Arms Sharing in Conflict Theaters

J. Andres Gannon[*]   Daniel Kent[†]

January 14, 2018

What determines the magnitude of alliance contributions to conflict theaters? At the outbreak of the 1990 Persian Gulf War, the French military's budget was approximately double that of their Italian counterpart – 58,149 and 30,768 million 2015 U.S. dollars, respectively.[1] However, in troops alone, France contributed over ten times as many forces to the conflict as Italy – 20,000 as opposed to 1,900 military personnel. Though the Italian forces were not without value, their relative size demonstrates a simple but important point: not all alliance commitments are created equal. Indeed, if an ally is not expected to provide resources to a conflict in proportion with its capabilities, then the alliance itself is of far less consequence than it would otherwise be. Yet, empirical investigations of alliances and conflict processes tend to avoid this distinction, instead focusing on: the formation of alliances, how alliances influence the initiation of disputes, or how alliances link to issues beyond the use of military force. We shed light on this important topic by developing a theoretical framework for and conducting an empirical investigation of the determinants of alliance contributions to conflict theaters. Through a new data set of country-level military portfolios and contributions to conflicts, we measure the type of technologies and amount of forces that states have deployed in conflict theaters since the end of the Cold War (which?).We then apply techniques for statistical inference in social networks to produce insights into the strategic considerations that influence decisions to provide various military capabilities to ongoing conflicts. This project (something about how it will help the lit and is relevant to current debates about alliance reliability amidst various stresses to the international order – NATO, North Korea, China.)

---

[*]jagannon@ucsd.edu
[†]kent.249@osu.edu
[1]https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Milex-constant-2015-USD.pdf