

# Allies as Armaments: Explaining the Specialization of State Military Capabilities\*

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Scholars and practitioners have long maintained that, for capable states, a full-spectrum military provides the best security in an unpredictable anarchic world. However, not all states seem to make this choice, with some capable states have imbalanced, specialized militaries. Are specialized militaries that forgo the development of vital defense capabilities and overinvest in seemingly less necessary ones simply making mistakes? I argue that there are conditions under which states can reap the gains of economic efficiency that stem from specialization without sacrificing the security benefits of a full-spectrum force. Because defense alliances build trust, minimizes the risk of defection, and foster coordination, states with militarily-capable alliance partners can individually specialize in military capabilities that, when brought together, still comprise a full-spectrum military force. I substantiate these arguments with a new measure of military portfolio specialization using fine-grained data on state military assets from 1970-2014.

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