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Adversarial conventional arms control in Europe: the quest for peace

Lippert, W.E.

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Part I: The Quest for Peace

Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Questions

As Europe's largest war since 1945 rages in its east without any clear indication of terminating, we must understand that adversarial conventional arms control (CAC)¹ is a path to peace – not just for this conflict, but for many inter-state conflicts. CAC agreements seek to either prevent the outbreak of war, or they bring wars to a close in the hope that they do not recommence. CAC is the quest for peace, whether that peace, as defined by the CAC agreement, is lopsided – favoring a victor after a conflict; more balanced, having been signed in peacetime in an environment potentially riven by mistrust and feelings of insecurity, but otherwise in the absence of recent or ongoing conflict; or a ceasefire, freezing battle lines in place to allow space for negotiations and a more permanent cessation of hostilities.² In brief, this dissertation defines CAC as quantitative and/or geographic restrictions, reductions, and/or limitations on conventional arms.

This dissertation begins with a detailed introduction in chapters 1-3 that covers the research questions, offers an overview of CAC issues, theory, and literature, and explains the methodologies applied to answer the research questions. It then presents four peer-reviewed articles published in/submitted to peer-reviewed academic journals in chapters 4-7, serving as the heart of the research and analysis. Lastly, the dissertation's chapter 8 concludes with final thoughts, implications, and areas for future research. The appendices provide additional information for each research chapter, particularly how scoring and calibrations were determined.

What explains the form that adversarial conventional arms control agreements assume and what determines their success? CAC agreements, with a minority of exceptions, lock in the status quo to all parties' benefit. States do not simply come to an agreement to substantially reduce their militaries while letting an adversary's military stay the same size – or grow – if they have any alternative. States negotiating an agreement are aware that the other side will also not do so if given a choice. Peacetime CAC agreements offer stronger states the

¹ This thesis is focused on “adversarial conventional arms control (CAC),” but for simplicity is often shortened to CAC. When other types of CAC are discussed, this is specified. “Adversarial” is specifically mentioned from time to time either to differentiate it from other types of CAC when they are discussed together, or as a reminder of the type of CAC being analyzed.

² Zellner is one of the relatively few writers who has defined CAC broadly by including ceasefires and peacetime agreements together, although he also includes “operational” arms control during conflict, which does not refer to quantitative limitations but on what weapons or tactics might be used. Wolfgang Zellner, “Conventional Arms Control during Wartime, in Ceasefire and Post-Conflict Situations” (Vienna: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, February 2025).

opportunity to remain strong but with reduced needs to engage in a costly arms race to retain their superiority, while weaker ones receive some measure of guarantee that the stronger state will not compel the weaker state to further compete – and, ideally, the stronger state will not attack if it feels secure.³ When states are relatively equal in terms of military capability, peacetime CAC agreements can end expensive arms racing, keeping both sides comparable but at lower cost. In wars, a CAC agreement (often as part of a broader peace agreement) can lock in a defeated state's inferiority – but with the reward of ending a conflict in which their loss is apparent and in which they can no longer afford the costs, especially when there are no clear gains to be had by continuing the conflict. Lastly, CAC agreements that establish a cessation of hostilities – usually with the establishment of a buffer zone – end human and material costs especially when both parties do not envision the likelihood of either side obtaining a decisive victory.

Peacetime CAC agreements may seek to maintain peace by reducing areas of contention, especially through geographic demilitarization, reducing tensions and disputes arising from arms racing, and preventing either side from being able to launch a surprise attack. Preventing a surprise attack was one of the 1990 Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and 1998 Adapted CFE (A/CFE) Treaties' specific goals.⁴ A conflict-related CAC agreement seeks to end the conflict, sometimes after a temporary cessation of hostilities such as an armistice, so that the losing side no longer faces attacks and the prospect of an even more destructive, annihilating defeat, and the victor no longer loses personnel and material in continuing the conflict. Thus, even a one-sided arms control agreement, such as the 1919 Paris Peace Treaties that followed World War One, having sought a “firm, just and durable Peace,”⁵ are mutual agreements wherein all sides formally signed the agreement. Similarly, narrower,

³ Christoph Bluth, “Arms Control as a Part of Strategy: The Warsaw Pact in MBFR Negotiations,” *Cold War History* 12, no. 2 (2012): 245–68, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2011.557364>; Richard Dean Burns and Donald Urquidí, *Disarmament in Perspective: Volume 1, An Analysis of Selected Arms Control and Disarmament Agreements Between the World Wars, 1919-1939*, vol. Disarmament and the Peace Conference, 1 (Los Angeles: California State College at Los Angeles Foundation, 1968); Virginia Page Fortna, *Peace Time: Cease-Fire Agreements and the Durability of Peace* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2004); John D. Maurer, “The Purposes of Arms Control,” *Texas National Security Review* 2, no. 1 (November 2018): 8–27; Patrick M. Morgan, “Arms Control: A Theoretical Perspective,” *Policy Studies Journal* 8, no. 1 (Fall 1979): 106–14; Thomas C. Schelling and Morton H. Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1961); Fred Tanner, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, and Graduate Institute of International Studies (Geneva, Switzerland), eds., *From Versailles to Baghdad: Post-War Armament Control of Defeated States* (New York: United Nations, 1992).

⁴ The preamble reads in part: “Committed to the objectives of establishing a secure and stable balance of conventional armed forces in Europe at lower levels than heretofore, of eliminating disparities prejudicial to stability and security and of eliminating, as a matter of high priority, the capability for launching surprise attack and for initiating large-scale offensive action in Europe,” “Treaty On Conventional Armed Forces In Europe” (Paris, November 19, 1990).

⁵ “Treaty of Peace with Germany (Treaty of Versailles)” (Versailles, June 28, 1919).

geographic demilitarization CAC agreements specifically aim to maintain peace between states by removing at least a specific potential flashpoint, as, for example, the Åland Islands Convention which states “that these islands may never become a cause of danger from the military point of view.”⁶

The outbreak of a major conventional war in Ukraine, which followed the Russian annexation of Crimea and support for separatists in eastern Ukraine in 2014, radically and immediately transformed European CAC institutions, approaches, and considerations. The invasion, for the most part, paused consideration by scholars and practitioners of a continent-wide agreement to reduce tensions between NATO and Russia and prevent a surprise attack – or fear of one – by either side. Geographic demilitarization in and around the Baltic states, and to a lesser extent around the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, as well as another CFE Treaty – the equivalent of a CFE 3 – that were being discussed by scholars,⁷ experts,⁸ and policymakers⁹ quickly gave way to substantial increases in military activity and a flood of NATO and other states’ military equipment pouring into Ukraine to fight and kill Russian forces. The pro-Ukraine coalition is, at the time of writing, more interested in what weapons to send Ukraine to help it stave off defeat, if not win, than what weapons to limit.

This does not seem to be a situation conducive to analyzing CAC, let alone planning for its future in Europe. Yet the topic could not be more relevant. As discussed in chapter 7, this dissertation proposes that one of the Russo-Ukraine war’s causes, beyond the inherent US/NATO-Russia rivalry, was CAC failure. It was not the only reason, but the dissertation argues that had the military balance between NATO and Russia been much more to Russia’s

⁶ “Convention Relating to the Non-Fortification and Neutralisation of the Åland Islands” (Geneva, January 19, 1922).

⁷ Ulrich Kühn, “Conventional Arms Control 2.0,” *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 26, no. 2 (April 2013): 189–202, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2013.779859>.

⁸ Samuel Charap et al., *Meeting Europe’s 21st Century Security Challenges: Reimagining Conventional Arms Control* (RAND Corporation, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.7249/RB10115>; Johan Engvall et al., *Conventional Arms Control - A Way Forward or Wishful Thinking?* (FOI, 2018); Łukasz Kulesa, “The Future of Conventional Arms Control in Europe,” *Survival* 60, no. 4 (2018): 75–90, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2018.1495430>; Wolfgang Richter, “Reviving Conventional Arms Control in Europe. A Contribution to Military Stability in Times of Crisis,” in *OSCE-Yearbook 2016*, ed. Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg / IFSH (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG, 2017), 51–61, <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783845282855-51>.

⁹ Lucien Kleinjan, “Conventional Arms Control in Europe: Decline, Disarray, and the Need for Reinvention,” *Arms Control Today*, June 2016, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2016-05/features/conventional-arms-control-europe-decline-disarray-need-reinvention>; Kingston A. Reif, “Europeans Seek Conventional Arms Talks,” *Arms Control Today* (blog), February 2017, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2017-01/news/europeans-seek-conventional-arms-talks>; Frank-Walter Steinmeier, “Reviving Arms Control in Europe,” *Project Syndicate*, August 26, 2016, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/reviving-arms-control-in-europe-by-frank-walter-steinmeier-2016-08>.

liking, they would have been much less motivated to invade Ukraine – either in 2014 or 2022.¹⁰ As Zellner observed, for example, the first round of NATO enlargement was linked to arms control but the second was not.¹¹

Understanding the role CAC failure played in compelling Russia to invade Ukraine in 2022 is essential. In order to prevent a future invasion or a broader European war, we must understand how issues of the military balance and CAC issues were causes of this war. Getting the causes right will help us find the correct, preventive solutions. For example, these solutions will differ substantially if the war was caused by Moscow's fear of a militarily powerful NATO capable of launching a surprise attack or supporting regime change in Moscow with military force compared to questions of Russian minority rights in Ukraine.

Kühn's authoritative book¹² on the decay of cooperative arms control, or what this dissertation refers to as adversarial arms control, was written and published prior to the 2022 invasion but was nonetheless prescient. Though he could not predict the war's outbreak, one can see some foreshadowing when he stated that:

almost three decades after the end of the Cold War, Europe has entered a new period of confrontation with Russia. The decay of cooperative arms control in Europe is deplorable. At the same time, it is even more a reason to re-engage on those issues that have led to its demise. Careful and non-biased analysis of the failures of the past might contribute to shaping a better future.¹³

Moreover, conflicts often end with agreements that have a substantial CAC component. The reasons for this are explained in greater detail in the following chapters, but the relevance to the Russo-Ukraine War is that there will likely be some sort of CAC agreement whether between just Russia and Ukraine, or from the Atlantic to the Urals (ATTU) (in the terms of the CFE Treaty). Thus, as this dissertation will argue, the Russo-Ukraine War has heightened rather

¹⁰ See also, for example, Amy J. Nelson and Adam Twardowski, "How the Demise of an Arms Control Treaty Foreshadowed Russia's Aggression against Ukraine," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (blog), February 1, 2022, <https://thebulletin.org/2022/02/how-the-demise-of-an-arms-control-treaty-foreshadowed-russias-aggression-against-ukraine/>.

¹¹ Wolfgang Zellner, "Conventional Arms Control in Europe: Is There a Last Chance?," Arms Control Association, March 2012, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2012-03/conventional-arms-control-europe-there-last-chance>.

¹² Ulrich Kühn, *The Rise and Fall of Cooperative Arms Control in Europe*, 1st ed., vol. 224, Demokratie, Sicherheit, Frieden (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783748903239>.

¹³ Kühn, 224:362.

than diminished CAC's importance in Europe. Although CAC may not be a priority for some international security scholars who may be grappling with the implications of the war's outbreak and who seek to understand the new European security – or insecurity – order, and although practitioners may be more focused on immediate battlefield crises, this dissertation attempts to contribute to the theory and practice of CAC agreements.

CAC is generally an underdeveloped or underexplored theoretical topic.¹⁴ In this light, this dissertation contributes to theories concerning military balancing, power balancing, rivalry stabilization, conflict prevention, and war causation. This dissertation does not suggest that CAC will always be a component of these issues, but this dissertation has attempted to increase the understanding of the impact of CAC's presence or absence on these theoretical areas. This dissertation is relevant to practitioners because the implications and lessons that this dissertation have identified are directly relevant to policymakers charged with crafting, negotiating, and implementing CAC agreements. This dissertation attempts to offer the framework that CAC agreements might assume based on existing conditions. Moreover, this dissertation has offered various suggestions for what might make CAC agreements succeed – such as delegation to agreement implementers.

While this dissertation maintains that CAC agreements are important and can be successful, this view is not universally held by scholars and other observers. Pessimists fall into two camps: those who believe that CAC agreements are either unachievable except in the narrowest of circumstances in which they merely cap warming relations or those who believe in their potential but who currently see the glass as much more empty than full.

Among the more pessimistic critics, Fatton argues that arms control agreements such as the CFE Treaty tend to disintegrate when tensions rise and relations deteriorate, putting into question the utility of arms control agreements if they do not act as a brake to stop declining relations when that is, according to Fatton, one of their core purposes.¹⁵ In a much earlier article from the start of the post-Cold War era, Gray argues that arms control is not only ineffective in contributing to or ensuring peace, but can be counter-productive when states – especially democratic ones – adopt defense policies such as non-acquisition of potential TLE when an

¹⁴ Lawrence Freedman, "Arms Control: Thirty Years On," *Daedalus* 120, no. 1 (Winter 1991): 78; Ulrich Kühn, *The Rise and Fall of Cooperative Arms Control in Europe*, 1st ed., Demokratie, Sicherheit, Frieden (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG, 2020), 28, <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783748903239>. Gray, for example, discusses and critiques theories of arms control without actually articulating a specific theory; Colin S. Gray, *House of Cards: Why Arms Control Must Fail* (Ithica and London: Cornell University Press, 1992).

¹⁵ Lionel P. Fatton, "The Impotence of Conventional Arms Control: Why Do International Regimes Fail When They Are Most Needed?," *Contemporary Security Policy* 37, no. 2 (2016): 200–222, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2016.1187952>.

agreement is expected to be made, or worst when democracies obey the terms of an arms control agreement but the other side does not.¹⁶ That is, the military balance status quo established by agreement is altered despite the agreement. Coffey, writing in 1987, stated that “The ideology of arms control resembles that of gun control, except that arms control is more dangerous because it would as well deprive the cops of guns,” and he was especially critical of any involvement of the United Nations.¹⁷

Miller, for example, is somewhat more positive in noting that since the start of the twenty-first century, “arms control has foundered” after having relatively prospered in the previous forty years.¹⁸ Similarly, Graef acknowledges that there was a positive period of CAC but observed just before Russia’s 2022 invasion that CAC in Europe was “falling apart” and that the US and Russia in particular were returning to a zero-sum military competition where the risk of relative gains for the opposing side resulting from any CAC agreement were unacceptable.¹⁹ This resulted in the deterioration of existing agreements and the prevention of new ones.

Withdrawals from arms control agreements, which would not be possible if they did not exist in the first place, can contribute to deteriorating diplomatic relations. For example, the July 2021 *Strategy of national security of the Russian Federation* bemoaned “the continuing dismantling of the system of arms control treaties and agreements lead to increasing tension and aggravation of the military and political situation, including near the state border of the Russian Federation.”²⁰ This strategy also alluded to the 2019 US withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty (which was due to the US assessment that Russia was developing INF Treaty-prohibited conventional missiles).²¹

Yet some scholars are more positive about CAC. Freedman, for example, emphasizes the positive outcomes of the negotiating process as a diplomatic endeavor, specifically stating:

¹⁶ Colin S. Gray, “Arms Control Does Not Control Arms,” *Orbis* 37, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 333–48, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-4387\(93\)90149-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0030-4387(93)90149-7).

¹⁷ John W. Coffey, “Arms-control Dialogue,” *Defense Analysis* 3, no. 3 (1987): 225–31, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07430178708405302>.

¹⁸ Steven E Miller, *Hard Times for Arms Control What Can Be Done?* (The Hague: The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, 2022), 1.

¹⁹ Alexander Graef, “Beyond Stability: The Politics of Conventional Arms Control in Europe,” *Zeitschrift Für Friedens- Und Konfliktforschung* 10, no. 2 (2021): 219, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42597-022-00070-y>.

²⁰ Vladimir Putin, “Strategy of national security of the Russian Federation” (Office of the President of Russia, July 2, 2021).

²¹ Michael R. Pompeo, “U.S. Withdrawal from the INF Treaty on August 2, 2019,” *United States Department of State* (blog), August 2, 2019, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/u-s-withdrawal-from-the-inf-treaty-on-august-2-2019/>.

arms control should be judged as a negotiating process as much as a negotiated outcome. It can be a means of maintaining an active diplomatic relationship at times of tension, providing a forum for dialogue on military issues, a means of signaling shifts on broader political questions, and so on.²²

Aside from the larger issues of fixing a military balance, transparency, and signaling benign intents – the goals of CAC agreements will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections and chapters – CAC agreements can develop human relationships that can promote peace and stability. This may be at the highest level between heads of state, for example between US President Reagan and Soviet Union General Secretary Gorbachev,²³ or at working levels between career civil servants and military personnel. In the context of chemical weapon convention negotiators and inspectors, Sur assessed that because “a great number of the inspectors have been intimately associated with the chemical weapon negotiations, and often know one other personally, has definitely contributed to the cohesion of these inspection teams.”²⁴ It is likely that CAC agreements develop similar relationships that contribute to peace because inspection teams’ reliability and perceptions by states of their honesty and completeness are crucial to perceptions of treaty compliance.²⁵ The Deep Cuts Commission emphasized that professional contacts through the formal arms control fora promote information exchange and military-to-military contacts are essential, especially in times of tension.²⁶

Overall, the articles constituting this dissertation are more positive than negative about CAC agreements for several reasons. First, this dissertation attempts to demonstrate and emphasize that the success record for CAC agreements is not one of unequivocal failure. Indeed, about half of the 37 CAC agreements since 1918 can be considered successful as defined and discussed in chapters 5 and 6, with one-third of the 37 agreements still in effect – which may not be a poor record given the changes that have swept Europe since the Great War

²² Freedman, “Arms Control: Thirty Years On.”

²³ Mark R. Wilcox, *The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and Russian Foreign and Security Policy (Dissertation)* (Manhattan, Kansas: Kansas State University, 2020).

²⁴ Serge Sur and United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, eds., *Verification of Disarmament or Limitation of Armaments: Instruments, Negotiations, Proposals* (New York: United Nations, 1992).

²⁵ Joseph P. Harahan and John C. III Kuhn, *On-Site Inspections Under the CFE Treaty, A History of the On-Site Inspection Agency and CFE Treaty Implementation, 1990-1996*, Treaty History Series (Washington, DC: The On-Site Inspection Agency, US Department of Defense, 1996), 46.

²⁶ The Deep Cuts Commission, *Second Report of the Deep Cuts Commission: Strengthening Stability in Turbulent Times* (Hamburg, Germany: Deep Cuts Commission and Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH), 2015).

ended. Moreover, many of the agreements were overcome by positive political changes rather than having collapsed due to rivalry or conflict, leaving just one-third as complete failures (see Table 1 and Figure 1 for an overview of agreements' outcomes). Today, twelve agreements are still in effect – again emphasizing that pessimistic views of CAC are misplaced. And, despite concerns about Russia's compliance with CAC agreements especially in light of their invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia is a party to at least seven of the agreements still in force.

Table 1: CAC Agreements and their outcomes

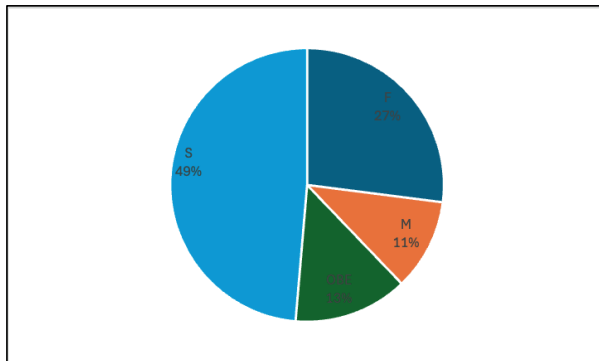
<u>Agreement</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Short Name</u>	<u>In effect*</u>	<u>Outcome**</u>
Germany Peace Treaty (Versailles)	1919	Germany1919	N	F
Austria Peace Treaty (St-Germain-en-Laye)	1919	Austria1919	N	OBE
Hungary Peace Treaty (Trianon)	1920	Hungary1920	N	F
Bulgaria Peace Treaty (Neuilly-sur-Seine)	1919	Bulgaria1919	N	F
The Svalbard (Spitsbergen) Treaty	1920	Spitsbergen	Y	S
Finnish-Russian Dorpat/Tartu Agreement	1920	Tartu	N	F
Åland Island Convention	1921	Åland	Y	S
Washington Naval Treaty	1922	WashNav	N	M
Russo-Finnish Helsinki Agreement	1922	Helsinki1922	N	F
Statute of the Tangiers Zone	1923/1928	Tangiers	N	M
East Aegean Agreements	1923, 1947 (and others)	Aegean	Y	S
Thrace Convention	1923	Thrace	N	S
Lausanne Agreements of 1923	1923	Lausanne	N	S
First London Naval Treaty	1930	LondonNav1930	N	F
Second London Naval Treaty	1936	LondonNav1936	N	F
Anglo-German Naval Treaty	1935	Anglo-German	N	F
Montreux Convention of the Straits	1936	Montreux	Y	S
The Moscow Treaty (Finland and Russia) of 1940	1940	Moscow1940	N	F
Germany	1945	Germany1945	N	S
Finland	1944/1947/1948	Finland1947	N	S
Romania	1947	Romania1947	N	OBE
Italy	1943, 1947	Italy1947	N	OBE
Bulgaria	1947	Bulgaria1947	N	OBE
Dodecanese	1947	Dodecanese1947	Y	S
Hungary	1947	Hungary1947	N	OBE
Austria	1955	Austria1955	Y	S
WEU agreements	1954	WEU	N	S
Cyprus (UN Security Zone Establishment)	1964/1974	Cyprus	Y	S
INF Treaty	1987	INF	N	M
Final Settlement for Germany	1990	Germany	Y	S
CFE Treaty	1990	CFE	N	M
Agreement on the principles for a peaceful settlement of the armed conflict in the Dniester region of the Republic of Moldova	1992	Transdnistria	Y	S
Subregional Arms Control (Balkans)	1996	Balkans	Y	S
Belfast Agreement	1998	Belfast	Y	S
Military Technical Agreement between the International Security Force ("KFOR") and the Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia	1999	Kosovo	N	S
Adapted CFE Treaty	1999	A/CFE	N/A	N/A
Six-Point Peace Plan for Georgia	2008	Georgia	Y	S
Minsk Agreements	2015	Minsk	N	F

* Y=Yes; N=No; /A=Not Applicable

** S=Success; F=Failure; M=Moderate Success/failure; OBE=Overcome by events; N/A=Not Applicable

Source: Information on agreement status based on author's research

Figure 1: Proportional outcomes of CAC agreements



* S=Success; F=Failure; M=Moderate Success/failure; OBE=Overcome by events; N/A=Not Applicable

Source: Information on agreement outcome based on author's research

Second, the most pessimistic view that CAC agreements might somehow create the conditions for war is not borne out empirically. In fact, it may be the opposite; in the absence of a CAC agreement, one side or bloc may engage in self-limiting for economic, domestic, or diplomatic reasons while the other side does not because they have no legal commitment to do so. Even if a CAC agreement fails to prevent a conflict, it is unclear that attempting to prevent a conflict with a CAC agreement is not worth the effort given the high costs of war.

This brings us back to the Russo-Ukraine War. Could the war have been prevented with a new CAC agreement, replacing the CFE and A/CFE Treaties? Counterfactuals are difficult to prove and their detractors might call them nothing more than a “what-if” game of fiction.²⁷ Nonetheless, it is worth asking if a CAC agreement between NATO and Russia would have decreased the likelihood of the major conventional war in Ukraine now taking place and if the investment of time and energy in negotiations and implementation might have been worth the effort and risks that decreasing capability would decrease deterrence. Finding an agreement that would have been acceptable to both NATO and Russia might have been impossible, especially as many NATO members’ leaders generally discounted threats of a Russian invasion of Ukraine, even when presented evidence by the US shortly before the invasion occurred.²⁸ Most NATO members would have been unwilling to meet Russia’s CAC demands as they unlikely viewed that the failure to agree would have resulted in war. Nonetheless, it is difficult to argue that the failure to find an acceptable agreement and the resulting war is better than an imperfect agreement that might have preserved a shaky peace. This is why CAC agreement critics may be wrong. War should be the outcome only when all other efforts have failed.

This thesis’ topic is one which had greater prominence prior to the previous few decades. The reasons are clear. During the Cold War, the question of peace and security in Europe was paramount, with broad concerns that any conventional war in Europe would escalate into a nuclear war.²⁹ Thus, CAC was seen not just as a niche academic exercise or minor policy issue, but as one closely linked to the future of humanity’s existence. However, its importance declined with the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union as the threat of a major conventional war in Europe had, it then seemed, also disappeared.³⁰ CAC

²⁷ Jack S. Levy, “Counterfactuals and Case Studies,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, ed. Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, 1st ed. (Oxford University Press, 2009), 627–44, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199286546.003.0027>.

²⁸ Shane Harris et al., “Road to War: U.S. Warnings Doubted,” *The Washington Post*, August 17, 2022, sec. A.

²⁹ Barry R. Posen, “Inadvertent Nuclear War?: Escalation and NATO’s Northern Flank,” *International Security* 7, no. 2 (1982): 28–54, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2538432>.

³⁰ Adam Daniel Rotfeld, “1: A Future Arms Control Agenda,” in *A Future Arms Control Agenda: Proceedings of Nobel Symposium 118*, ed. Ian Anthony (Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 2001), 3–14.

between states that had warm relations may have seemed to be little more than a diplomatic refinement of the new world order. Then the international security order transformed on 11 September 2001, and interest in CAC substantially declined in comparison to issues related to international terrorism and homeland security.³¹ Again, it was no wonder that adversarial CAC in Europe was being closeted, with then-President Bush stating when he announced the US withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, that the US had “entered into a new strategic relationship with Russia that is cooperative rather than adversarial.”³² Then-NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg stated in 2023 that, “arms control agreements are not made between friends. They are made between adversaries.”³³ The statements about *adversarial* CAC agreements (the type which President Bush and Secretary General Stoltenberg were addressing) tackling rivalries first and foremost are accurate, although the dynamics of who enters CAC agreements and why is more complicated than the existence of an adversarial relationship. For example, the 1954 Western European Union Agency for the Control of Armaments protocol agreement saw controls imposed on Germany by fellow NATO members, Türkiye currently imposes strict restrictions on its NATO allies through the 1936 Montreux Convention, and several agreements referee NATO allies yet rivals Türkiye and Greece.

One of this dissertation’s central goals is to address, directly or indirectly, how to prevent another war in Europe if and when the Russo-Ukraine War ends through CAC. This means understanding the war’s causes and analyzing CAC agreements to determine what approaches might or might not work, and which may be most appropriate, for a post-war Europe. There is no need to reinvent the proverbial wheel in its entirety because a wide variety of CAC agreements in Europe have been created and implemented during the last 100 years. This dissertation’s research, which is primarily presented and discussed in four articles submitted to/published in peer-reviewed academic journals, offers insights relevant to conceiving, negotiating, and implementing any future agreements between Ukraine, Russia, NATO, and the EU. The EU’s role in future arms control agreements, including CAC, is likely to increase compared to the past several decades in which the EU was absent from CFE and A/CFE Treaty negotiations. It will be difficult for the EU Commission to abstain from future

³¹ For an example of how terrorism studies surged after the 11 September 2001 attacks, see: Edwin Bakker, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism Studies: Comparing Theory and Practice* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2015).

³² “U.S. Withdrawal From the ABM Treaty: President Bush’s Remarks and U.S. Diplomatic Notes,” Arms Control Association, accessed October 16, 2023, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2002-01/us-withdrawal-abm-treaty-president-bush%E2%80%99s-remarks-us-diplomatic-notes>.

³³ “Remarks by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the 18th Annual NATO Conference on Arms Control, Disarmament and Weapons of Mass Destruction Non-Proliferation,” NATO, April 18, 2023, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_213952.htm.

CAC agreements because of its important role in EU-wide defense policies, and several of its member states are non-NATO members but may be interested or impacted by future CAC agreements in Europe.³⁴

As the articles highlight, one challenge with establishing a post-war CAC regime from the ATTU is that there has not been a template for the situation in which the continent now finds itself. CAC agreements such as the Washington Naval Treaty or the CFE Treaty were signed when state parties were wholly at peace; or at least not in a state of war in Europe. In contrast, post-conflict treaties such as the post-World War peace treaties or the agreement ending the 1999 Kosovo conflict were signed between direct belligerents.

CAC agreements necessitate approaches to how and what limits are imposed and how these limits are verified, with even the absence of specific limits and lack of verification procedures being conscious choices. Limits can come in generally two broad forms: geographic demilitarization which refers to limits set in a narrow geographic area such as an island, a sea, or an area along a common border; and national limitations, which means that states agree to limit a military capability on their entire national territory or within their entire inventory, no matter where that capability might exist. Each has different implications for states' security, military capabilities, and agreement implementation although some agreements combine or include elements of both.³⁵

With this comes the question of how to monitor compliance and conduct verification during agreement implementation. At the lowest level of activity is an approach in which no monitoring measures are introduced that do not already exist, such as the 1922 Washington Naval Treaty in which monitoring was up to each state to use its existing means, such as defense attachés, espionage, and what are now referred to as open sources.³⁶ At the opposite end of the spectrum would be a rigorous regime of on-site inspections and verifications coupled with delegation to an agreement executor that states have entrusted to conduct many activities of monitoring, verification, and compliance assessment.

³⁴ William Lippert, "The Role Of The European Union In Future Conventional Arms Control In Europe" (EUACADEMY Conference "European Security: Challenges And Policies," Dublin, Ireland, December 15, 2023); Clara Portela, *The EU's Arms Control Challenge: Bridging Nuclear Divides*, Chaillot Paper, 166 (April 2021) (Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), 2021), <https://doi.org/10.2815/601066>.

³⁵ Some military balancing agreements include geographic demilitarization conditions – but the purpose is to fix a relative military balance rather than merely remove a source of potential dispute or establish a cease-fire line.

³⁶ The Russo-Ukrainian War suggests that public open-source research could greatly assist monitoring and verification efforts. For insights about open-source intelligence and the Russo-Ukrainian War see: Hannah van Beek and Sebastiaan Rietjens, "Chapter 4: Open-Source Intelligence in the Russia-Ukraine War," in *Reflections on the Russia-Ukraine War* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2024), 57–76.

Much of this thesis analyzes CAC agreements in Europe since 1918, attempting to first understand how agreements took the shape they did, then determine if CAC agreements have been successful, and finally assess the characteristics, or variables, that made these agreements successful or not. The dissertation's research and analysis are presented in a detailed introduction, followed by four research article-chapters, and then a conclusion.

Structure

This dissertation begins with Part 1, which opens with an introduction to the topic of CAC in Europe, research questions and objectives, CAC definitions and concepts, theories and theoretical foundation, a literature review, and a brief discussion of the methodologies used in the four articles that compose the thesis' core.

Part 2, chapter 4, entitled *Status Quo Constancy and Conventional Arms Control*, opens with an overview of CAC theory and then proceeds to explain how the geopolitical environment, military balance instability, and resource constraints might play a role in whether a CAC agreement will alter the military balance. The chapter's model offers a prediction of whether an agreement would alter the status quo, and then the hypothesis is tested by assessing the final agreement's requirements. Appendix A provides explanations on how the conditions were calibrated and outcome (change or retention of the status quo) was assessed.

In Part 2, chapters 5 and 6, entitled *Delegation to Treaty Bodies and International Organizations for Conventional Arms Control Agreements in Europe: A Sum Score Evaluation* and *Conventional Arms Control Agreements in Europe: Conditions of Success and Failure*, respectively, offer a quantitative analysis of CAC agreements in Europe from 1919 to 2015. Chapter 5 focuses on measuring delegation in CAC agreement implementation using a sum-score methodology, and analyzing the correlation between delegation as an independent variable and CAC agreement success as the dependent variable. Appendix B provides details about how each agreement was scored for delegation and its components; and how the level of success was calculated. Additionally, two case studies are provided as detailed examples of how the delegation component scores were determined. Chapter 6 focuses on analyzing the necessary and sufficient conditions of CAC agreement success applying a QCA methodology, based on four conditions. Appendix C provides explanations of how the three conditions were calibrated and scored, and how CAC agreement success or absence of success was determined.

Part 2, chapter 7, is based on the article *How Conventional Arms Control Failures Caused the Russo-Ukraine War*, a case study applying process tracing and counterfactual methodologies analyzing how CAC failures led Russia to invade Ukraine. These failures are the product of failure to adapt existing agreements, the collapse of agreements through suspension and withdrawal, and the failure to arrive at new agreements.

Lastly, Part 3, chapter 8, consists of the concluding chapter which includes a summary of the previous chapters, the thesis' key findings, various research and policy issues that this thesis raises, how this thesis may be of value to scholars and practitioners, the thesis' limitations, areas of future research, and finally an overall conclusion.

Research Questions and Objectives

What explains the form that adversarial conventional arms control agreements assume and what determines their success?

This is the over-arching question that percolates throughout the thesis. First, this thesis attempts to identify how states arrive at the controls that they do – at least in a general sense. CAC agreements in theory could be composed of any range of agreement conditions in terms of what and how specific areas are limited in geographic demilitarization or how – especially relatively – military capabilities are limited. As an extreme example, during the interwar years³⁷ Russia might have agreed to demilitarize the entire Kolan peninsula to reduce the extent to which Finland might have felt threatened by Russia or the Warsaw Pact could have agreed to reduce its forces to a quarter of those of NATO – but neither of these happened. This dissertation suggests that CAC agreements are bound by conceptions of the status quo and that there is a theoretical limit to agreements that can be made based on the notion that, in general, states retain the status quo. Only in some exceptions might they agree to a reduction to parity – but never an inversion of the military balance and standing.

Second, the question of success is omnipresent, because success can mean peace while failure can mean war, both of which are enormously consequential for the states involved, their people, and potentially the broader world. The failure of CAC in Europe and the resulting Russo-Ukraine War clearly had immediate implications and impact throughout the world,

³⁷ “Interwar” in this dissertation refers to the period between World Wars One and Two.

which continue to ripple and grow as the war continues. Indeed, there is no guarantee that the war will not descend into a broader world war.³⁸

The relevant conditions of a CAC agreement can be identified and assessed at various stages. In the first stage when states initially conceive an agreement, or the potential for one, they consider the status quo and, when necessary, current and future concerns of deterrence, the security dilemma, and the ODB. How they view these carries over into the negotiations as states bargain and communicate their views, preferences, and demands based on these three concepts. How states debate and what they conclude creates another set of conditions – for example, whether a narrow geographic demilitarization area is established or if states limit their military capabilities much more broadly across their national inventories. Another condition that is determined during the negotiation is how to implement the agreement. Then, during implementation, the conditions of interest shift to questions such as the presence of a great power rivalry and to what extent implementation is delegated to an international organization.

Research Questions

The question of conditions and success creates research sub-questions:

- Under what conditions do the more powerful states in an adversarial conventional arms control (CAC) agreement accept a reduction in their relative military power?
- How is adversarial CAC agreement success and failure defined?
- What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for adversarial CAC agreement success or failure?
- How is delegation to an agreement execution body defined and measured?

First, this thesis attempts to define what constitutes the status quo between states or blocs, and then determine how CAC agreements retained or altered this status quo and what conditions may have driven any variation. It then seeks to identify and define the conditions that contribute to CAC agreement outcome and then analyze their impact on success and failure, which itself needs to be defined. The question of delegation to an agreement executor primarily concerns implementation – though the approach must be determined and agreed to

³⁸ Bryan Frederick, Mark Cozad, and Alexandra Stark, *Escalation in the War in Ukraine: Lessons Learned and Risks for the Future* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR2807-1>.

between state parties during the negotiation stage and it is almost always written within the agreement text or subsequent annexes and protocols. That is agreement executors are created, or not, as part of the overall agreement. They are not afterthoughts or ad-hoc arrangements, although precisely how they function evolves over time based on conditions, preferences, and experience.

Research Objectives

As chapters 5 and 6 discuss in detail, defining CAC agreement success and failure is one of this thesis' key and necessary objectives, because without this definition it is not possible, for example, to analyze causal relationships, understand approaches to treaty implementation, or understand which limitations were selected and why. Our understanding of CAC agreements would be very different if success is defined, for example, by one side being unable to cheat so that they would have the capability to launch a surprise attack and obtain a military victory compared to if success is defined by the absence of conflict between rivals. The former is subjective; without a war, it is impossible to know if a cheater can successfully launch a surprise attack. The latter, however, is much easier to determine although establishing the causes of peace – particularly CAC's role – is more difficult. This thesis might assess different variables if success was defined as reducing defense expenditures, improving relations with allies, or if a state party succeeds in rupturing a rival's alliances – all of which are motivations of some CAC agreements. Chapter 7 is a case study that assesses in detail how a CAC regime collapsed and caused in part the current Russo-Ukraine War.

Another research objective is to understand where there are similarities and differences between CAC agreements, no small undertaking when there is such a variety of agreements spanning over 100 years and addressing different types of rivalries. These cross-case comparisons of CAC agreements are done in chapters 4-6.

Above all, this thesis attempts to add to the existing scholarship by assessing CAC from new perspectives with different methods based on a dataset of up to 36 agreements spanning 100 years and going beyond the "East-West" dyadic relationship.

Contribution of this Thesis

Compared to the existing scholarship, this thesis offers new and unique insights in several ways but foremost is its focus on adversarial conventional arms control agreements in Europe. This is not to say that other previous scholarly attempts to look at CAC, or arms control more broadly, are not without merits. Different scopes offer different insights and this thesis builds on a substantial body of original and relevant study. However, especially when considering post-Russo-Ukraine War Europe, understanding and concentrating on adversarial CAC agreements in Europe might be one of the most relevant bodies of knowledge to incorporate when it comes to trying to prevent another conflict.

This thesis' narrow focus contrasts with other scholarly works to date. For example, Risse analyzes states' voting patterns in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on all different types of arms control resolutions.³⁹ Mantilla likewise assesses conventional arms control with a broader definition that concerns international cooperation and global arms proliferation targeted by the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.⁴⁰ Alberque focuses on inter-state trade arms control that seeks to reduce the proliferation of missile technologies⁴¹ while Turnbull's argument centers on the impact of middle powers on negotiating and ratifying humanitarian arms control agreements.⁴²

Vaynman's work comes closer to what this thesis analyzes by focusing on adversarial arms control agreements but her dataset is much larger, going back to 1816-2007, and includes agreements across the globe and analyzes all types of adversarial arms control agreements, not just conventional arms.⁴³ Brender, in contrast, seems to conflate and confuse different types of arms control agreements while attempting to address interstate rivalries and states' efforts to signal benign intent through arms control agreements.⁴⁴

³⁹ Tobias Risse, "External Threats and State Support for Arms Control," *Journal of Peace Research* 61, no. 2 (February 5, 2023): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433221123359>.

⁴⁰ Giovanni Mantilla, "Deflective Cooperation: Social Pressure and Forum Management in Cold War Conventional Arms Control," *International Organization*, 2023, 1–35, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818322000364>.

⁴¹ William Alberque, *Revitalising Arms Control: The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCoC)* (The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), 2021).

⁴² Timothea Turnbull, "Prestige, Power, Principles and Pay-off: Middle Powers Negotiating International Conventional Weapons Treaties," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 76, no. 1 (2022): 98–120, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2021.1956429>.

⁴³ Jane Eugenia Vaynman, *Enemies in Agreement: Domestic Politics, Uncertainty, and Cooperation between Adversaries*, PhD Dissertation (Ann Arbor, MI: Department of Government, Harvard University, 2014).

⁴⁴ Agnes Brender, "Determinants of International Arms Control Ratification," *ILE Working Paper Series*, University of Hamburg, Institute of Law and Economics (ILE), no. 17 (2018).

The extent to which conventional arms control is often subsumed by, if not outright ignored by, nuclear arms control is demonstrated by Kreps whose article *Institutional Design of Arms Control Agreements* is focused on nuclear arms agreements, with the CFE Treaty and other post-World War Two CAC agreements in Europe receiving only a brief or no mention.⁴⁵ This is typical of much of the adversarial arms control literature – that works focus on nuclear rather than conventional arms control. This minimizes the relevance and importance of the CFE Treaty and CAC agreements that were made between non-great powers. This thesis attempts to correct this omission.

Indeed, much of the focus on adversarial arms control even when it goes beyond nuclear weapons focuses on some version of the East-West rivalry. During the Cold War, this was between the US and Soviet Union, and NATO and the Warsaw Pact; and since the mid-1990's, NATO and Russia. Kühn somewhat escapes from this paradigm, including the Balkans in his study of cooperative clusters; but his study also includes confidence and security building measures (CSBMs), which this thesis does not.⁴⁶ Moreover, this dissertation includes more agreements beyond Kühn's focus. The inclusion of nuclear arms considerations in CAC agreements is also complicated by the uneven extent to which nuclear weapons states are represented in blocs. Russia is, largely, its own bloc and thus represents a single, large nuclear-weapon state. While NATO as a group of states has three nuclear-weapon state members, and the EU has one. From a practical perspective, policymakers and negotiators may struggle to include nuclear weapons issues in any Europe-wide CAC agreement.⁴⁷

This dissertation addresses a fundamental question that often seems to be overlooked in much of the CAC literature: why do CAC agreements take the forms that they take? Though scholars have identified reasons why states might generally enter into CAC agreements, articulating the advantages and disadvantages of agreements, they rarely go beyond very broad notions and models of cooperation. That is, scholarship may explain why a CAC agreement takes shape, but it has not delved into the forms that it might take and the balances they establish. For example, the CFE Treaty could have resulted in any combination of limitations – but it resulted in a very specific equal ratio of forces in five major military capability categories. This dissertation has attempted to begin to address this omission by quantitatively

⁴⁵ Sarah E. Kreps, "The Institutional Design of Arms Control Agreements," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 14, no. 1 (January 2018): 127–47, <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orw045>.

⁴⁶ Kühn, *The Rise and Fall of Cooperative Arms Control in Europe*, 2020.

⁴⁷ Ursula Jasper and Clara Portela, "EU Defence Integration and Nuclear Weapons: A Common Deterrent for Europe?," *Security Dialogue* 41, no. 2 (April 2010): 145–68, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010610361889>. This article discusses in detail the then-challenges of two nuclear-weapon states within the EU and differing arms control perspectives and policies.

identifying the status quo prior to an agreement being signed, and assessing if and why the status quo was changed by the agreement.

As previously stated, one of this thesis' over-arching research questions and objectives is to understand adversarial CAC agreements from the perspectives of their success and failure. This is an effort that surprisingly few scholars have attempted despite its importance to theory and practice. Tanner only assesses post-conflict arms control, which excludes peacetime agreements.⁴⁸ Moreover, he includes only a small number of agreements in his study. Vaynman observed that the "important challenge for thinking about [agreement] effectiveness is determining the period that an adversarial agreement should be in place for it to be considered effective."⁴⁹

Kreps provides an insightful analysis in *The Institutional Design of Arms Control Agreements*, assessing three variables of arms control agreements and their relationship to agreement success, although his focus is on nuclear weapons-related agreements.⁵⁰ Schofield defines arms control failure as the "failure to formulate or maintain compliance with an agreement...; more importantly, it means the failure to achieve the stated objective of reducing the likelihood of war."⁵¹ This definition, however, suffers from several limitations.⁵² First, compliance is a complicated question and even states with substantial collection and analysis resources might disagree about compliance and violations, and how significant a violation is. Even violations may not be a sign of agreement failure when those violations are with the permission, and even encouragement, of (former) rivals. The best example of this was how the victorious World War Two Allies pushed the defeated Axis states to rearm in the context of the Cold War – without the CAC agreements being modified or denounced.⁵³

Second, assessing if an agreement has "reduced the likelihood" of war is largely impossible. Even states that had an active CAC agreement went to war with one another though they might have done so later than they would have otherwise done had no agreement existed. Using this definition and applying it to the Russo-Ukraine War, one might say that the 1994

⁴⁸ Fred Tanner, "Postwar Arms Control," *Journal of Peace Research* 30, no. 1 (February 1993): 29–43, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343393030001004>. Additionally, as this study dates from 1993, it understandably excludes many agreements that were made since then.

⁴⁹ Vaynman, *Enemies in Agreement: Domestic Politics, Uncertainty, and Cooperation between Adversaries*, 314.

⁵⁰ Kreps, "The Institutional Design of Arms Control Agreements."

⁵¹ Julian Schofield, "Arms Control Failure and the Balance of Power," *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 33, no. 4 (December 2000): 747.

⁵² The article also is not a quantitative analysis of arms control agreements.

⁵³ Tanner, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, and Graduate Institute of International Studies (Geneva, Switzerland), *From Versailles to Baghdad*.

Budapest Agreement which promised respect for Ukraine's sovereignty in exchange for it giving up nuclear weapons, and then the 2014 Minsk Agreements were successful because they may have reduced the *likelihood* of a Russian invasion. Thus, it is both hard to be certain when the likelihood is reduced; and it strains credibility to conceive that the reduction of the likelihood of war is a form of success, even if war broke out.

This thesis offers a much clearer definition of success which is explained in chapters 5 and 6, and chapter 7 serves as a case study of CAC failure; yet at the same time, some cases still fall into gray areas of success or failure.

This thesis also offers new insights into war causation by defining clear, independent, and dependent variables, a task that is not easy given the interconnectedness of potential war causes.⁵⁴ Lastly, this thesis offers quantitative methods to measure delegation in CAC agreements and analyze the causal conditions of CAC agreement success and failure.

Chapter 2: Definitions of Core Concepts, Theoretical Frameworks, and Methodology

This thesis' topic of *Adversarial Conventional Arms Control in Europe* warrants some clarification in terms of the meaning of the core concepts contained in it. The topic is composed of four distinct elements that require clear definitions: adversarial relationships between states, conventional arms, arms control, and Europe. Adversarial arms control agreements are, as the term indicates, signed between adversaries. In brief, the goal is to end a conflict or reduce the likelihood of one by fixing a certain military balance and/or demilitarizing a certain geographic area to reduce areas of potential, military competition. CAC agreements stabilize an adversarial relationship through mutual agreement. Allies and partners would not make such an agreement as, in general, states are likely to prefer allies and partners to have stronger than weaker military capabilities.⁵⁵ The following sub-section unpacks and defines the concept in more detail with reference to the scholarly literature.

⁵⁴ Jack S Levy, "The Causes of War and the Conditions of Peace," *Annual Review of Political Science* 1:1 (1998): 28. War causation is complicated as causes exist at many levels, and analyzing different levels offer different insights. This dissertation focuses on organized group and systemic levels of war causation; see: Niels van Willigen and Benjamin Pohl, "2: The Causes of War," in *Global Challenges: Peace and War* (Leiden and Boston: Brill | Nijhoff, 2013), 29–41, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004246935_004.

⁵⁵ For example, the US has often demanded that other NATO members spend more on defense, see Jordan Becker et al., "Transatlantic Shakedown: Presidential Shaming and NATO Burden Sharing," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, April 21, 2023, 002200272311678, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220027231167840>.