decade prior to the Iranian Revolution saw the rise of radical Islamist opposition movements across the region. The 1950s and 1960s was the apogee of leftist secular Arab nationalist ideologies – Nasserism and the Ba’ath party. The spectacular failure of the regimes associated with this ideology in the 1967 Six-Day war with Israel struck a severe blow to the legitimacy of this movement. Across the region, political Islamist movements emerged from the periphery to take a leading place in the opposition of the established regimes.

Opposition in Egypt

In 1928 Hasan al-Banna founded what was to become the most influential Islamist organization, with branches across the Middle East: the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood was originally supported by the Egyptian monarchy as a counterweight to the liberal opposition, though this collaboration eventually soured; Banna was assassinated by the government. The Brotherhood initially welcomed the 1952 coup but Gamal Abdel Nasser soon banned the Brotherhood after an assassination attempt against him in 1954. With their members in jail or exiled and some of their leaders executed and alienated from the general population, the organization spent the next several decades in the political wilderness.\(^{19}\)

Their opening emerged in the aftermath of the Six Day War, when Nasser himself began to turn to religion to legitimate his regime. President Anwar Sadat after him

explicitly reached out to Islamist groups as a counterweight to his leftist/Nasserist opposition, and encouraged the Islamization of Egyptian society to act as a conservative force in society. Sadat proclaimed religious faith as one of the two pillars of the state and the Constitution of 1971 made Islam the state religion. He released hundreds of the Muslim Brotherhood from prison and allowed them to publish their literature. This organization by the early 1970s eschewed violence; its willingness to work within the political system disqualifies it as a revolutionary movement. Many Islamists, however, had radicalized during their period underground or in jail, following the lead of those such as Sayyid Qutb, a leader in the Muslim Brotherhood. Qutb was executed by the regime in 1966, but the impact of his writings make him the most important thinker not just for Egyptian but the larger radical Islamist movement in Sunni Islam. Qutb had argued that Egypt was in a state of jahiliyya, or ignorance, and the implication was that the regime must be overthrown.\textsuperscript{20}

Various groups constituting radicalized former members of the Brotherhood took up the mantle to replace the regime with their version of an Islamic one, and some began to take direct action.\textsuperscript{21} In April of 1974, an organization called the Islamic Liberation

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item This analysis is in Qutb’s \textit{Signposts}, considered the Islamist equivalent of Lenin’s \textit{What Is To Be Done}?
\item Not all the Islamist groups that were inspired by Qutb accepted his doctrine of jahiliyya; for many the problem was not Egyptian society as a whole but its anti-Islamic rulers. See William E. Shepard, "Sayyid Qutb's Doctrine of "Jahiliyya"," \textit{International Journal of Middle East Studies} 35, no. 4 (2003): 536. For an elaboration of Qutb and his impact, see John Calvert, \textit{Sayyid Qutb and the Origins of Radical Islamism} (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2010).
\item There are a variety of names by which these groups are referred to. The Islamic Liberation Organization, Munazzanat al-Tahir al-Islami, is also known as the Technical Military Academy group, or Jam’at al-\
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Organization attempted a coup d’état by taking over the Technical Military Academy and marching on the Arab Socialist Union, where Sadat was to speak to the ruling elite. The coup was stopped in progress. In 1977, in what was a premature confrontation with the regime, an organization called the Society of Muslims kidnapped and assassinated a former cabinet minister when their demands for the government to release arrested members of their organization were not met. Sadat’s trip to Jerusalem to begin the peace process with Israel in November of 1977 increased the ire of all Islamist groups. The Muslim Brotherhood publications, which had been legalized to provide a counterweight to the leftists, and the Islamist student unions, which had effectively marginalized the leftists, lashed out against the regime. The security forces of the regime confronted an organization called al-Jihad in 1978 that would go on to assassinate President Sadat in 1981.

_Opposition in Syria_

urban population felt estranged from. The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in Syria in 1945-46, inspired by, but independent of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.\textsuperscript{22} In contrast to the situation in Egypt, the Brotherhood worked in cooperation with the traditional Muslim clerics. The Brotherhood in Syria was not, for most of its history, a revolutionary movement. Following the Syrian defeat in the 1967 Six Day War, however, there were splits in the Brotherhood regarding whether they should prepare for jihad against the regime. In 1970, Hafez al-Assad came to power, the first Syrian leader of the Alawi sect, which many Islamists regarded as heretical. In 1973 violent protests erupted when Assad promulgated a secular constitution. Assad responded by bolstering his Islamic credentials, such as including a provision in the constitution that the president of the Republic had to be a Muslim and hereto forth regularly attending Friday prayers. His intervention on the side of the Maronite Christians in the Lebanese Civil War in 1976, however, further provoked the ire of the Islamists.

Beginning in 1976, a group called the Fighting Vanguard of the Mujahidin, a radical offshoot of the Muslim Brothers, began assassinating government officials, including Assad’s nephew, and attacking regime institutions such as the police and the Ba’th party.\textsuperscript{23} In June 1979, the members of the Fighting Vanguard attacked the Military


\textsuperscript{23} This group, sometimes referred to as just the Mujahidin, are often confused with the Brotherhood. Although many of its members retained ties with the Brotherhood, it was a distinct organization. Overviews of the Islamist opposition in Syria in this period include Raphaël Lefèvre, \textit{Ashes of Hama: The Muslim Brotherhood in Syria} (London, UK: C. Hurst & Co., 2013), 81-115; Line Khatib, \textit{Islamic Revivalism in Syria: The Rise and Fall of Ba’hist Secularism} (New York, NY: Routledge, 2011), 69-81;
Academy at Aleppo, killing 83 mostly Alawi cadets, and wounding many more. This was the beginning of a low level civil war between the regime and Islamist groups. The Islamists’ strategy seemed to be to provoke the regime into a confrontation, with the hopes that the regular army when called up would buckle given the predominance of Sunnis. Another aim was to prompt the Muslim Brotherhood to join the confrontation, which was successful. The Assad regime dramatically increased the repression on the Muslim Brotherhood, which radicalized them. In October of 1979, the organization officially endorsed the use of violence against the regime.

Opposition in Iraq

Like Hafez Assad, Saddam Hussein faced opponents to his rule on several fronts, including his rivals from within the Ba’athist party, especially before the consolidation of his rule following the purges of July 1979, and separatist Kurds, particularly before he defeated them in 1975. But his problem with Islamists was an increasing one, and


26 Ibid., 110.
involved the group that constituted a majority of Iraq’s population: the Shia.\textsuperscript{27} Various Islamic organizations had sprouted up in the 1950s and 1960s among the Shia, but the purpose of most of these was to combat communism and the perceived anti-religiousness of modern Iraqi society. The clandestine al-Dawa party, however, had the ambition of taking power and establishing an Islamic state in Iraq. Instrumental in its formation and eventually its leader was a Khomeni-like figure, the Ayatollah Muhammed Baqir al-Sadr, a high-ranking politically active cleric who had a close relationship with Khomeini from the latter’s thirteen years of exile in Najaf.

Al-Dawa and other Islamist groups such as the Islamic Action Organization grew in strength, number, and radicalization in the 1970s, especially from 1977 on.\textsuperscript{28} The

\textsuperscript{27} Among the Sunnis, there was a small group of active Muslim Brethren in the 1950s and 1960s, and the Ba’th party assassinated a Sunni religious figure in the early 1970s, but “[t]his case remains isolated, and there is no sign of any broader Sunni revivalist movement in modern Iraq.” Chibli Mallat, "Islamic Revivalism in the Arab East: Iraq," in The Politics of Islamic Revivalism: Diversity and Unity, ed. Shireen T. Hunter (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), 83.

Ba’th party’s ascension to power in 1968 brought a totalitarian dislike of autonomous power. They targeted even the accommodating cleric, Ayatollah al-Hakim. This approach radicalized many Shia. In the mid-1970s, there were arrests and execution of Shia figures, many of them Da’wa members. Most remarkable was the upheaval in Najaf and Karbala in 1977. The protests were driven by a number of factors, but the regime’s attempt to control the pilgrimage to holy sites was the tipping point. Tens of thousands gathered and chanted slogans such as “Saddam take your hands off, neither our army nor our people want you.” The protests were eventually quelled after sixteen people were killed and thousands arrested, but it was an unprecedented challenge to the regime. The regime responded by increasing the surveillance and control of Shia institutions and finances. It also incorporated more Shia into its leadership and burnished its religious credentials by such acts as declaring Imam Ali’s birthday a national holiday. Saddam thenceforth regularly visited the holy shrines.

**Opposition in Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia was in many ways exceptional from these other states. The basis of legitimacy of the Saudi state was not a secular nationalist ideology, but Islam. The regime was forged on an alliance between Islamic revivalists centered on the thought of 18th century thinker Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and the Saud family. The puritanical Wahabbi version of Islam pervaded the social and political life of Saudi Arabia, and helped its rulers legitimate a dynasty that untied tribes and territories on the Arabian Peninsula that for most of their history had not been under a single ruler. There

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were tensions between the religious leaders and the Saud dynasty, most notably the Ikhwan revolt, when in 1929 the religiously indoctrinated tribal fighters for Ibn Saud, founder of the modern state, would not heed his call to stop at international borders. But since putting down the revolt, the regime faced no religiously motivated revolutionary opposition. There was religious opposition to the modernization process, such as the introduction of television to the kingdom, but this fell well short of revolutionary opposition.

The resurgence of Islam in the 1970s did not bypass Saudi Arabia, but there was nothing like an organized movement aiming to take down the state. Among the Sunni, Lacroix and Hegghammer identify two types of opposition in this period. The Islamic awakening, or Sahwa, was the more mainstream approach. It blended a traditional Wahhabi perspective on social issues with a Muslim Brotherhood approach to political issues. The political aim, however, was to “reform the state’s policies without ever straightforwardly questioning the legitimacy of the state.” A smaller isolationist, “rejectionist” movement developed in the 1970s from which the movement around

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Juhayman al-‘Utaybi, who would orchestrate the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca in 1979, would emerge. The government showed some irritation at the radical nature of the religious interpretations of this movement, arresting some of the members. Juhayman was brazen enough to criticize not only the religious establishment, but the Saudi regime for “making religion a means to guarantee their worldly interests, putting an end to jihad, paying allegiance to the Christians (America) and bring over Muslims evil and corruption.”

He regarded the regime as illegitimate, but admonished his followers to keep away from state institutions rather than advocating they overthrow them. His movement seemed to be more millennialist, prone to withdraw into isolation rather than have a particular political, let alone revolutionary, agenda. Thus, although the Saudi regime monitored and made some attempt to neuter the movement, they seemed to not regard it as a serious revolutionary threat.

The Shia in Saudi Arabia also did not exhibit signs of revolutionary behavior. Concentrated in the Eastern province, home to much of the oil production, they had long been persecuted under Saudi rule, suffering not just de facto discrimination, as elsewhere in the Gulf, but de jure discrimination. For example, Shia testimony was not permitted

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32 Ibid., 111.


34 Estimates of the size of the Shia population vary widely, from the implausible 2% estimation of the government to 10-15%. See, for example, Jones, "Rebellion on the Saudi Periphery: Modernity, Marginalization, and the Shi'a Uprising of 1979," 231; Graham E. Fuller and Rend Rahim Francke, *The
in courts, and even the ability to build mosques was severely restricted. A Shia collective identity, however, was very weak. An organization, more a network of Islamists, was founded in 1975, a branch of the Shia movement in Iraq called the Movement of Vanguards’ Missionaries. The organization was not aimed at seizing power from the state. It had the more modest goal of revitalizing Shia doctrine and encouraging a larger Shia political consciousness. The focus was on “personal and social transformation” which was a “prerequisite for true Islamic government.”

It was the Iranian Revolution that radically changed the strategy of this organization as well as the consciousness of the community at large. It was only in the aftermath of the Revolution, on the eve of unprecedented demonstrations against the regime in November of 1979, that the Saudi branch of the Movement of Vanguards’ Missionaries was renamed the Islamic Revolution Organization in the Arabian Peninsula, signifying its new political mission.

Thus, although the general Islamic revival did not leave Saudi Arabia untouched, the Saudi regime was in a different class, having no perceived significant Islamist revolutionary movement. Historically, the possibility of leftists taking power via a military coup seemed the regime’s greatest threat to power. The Saudi leadership was

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Ibrahim, *The Shi‘is of Saudi Arabia*, 126.


not unaware of religiously grounded critiques of their regime, but still regarded their religious credentials to be the source of the strength of their legitimacy, rather than the weakness. The uprisings in the Kingdom in 1979 and the accompanying Iranian Revolution would thus come as a great shock to the ruling class. It was also a warning to other regimes in the region, because if the Saudis could be challenged as insufficiently Islamist, than any regime could.

**Summary**

In conclusion, the Islamic revival of the 1970s affected the entire Arab world, though the political effects were not the same. Revolutionary Islamist organizations developed in the regimes still populated by the Arab secular nationalists: Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. In Saudi Arabia, Islamist movements had prompted some opposition against the regime, but the leadership does not seem to have perceived that there was a significant revolutionary movement. The closest case is the small group of Sunni messianic extremists, which seemed more isolationist than revolutionary. Among the Shia in Saudi Arabia, the Iranian Revolution would have a tremendous demonstration effect, transforming many individuals’ worldviews from nonpolitical to revolutionary. Elsewhere, the Revolution had an emboldening effect upon societies that had preexisting revolutionary movements.

**International Relations of the Middle East prior to the Iranian Revolution**

Having assessed the independent variables of interest – the degree to which the revolutions acted as a model and a platform and the extent of revolutionary opposition
prior to the revolutions, I turn the international relations of the Iranian Revolution. To provide the context and assess whether these revolutions affected patterns of international politics, I first examine relations amongst the powers of the region prior to the revolution.

The Middle East international system consists of two overlapping subsystems centered on the Levant/Egypt and the Persian Gulf. Aside from the outside superpowers, the states that had the greatest impact on the international affairs of the region in this period were Egypt, Israel, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. The international relations of the Middle East prior to the Iranian Revolution were shaped by events that had occurred in the region a decade earlier. In inter-Arab politics, the division between “progressive” Egypt and “reactionary” states such as Saudi Arabia, which had been characteristic of the Arab cold war in the 1950s and 1960s, was transformed in the aftermath Egypt’s disastrous defeat in the 1967 Six-Day War with Israel. As discussed, the rout discredited Nasserism and to a lesser extent the broader pan-Arab movement, and provided impetus for a more limited Egyptian policy centered on getting their land back from Israel. Egyptian President Abdul Nasser initiated rapprochement with Saudi Arabia, which was accelerated by his successor, Anwar Sadat. Sadat also pursued a close relationship with Syrian President Hafez Assad and Saudi Arabia to regain Egyptian territory. The Cairo-Damascus-Riyadh alliance was a fragile institution, but nevertheless persisted for much of the 1970s. Saudi Arabia played broker between the other two

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states, which were often at odds. Assad became increasingly embittered by the Egyptian pursuit of an agreement that undermined Syria’s bargaining position.  

Egypt’s decision to pursue a separate peace with Israel ultimately resulted in Syria breaking relations with Egypt. With Egypt removed from the Arab-Israeli dispute, Syria was in a much-weakened state vis-à-vis Israel. The Saudis were more sympathetic to Sadat’s attempts to resolve the dispute. They did not want another protracted conflict and supported Sadat’s pro-American, anti-Soviet position. They also feared that a break with Sadat could encourage more radical leftist forces to displace him. But the Saudis were hesitant about outright supporting Sadat’s initiatives and thus exposing themselves to Arab criticism. Even they could not accept the Camp David Accords. The strong sentiment that emerged against the Accords forced their hand; they joined almost all Arab states and broke relations with Egypt.  

Iraq had long rejected negotiations with Israel, though the bulk of its denunciations during this period were directed at Syria rather than Egypt. As late as 1978, Iraq maintained diplomatic relations with Egypt. Iraq was not as threatened the way Syria was by the withdrawal of Egypt from the Arab-Israeli conflict. In fact it presented Saddam Hussein an opportunity to seize the mantel of leader of Arab states, and push Syria into a subservient position. Iraq had several policy disagreements with Syria over matters such as Syria’s intervention in Lebanon, their negotiations with Israel and their use of the Euphrates water. More fundamental to their antagonism was that

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39 This included Syria’s ability to wrest the Golan back from Israel as well as other bones of contention – he wanted Syrian dominance in Lebanon as well as control over a future Palestinian entity.

both regimes were Ba’thist, saw each other as a rival for the Ba’thist mantel, and feared subversion from cliques in their own party with ties to the other state. As Saddam said to his advisors in 1979, “any relationship between Iraq and the system in Syria must take one of two directions – there is not a third direction – it is either collision or merger. There is no middle ground on this matter.”

In fact, there was a brief attempt at some kind of unification in 1978-1979, when both perceived that it was in their interests to at least appear to be merging. The Egyptian peace with Israel had left Syria dangerously vulnerable; its talks with Iraq were motivated by the need to balance against Israel. The reconciliation was initiated by Iraq. Its stated motive was to shore up the Arab rejectionist front in light of Egypt’s peace with Israel. Put in a more self interested manner, it was Iraq’s opportunity presented by Egyptian isolation to seize the role of leader of the Arab world. Just weeks after the merger between Syria and Iraq was announced, Saddam convened a summit of Arab states in

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Baghdad for the first time, for the purposes of condemning Egypt. At a follow up meeting in March, Egypt was expelled from the Arab League. The attempted merger with Syria, however, was soon derailed, as discussed below, and the relationship reverted to hostility.

Iraq, along with Saudi Arabia and Iran, were the major players in the Persian Gulf. The British decision to withdraw from the region in 1971 set up the possibility of direct competition between the powers. The shah’s ambition was to assert Iranian primacy in the region, which had the backing of the United States. The Saudis were somewhat wary of Iranian aspirations, but soon came to a “spheres of influence” deal with them whereby Iran recognized the small Gulf states to be under Saudi protection, while Iran would control the Gulf waters. The shah gave up the Iranian claim on Bahrain as a means to soothe relations with Saudi Arabia and other Arab states. The Saudis looked the other way when the shah claimed the islands of Abu Musa and Tunbs at the entrance to the Persian Gulf. Despite Iranian ambitions and power, the bigger threat from the Saudi perspective was Iraq. Iraq was a weaker state, but it was a leftist revisionist power, routinely threatening and denouncing the Arab monarchies. Beyond


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the rhetoric, they supported the leftist Dhofar rebellion against the sultan in Oman, as well as the leftist regime in South Yemen (which also supported the rebellion), and had border disputes with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The shah, on the other hand, was supportive of the conservative monarchs against leftist forces and closely tied to the Americans, like they were. He sent Iranian forces into Oman to help crush the Dhofar rebellion. And he was a balance against Iraq. He supported several coup attempts and gave critical aid to the Kurdish insurgency in Iraq.

Iraq and Iran eventually came to terms on the Kurdish issue, and relations in general, via a long-standing territorial dispute over the Shatt al-Arab. This is the name for the river formed by the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, the last 65 miles of which is the border between Iran and Iraq. It was Iraq’s only waterway into the Persian Gulf. The dispute concerned where exactly that border exists – whether it is in the median of the navigable channel or on the Iranian shore of the Shatt, a debate that stretched back to the 19th century, predating the modern states of Iran and Iraq. In the


49 An overview of the dispute is in Richard N. Schofield, Evolution of the Shatt Al-'Arab Boundary Dispute (Cambridgeshire, UK: Middle East and North African Studies Press, 1986). A 1937 treaty between the two countries had granted Iraq sovereignty over the Shatt, but the shah in the aftermath of the British announcement in 1968 that they were withdrawing from the Gulf looked to renegotiate the boundary. After frustration with the negotiations, he unilaterally abrogated the 1937 treaty and backed the Iranian right to navigate the river with a display of force. Given the power imbalance in favor of Iran, Iraq had little recourse. See Hussein Sirriyeh, "Development of the Iraqi-Iranian Dispute, 1847-1975," Journal of Contemporary History 20, no. 3 (1985): 485-86; Rouhollah K. Ramazani, Iran's Foreign Policy, 1945-1973:
Algiers Accord of 1975, Saddam formally agreed to accept the middle of the channel as the border; in exchange, the shah ceased his support for the Iraqi Kurds in a rebellion that Saddam had thus far unsuccessfully attempted to tame. The insurrection promptly collapsed.\textsuperscript{50} The treaty not only settled the territorial dispute. The two sides promised not to intervene in the internal affairs of the other. This became the basis of a relatively cooperative relationship from 1975 until the Revolution.

Iraq’s foreign policy towards not just Iran but also the other Gulf states exhibited a new pragmatism. It stopped supporting the leftist insurgency in Oman, ended its propaganda against Saudi Arabia, and ended several border disputes with the Saudis.\textsuperscript{51} The reduced threat from Iraq prompted Saudi Arabia to more evenly balance between Iran and Iraq.

Regarding Egyptian-Iranian relationship, the shah and Nasser had been on opposite sides of the leftist/pro-Soviet and conservative/pro-Western divide. But in the aftermath of the Six Day War, Nasser reached out to Iran, and in August 1970, a month before Nasser’s death, they resumed bilateral relations. The shah and Sadat had warm

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\textsuperscript{51} Laurie Ann Mylroie, "Regional Security after Empire: Saudi Arabia and the Gulf" (Harvard University, 1985), 148-49; Gause III, \textit{The International Relations of the Persian Gulf}, 38.
\end{flushleft}
relations; Iran supported Egypt in the 1973 war and there was increased economic cooperation thereafter. 52 Iran supported Egypt’s outreach to Israel, and pushed the Begin administration to negotiate with Sadat. 53

Iran’s relationship with Syria was mostly strained since Ba’thist rule in Damascus. The shah did not appreciate Syria’s backing of radical movements in the region, including the call to liberate “Arabistan,” the Khuzestan province of Iran. Nor did Iran look with favor on Syria’s alliance with the Soviet Union. The Syrians did not like Iran’s pro-American and pro-Israeli policies, and its support for pro-Western Arab regimes. The shah resisted attempts at the merger of Arab states including Syria, whether it involved Egypt, Jordan, or Iraq. In the mid-1970s there was a thaw in the hostility when the shah cooperated with Syria and other Arab states during the 1973 war, and in the war’s aftermath even provided financial aid to Syria. 54 This thaw was soon reversed by the shah’s warm embrace of Sadat’s outreach toward Israel, which embittered Assad.


53 This was a part of what Trita Parsi calls Iran’s “Arab option,” an effort to pull closer to the Arab position and pull back from the Israelis in an attempt to get Arab acceptance of Iranian hegemony. Trita Parsi, Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 44, passim; Trita Parsi, "Israel and the Origins of Iran's Arab Option: Dissection of a Strategy Misunderstood," Middle East Journal 60, no. 3 (2006).

Assad in fact provided a safe haven for Iranian Islamist opposition figures, including an offer of asylum to Khomeini.\textsuperscript{55}

Thus, on the eve of revolution in Iran, Egypt was estranged from the Arab powers, though it still maintained relations with Iran. Iraq had cut ties with Egypt, but had come to an accommodation with Saudi Arabia and Iran, and was briefly in an attempted merger with Syria. Saudi Arabia not only had reasonable relations with Iraq, but also Iran and Syria, though it had severed ties with Egypt. Syria was cautiously undergoing a merger with Iraq and cordial with Saudi Arabia, but acrimonious toward Egypt. The one state that had reasonable relations with the others was the soon to be revolutionary state – Iran. The partial exception was the Iranian–Syrian relationship.

\textbf{International Relations of the Iranian Revolution}

Did the outbreak of the Iranian Revolution inspire fears of contagion among leaders that shaped policies of hostility towards the revolutionary state and cooperation with other states? To what extent were their foreign policies a response to Iran’s attempts

to export the revolution? I examine the response of Iran, Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia in turn.

*Iraqi Reaction to the Iranian Revolution*

The Ba’thist regime’s response to the Iranian Revolution was initially one of cautious optimism. Geopolitically, the fact that the new regime had an anti-Western/anti-Imperialism/anti-Israel perspective was a welcomed change from the shah. But relations between the shah and Saddam had significantly improved following the signing of the 1975 Algiers Accord largely because each adhered to the third clause of that agreement – that they would not interfere in the internal affairs of the other state. This was an Iraqi concern from the beginning of the revolution.

Following the shah’s ouster, Saddam made clear that he was willing to work with the new regime provided the relationship was “on the basis of nonintervention in domestic affairs and respect for each other’s sovereignty.” Saddam announced, “A regime which does not support the enemy against us and does not intervene in our affairs, and whose world policy corresponds to the interest of the Iranian and Iraqi people, will certainly receive our respect and appreciation.”\(^{56}\) He told his advisors at the same time that Iran’s “stability and unity will be something positive for us, if Iran is not hostile to the Arab nation.”\(^{57}\)

\(^{56}\) FBIS (Foreign Broadcast Information System)/MENA-5-33, 15 February 1979, E1 (emphasis mine).

In the first months of the revolution there were uncertainties as to the character of the regime that would emerge. Iraqi leaders often dismissed Khomeini as an old man that would not be up to the task of ruling Iran. They welcomed the new Bazargan government, particularly their withdrawal from CENTO, and invited Bazargan and his foreign minister to visit Iraq during the Non-Aligned conference of 1979.58 But while Hussein drew a distinction between the Bazargan government and clerical forces, the former did not control the latter.59 And as clerical forces did not reciprocate Iraqi good will, Iraq responded in kind.

Fears Saddam may have had about the contagion of a revolution that was increasingly radicalizing in an Islamist direction were made manifest in June of 1979. Ayatollah Muhammed Baqir al-Sadr was put under house arrest to prevent him from leading a group of Shia leaders to Iran to congratulate Khomeini on the revolution. In response to the arrest, violent protests erupted in Karbala, Najaf and Shia areas of Baghdad. These were put down by force. There were major protests within Iran in response, and clashes took place between the two states on their border. The Iraqi state newspaper warned Iran against “the consequences of repeating the game played by the shah against Iraq.”60 Iran responded with an early call on Tehran International Service in

58 Ramazani, Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East, 58; Khadduri, The Gulf War: The Origins and Implications of the Iraq-Iran Conflict, 81.
59 Saddoun Hamadi, the foreign minister of Iraq, in a speech before the Security Council of the United Nations in October of 1980, detailed Iraqi efforts to reach out to the Bazargan government, only to be rebuked by the Khomeini faction that was actively working to undermine the Ba’th regime. See Tareq Ismael, Iraq and Iran: Roots of Conflict (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1982), 203-12.
60 FBIS/MENA-5-117 15 June 1979, E1.
Arabic to rise up against the Ba’thist regime.  

Shia groups formed the Islamic Liberation Movement with the goal of putting down the Ba’th regime. Also at this time key Kurdish insurgent figures crossed into Iran and received aid.

Hussein responded to the Shia community with a carrot as well as a stick. He poured aid to the Shia areas and increased Islamic symbols in his rhetoric. He even resurrected the idea of a popularly elected national assembly (which would obviously be Shia dominated) mentioned in the 1970 constitution but never convened. Tensions remained high, however, with more arrests, executions, and sporadic guerilla activity. Islamist groups formed military wings; the al-Dawa party received an influx of members, one of whom tried to assassinate Saddam Hussein. Ayatollah Baqir al-Sadr, under house arrest, smuggled messages to his followers calling for a violent uprising against the regime.

Relations between Iran and Iraq somewhat simmered after the border clashes in the early summer, though in October Hussein began to call into question the Algiers Accord. He complained about territory that had not yet passed into Iraqi hands as per the agreement and demanded a renegotiation of the Shatt al-Arab. Hussein was now demanding full sovereignty, though he continued to abide by the agreement. In a token effort to gain support among the Arab states, he also called for the return to their rightful Arab owners a few disputed islands the shah had claimed in the Strait of Hormuz.

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63 Wiley, The Islamic Movement of Iraqi Shi’as, 54-55.
After the Bazargan government fell and clerical strength increased, the rhetoric in Iran heated up, and by 1980 some Iranian government officials were explicitly calling for the Ba’th regime’s overthrow. In March, Iraq expelled the Iranian ambassador for interfering in the internal affairs of Iraq. Meanwhile, the situation inside Iraq was escalating. At the end of March, the regime decreed a death sentence on anyone associated with al-Dawa. On April 1, 1980, a member of a Shia opposition group attempted to assassinate Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz as he spoke at a university in Baghdad. During the funeral procession for those that were killed in the attempt against Aziz, a bomb was thrown, according to Iraqi reports, from the window of an “Iranian school.” The response from Iran was hardly conciliatory. Commentary on the Tehran International Service radio in Arabic noted that the assassination attempt “was not an isolated incident, but part of the general national struggle against imperialism and the criminal regime in power. It is not a bomb that missed its target, but part of a big explosion in Iraq these days that is bound to hit all its targets soon and uproot imperialism and that dictatorship.”

Hussein responded with the unprecedented step of executing a Grand Ayatollah, Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, as well as his sister, a Shiite activist. And he expelled thousands of Iraqi Shia of Iranian origin from the country. Gregory Gause notes that Hussein’s rhetoric underwent an immediate change, from warning the Iranians not to interfere in Iraqi internal affairs to verbally attacking the Iranian leadership and

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threatening war. This was matched by a chorus of Iranian senior political and religious leaders calling on Iraqis and members of the Iraqi military to rise up. Iranian radio was also broadcasting calls from al-Dawa to rebel.

These series of events seem to have convinced Saddam Hussein there was an orchestrated attempt to overthrow his regime, and that he had to strike back at Iran. Most scholarship on the issue of the timing of the Iraqi decision to go to war with Iran place the decision in the aftermath of these events in April. It was only at this stage

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69 See Kevin M. Woods and Williamson Murray, *Qadisiya Saddam: The Iran-Iraq War - a New Perspective* (Forthcoming, Cambridge University Press), 46-47; Amatzia Baram, "Saddam Husayn, the Ba’th Regime and the Iraqi Officer Corps," in *Armed Forces in the Middle East: Politics and Strategy*, ed. Barry Rubin and Thomas A. Portland (Portland, OR: Keaney Frank Cass, 2002), 214; Gause III, "Iraq’s Decisions to Go to War, 1980 and 1990," 67; Ofra Bengio, *Saddam’s World: Political Discourse in Iraq* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 145; Hiro, *The Longest War: The Iran-Iraq Military Conflict*, 36; Shahram Chubin and Charles Tripp, *Iran and Iraq at War* (London, UK: I.B. Tauris & Co, 1988), 26. There is one significant source that puts Saddam’s decision to invade much earlier. An American CIA officer, George Cave, met with Iranian officials in October of 1979 and told them that Iraq was preparing to invade Iran. Although increasingly cited, this intelligence appears to have been fabricated by the CIA and shared with the Iranians in an attempt to curry favor with them. For the details of this episode, and an elaboration of my argument below, see my “Revolution and War: Saddam’s Decision to Invade Iran.”
Saddam told the Iraqi military to start preparing for war. This is also when Saddam appears to have consulted with several Gulf countries about his intention to invade.

From the spring of 1980 on, both Iran and Iraq called for the downfall of the other side, accompanied by a long string of border skirmishes. And Iraq’s domestic opposition continued, including a June 1980 attempted assassination of Hussein by Iraqi airmen, led by a Da’wa member, who shelled an air force reviewing stand. It was, however, not until September that Iraq unleashed a full-scale invasion, a delay attributed to the war planning process and also waiting to see of the Nuzih war – an attempt by Iranian exiles in Iraq to overthrow the regime in July – would succeed.

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72 Wiley, *The Islamic Movement of Iraqi Shi’as*, 58.

73 The coup of course did not succeed, although it further weakened the military in the resulting purges. See Mark J. Gasiorowski, “The Nuzih Plot and Iranian Politics,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34(2002).
When Saddam decided to invade Iran sheds light on his motives for initiating the war. Some have argued that the invasion of Iran was largely for offensive purposes – to strike Iran while it was weak for the purposes of gaining territory.\(^{74}\) However, Hussein supported the shah until the end of his rule, showing no sign of taking advantage of his increasingly debilitating situation, and was at least initially on good terms with the weak provisional government.\(^{75}\) Saddam’s hostility towards Iran corresponds not with the


\(^{75}\) The chaos and the purges put Iraq in the unprecedented state of having a military advantage vis-à-vis Iran. One of the first actions of the revolutionary committee appointed by Khomeini was a purging of the armed forces. Accounts of the purges include Nikola B. Schahgaldian and Gina Barkhordarian, *The Iranian Military under the Islamic Republic* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1987), 15-27; Sepehr Zabih, *The
weakening of the Iranian state but the radicalization of the revolution. In addition, there is no evidence that Saddam was trying to annex the neighboring Iranian province of Khuzestan, or “Arabistan,” the long-standing Arab term for the province, which had significant oil deposits and would provide Iraq a less vulnerable access to the Gulf.  

Saddam probably wanted to restore the border of the Shat al Arab to its pre-1975 position. But the benefits of moving the border from the middle of the channel to the Iranian shore would not significantly alter the strategic balance between Iran and Iraq. However, the border was not just or even primarily about geopolitics. It was symbolic, a means to send a signal to Iran to “recognize [Iraq’s] right of sovereignty” Saddam said that “we will force their heads into the mud to enforce our political will on them, which

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77 This was the common refrain by Saddam Hussein and Tariq Aziz at the outbreak of the war. See FBIS/MEA-5-189, 26 September 1980, E6; FBIS/MEA-5-190, 29 September 1980, E1. For the argument that the significance of the Shatt al-Arab was not the territory but the symbolic value used for other political goals, see Will D. Swearingen, "Geopolitical Origins of the Iran-Iraq War," Geographical Review 78, no. 4 (1988).
can only happen militarily.” At a minimum, he was sending a message to Iran not to interfere in Iraqi affairs. But the limited invasion had greater goals – the collapse of the revolutionary government, perhaps by politically discrediting the regime given an Iraqi victory, but also militarily. A former Iraqi general has elaborated, “the assumption was that, if Iraqi troops could advance 15 to 20 kilometers inside Iran, the Revolutionary Army would have to advance from Tehran toward the border to confront us. This would provide secular counter-revolutionary groups in the capital a chance to seize control and establish a secular government.”

After border skirmishes with Iran in the beginning of September, Saddam appeared before the National Assembly on the 17th and announced that because Iran had violated the Algiers Accord, Iraq was abrogating the treaty, and announced that Iraq regained full sovereignty of the Shatt al Arab. Fighting soon broke out there. On September 22nd, Iraq invaded Iran. Saddam was never planning a long and protracted conflict. Given Iranian weakness, they would have to succumb to Iraqi superiority. However, Iran did not comply. Instead, they treated the invasion as a test of the revolution.

From almost the beginning of the war, Iraq was suggesting cease-fires that Iran rebuffed. On September 26th, only four days after the Iraqi invasion began, Hussein responded to the UN Secretary General that he was ready to cease-fire. Two days later


he announced that Iraq’s territorial objectives were achieved, despite the fact that Iran was still blockading the Shatt. A cease-fire would be acceptable as long as Iran recognized Iraq’s rights in the Shatt and other “usurped” territories, ended its occupation of the islands in the Gulf, and “abandon its evil attempts to interfere in the domestic affairs of the regions’ countries.” 80  Khomeini rejected a possible cease-fire, pointedly remarking that the aim of the war was not only reclaim their lands but punish “the criminal Baath Party regime for its crimes.” 81  Other mediation attempts encouraged by Iraq failed. Khomeini reiterated on October 19th that Iran “will not rest until the downfall of the decadent Iraqi Ba’thist regime.” 82  Iran was not getting the message, and rather than the invasion serving to fracture the revolutionary regime, the regime used the outpouring of Iranian nationalism to help consolidate it.

The Iraqi offensive continued, most notably in the capture of Khorramshahr at the end of October. But even from the middle of the month, Iraqi forces settled down, focusing mostly on retaining captured territories rather than conquering more. On December 7th, Hussein publicly announced that Iraq intended to capture no new territory. 83  The conflict settled into a stalemate.

83 Karsh, The Iran-Iraq War: A Military Analysis, 21; Woods and Murray, Qadisiya Saddam: The Iran-Iraq War - a New Perspective, 129.
Iraq responded to the stalemate with a mixture of threats and offers. They advertised their claim to “Arabistan” and threatened their support for Iranian minorities, and admonished the Iranian leadership to settle with Iraq, or the occupation of territory in the course of the war may create “certain rights which did not exist before the war began.”

In March of 1981, an Islamic Conference Organization delegation went to Iran after consulting with Iraq, proposing a ceasefire and the Iraqi withdrawal of Iran. Iran rejected the proposal. Iraq responded that it would not withdraw from “a single inch of territory … unless the Persian regime” recognized Iraqi rights. Iraq attempted an offensive on Susangerd that failed, which confirmed the stalemate.

Hussein had several reasons to worry about a protracted conflict with Iran, among them the loyalty of his military and the population. The bulk of his fighting forces were conscripted Shia soldiers. The regime did its best to set the Iraqis against the “Persians.” But there were instances of desertion and subversion, even publicly alluded to by Saddam himself. There were several attempts to assassinate Hussein by a network of Shia officers that were uncovered and summarily dealt with. Hussein implored his generals to keep casualties down. He also wanted to keep the affects of the war as far from the people as possible. This became more difficult as the war strained Iraqi finances. A reduction in public accounts, he warned his advisors, would be noticed by the population.

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87 Ibid., 51.
“You must guard the citizens [of the] state, do not let [them] panic… keep the state stable.”

Rather than cutting back state provided goods he relied heavily on borrowing from Gulf countries.

Hussein managed to contain domestic disturbances, but his war with Iran was going badly. Not only had they not been dislodged or recognized Iraqi rights, they were demanding the overthrow of the Ba’thist regime. And he was beginning to lose the war. In September of 1981, Iran launched a counter invasion and by the summer of 1982 was able to push back most of the Iraqi advances. Saddam, with his leadership on the line, scaled back his demands to the status quo ante bellum. He began to withdraw from Iranian territory under Iraqi control, under cover of the situation in Lebanon, where an Israeli invasion was triggered by the Iraqi assassination of the Israeli ambassador in London, which was blamed on the PLO. He offered to end the conflict and turn to Israel. Iran did not take the bait. Iran demanded as terms for peace that Iraq install a proper government, pay reparations, repatriate 100,000 Shia Iraqis that Hussein had deported, and that Iraq admit responsibility for starting the war. None of these demands were acceptable to Iraq, and served Iran as a pretext for an invasion of Iraq, which had been the subject of significant debate within Iran. Iran’s first campaign was to take Basra, which would hopefully ignite a Shia revolt.

Despite the dismal situation, there were some bright spots for Hussein. First and foremost, he was still in power. He consolidated power through a party rearrangement and survived several assassination attempts. The Iranian invasion of Iraq prompted more international aid. The Americans in particular took Iraq off of the list of states that

88 Woods and Murray, Qadisiya Saddam: The Iran-Iraq War - a New Perspective, 192.
sponsor terror and began providing it with intelligence of Iranian troop movements and selling it arms. Also, the Iranian invasion fared poorly. The Iraqis were now fighting on their own soil, where they had well prepared defenses. The assault against Basra failed. The Iranians tried again in the direction of Baghdad in the autumn of 1982 but also failed. Despite some voices to the contrary within Iran, the Iranian leadership was committed to the war aim of removing the Ba’thist leadership and installing an Islamic state. With Iranian support, the Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq was established in November of 1982, with the Iraqi cleric Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim at its head.\(^89\) This was obviously incompatible with Saddam Hussein’s war aims, which was now merely to end the war with Iraq intact and himself at the helm. The war would last six more years and was mostly a stalemate, with the significant exception of Iranian advances in southern Iraq in 1987.

The principle reason for the stalemate, and the eventual conclusion of the Iran-Iraq war, was the external assistance Iraq had, and that Iran lacked. Iran’s only significant regional ally was Syria. Iraq had the support of most other Arab states, most importantly the Gulf states, who financed the war. Iraq’s attempt to draw in outside powers in the conflict was successful. He received aid from both superpowers, and by the end of the conflict, the United States was engaged in direct hostilities with the Iranians in the Persian Gulf. Iraq was also on the offensive, thanks to the aid of its allies. Iranians realized the situation was hopeless. Khomeini, implying he was the last holdout in the government, “drank the poison” and sued for peace.

\(^{89}\) A brief overview of SAIRI is given in Baram, "Two Roads to Revolutionary Shi'ite Fundamentalism in Iraq," 547-51.
Iraq was initially on reasonable terms with the Iranian Revolution, but when the revolution radicalized and inspired his Shia Islamist opposition, relations deteriorated dramatically. The trigger for actual war was the perception that Iran was helping the opposition. Saddam himself was not above supporting Islamist groups, notably in Syria. The documentation is fragmentary, but Iraq gave support to Syria’s Islamist opposition, including weapons, military training, and safe haven. It seems clear, though, that Iraq did not actually want these forces to come to power. Their support was intermittent, seemingly part of a strategy to bleed both sides of the conflict – support the Islamists to weaken the Syrian regime, but not too much that they would be successful. Baghdad probably had ties with an extensive plot by officers, uncovered in January 1982, that was to coincide with the Islamist uprising. The plan seems to have been for the Islamists (inadvertently) help the Baathists come to power. There may have also been a degree of unease with the notion of backing Islamists in Syria. A revealing recording of the deliberations within the governing council of Iraq over the state’s policy towards Islamists in Sudan in 1986 illustrates this unease and indicates the Iraqi policy towards

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90 According to Lessons Learned from the Jihad Ordeal in Syria, by Abu Mus’ab al-Suri, who himself was trained in Iraq, at several points Iraq ceased providing aid to the rebels. The document, reflecting on the lessons of the Syrian uprising, rails against the Brotherhood for accepting Iraqi support, which was volatile, gave a degree of control over them, watered down their message, and disillusioned Islamists. The document was retrieved in Afghanistan by American forces and posted at the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point: http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/lessons-learned-from-the-jihad-ordeal-in-syria-english-translation-2.

Syria. Saddam’s advisers expressed reservation about Sudan’s Islamists. There was the fear that they would embolden the Egyptian Brotherhood and beyond. Tariq Aziz spoke strongly of the threat of the Islamist movements and reminded them how the Iranian Revolution had an emboldening effect on such movements. Saddam responded, “do we launch the battle against the religious current or do we launch the battle against the religious current when it has certain characteristics? The answer is we launch the battle against the religious current with certain political or behavioral characteristics. If it launches a battle against us, we will launch a battle against it. And if it reaches power and [or] gets close to it, we would launch a battle against it.”

*Syrian Reaction to Iranian Revolution*

One may surmise that Hafez Assad was alarmed at the possibility of the Iranian Revolution emboldening his domestic opposition, which was exploding at the same time as Iranians were calling on the unity of all Muslims and denouncing secular, un-Islamic regimes of which the Syrian state epitomized. But if he had that fear, it did not translate into a policy of hostility toward the revolutionary regime. Twelve days after Khomeini returned to Iran, Assad sent him a telegram congratulating him for a revolution that “is

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93 Haas suggests that he was, and that this was a Syrian motive in the potential unification with Iraq, though the evidence he provides does not support this claim. Haas, *The Clash of Ideologies: Middle Eastern Politics and American Security*, 126.
inspired by the great principles of Islam.” Syria was the first Arab country to recognize the new regime. In March, Assad sent his information minister to Iran to develop ties, where he met with Khomeini.

What motivated Assad to draw close to Iran was the same impulse that drove him to pursue unity talks with Iraq. The Egyptian-Israeli peace had left him dangerously vulnerable vis-à-vis Israel. He needed allies. His relations with the shah had progressively deteriorated the more the shah had supported Egypt coming to peace with Israel. The new Iranian regime was everything the shah was not in such matters – against the peace process, anti-Israeli, and anti-American. Thus there was an opportunity to start relations anew, and bolster the rejectionist front.

Whether an alliance between Iran and Syria would develop, however, was not at all clear. One possible factor pushing against the relationship was that, as the revolution was radicalizing in Iran, so was the revolution brewing in Syria. As discussed earlier, from mid-1979 on, starting with an attack on a military academy at Aleppo, there was a low level civil war between the regime and Islamist groups. Assad could not have been comforted in the fact that the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood and other Sunni Islamists strongly supported the Iranian Revolution and saw it as a source of inspiration. Syrian Islamists did not dwell on the particularities of the Iranian regime. For them, the revolution was victory for Islam over unIslamic leaders. They suggested that Assad would soon follow in the fate of the shah. The Muslim Brotherhood called on the ulama to play a key roll in mobilizing the masses against the regime as it had in Iran. Assad

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94 FBIS/MEA-79-30, 12 February 1979, H1.

took the Islamist threat very seriously. He was nearly killed in an assassination attempt in June of 1980. In response, hundreds of Islamists in prison were executed and membership in the Muslim Brotherhood was made punishable by death. In October 1980, Islamist groups united under the Syrian Islamic Front in order to combat the regime. The regime’s sense of insecurity is indicated in the fact that Assad reportedly had a security entourage of 12,000 soldiers, and the three generals heading the state security services had 60 soldiers each.

While Assad’s Islamist uprising could have cooled his enthusiasm towards the Iranian Revolution because of the negative example it set at home, there were other factors pushing Syria towards Iran. In addition to an ally against Israel, Syria now needed an ally against Iraq. In the summer of 1979, unity talks with Iraq collapsed, probably because Saddam got wind that factions within the Iraqi Baath party planned to use the federation and Syrian help as a means to constrain him. Saddam accused the Syrians of orchestrating a coup against him. The Syrians strenuously denied any connection, but the merger deteriorated into acrimony. Amid the invective, it was clear

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98 One possible reason for its unraveling was that the Syrians were not willing to accept a junior role in the merger, and Iraq pushed them farther than they wanted to go, hoping they could entrap them. Mufti, however, argues that the affair was principally for Saddam Hussein to purge Ba’athist officers and consolidate his rule by exposing those who were not fully loyal to him. Malik Mufti, *Sovereign Creations: Pan-Arabism and Political Order in Syria and Iraq* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 209-20.
Assad was now in an even more dangerous position. Not only could Iraq not be counted on against Israel, it was another enemy they needed to balance against.

Beyond cultivating ties with Iran as an ally against Iraq and Israel, Assad may have reached out to the Iranians in an effort to make sure the Iranians did not aid his Islamist opposition as well as discredit the Iranian example by their very ties with him. There is no evidence either way that this was a motive of Assad’s outreach to Iran, but it is certainly what happened. The more he reached out to Iran and Iran responded, the more illegitimate the Iranian example became for his domestic opposition. Islamists initially expressed bewilderment at the growing Syrian-Iranian rapprochement. Their own efforts to reach out to the Iranians came to nothing.99 Syrian radio in April 1980 aired a statement by an Iranian official praising Assad and denouncing the Islamists as gangs carrying out the Camp David conspiracy, which prompted criticism within Iran and Syria.100 A similar statement was made in December.101 By the fall of 1980, the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood had ceased making public statements about the Iranian Revolution. Their manifesto of revolution produced in November of 1980, for example, despite having a section on foreign affairs, curiously ignores all mention of the Iranian Revolution.102 Having been spurred by Iran, they were driven to Iraq for support.

Thus the Syrian decision to draw close to Iran, driven initially by its need to have an ally against Israel in the context of the post-Camp David Middle East, was driven further by the fact that they also needed an ally against Iraq, and the concern that Iran

100 Abd-Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria*, 183-84.
101 Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran: Diplomatic Alliance and Power Politics in the Middle East*, 43.
102 The manifesto is reproduced in Abd-Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria*, 201-67.
would have an emboldening effect on Syria’s Islamist opposition was blunted by the fact that Iran not only did not aid, but condemned the Islamists, thus considerably weakening the power of the model of the Iranian Revolution in the eyes of the Islamists.

The rapprochement with Iran that developed was both a cause and a consequence of the further deterioration of relations with Iraq. A month after the negotiations between Syria and Iraq ended, the Syrian foreign minister was sent to Iran to explore expanding relations. This was followed by visits from the Iranian foreign minister in September and deputy prime minister in October. Syria strongly supported Iran in the hostage crisis, seemingly undeterred by the radicalization going on within Iran. Further talks led to tangible results. In the spring of 1980, as relations between Iraq and Iran were reaching new lows, Syria began transferring Soviet-made arms to Iran to replace its depleted stock. Although harshly criticized by Iraq for doing so, the Syrian information minister gave a typical response: “We believe that establishing good relations with the Iranian Revolution and supporting that revolution so it can settle down and devote time to help the Arabs liberate their occupied territories is the duty of every Arab who believes that Israel and US imperialism are the danger to be faced.”

In August, Iraq expelled the Syrian ambassador in protest.

Upon the outbreak of war between Iran and Iraq in September, Syria was silent for the first two weeks, seemingly waiting to see whether the Iranian regime would survive. Assad was soon denouncing Iraq as starting the wrong war against the wrong enemy at the wrong time. The correct enemy was of course Israel. And a quick Iraqi

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104 Seale, *Asad of Syria: The Struggle for the Middle East*, 357.
victory would embolden his other enemy, Iraq. Syria increasingly notched up its aid to Iran. It leveraged its new treaty with the Soviet Union to continue the Soviet weapons to Iran. In October, Iraq broke relations with Syria. In the spring of 1981 Assad consented to Iranians using Syrian airspace to attack Iraq. By December, though, he traveled to the Gulf states, seeking aid given the Israeli threat (Israel having just annexed the Golan Heights) and his Islamist opposition. They informed him that any aid was conditional on him abandoning his pro-Iranian position. As a response, he declared that it was now time that Iran and Iraq stop fighting so that energies could be turned to towards Israel. But his attempt to mediate a cease-fire was rejected by Iran.

By this time, the Syrian Islamists silence regarding the Iranian Revolution had turned to hostility. Iran continued to back the Assad regime in its contest with the Islamists. The leader of the Islamic Republican Party in Iran explicitly said that the party could not condone the uprising when Assad was confronting imperialist agents such as Israel and Egypt and, not incidentally, supporting the Iranian Revolution. In the context of such lack of support, a Syrian Islamist leader, in an interview with a German newspaper, made clear that if they were victorious, their Islamic Republic would differ greatly from Iran’s: “we do not wish to replace one dictatorship with another.” The Islamists, however, were not victorious. The insurgency culminated in an uprising in Hama in February of 1982 that Assad decisively crushed, killing thousands in the process.

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106 Abd-Allah, The Islamic Struggle in Syria, 283.
Syria and Iran deepened their ties in the spring and summer of 1982. In the spring, the relationship was formalized with a trade and oil deal. Most significantly, Syria cut off Iraqi access the trans-Syrian pipeline, halving Iraqi exports and costing Syria 17 million dollars a day. At the same time, Assad was aiding Kurdish insurgents who were sabotaging Iraq’s other pipeline and tying down troops. The tightening of the Syrian-Iranian relationship was driven by Assad’s push to rid Iraq of Saddam Hussein, having just survived a severe insurgency backed by Iraq, and seeing an opportunity to finish him given the momentum was swinging in Iran’s favor. The Syrian press called on the Iraqis to bring down his regime.

The Syria-Iranian relationship was further bolstered by the invasion of Lebanon by Israel in June of 1982. Israel had controlled territory across their northern border since 1978, but this invasion reached Beirut. Syria gave permission to Iran to send a contingent of forces to Lebanon to mobilize Lebanese and resist the Israelis. It has been reported that a much larger Iranian force was offered to Syria, but that Assad refused because an all out war with Israel, which was being considered in Iran, would threaten the Ba’thist regime’s survival if it was not successful, as he feared it would not be. And a major Iranian involvement with Israel would incline Iran to make peace with Iraq, as many Iranians were considering. However, the Iranians’ more limited involvement in Lebanon was critical in Assad’s strategy to wage a proxy war against Israel. This was the

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beginning of a long relationship between Iran, Syria, and Islamist groups in Lebanon, which came to symbolize the Syria-Iranian relationship.

The relationship was not without its tensions. By the mid 1980s, Hezbollah emerged as a concrete organization. Clearly inspired by and dependent on Iran, they had a tenuous relationship with the less militant Amal party, which had a close relationship with the Assad regime. Open conflict broke out between the two in 1987 and was not settled until 1989. Syria did not share Hezbollah and Iran’s goal of making Lebanon an Islamic republic, but Assad allowed them to operate given their ability to mobilize the Shia against Israel. He never would have tolerated an Islamic state in Lebanon, but there was little chance of establishing such a regime in a state with a significant Christian community, among others, who rejected an Islamic republic. The bigger issue Assad had with Hezbollah and thus Iran was that he did not want an element in Lebanon that he could not control.

The issue of an Islamic state in Iraq was a much more salient threat. Assad wanted Saddam deposed, and was willing to take significant lengths to bring that about. But it was also clear that Iran and Syria had a significant disagreement over what regime was to take his place. Syria favored a secular regime, and Iran wanted an Islamic republic modeled after its own. Syria had made clear before the Iranian invasion of Iraq that they would not support such a move, and threatened to reevaluate its stance on the Iran-Iraq war. The Syrians vigorously resisted Iran’s announcement early in 1982 of a

four stage plan to establish an Islamic republic in Iraq. Syria did not reevaluate its stance on the Iran-Iraq war in the context of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and in fact continued providing weapons to Iran. But it remained a major potential source of conflict in 1982-83. Iraq’s successful resistance of the Iranian invasion dissipated Syrian concerns. Syria’s alignment with Iran would persist through the Iran-Iraq war and beyond.

The relationship between Syria and Iran, sometimes rocky, was not inevitable. Had relations with Iraq not deteriorated, it might not have even developed, especially if, as the revolution radicalized in Iran, Iran had not supported Assad against his opposition. The choice by the revolutionary regime in Iran to stand with the Syrian regime had important implications for its broader appeal, and is understudied by scholars of Iranian foreign policy. The decision was not just a dilemma of power politics verses ideology. Courting Syria gave the Iranians an ally not just against Iraq but Israel. It furthered their message that the Revolution was not just a narrow sectarian matter; it was about anti-Imperialism and liberating the oppressed. And it would weaken the ability of Arab states to construct a narrative of a united Arab front against the Persians. But the policy also severely undercut Iranian attempts to appeal particularly to Sunni Islamist groups who had the same basic program as the Iranian Revolution and expressed sympathy towards it.

As one partisan stated, “No miscalculation of the Iranian Islamic Revolution could have given greater gratification to its enemies than its ties to the Asad regime, and sincere


Sunni supporters of the Islamic Republic could only stand back in disbelief." This was a chance to put into practice Khomeini’s ecumenical rhetoric. But backing the Alawī regime against the Sunni Islamists emphasized the sectarian nature of the revolution. There is some evidence that Iranians appreciated the dilemma they were in, but clearly felt the benefits outweighed the disadvantages.114

Syrian policy was born out of desperation to protect itself against Israel and then Iraq. This overshadowed possible qualms about aligning with Iran, a source of inspiration for their Islamist opposition. Those qualms further dissipated as Iran reached out to the regime and was thus discredited in the eyes of the opposition. The Iranian regime was supporting Assad against its enemies, both those at home and abroad. Given that kind of support, he seems to have assessed that despite the impact Iran may have as a

113 Abd-Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria*, 182.

114 Olmert reports a divide within the government on policies towards Syrian as well as Libya and Algeria, with some wanting to support the Islamic opposition and others arguing that these regimes served as important allies for the present time. Yosef Olmert, "Iranian-Syrian Relations: Between Islam and Realpolitik," in *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World*, ed. David Menashiri (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 173. In an interview with Jubin Goodarzi, former President Bani Sadr claimed, apparently without irony, that there was no serious consideration of backing the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood because it had been contaminated by compromising its Islamic credentials due to its links with Jordan and Iraq. Of course, the Islamic Republic compromised its credentials by reaching out to Syria, and in doing so forced the Syrian Islamist opposition to turn to Iraq, which in turn caused defections within the Islamists’ ranks. The Iranians were at least aware of the negative impact their policy could have at home. News of the Islamist uprising in Syria was for the most part blacked out by Iranian state news agencies to save them the embarrassment of backing the Syrian regime against an Islamist opposition. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran: Diplomatic Alliance and Power Politics in the Middle East*, 300-01.

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model to his Islamist opposition, it was worth siding with Iran, especially after Iraq was acting as a platform in spreading revolution.

*Egyptian Reaction to the Iranian Revolution*

The Iranian Revolution was ongoing at the same time as a profound change in Egyptian foreign policy – the peace process with Israel, culminating in a peace treaty in 1979. This and the Arab states’ rejection of Egypt dominated their foreign policy concerns. But the Iranian Revolution was not unrelated to this issue. The revolution had removed a leader staunchly in the American camp, and replaced it with a regime that, even if moderates retained power, would clearly not be in the American orbit. There were not just foreign policy implications from the Iranian Revolution. There were domestic implications as well. Besides the fact that Sadat could no longer count on the support of the shah, he risked being compared to him in an unfavorable manner by his domestic opposition.

The Iranian Revolution buoyed radical Islamists in Egypt.115 Islamists rejected notions that the revolution was specifically Shia and put the revolution in the broad

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115 Ibrahim reports the success of the Iranian Revolution gave radical Islamists the groups “a tremendous boost.” “At the time our interviews [of radical Islamists in Egyptian prisons] were stopped by the government [in February 1979, when Khomeini returned to Iran and an Islamic Republic was declared] the morale of [the RHF and MA] was soaring high. When we drew their attention to the significant doctrinal differences between the Shi’is and the Sunnis, both dismissed them as inconsequential.” Ibrahim, "Anatomy of Egypt's Militant Islamic Groups: Methological Note and Preliminary Findings," 443. The enthusiasm for the Iranian Revolution was despite the fact that, prior to the Revolution, there was very little
context of a victory of Islamic forces against anti-Islamic ones. The Muslim Brotherhood, though, were careful to avoid direct comparisons between the shah and Sadat in their still legal publications. Sit-ins and campus demonstrations from Islamist student groups seemed to mimic the beginning of the Iranian Revolution. Sadat at least initially did not seem concerned about the effects of the Iranian Revolution. A journalist close to Sadat told Foreign Minister Boutros-Ghahli in January of 1979 that the Iranian Revolution would not prompt Sadat to crack down on Islamist groups like the Brotherhood: “half the people present imagine that the shah will return victorious, and the other half think that the [Muslim Brotherhood] can never take over Egypt. Sadat himself still thinks that the real danger comes from communism.”

awareness of or interaction with Iranian Islamist thought among Sunni radicals, despite the similarities in their basic message. See Sivan, "Sunni Radicalism in the Middle East and the Iranian Revolution."


117 Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Egypt's Road to Jerusalem: A Diplomat's Story of the Struggle for Peace in the Middle East (New York, NY: Random House, 1997), 182. Interestingly, American observers begged to differ. As early as 1975, US Ambassador Eilts cabled that “We continue to believe that the religious right has vastly more potential disruptive power in Egypt than does the left, and for the [regime] to connive deliberately at [a] Muslim Brotherhood renaissance is playing with fire.” Cited in Paul Chamberlin, "A World Restored: Religion, Counterrevolution, and the Search for Order in the Middle East," Diplomatic History 32, no. 3 (2008): 465.
The shah, however, did not return victorious, and Sadat took care to reign in Islamist forces. In a series of speeches, he attacked religious interference in Egyptian politics, and the Muslim Brotherhood in particular, for changing from a religious organization to an underground terrorist organization. There could be “no religion in politics, and no politics in religion,” he stated. He temporarily suspended the Muslim Brotherhood’s primary publication, al-Da’wa, and cracked down on Islamists in student unions. The state controlled newspapers, meanwhile, provided theological critiques of the Islamic Republic.

But besides attempting to curb radical Islamists, Sadat did not deviate from his general strategy of relying on Islam to legitimate his regime. In fact, he seemed to double down on his Islamist credentials. He initiated contacts with a professor of Islamic law and had a weekly meeting to discuss changes that would meet the demands of Islamists. He introduced legislation that would provide for Islamic penalties for sins such as apostasy and drinking, and proposed a constitutional amendment to make sharia law the main source of legislation. There are reports that several of his senior advisors were repeatedly warning Sadat that he must take further action against Islamist organizations. At a meeting toward the end of 1979, an advisor supposedly said “we ought to crack

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down before it’s too late. Otherwise, they will have us all shot at the first opportunity.”

Whereupon an aid sympathetic with the Muslim Brotherhood responded, “Would you prefer, perhaps, the communists?” Sadat angrily replied that “I am not the Shah of Iran and our Muslims are not Khomeinists.” While some, including his wife, wanted Sadat to turn in a more secular direction, Sadat would not have it. He would crack down on radicals, but he still seemed to have regarded religious forces as something he could largely control: most of them would support his rule, and the radicals could be contained. They were still useful as traditional, conservative support for his rule against the major threat from Nasserists and other leftists.

122 Eric Rouleau, “Who Killed Sadat?,” *MERIP Reports* 103(1982): 5. In an interview with Kirk Beattie, Mustafa Khalil, the former prime minister and foreign minister under Sadat, said that “Sadat didn’t draw parallels between Iran and Egypt. The mullahs were much more powerful there; the shah had angered all the clergy, whereas here the clergy support the regime.” Beattie notes that while perhaps Sadat in general did not make such comparisons, “one is well advised to recall Camelia Sadat’s words about her father’s admonition, “Don’t show you are weak.” Beattie, *Egypt During the Sadat Years*, 267.

123 The Egyptian military in 1981 even briefly trained a handful of Syrian Muslim Brotherhood members in guerilla tactics. It is unclear how high up the chain the decision was made to provide such training, or what the motive was – perhaps to get back at Syria’s castigation of Egypt, or learn more about Islamist networks. That the decision was a mistake from the Egyptian regime’s perspective is clear from the gloating of Abu Mus’ab al-Suri, who worked as a trainer in the Arab-Afghan camps in Afghanistan: “The Egyptian military had trained me, and now, I have trained for them tens, perhaps hundreds of people, who are trainees and commanders in the Egyptian Jihad Group (jama’at al-jihad) and the Islamic Group (al-jama’ah al-islamiyyah)” Brynjar Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad: The Life of Al-Qaida Strategist Abu Mus'ab Al-Suri* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2008), 45.
The direct interaction with revolutionary Iran and Egypt was relatively brief. The initial official response to the revolution from Egypt was to promptly recognize the new regime. Sadat explained that “Egypt has always been eager to be friends with Iran under the principles of noninterference in the state’s domestic affairs and respect of the will of the peoples and their right to a free choice without foreign interference.” His consistent support of the shah did not endear him to the revolutionaries. The shah had stayed briefly in Egypt after he left Iran, and Sadat repeatedly and publicly thereafter invited the shah to stay in Egypt, which he justified on the grounds of Islamic and Egyptian hospitality.

It was Iran that initiated the break in relations in April of 1979 on account of the Egyptian peace with Israel; Egypt responded by severing relations on the same day. Sadat added a denunciation of Khomeini, which became more virulent thereafter, as the revolution radicalized. In a December 1979 interview, he castigated Khomeini as a lunatic that was full of hate. He said that he was “sad for the Islamic nation, because Khomeini’s fever is beginning to catch onto some Moslem leaders. But I will not hesitate to fight this disease if it tries to creep into some souls here.” Sadat strained to portray the Islam of the Iranian Revolution as a perversion of Islam, as this militant brand was the opposite of the quietist brand he was trying to promote. His press was straining to

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124 FBIS/MEA-79-032, 14 February 1979, D1.

125 In March of 1980, the shah eventually accepted Sadat’s invitation for refuge and lived in Egypt until his death in June, whereupon he was given a state funeral.

emphasize the differences between Sunni and Shia. He denounced Iran’s taking American embassy officials hostage as un-Islamic. In the aftermath of the shah’s departure, Sadat’s foreign minister had insisted that Egypt was not attempting “to play the role of a gendarme in the region,” and warned against outside interference in the region.\(^{127}\) But as the revolution radicalized, Sadat supported American action against Iran and offered Egyptian support to Gulf countries threatened by Iran.\(^{128}\) Egypt’s lack of support for the Islamic Republic prompted the Muslim Brotherhood publication, al-Da’wa, to go as far as saying, in a thinly veiled reference to Sadat, that “many countries fear Iran because they themselves are ruled by oppressors.”\(^{129}\)

The conflict between Iran and Iraq was a barometer of Egyptian leader’s stance toward the Iranian Revolution. Iraq had not previously endeared itself to Egypt. It had led the rejectionist camp against Egypt, convening summits in the fall of 1978 and spring of 1979 to orchestrate the severance of connection between Egypt and Arab states. But the Iranian Revolution would transform the Iraqi-Egyptian relationship from hostility to amity. Upon the invasion of Iran by Iraq, Sadat expressed Egyptian neutrality and condemned both parties. But he said openly that he would like to see anyone instead of Khomeini ruling Iran, and suggested the time was ripe for a military coup. Even if Khomeini was not toppled, the war would be a “grave blow” to his Islamic Revolution.\(^{130}\)

In a speech to the Egyptian Parliament, Sadat recounted the attempt by the rejectionist front to marginalize Egypt, and in this context, he denounced Iraq as the

\(^{127}\) FBIS/MEA-79-046, 7 March 1979, D4

\(^{128}\) Ramazani, *Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East*, 168-69.


aggressor – Saddam was attempting to restore the mistake of giving Iran control of the Shatt and bidding to become the leader of the Gulf and the larger Arab world. But Sadat’s hostility towards Iraq, despite their previous anti-Egyptian actions, for the most part faded. In early 1981, Egypt struck an arms deal with Iraq. Iraq, for its part, did not want to publicly renew its relationship with Egypt, but it needed the weapons. There are several reasons why Sadat reached out to his former enemy – he may have wanted to use aid to Iraq as a means to tout his credentials of defending the Arab nation, a vehicle to reintegrate with the Arab states, and saw that Egypt could benefit economically from selling military equipment and increasing economic ties with Iraq. But supporting Iraq also provided a means to contain the Iranian Revolution.

At home, Sadat ordered a harsh suppression of opposition movements, including Islamists, in the fall of 1981. Having built his legitimacy on greater democratization and his religious credentials, in contrast to the Nasser era, the crackdown strained support for his rule. Khomeini responded: “Today, with the widespread arrests of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, Sadat has completed his service to Israel.” The crackdown directly prompted the assassination of Sadat by the Islamist group al-Jihad. The news was welcomed in Tehran.

Sadat’s successor, Hosni Mubarak, continued the policies initiated by Sadat – attempting to suppress as well as co-opt Islamist opposition, and continuing to aid Iraq

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132 Legum, Shaked, and Dishon, Middle East Contemporary Survey, vol. 5, 258.

against Iran. The Mubarak regime attempted to isolate and punish the radicals, and purge the armed forces of Islamist influence. But Mubarak also attempted to bolster the religious legitimacy of the regime by providing concessions to the Islamization of society, as well as providing resources for the state controlled religious institutions.\footnote{For an elaboration of Mubarak’s attempts, see Hesham al-Awadi, \textit{In Pursuit of Legitimacy: The Muslin Brothers and Mubarak, 1982-2000} (New York, NY: Tauris Academic Studies, 2004), 49-72.}

This did not satisfy the radicals. When Mubarak attempted to appease Islamists by selectively implementing Islamic law, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad demanded instead “an Islamic republic led by religious men, like Ayatollah Khomeini’s government in Iran.”\footnote{Ramazani, \textit{Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East}, 173.}

The Mubarak regime ensured that news of events in Iran rarely surfaced in print or on television.

Mubarak regarded the domestic Islamist opposition as the major threat to his regime, and his concerns extended to his foreign policy. The Iranian push into Iraq in 1982 further increased the Iraqi efforts to secure Egyptian aid, which was forthcoming. Egypt provided material and military advisors. An estimated one billion dollars of war material made its way to Iraq in 1982, and by 1985 that figure climbed to two billion.\footnote{Ralph King, \textit{The Iran-Iraq War: The Political Implications}, Adelphi Papers (London, UK: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1987), 43.}

Egypt provided pilots for the Iraqi air force, in addition to other soldiers.\footnote{Entessar, “The Lion and the Sphinx: Iranian-Egyptian Relations in Perspective,” 172.}

Iraq was increasingly willing to publicly embrace Egypt. In 1983, the foreign ministers visited the respective states, and trade sanctions were lifted. In 1984 Iraq led an effort to get Egypt back into Islamic Conference Organization. This process culminated...
with the resumption of diplomatic relations between Egypt and Iraq in 1987, and Iraq’s support of Egypt’s unconditional rehabilitation in the Arab world. Iranian-Egyptian ties, however, remained broken. In 1985, while investigating an assassination attempt against a former interior minister, the Egyptian government claimed to uncover an Islamist movement connected to Iran. The only evidence provided was photographs of Khomeini uncovered when security forces searched militants’ homes. Nevertheless, the two remaining Iranian diplomats in Cairo, housed in the Swiss embassy, were expelled.138

**Saudi Reaction to Iranian Revolution**

The Saudi regime had responded to upheaval going on in Iran by unconditionally backing the shah. They had expected the Americans to handle the situation, and were upset at the American’s willingness to abandon their ally.139 As late as January 1979, Crown Prince Fahd was publicly supporting the shah and was warning of the fear that Communists would take advantage of the chaos in Iran.140

However, when Mehdi Bazargan was appointed Prime Minister of the provisional government in the aftermath of the shah’s departure, Crown Prince Fahd sent a note of congratulations, emphasizing their common Islamic roots, a theme that was elaborated by King Khaled the day that the Islamic Republic of Iran was officially established.141 Abdullah al-Faisal went even further: “The new regime in Iran has removed all obstacles

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138 Ibid., 171. See also Nael Shama, *Egyptian Foreign Policy from Mubarak to Morsi: Against the National Interest* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 144.


140 Ramazani, *Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East*, 87-88.

141 FBIS/MEA-79-032, 14 February 1979, C2.
and reservations in the way of cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Islam is the organizer of our relations." Rather than seeing the Islamic Republic of Iran as a rival or threat, the Saudis, at least publically, were conciliating the new regime, attempting to draw it in under the shared language of Islam.

The Saudi policy of appeasement, however, was soon to be strained. The Gulf States met together to coordinate their policy towards the revolution. They sent Shaykh Sabah in July, the long-standing foreign minister of Kuwait, to confer with Iran. He found suitable interlocutors in the Bazargan government. They issued a joint communiqué affirming their commitment to the principles of “mutual respect and sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity” and the need for “noninterference in other people’s affairs.” But his meetings with the clerics, including Khomeini, were confrontational, and he provided a pessimistic assessment of accommodation. Later in the summer of 1979, protests erupted among the Shia in Bahrain and Kuwait, supported by senior Iranian clerics. Saudi Arabia dispatched two army brigades to Bahrain at their request.

The real impetus behind a change in Saudi policy, though, were the events of November 1979, revolutionary agitation in their own realm that alarmed the Saudis about the very real possibility of spillover from the Iranian Revolution, which was at the same time radicalizing. The takeover of the Grand Mosque in Mecca during the Hajj by a group of Islamist extremists, as mentioned, was the first revolutionary upheaval from

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Sunni Islamists directed at the Saudi regime. Coupled with the shock of the uprising was the embarrassment that it took the security forces two weeks and foreign help to put down the uprising. The reliability of the National Guard came into question.\footnote{Cronin, "Tribes, Coups and Princes: Building a Modern Army in Saudi Arabia," 22-23.}

While security forces were busy securing Mecca, unprecedented violent protests erupted among shia in the heart of the oil-producing region when some attempted to hold a religious procession previously banned. Seven days of rioting ensued, that left at least two-dozen people dead and hundreds wounded. The Saudis rushed troops from Mecca and brutally crushed the rebellion before it could metastasize any further. The Shia uprising was not necessarily an attempt to reproduce the Iranian regime. Like the Iranian Revolution, leftists and Islamists that did not accept Khomeini’s particular political model played a prominent part in the protests.\footnote{Jones, "Rebellion on the Saudi Periphery: Modernity, Marginalization, and the Shi'a Uprising of 1979."} But the rebellion was clearly inspired by the Iranian Revolution. Demonstrators held up pictures of Khomeini, and took up his slogans.\footnote{Jacob Goldberg, "The Shi'i Minority in Saudi Arabia," in Shi'ism and Social Protests, ed. Juan R. I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 240-41.}

These violent protests clearly rattled Saudi officials. While the Iranian Revolution did not directly inspire the Meccan incident,\footnote{The alleged Mahdi, Mohammed Abdullah, was supposedly asked during the siege whether the uprising was inspired by Iran and he emphatically and unsurprisingly answered, “No!” Yaroslav Trofimov, The Siege of Mecca: The 1979 Uprising at Islam’s Holiest Shrine (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 2007), 70.} the siege of the Grand Mosque indicated a level of rejection of the regime hitherto unsuspected, which was targeting the core of their legitimacy – their religious credentials. The Shia disorder set an alarming
precedent for what had been an ignored and apolitical population. The regime responded domestically with both sticks and carrots. In both cases, not only were the perpetrators swiftly dealt with, the regime cast a dragnet looking for other possible connections. At the same time, they looked to ameliorate grievances. Concerning the Shia community, part of the grievances stemmed from chronic underdevelopment; the Kingdom poured money into various projects such as improving the infrastructure, though religious demands went largely unheralded. Saudi Shia Islamists who were clearly unsatisfied announced the creation of the Organization for Islamic Revolution in the Arabian Peninsula.\textsuperscript{149} In a nod to Sunni Islamists demands, authorities tightened up the alcohol ban and the practice of employing women, increased religious control over the education system, allocated more resources to constructing mosques and other religious purposes, and appointed a descendent of Abd al-Wahhab as minister of justice and Islamic affairs.\textsuperscript{150}

But their attempt to shore up the regime did not just involve domestic policy. Just after the November uprisings, in December of 1979, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. One of the means of handling the Islamist threat would be to channel that energy and send it abroad, at the same time beefing up their Islamist credentials. Extensive Saudi involvement in Afghanistan, though, did not develop for several years.\textsuperscript{151} More immediately, their policy towards Iran began to change. The same month as the uprisings

\textsuperscript{149} Louër, \textit{Transnational Shia Politics: Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf}, 166.


in Saudi Arabia brought the hostage crisis and subsequent radicalization of the Iranian Revolution. Amidst increasingly strident rhetoric coming from Iran, including rhetoric specifically denouncing the Saudi regime, the Saudis publicly played it cool. Crown Prince Fahd was asked in February of 1980 in the aftermath of further Shia protests about the possibility of the contagion of the Iranian Revolution. He “wondered aloud on what basis the question was ‘even asked.’” He explained that the Iranian revolutionaries had demanded rule based on Islamic principles, something that had existed in Saudi Arabia since its foundation.

Privately, they were reorienting their policy. The Saudis initially appeared to keep up their appeasement of Iran, letting the Americans and Iraqis lead the charge against Iran. But they increasingly showed an uncharacteristic willingness to assert themselves against Iran. In the context of increasing meetings between Saudi and Iraqi officials, most scholars writing on the subject think that Iraq shared with Saudi Arabia their plan to invade Iran in mid 1980 and the Saudis approved. On September 17, when Saddam Hussein formally abrogated the Algiers agreement, Iraqi envoys were sent

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152 For example, President Bani Sadr stated in March 1980 that “Arab governments in the Gulf area are friends of the US; therefore we do not consider these states as independent, nor do we wish to cooperate with them, and Iran intends to export its Islamic revolution in support of any Islamic movement that rises against any Arab government.” Gerd Nonneman, *Iraq, the Gulf States & the War* (London, UK: Ithaca Press, 1986), 21.

153 Ramazani, *Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East*, 89.

to the Gulf countries and returned home claiming to have gained their assent to the Iraqi action. Saudi Arabia did not deny the reports.\textsuperscript{155} When war commenced a few days later, the Saudis gave permission to Iraqi warplanes to take shelter in the Kingdom, despite the fact that Iran had threatened to attack Iraqi forces wherever they were, and they allowed their Red Sea ports to be used for the shipment of war supplies to Iraq.\textsuperscript{156}

When Iraq’s initial blitzkrieg fell short and Iran threatened Saudi Arabia for cooperating with Iraq, Saudi Arabia backed off a bit and expressed their neutrality, but it was clear what side they were on.\textsuperscript{157} As the war ground to a stalemate, the Saudis ramped up their coordination and funding of Iraq. They also used their position in OPEC to set a relatively low export quota for Iran, reducing Iran’s ability to earn the foreign exchange to support its war efforts.\textsuperscript{158} Saudi “loans” increased after Iran was able to push back and then cross into Iraqi territory. Precise figures are not known, but it is estimated that by then end of 1982, Saudi Arabia had lent their former enemy about 20 billion dollars in the fight against Iran.\textsuperscript{159} An unusually outspoken Saudi prince declared in December of 1981 that Saudi Arabia “totally supports the Iraqi position in the war” and


\textsuperscript{156} Gause III, \textit{The International Relations of the Persian Gulf}, 72.

\textsuperscript{157} Nonneman, \textit{Iraq, the Gulf States & the War}, 33.

\textsuperscript{158} As a swing producer, the Saudis would also glut market, thus decreasing the price for oil. This harmed Iran, although they also had the motive of keeping their Western allies, particularly the United States, pleased. See Hooshang Amirahmadi, “Iranian-Saudi Arabian Relations since the Revolution,” in \textit{Iran and the Arab World}, ed. Hooshang Amirahmadi and Nader Entessar (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1993), 141-44; Fürtig, \textit{Iran's Rivalry with Saudi Arabia between the Gulf Wars}, 231-33.

\textsuperscript{159} Nonneman, \textit{Iraq, the Gulf States & the War}, 97.
that Iraq was doing a service by protecting the entire Arab nation.\textsuperscript{160} Usually the Saudis were coy in their public statements, but they unquestionably supported Iraq against Iran throughout the war, and as a result earned the enmity of Iran, who called for the regime’s overthrow.

Besides their support for Iraq, they also shored up their relations with the other Persian Gulf states. In 1981, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was formed among Saudi Arabia and the five smaller Persian Gulf states: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman. Talk of such a regional organization predated the Iranian Revolution, but it was never realized. There was a fear of Saudi Arabia using the organization to dominate the smaller states. The GCC was a direct consequence of the of the Iranian Revolution – the primary purpose of the organization (though not even mentioned in the founding charter) was to coordinate resources in order to fend off an internal political threat, their Islamist opposition, inspired by the Iranian Revolution.\textsuperscript{161} Although sometimes considered an alliance against the external military threat of Iran, the GCC was formed when Iran was bogged down defending itself from Iraq. More telling, although the members often pledged their mutual defense and some effort was made to coordinate their defenses, no effective military structure was established, even after Iran became a more salient military threat. GCC forces were nothing more than a

\textsuperscript{160} Legum, Shaked, and Dishon, \textit{Middle East Contemporary Survey}, vol. 6, 787.

“trip wire.”\textsuperscript{162} One of the first areas of cooperation among members involved the sharing of intelligence concerning possible dissidents. Agreements were particularly forthcoming in the wake of an attempted coup in Bahrain in 1981. Shortly thereafter the countries signed various bilateral agreements concerning extradition, deportation, border crossing, and the exchange of equipment and information.\textsuperscript{163} The Iran-Iraq war provided a convenient pretext of excluding Iraq from the organization. While there was still fear of Saudi domination, the interest in protection, given their perceived internal threat environment, outweighed the risks, just as it had done for the Italian states that had welcomed Austria protection in the face of liberal revolutions.


\textsuperscript{163} Ramazani, \textit{The Gulf Cooperation Council: Record and Analysis}, 35-38. Another aspect of the GCC was its efforts towards economic cooperation. While often treated separately from security concerns, Scott Cooper has cogently argued that the economic benefits resulting from this cooperation also involve regime security, as the jobs created by economic integration, the increase in labor mobility, and so on would particularly target the Shia, who were disproportionately unemployed. Cooper, "State-Centric Balance-of-Threat Theory: Explaining the Misunderstood Gulf Cooperation Council," 336-38.
The Saudis engaged in a few direct confrontations with the Iranians over the Gulf, but both sides wanted to avoid an escalation of the conflict, and the incidences remained isolated. The Saudi’s most visible conflict with Iran involved the attempt by Iranian pilgrims at the Hajj, orchestrated by the Iranian government, to spread propaganda about the Iranian Revolution and against the Saudi regime. Iranian officials described these pilgrims as the ambassadors of the Iranian Revolution. Conflict between Iranian pilgrims and the Saudi regime culminated in a confrontation at the 1987 Hajj in which around 400 Iranians were killed and thousands injured. Iranian officials responded with calls to liberate Mecca. Saudi Arabia responded by severing diplomatic relations with Iran, provoking Khomeini to boycott the pilgrimage the following year.

The protests during the Hajj exemplified why the Saudis considered the Iranian Revolution dangerous. Formerly, the leftists had been considered their major threat, and they responded by burnishing their Islamic credentials. Iran, however, threatened to turn that strength into a weakness, to challenge the core of their legitimating principles and thus invite Islamists to attack the regime. For this reason, the Saudis were willing to support their former enemies, the Iraqis, who formerly were considered an ideological and geopolitical threat. The fact that they were a potential geopolitical threat was illustrated only a couple of years after the Iran-Iraq war, when the Iraqi military, built up with Saudi finance, threatened to invade them.

164 The Saudi’s fear of direct military confrontation, though, prompted them several times to offer Iran financial compensation in order to end the war.

Conclusion

The model laid out in chapter one asserted that leaders fear the spread of revolutionary contagion when there are preexisting significant revolutionary movements within their own borders. This was the case among the Arab states assessed here. In Iraq, Egypt, and Syria, the Iranian Revolution emboldened existing radical Islamists, which led to an increased crack down on such movements. In Saudi Arabia, one can see the mechanism at work. The Kingdom initially perceived that they had no significant Islamist revolutionary opposition, in contrast to the other states, and likewise did not at first exhibit any particular alarm over the possible contagion from the Iranian Revolution. However, after their experiences in November 1979 – the take over of the grand mosque and the Shia riots – changed their perception of their domestic opposition, their fear of the contagion of the Iranian Revolution was much more evident.

The model in chapter one also claims that states’ fear of contagion will primarily be driven by characteristics of the host rather than the activities of the infecting agent. This is not to say that states are indifferent to states acting as a platform, but that the existence of preexisting opposition movements is a necessary condition for states to fear the revolutionary contagion abroad. There is some evidence for this thesis in the international impact of the Iranian Revolution. What caused Saudi Arabia to worry about the contagion of the Iranian Revolution was the domestic upheaval of November 1979, events that Iran had no direct involvement in. In Egypt, there was alarm at the possibility that the Revolution would embolden Islamists, which it indeed did, even though Iran never had any significant ties with these Sunni opposition movements.
However, the Iranian Revolution shows the strong effect that a revolutionary state acting as a platform can have on other states’ response to the revolution. This is best exhibited in the Iraqi case. Iraq was clearly alarmed by the radicalization of the Iranian Revolution in Islamist terms, which could act as a model to their domestic opposition. But what seemed to push Hussein over the edge in terms of initiating war with Iran was his concern that Iran was directly meddling in Iraqi affairs. This was probably more preventative than a reaction to what Iran had already done. Although the Ba’thist regime preferred to cast the Shia insurrection as the work of outsiders rather than admit they had an indigenous insurrection, spurred by the example of the Iranian Revolution, the latter was certainly the case. Prior to the war, Iran’s aid to the Iraqi opposition was largely symbolic. But they were engaging in propaganda, and the ties that the revolutionary regime had with the Iraqi opposition, and its ability to mobilize them, was obvious. When Khomeini broadcasted a message to Sadr telling him to remain in Iraq despite the persecution of the Iraqi government and Sadr responded, it set off a wave of protests in Iraqi cities in support of Sadr and Khomeini.166

Saddam probably reasoned that it would be hard enough for him to contain his opposition when Iran was serving as a model. The more Iran served as a platform, directly aiding his domestic opposition, the more suppressing them would be extremely difficult, if not to say impossible. He had had a hard enough time with the Kurds when they received aid from the shah. The fear of contagion was not dependent on the revolutionary state acting as a platform, but that was certainly an amplifier of fear.

The model in chapter one also argued that the fear of contagion would have a
decisive affect on international affairs – that there would be cooperation amongst states
with similar revolutionary opposition and conflict with the revolutionary state. It was
argued that this pattern of cooperation and conflict would exist sometimes in contrast to
geopolitical pressures.

Syria is a clear falsification of this model. The Ba’thist regime undoubtedly had a
significant revolutionary Islamist opposition movement, which was emboldened by the
Iranian Revolution. Assad nevertheless reached out to Iran and remained bitter enemies
with Iraq and, to lesser extents, Egypt and then Saudi Arabia. Their potential fear of the
contagion of the Iranian Revolution was simply overwhelmed by other factors – first their
need for an ally against Israel, then Iraq. And their attempt to reach out to Iran brought
benefits on the home front – discrediting the Iranian model. The fear of contagion of a
revolution is a factor that shapes and shoves, but it is sometimes overwhelmed by other
factors. In Syria’s case, their vulnerability to other powers proved pivotal.

However besides Syria, one can observe a pattern of cooperation and conflict
predicted in chapter one in the alignments among states after the Iranian Revolution. The
revolution brought about a sea change of alignments that is difficult to explain using
realist explanations, which focus on the distribution of material power. In both military
and economic terms, the Iranian Revolution severely decreased Iran’s capabilities. By
the beginning of the 1990’s, Iran was only beginning to recover to pre-Revolutionary
levels. Regarding military capability, the shah had heavily invested in the armed forces,
reflecting his desire to transform Iran into a world power. Relying especially on arms
imports from the United States, he developed easily the most powerful military in the
region. The military rapidly fell apart after the shah fled the country and it faced purges from the revolutionary government, as discussed. The mobilization for the Iran-Iraq war increased troop levels, and by the mid 1980’s the total armed forces had surpassed pre-revolutionary levels.\textsuperscript{167} Sheer numbers, of course, do not adequately express power; it is generally acknowledged that the lack of training and equipment significantly affected their capabilities.\textsuperscript{168} And, of course, once Iran was bogged down in a war with Iraq they were significantly weaker vis-à-vis other opponents. Even with the war’s conclusion, they were weaker vis-à-vis neighboring states than they had been before the revolution. Iran’s economy exhibited the same pattern. The several decades prior to the revolution had seen dramatic economic growth.\textsuperscript{169} Such growth gave confidence to the shah’s boast of becoming a great power. This growth, however, peaked in 1977. A recession beginning that year further escalated as the country tumbled into revolutionary chaos. The economy began to recover somewhat beginning in 1981 partly as a result of the Iran-Iraq war. This trend was continued by the rising price of oil from roughly 1981 to 1983, but the economy again began to falter for a variety of reasons. By the end of the decade

\textsuperscript{167} It is estimated that the combined armed forces had sunk from roughly 413,000 in 1978-79 to a low of 90,000 in 1980-81, then back up to 555,000 in 1984-85. See \textit{The Military Balance} (London, UK: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1979-1986).

\textsuperscript{168} The effect of the lack of arms imports was especially pernicious. Iraq, for example, from the period of 1980 to 1987 imported 369% more arms than did Iran, and Iranian imports were often of poorer quality Cordesman and Wagner, \textit{The Lessons of Modern War: Volume II: The Iran-Iraq War}, 48-53.

Iran had still not reached economic levels achieved in 1977 despite the tremendous growth in population; thus, the per capita income had dropped substantially.\footnote{Writing in 1993, Amuzegar noted that “Since the revolution, economic growth has been almost nil, with GDP registering a decline in 6 out of the 14 years. Unemployment has hovered around 12-14 per cent of the labor force. Dependence on foodstuffs has increased. With the population up by nearly 62 per cent, and real GDP about the same as the pre-revolution level, per capita income has fallen 38 percent.”}\footnote{Amirahmadi’s figures just before the up-tick of the early 1990s are even more dramatic. Ibid., 59; Hooshang Amirahmadi, \textit{Revolution and Economic Transition: The Iranian Experience} (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 195-96.}

Iran was unquestionably more powerful before the revolution, and yet, as detailed, Iran had friendly relations with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq. The revolution dramatically weakened Iranian power, and yet these same states balanced against Iran.\footnote{This is emphasized by F. Gregory Gause III, "Balancing What? Threat Perception and Alliance Choice in the Gulf," \textit{Security Studies} 13, no. 2 (2003). Gause also points out the weakness of Stephen Walt’s balance of threat “theory” in making up the difference. The balance of threat could have coded Saudi Arabia’s decision to align with Iraq as balancing the Iranian revolutionary threat or bandwagoning with an Iraq that seemed to be emerging as the Gulf’s dominant military power (281). This ex post coding problem points to the difficulty of the theory predicting anything ex ante. Either decision Saudi Arabia made could have been explained as consistent with the theory. Beyond rendering the core of neorealism – the balance of power theory – indeterminate, the balance of threat in practice incorporates domestic level and ideational factors as opposed to the distribution of power in the international system. In Walt’s analysis, “aggressive intentions” often slips from the designs one state has on another to how one state’s ideology affects the legitimacy of another, a fact that constructivists have pointed out. (Michael N. Barnett, "Identity and Alliances in the Middle East," in \textit{The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics}, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1996), 403-07; Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," \textit{International Security} 23, no. 1 (1998): 186-87.) For example, Walt states that focusing on threats rather than power helps account for the anomaly of}
The Iran-Iraq war, in contrast, had little effect on alignments in the region. The change in patterns of conflict and cooperation was not just a function of the states’ response to Iranian aggression. Saudi Arabia and Egypt aided Iraq against Iran well before Iran continued into Iraq. That is, it was not just about Iran’s ability to project power, or even its willingness to do so. One cannot explain the realignment of the Middle East after the Iranian Revolution by referencing the balance of power, or even Iranian intentions. One must take into account the fear that a wave of revolutionary political Islam was sweeping through the system. This explains the Saudis arming Iraq, which would go on to threaten it a few years later. It explains why relations with Iraq and Iran broke down. And it explains why other Arab states were open to reintegrating Egypt back into their fold.

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Arab states’ unwillingness to ally with Israel, even when such an alliance would have been an obvious military asset: “This failure is readily understood when we recall that such an alliance would have posed a potentially lethal threat to the legitimacy of the Arab states involved because of the importance attached to Arab solidarity.” Stephen M. Walt, The Origins of Alliances (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 265. Walt’s balance of threat is more descriptively accurate than the balance of power theory, but it is neither realist nor a theory. As Waltz says, it is “not the name of a new theory but as part of a description of how makers of foreign policy think when making alliance decisions” Kenneth N. Waltz, “Evaluating Theories,” American Political Science Review 91, no. 4 (1997): 916.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

In chapter one, I set out a simple theory, that whether there were preexisting revolutionary movements would determine whether leaders feared revolutionary contagion, and the result would be conflict with the revolutionary states and cooperation with like states. As to be expected, this simple theory is a blunt tool that misses many of the nuances at play in the international response to revolutions, and even some of the bigger issues – for example, how states might agree on opposing a revolution, but have profound disagreements on the correct counterrevolutionary strategy.

Also, the argument that the fear of contagion in these particular circumstances would be the basis of their foreign policies, dictating patterns of cooperation and conflict, is strong one. It assumes the fear of contagion will overwhelm other factors that may compete with it, most notably, geopolitical pressures. And it assumes that policy substitutions – simply ramping up repression while carrying on a traditional foreign policy – will not be considered sufficient. This argument, and the assumptions embedded in it, was not always correct. The case of the foreign policy of Syria towards Iran is an explicit falsification of my theory – a case where the theory should have applied but did not.

But what is more notable is how much of international politics is illuminated by the theory. To use the same analogy as Mearsheimer, it is like a flashlight in a dark room, not illuminating all the details, but providing the general shapes and effective at
navigating through the darkness. The first chapter, involving the response to revolutions during the ancien régime, was largely a negative confirmation of the theory. The second chapter, the response to revolutions during the concert of Europe, was largely a positive confirmation of the theory. The third chapter, aside from the case of Syria, also for the most part validated the theory. One of the notable findings is the extent of cooperation between states that share the fear of revolution, sometimes in contrast to geopolitical pressures. Another is the extent to which a state simply acting as a model can generate a response. Certainly the extent to which states act as platforms affects leaders’ reaction to them, especially when the state is powerful. An addendum to the theory might be that the greater the power of the state, the more the platform factor overwhelms concerns about the model, assuming there is a preexisting revolutionary movement in the host state. But the fact that leaders are concerned about powerful states attempting to spread revolution abroad is not unexpected. What is most interesting is that leaders fear states acting as models, even peripheral states. Given the fact that this issue has been neglected and the mechanism is so indirect, it is surprising that it has any causal weight at all.

These findings should have interest to the research on diffusion/demonstration effects. Increased scrutiny has been given to how such indirect international factors affect domestic political outcomes. This dissertation extends these findings by showing that leaders anticipate such mechanisms and try to prevent them from happening. They attempt to shape the international system in such a way that preserves their rule.

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A next step in terms of extending the model is to apply it to a broader set of cases. One set of cases is the international response to the Russian revolution of 1917 and Italian revolution of 1922. An evaluation of these cases would include in the study two prominent revolutionary ideologies of the 20th century – communism and fascism. Because these cases occurred over a roughly similar period, they provide useful comparisons. Both these revolutions varied over time and space in the extent to which they acted as a platform in spreading revolution abroad, and there was also variation among the extent to which there were revolutionary fascist and communist movements in the great powers. The reaction to the revolutions yields some anomalies for the model, most notably Weimar Germany’s alignment with the Soviets despite their own communist movement, although the extent of the concern in Weimar Germany over the Soviets and the extent to which this limited their alliance has not been appreciated. But there are also confirmations of the model that echo the cases examined in this dissertation. For example, in Europe of the 1920s, there was no Franco-Russian alliance to cooperate against Germany, just as there was not a Franco-Russian alliance against the German powers in Europe of the 1820s, for broadly the same reason – fear of revolutionary contagion.

The model also may have something to contribute to current events. Another case to test the model against is the Arab spring of 2011. Even more recently, the biggest story in international affairs in the first half of 2014 has been the drama unfolding in Ukraine. In February of 2014, protestors overthrew President Viktor Yanukovych. Russian President Vladimir Putin refused to recognize the legitimacy of the new government. He annexed the Crimea in March and as of this writing the situation in
eastern Ukraine remains tenuous. There are several interpretations of Putin’s annexation of Crimea and efforts to destabilize the new Ukrainian regime. One views his actions as driven by geopolitics. He wants to prevent Ukraine from moving towards the West, or at least secure the Crimea, including Russian military bases and natural gas fields. Another perspective is that his actions are explained by the diversionary thesis. Putin was facing a bad economy and in the aftermath of his actions his approval rating has soared. But there is another factor that is related to this dissertation. Putin is anxious to keep revolution at bay. In December 2011, the largest protests since the fall of the Soviet Union demonstrated against Putin’s rule, which some called Russia’s Arab Spring. Putin does not want what happened to Yanukovych happen to him. He wishes to undermine the revolution, which could be a negative example in Russia, and send a message to the West, whom he feels was behind not only the revolutions in Ukraine but the protests in Russia.

Another way to extend the subject is not just to add to the cases examined by the model, but widen the focus. This dissertation is largely about when the fear of revolutionary contagion is not salient and how it becomes so. What remains to be examined is how that fear dissipates as the larger ideological wave diminishes. John Owen argues that transnational ideological contests begin when a regime undergoes a crisis and a new one emerges. This contest only ends when one regime proves its superiority and spreads throughout the system. However, as was pointed out earlier, a regime change is neither necessary nor sufficient to initiate this contest. It is also not necessary for all regimes to converge on one type for the contest to end. For example, an ideological contest that came to a close, which this dissertation touches on because it
occurred in the period prior to the Iranian Revolution, was rivalry between the leftist pan-
Arab revolutionary regimes and conservative monarchical regimes. This contest died not
as the result of the region converging on one regime type. Instead, the pan-Arab
revolutionary ideology was discredited and lost much of its salience for international
politics. This casts doubt on Owen’s evolutionary account of what drives these long
waves of ideological contestation – that different regime types have different abilities to
survive in the international system, and thus the contest is over when one regime type has
proven its superiority and is adapted throughout the system. The decline of revolutionary
waves, or transnational ideological contests, also raise a number of interesting questions
to be investigated about how this process is played out. For example, there are the
strategic dilemmas of revolutionary states: how they signal restraint to the international
community while appeasing their domestic audience.

This dissertation makes a contribution to the literature on the international effects
of revolution, but also speaks to larger issues in the study of international politics. One
such issue is the relationship between domestic instability and conflict. I have noted that
the relationship between domestic instability and international conflict in the international
relations literature is almost exclusively examined through the lens of the diversionary
theory. The evidence in this dissertation is in many ways the opposite of the diversionary
theory – instability often leads to cooperation rather than conflict, and conflict is targeted
at a source of the problem rather than a diversion. While much of the focus of the
international effects of revolutions is on how revolution can lead to war, one of the
notable findings of the dissertation is how the fear of contagion can lead to an unusual
degree of cooperation among states with similar movements. This relates to the need for
a broader exploration of how internal instability can lead to cooperation. Rather than exclusively testing whether a positive relationship exists between internal instability and external conflict, the question must be disaggregated, with greater focus on the mechanisms at play. One might begin by establishing ex ante whether leaders have status quo or revolutionary goals and consider under what circumstances conflict or cooperation would achieve their aim.

This dissertation began with one of the longstanding questions in the study of international politics that nevertheless gets short shrift: whether ideological differences between states affect international politics. In the aftermath of the Cold War, two of the most prominent visions for what the future of world politics would look like were Samuel Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” and Francis Fukuyama’s “The End of History.” It is notable that, despite their disagreements on the future, they both agreed about the past. Both characterized international politics as the struggle over different ideological visions for how regimes should be organized. This agreement is notable because it seems to contradict at the focus of most of the scholarship on international relations, which has largely ignored if not denied the international effects of ideological differences between states.

I have identified a few reasons why this may be so. One is the method of measurement – reducing ideological differences between states to those between democracies and autocracies. The field has an almost pathological obsession with the distinction between these two regime types at the expense of other ways of considering

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regimes. Even more to the point, I asserted that work on the international affects of ideological differences between states often lacked compelling mechanisms, ones that explain why the salience of ideological differences varies over time and space. I have attempted to examine such a mechanism here. The mechanism examined here, whereby a revolution inspires a fear of contagion in other states and correspondingly affects their foreign policy, does not exhaust how ideology can affect international politics. But it is a main one. The contest over regime type has had a profound affect on international politics, and the mechanism I examine is a principle way in which this effect works.

I have shown here that ideological differences among states can have profound effects on relations between them. But it is also important that these ideological differences not be exaggerated. My theory asserts relatively narrow conditions under which ideological differences between states become salient for international politics. Often international politics carries on with little or no reference to the internal characteristics of regimes, as I have shown even in cases where it might be expected that there be fear of revolutionary contagion.

To return to the basic question this dissertation began with, asking whether ideological differences between states affect international politics is too blunt. The question needs to be further specified: When are ideological differences salient, why, and how much? To answer the question very simply, ideological differences become salient when states have a significant opposition that have the same ideological characteristics of another state in the system because leaders of that state will fear contagion, and when that is the case, the international effects will be profound, affecting patterns of cooperation and conflict.
Waltz rhetorically asked in his *Theory of International Politics*, “Which is more precarious: the life of a state among states, or of a government in relation to its subjects? The answer varies with time and place.”

His point was to establish that, because of this variation, the use of force or the constant fear of it cannot be used to distinguish between international and domestic affairs. But if a life of a government in relation to its subjects were more precarious than a life of a state among states, could this not have an effect on how states interact with each other? Neorealism’s assumption that states want to survive helps lead it to the conclusion that what drives international politics is distribution of capabilities. However, if it is not the survival of states but the survival of regimes, governments, or leaders that is salient, which has been an increasing focus in international politics, very different factors may be relevant, including ideological factors. Ideology in international relations is often considered as the opposite of realpolitik and, at times, rationalist perspectives. But this is unwarranted. Ideological factors can be tightly bound with a regime’s survival.

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