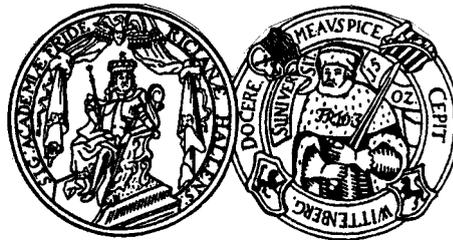# MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITÄT HALLE-WITTENBERG

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International Institutions and the Persistence of Great Power Cooperation

Paper presented at the ISA Convention in Hong Kong, July 26 to 28, 2001

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Abstract:

This paper claims that international institutions have but a very limited impact on the durability of great power cooperation. Its heuristic approach utilizes differences in expectations held by realists and institutionalists (analogous to divergent forcasts for the stability of economic order after the decline of hegemony): Whereas realists would anticipate that security cooperation between great power will unravel once their common opponent is gone, institutionalists claim that security cooperation may persist if the allied powers can make use of strong security institutions. Hence, regarding the aftermaths of major wars, institutionalists would predict a rough correlation between the degree of cooperation and the degree of institutionalization across cases. Moreover, within a single case, institutionalists would expect that an eventual breakdown of security cooperation was often preceded by a weakening of the relevant institutions. The paper tests both hypotheses against evidence from the periods following the Napoleonic Wars, World War I (in both Europe and the Far East) and World War II. As it turns out, the robustness of great power cooperation does not covary with the strength of pertinent international institutions.

International institutions occupy a most prominent place in the thinking of politicians and scholars alike. Liberals in particular consider them a crucial instrument for facilitating international cooperation. Compared to other major factors which conceivably influence the prospects for collaboration institutions are much more open to purposeful manipulation.[1] In contrast to other variables, such as the distribution of capabilities among states, national political institutions, and political ideologies, international institutions can be set up and adapted by mutual understanding and cooperative design. Not surprisingly then, the number of international regimes and organizations has proliferated with the increase in cross-border interactions over the last centuries. Statesmen have increasingly resorted to international institutions in their efforts to create a more peaceful and prosperous world.

However, whether international institutions actually deserve so much credit and intense political efforts is still a matter of serious and heated debate. Marxists, pluralist liberals and realists have always expressed doubts if institutions affect actual state behavior to any large extent. Neorealists, in particular, claim that institutions have just a marginal impact on interstate relations, especially where high stakes like national security are at issue.[2] According to this school, international institutions influence state strategies only to the extent they are backed by the power of predominant states which can provide incentives for other states' compliance.[3] Otherwise, states are free to disregard institutional constraints whenever they deem it in their interest. In the absence of any superior authority which can enforce international rules, realists tend to regard norm compliance as a mere coincidence, that is, as an indication that overall state preferences did not conflict with institutional constraints. The mere observation that institutions are created, respected and adapted is not accepted as convincing evidence of their political relevance.

As institutionalists readily concede, the actual impact of international regimes should not be taken for granted but rather be subjected to systematic empirical testing. Unfortunately, despite the unprecedented proliferation of international regimes over the last decades, it is difficult to provide conclusive evidence for strong institutional effects. In order to do so, institutionalists would have to show that states would have acted differently in the absence of the investigated regimes or organizations. On the other hand, discord and uncooperative behavior in itself does not undermine the plausibility of institutionalist claims, either. After all, the theory does not expect that institutions always override or alter antagonistic state preferences.[4] Instead, institutionalists presume

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[1]Robert O. Keohane, "Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond," in *Neorealism and its Critics*, ed. Robert O. Keohane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 158-203, at 196-200.

[2]Kenneth N. Waltz, "Reflections on Theory of International Politics: A Response to My Critics," in *Neorealism and its Critics*, ed. Robert O. Keohane, 322-345, at 336; John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions, International Security 19, no. 3 (winter 1994/95): 5-49, at 7; Joseph M. Grieco, *Cooperation among Nations. Europe, America, and Non-Tariff Barriers to Trade* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 32; Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 59, 72 and chap. 8.

[3]Mearsheimer, "False Promise," 13-14.

[4]Robert O. Keohane, Helga Haftendorn and Celeste A. Wallander, "Conclusions," in *Imperfect Unions. Security Institutions over Time and Space*, eds. Helga Haftendorn, Robert O. Keohane, and Celeste A. Wallander (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 325-338, at 326-27.

international institutions to be most effective in so-called mixed motive games, that is, in situations where the states' willingness to cooperate largely depends on the chances that others will reciprocate.[5] Thus, careful testing of institutional hypotheses would require a meticulous determination of state preferences *irrespective* of pertinent institutional environments.[6] Such an assessment, however, is extremely demanding, especially for complex interactions characterized by several interacting "games" with more than two obvious policy options for each actor.[7]

Due to these methodical problems, this paper will study the impact of institutions by applying less demanding covariance tests as suggested by various institutionalists.[8] I shall investigate to what extent the strength of international instititutions covaried with the degree of cooperation between allied great powers in the aftermath of great wars. To this end, three kinds of correlations will be looked at: (1) correlations across different cases. Thus I will study if the persistence of security partnerships correlated with the extent of institutionalization; correlations within cases: here I shall analyze (2a) if the collapse of cooperation coincided with the weakening of pertinent security institutions, and (2b) if institutional erosion was more intense in the relations between allied powers which eventually turned into antagonists than it was between allies which remained security partners. If institutionalists are correct in assuming considerable effects of international regimes and organizations then we should observe clear covariances between their degree of institutionalization and the extent and persistence of cooperative state behavior.

For a number of reasons , the aftermaths of great wars provide especially interesting and useful cases for assessing the influence of international institutions. First, the defeat of a powerful opponent profoundly changes the distribution of capabilities, thus eliciting contrasting expectations from competing theoretical approaches. Whereas realists would predict a return to discord and rivalry among victorious allies[9] institutionalists would assume that the persistence of cooperation will significantly depend on the strength of common institutions.[10] Second, after a major war the impact of institutions should be

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[5]Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), chap. 4.

[6]Michael Zürn, "Assessing State Preferences and Explaining Institutional Choice: The Case of Intra-German Trade," in: *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (June 1997): 295-320.

[7]Otto Keck, "Der Beitrag rationaler Theorieansätze zur Analyse von Sicherheitsinstitutionen," in *Kooperation jenseits von Hegemonie und Bedrohung. Sicherheitsinstitutionen in den internationalen Beziehungen*, eds. Helga Haftendorn and Otto Keck (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1997), 35-56, at 39 and 53.

[8] Robert O. Keohane and Lisa L. Martin, "The Promises of Institutionalist Theory," *International Security* 20, no 1 (summer 1995): 39-51, at 47; Marc A. Levy, Oran R. Young and Michael Zürn, "The Study of International Regimes," *European Journal of International Relations* 1, no. 3 (September 1995): 267-330, at 274-75 and 294.

[9]Kenneth N. Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (summer 2000): 5-41, at 30; Stephen M. Walt, "The Ties That Fray: Why Europe and America are Drifting Apart," *The National Interest* 54 (winter 1998/99): 3-11; Mearsheimer, "False Promise," 11-14.

[10]Helga Haftendorn, "Sicherheitsinstitutionen in den internationalen Beziehungen. Eine Einführung," in *Kooperation jenseits von Hegemonie und Bedrohung. Sicherheitsinstitutionen in den internationalen Beziehungen*, eds. Helga Haftendorn and Otto Keck (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1997), 11-33, at 11-12; Wallander and Keohane, "Risk, Threat, and Security Institutions"; G. John Ikenberry,

more easily detectable because in these transitional periods state to state relations are less fixed through entrenched conflicts or perceptions and thus are more malleable by strong institutions. Finally, for related reasons, in such post-war situations national decision makers can be expected to give more attention to institutional opportunities and developments. Hence, political practicioners are likely to attach greater relevance to investigations that focus on these particular periods.

The first part of the paper establishes criteria for the strength of international institutions derived from the rationalist version of institutionalist theory. The following parts apply those criteria to four historical case studies which cover the period between the demise of the common opponent and the reemergence of serious antagonisms among some of the victorious powers. I have selected only the aftermath of those hegemonic conflicts where the coalition lasted until the very end of the war. Among the great powers, I reckon all states which could join the highest decision making bodies of the successful coalition. In the modern era, these criteria leave the following cases to be studied:

- the relations between Austria, Britain, Prussia and Russia after the Napoleonic wars,
- the relations between Britain, France and Italy after World War I (in Europe),
- the relations between Britain, Japan and the United States after World War I (in the Far East), and
- the relations between Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States following World War II.

As I shall argue it is very difficult to detect a clear causal relation between international institutions and the evolution of great power relations after major wars. To be sure, all the victorious coalitions set up new regimes or adapted existing ones to help managing their postwar interactions. Yet neither across-case comparisons nor within-case analyses reveal any conspicious correlation between the relative strength of pertinent institutions and the stability of great power cooperation. Apparently, more fundamental background conditions, such as the overall compatibility of national preferences, have a far greater impact in this respect. In light of this finding, instititutionalists' claims that their approach should be regarded a free-standing theory of world politics should thus be treated with some caution.

Defining the Variables: Institutionalization and the Meaning of Great Power Cooperation

As indicated above, the paper focuses on the covariance between the degree of institutionalization and the evolution of great power cooperation. For reasons of heuristic precision and consistency, I clearly distinguish between institutions and behavior. Thus, institutions are exclusively treated as an independent variable, that is, I do not try to explain the persistence or evolution of great power *institutions,* such as alliances. On the other hand, actual behavior or patterns of behavior will not be treated

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After Victory. Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

as a constitutive element of the independent variable. To do otherwise would open institutionalist explanations to the charge of circular reasoning, for in this manner current habits of cooperation would be used to account for consecutive patterns of security partnership. Accordingly, explicit and negotiated norms and rules make up the core of my independent variable while the dependent variable are authentic interactions or patterns of interactions.

Although most variants of institutionalist theory attach importance to both formal and informal norms, the focus of my investigation will be on explicit institutions. This constraint follows from three considerations. First, as pointed out below, the strength of institutions significantly depends on the clarity and precision of their rules and norms. Accordingly, in most cases explicit institutions can be expected to have a greater impact than implicit ones. Second, unlike implicit institutions explicit norms and rules can be deliberately created by actors to facilitate their mutual cooperation. Implicit regimes can evolve only as a consequence of habits of cooperation, when actors realize that repeated patterns of behavior have led to reciprocal expectations of appropriate behavior. In this way implicit norms can help to stabilize existing patterns of cooperation and mutual restraint. Yet they do not originally bring them about. In such cases, then, institutions are more a consequence than a cause of cooperation. Therefore, they are less applicable as a political instrument open to deliberate use. Finally, explicit institutions can be described and analyzed much more precisely than implicit ones. Often the latter are very hard to distinguish from actual behavior that is to be explained. As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, this may lead to circular reasoning in so far as the same pattern of cooperative behavior is seen both as an indication and as a consequence of implicit norms.[11]

For rational institutionalists the causal influence of an institution is primarily a function of its degree of institutionalization which, in turn, depends on (a) the commonality of rules and norms, (b) their specificity, (c) the institution's functional differentiation between members and (d) its autonomy vis-à-vis outside agents.[12] In the context of great power cooperation after major wars the first two criteria reward special attention as the great powers' security institutions brought about hardly any functional differentiation nor organizational autonomy.

Commonality and specificity basically refer to the extent of consensual interpretation, as well as to the detail and precision of norms, rules and procedures. The more precisely the regimes and organizations distinguish between instances of cooperation and defection, the better the institution stabilizes the expectations of state leaders. On the other hand, grey areas, disputes concerning interpretation and normative inconsistencies foster uncertainty, diminish reputational costs associated with uncooperative behavior, and complicate agreement on appropriate sanctions against defectors. In addition, dispute

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[11]Andreas Hasenclever, Peter Mayer and Volker Rittberger, *Theories of International Regimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 14-21; Ronald A. Jepperson, Alexander Wendt and Peter J. Katzenstein, "Norms, Identity and Culture in National Security," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 33-75, at 63.

[12]Robert O. Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power* (Boulder, Col.: Westview, 1989), 4-5; Wallander and Keohane, "Risk, Threat, and Security Institutions," 24.

settlement mechanisms and agreed procedures for the consensual assessment and adaption of institutions are useful in that context, because they reduce the opportunity, need and scope for unilateral interpretations which otherwise might undermine confidence in the institution's stability.

Institutionalization also depends on the organization of sanctions and consultations as well as on the institutionalization of related issue areas. Sanctioning procedures are more effective if they include prearranged rules which render it possible to punish defectors even against their own vote. The value of consultations is above all a matter of their frequence. Institutions facilitating or mandating regular and timely disclosure of perceptions and intentions diminish incentives for defection, for they provide other states with ample warning and thus with better opportunities for adequate countermeasures. Contrariwise, if institutions call for consultation only rarely or in times of crisis defectors may speculate on a successful *fait accompli* to deliver long-term gains. Finally, security regimes that are nested into other institutions with similar membership should be more effective in deterring defection. For cheated collaborators, neighboring regimes provide better opportunities for cross-retaliation. Seen from the would-be defector's point of view, cooperative stakes in related issue areas tend to increase the opportunity costs of compromising one's reputation. [13]

These criteria will be applied to the pertinent institutions as they existed as the actions under investigation actually unfolded. Contrary to some institutionalists' notions,[14] I shall pay little attention to earlier institutional regulations that have been modified or abolished some time before those actions were undertaken. After all, it is somewhat at odds with institutional reasoning to expect much impact from norms or rules even *after* states have declared them obsolete. To be sure, the experience of past cooperation can stabilize current or future expectations. However, such trust in the partners' cooperative attitude may result from many factors, such as political transparency, shared values, common ideologies etc. Above all, even in institutionalized relations trust stems primarily from the actual experience of cooperative behavior and less from the contents of norms, rules and procedures, especially if in the meantime they have been modified or revoked. Therefore, accumulated trust can be attributed only in part to the effects of institiutions. By itself it does not prove the strength of pertinent institutions.

Before looking at institutionalist explanations for the persistence and break-down of great power cooperation I first need to clarify the nature and measurement of my dependent variables. I do not track singular instances of cooperation and defection but rather broader patterns of such behavior which I call "partnership" to "rivalry". I shall speak of "partnership" as long as allies maintain policy coordination and continue to engage in common activities even in the absence of a unifying threat. Hence security partnership is characterized by common efforts to defuse both crises and long-term threats to the established international order, as well as by joint endeavors to avoid arms races and proxy wars. Partners forgo short-term gains offered by *faits accomplis* and other forms of secretive behavior in favor of the long-term benefits which come with a cooperative

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[13]Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 89-92.

[14]Wallander and Keohane, "Risk, Threat, and Security Institutions," 32, also 40; Michael Zürn, personal communication.

relationship. Instead of pursuing unilateral advantages they routinely adapt to the preferences of their partners.

From this ideal type of security partnership I derive a scale of behavior which stretches from close partnership (top) to outright rivalry (bottom):
- coordinated activities to defuse crises, potential arms races or threats to the established international order
- common abstention from confrontational measures
- inconclusive consultations followed by unilateral activities
- unilateral activities not preceded by consultations (*fait accompli*)
- reciprocal conflict behavior such as arms races, proxy wars and the construction of antagonistic alliance systems
- military conflict

This scale, however, only differentiates between single acts as to whether they are compatible with partnership or rivalry. It does not yet discriminate between different types of relationships, that is, *patterns* of behavior. I will code a relationship between erstwhile allies as "rivalry" if the two powers engage in reciprocal warfare, an arms race (or other forms of reciprocal conflict behavior) stretching over several years or cease to consult in several consecutive crises in order to pursue their interests with unilateral measures. On the other hand, a "partnership" may be said to persist as long as *faits accomplis* remain isolated instances which time and again are followed by successful consultations or negotiations on crises, arms control or questions of international order.

Reemergence of Rivalry in the Wake of the Napoleonic Wars

Despite some ups and downs in the relations between the Napoleon's former antagonists, by and large Austria, Britain, Prussia and Russia remained security partners until 1832. The four allied powers did not start arms races but unilaterally reduced their force levels. Neither did they develop serious war plans for engaging each other, nor did they set up antagonistic alliances.[15] In the only case in which an ally proposed to form a new alliance against another great power, Austria's foreign minister Metternich was instantly rebuffed by his British colleague Lord Castlereagh.[16] In fact, prince Metternich soon was to appreciate that the tsarist empire was much less of a threat to Habsburg interests than an indispensable bulwark of autocratic order. Instead of using sudden crises for opportunistic self-aggrandizement, the four powers repeatedly sought to defuse them through collective crisis management. Apart from occasional irritations and abstentions on the part of individual powers, most of the allies consulted and cooperated rather closely to contain the various crises set off by uprisings in Naples (1820/21), Piemont (1820), Spain (1820-1823), Greece (1821-1829), Poland (1830/31) and Belgium (1830-

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[15] A. J. P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954), 3; F. Roy Bridge and Roger Bullen, *The Great Powers and the European States System 1815-1914* (London and New York: Longman, 1980), 8.

[16] Charles K. Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, 1815-1822. Britain and the European Alliance* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1925), 100-118 and 175-85.

1831).[17]

After 1832, the Anglo-Russian partnership broke down and turned into a serious rivalry which continued until the beginning of the following decade when relations between the two powers again temporarily improved. The ideological rift caused by various revolutions and the British "Reform Bill" also led to some alienation between Britain and the two German powers. However their quarrels hardly escalated beyond some diplomatic arguments on the domestic confrontations in Spain and Germany. Although Britain's partnership with Austria and Prussia disintegrated, the three powers did not become genuine rivals.[18] On the other hand, from 1832 on England and Russia began to confront each other militarily and on quite a number of issues. They gave significant material and financial support to opposing factions in the civil wars on the Iberian Peninsula (mid 1830´s);[19] they became engaged in a maritime arms race (mid 1830´s).[20] They also came very close to war in two crises over the Turkish straits (1833 and 1839/40),[21] and they undertook the first military expeditions in what later became known as the "Great Game in Asia" (1839/40).[22] In a nutshell, then, "alliance was transformed into rivalry."[23] By the mid 1830´s, British foreign minister Lord Palmerston already spoke of Russia as "the great enemy of England", just as Tsar Nicholas came to the conclusion that his former ally was to be considered a threat rather than a trusted security partner.[24]

Compared to the elaborate security regimes set up in the aftermath of the two world wars

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[17] Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored. Castlereagh, Metternich and the Problems of Peace, 1812-22* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), chaps. 14-16, Webster, *Castlereagh, 1815-1822*, chap. VI; Roy Bridge, "Allied Diplomacy in Peacetime: the Failure of the Congress 'System', 1815-23," in *Europe's Balance of Power*, ed. Alan Sked (London: Macmillan, 1979), 34-53; Matthew Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923: A Study in International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 53-77; W. Bruce Lincoln, *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russians* (London: Penguin, 1978), 135-43; John Shelton Curtiss, *The Russian Army under Nicholas I, 1825-1855* (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1965), chap. III; and Harald Müller, "Die Krise des Interventionsprinzips der Heiligen Allianz. Zur Außenpolitik Österreichs und Preußens nach der Julirevolution von 1830," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte* 14 (1976): 9-56, at 38-49; Charles K. Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Palmerston, 1830-1841* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1951), Vol. 1, chap. II; Kenneth Bourne, *Palmerston. The Early Years, 1784-1841* (New York: Macmillan, 1982), 333-48; Paul W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics, 1763-1848* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 670-91; and René Albrecht-Carrié, *The Concert of Europe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 60-98.

[18] Bourne, *Palmerston*, 367-374; Webster, *Palmerston*, Vol. 1, 222-223; Roger Bullen, "France and Europe, 1815-48: the Problem of Defeat and Recovery", in Sked, *Europe's Balance of Power,* 122-44, at 134.

[19] Webster, *Palmerston*, Vol. 1, 238, 245, 377, 423, 425 and 428.

[20] Christopher J. Bartlett, *Great Britain and Sea Power, 1815-1853* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 108-109 and 116-28; John Howes Gleason, *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain. A Study of the Interaction of Policy and Opinion* (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1950), 171 and 217-220.

[21] Webster, *Palmerston*, Vol. I, chap. IV, and Vol. II, chap. VII-VIII; Gleason, *Russophobia*, chap. IX; Anderson, *Eastern Question*, 77-109; Lincoln, *Nicholas I*, chap. 6;.

[22] Webster, *Palmerston*, Vol. 2, 738-52; Malcolm E. Yapp, *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan, 1798-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), chaps. 4 and 8; Gerald Morgan, *Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Central Asia: 1810-1895* (London: Frank Cass, 1981), 20-30; Harold Norman Ingle, *Karl Nesselrode's Cosmopolitan Diplomacy and the Russian Rapprochement with Britain, 1836-1843*, (Diss. University of California, Davis, 1972), 234-56.

[23] Gleason, *Russophobia*, 290.

[24] Palmerston's quote in Bourne, *Palmerston*, 562; see also Lincoln, *Nicholas I,* 109-110, 220 and 224; Theodor Schiemann, *Geschichte Rußlands unter Kaiser Nikolaus I.* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1904-1914), Vol. III, 279 and 282.

the regimes of the concert epoch mark just a modest beginning. Precise regulations and procedures were mostly lacking, partial exceptions being the Vienna final act and the peace treaty with France which obliged the allies to respect the territorial settlement. Apart from that, the treaties contained no common commitment to protect the established borders. None of the contracting parties had to support an ally against infringements of its territorial integrity. When, in 1818 at the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, Prussia and Russia suggested such a treaty of mutual guarantee Austria and Britain demured.[25] As a result, both peace instruments failed to specify particular measures for coping with threats or aussaults on the territorial settlement of the Vienna congress.

The various alliance treaties concluded by the victors did little to close these regulatory voids. Thus, the treaty on the Holy Alliance -- which according to one historian was "perhaps the vaguest document ever to trouble European diplomacy" -- confined itself to unspecific principles that committed the monarchs of Austria, Prussia and Russia to base their future relations on the "devine verities" of christianity. Given its lofty language (Britain's foreign minister Castlereagh characterized the treaty as a "piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense") one may question if the Holy Alliance actually was an institution at all. It is not surprising then that the treaty hardly affected the subsequent policies of the powers.[26]

The Germanic confederation which had replaced the dissolved Holy Roman Empire was a more elaborate institution. Article LXIII of its founding treaty ruled out violent settlement of inner-German disputes and called for common defense against external assaults on the Germanic states, including Austria and Prussia. It was later supplemented with a military convention and procedures for the peaceful settlement of disputes. However, as it turned out, the Federation had little effect on the relations between the great powers. It was, therefore, more of a "mutual insurance among monarchs to preserve the political and social status quo" than an international security regime.[27]

The Quadruple Alliance concluded between the four victorious powers also lacked greater specificity, for it merely explicated general principles of cooperation as well as some norms and rules concerning the treatment of defeated France. The treaty's famous "congress article" (art. VI) stipulated in very broad terms that the four monarchs or their representatives should regularly convene at conferences to "facilitate and to secure the execution of the present Treaty", and "to consolidate the connections which at present so closely unite the Four Sovereigns." The powers' conferences were intendended "for the

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[25]Webster, *Castlereagh, 1815-1822*, 74-87; Kissinger, *A World Restored*, chap. 12.

[26]Alan Sked, "Introduction," in *Europe´s Balance of Power, 1815-1848*, ed. Alan Sked (London: Machmillan, 1979), 1-13, at 4 (first quote); Webster, *Castlereagh, 1815-1822*, 482 (second quote); Karl Griewank, *Der Wiener Kongress und die europäische Restauration 1814/15*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1954), 360-361; Werner Näf, *Zur Geschichte der Heiligen Allianz* (Bern: Paul Haupt, 1928), 5 and 9.

[27]Reinhard Rürup, *Deutsche Geschichte im 19. Jahrhundert: 1815-1871* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1984), 128 (quote); for concurring assessments see Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1800–1866: Bürgerwelt und starker Staat* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1993), 356, and Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte, Zweiter Band: Von der Reformära bis zur industriellen und politischen "Deutschen Doppelrevolution" 1815-1845/49* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1987), 367.

purpose of consulting upon their common interests, and for the consideration of the measures which at each of those periods shall be considered the most salutary for the repose and prosperity of Nations, and for the maintenance of the Peace of Europe." This wording left open, among other things, what was meant by the close unity of sovereigns or the "repose and prosperity of Nations" (did it include the domestic order of states and societies?), when an allied intervention was bound to occur and what particular circumstances mandated the convention of a congress.[28] Accordingly, commonality of interpretation, that is, agreement as to what the norms actually meant and implied, was rather low among the victors. Hence, institutionalization of allied cooperation was quite weak. Even before the end of the period of frequent congresses (1815-1822), the concert thus amounted to little more than an "informal institution", "a vague system of Conferences", if not just "a weak and ineffective institution" or nothing but "an abstract idea".[29]

Moreover, it can hardly be argued that more precise norms and principles were unnecessary because, even in their absence, contemporary decision makers had gradually learned to trust each other and had gained enough mutual experience to differentiate between appropriate and forbidden actions.[30] Quite the contrary: in the years preceding and following the Congress of Vienna, allied decision makers often failed to display the kinds of personal or official conduct which might have served as an exemplary orientation for international cooperation. Rather, broken promises, threats (including threats of war), intrigues and mutual suspicions proliferated. At the Congress of Vienna Russia's Alexander I and Austria's foreign minister Metternich even came very close to duelling each other.[31]

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[28]Webster, *Castlereagh, 1815-1822*, 153-65; Kissinger, *A World Restored*, 408-410; Francis H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace. Theory and Practice in the History of Relations between States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 199-210.

[29]Quotes taken, in that order, from Carsten Holbraad, *The Concert of Europe: A Study in German and British International Theory, 1815-1914* (London: Longman, 1970) 2; Charles K. Webster, "Disarmament Proposals in 1816," *Contemporary Review* 122 (1922): 621-27, at 627; Korina Kagan, "The Myth of the European Concert: The Realist-Institutionalist Debate and Great Power Behavior in the Eastern Question, 1821–41," *Security Studies* 7, no. 2 (winter 1997/98): 1-57, at 55; Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, *Vom Wiener Kongreß zur Pariser Konferenz: England, die deutsche Frage und das Mächtesystem 1815 – 1856* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1991), 13. Even Louise Richardson who accords greater importance to the workings of the concert system has to admit that it had but "an extremely loose institutional form" which "makes it very difficult to analyse". Louise Richardson, "The Concert of Europe and Security Management in the Nineteenth Century," in *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space,* eds. Helga Haftendorn, Robert O. Keohane and Celeste A. Wallander (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 48-79, at 52 and 56.

[30]Wallander and Keohane seem to claim as much when they contend that "(H)igh-level policy makers met in virtually continuous session, and self-consciously followed rules that minimized attempts at exploiting situations for unilateral advantage." Unfortunately, Wallander and Keohane leave the reader in the dark as to what kind of rules they refer. "Risk, Threat, and Security Institutions," 37.

[31]See the instances described in Kissinger, *A World Restored*, chap. 9; Peter Burg, *Der Wiener Kongreß. Der Deutsche Bund im europäischen Staatensystem* (Munich: dtv, 1993), 9-29; Edward Vose Gulick, *Europe´s Classical Balance of Power: A Case History of the Theory and Practice of One of the Great Concepts of European Statecraft* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1955), 191, 212, 216, and chap. VIII.

In light of this low institutionalization the long cooperation between the four victors (1815-1832) is rather surprising. During this period, constraining regulations were obviously of lesser importance than the decision makers' overall willingness to respect foreign interests and act with restraint. In the words of British historian Hinsley: "Their acceptance of the restraints and frustrations of the Concert system was the consequence rather than the cause of their preparedness to be restrained."[32] Apparently, compatible preferences, notably the British interest in cutting defense spending and the Eastern Powers' common wish to contain the threat of revolution, were much more consequential.[33]

Nor did institutional evolution play a conspicous role in the process that led to the collapse of cooperation in the 1830's. Thus, the rupture between Britain and the Eastern Powers was not preceded by any significant erosion of concert institutions. Quite the contrary, around 1830 the powers succeeded in jointly managing the Greek and Belgian crises. These common efforts were bound to foster general trust in mutual cooperation and restraint. In addition, over the course of these close consulations and negotiations the powers, and especially Britain and Russia, also explicitly confirmed and specified their acceptance of restraints and common responsibilities. For instance, during the Belgian crisis a protocol of the conference of the allied ambassadors, while conceding that "(e)ach nation has its particular rights", went on to state "but Europe also has her rights."[34] Even more important, the great powers formulated and repeatedly confirmed a new norm which forbade making use of crises for attaining any kinds of unilateral advantages.[35]

Finally, institutional developments shed little light on the question why London and St. Petersburg became antagonists, while Russia, Prussia and Austria managed to preserve and even intensify their security partnership. As already pointed out, the special institutions of the continental monarchies had little value for the great powers' security cooperation: whereas the Holy Alliance was much too vague to be considered a genuine institution, the Germanic confederation proved unable to constrain its two great power members.[36] Moreover, it excluded Russia. Nor did the three conservative courts etablish elaborate regimes among themselves. The Berlin Convention which the three Eastern autocracies eventually concluded in October 1833 did little more than to codify the principle of monarchical solidarity that had already been practiced by the courts during the revolutionary upheavals of the preceding years. The treaty did not include a mutual assistance clause. Instead, it mandated military support only in those hypothetical cases when one contracting party, after having intervened on behalf of another one, were to fell

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[32]Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace*, 220.

[33]On the British aristocracy´s insistence on budget and defense reductions see Norman Gash, *Lord Liverpool: The Life and Political Career of Robert Banks Jenkinson, Second Earl of Liverpool, 1770–1828* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 115-119 and 126-38; Christopher J. Bartlett, *Great Britain and Sea Power, 1815-1853* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 13-17. On the eastern autocracies solidarity against liberal movements see Holbraad, *Concert of Europe*, 23-34; Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 328-40; Kissinger, *A World Restored*, chap. 14-17; Janet M. Hartley, *Alexander I* (London: Longman, 1994), 147-60.

[34]As quoted in René Albrecht-Carrié, *The Concert of Europe* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 73.

[35]Op. cit., 69, 106 and 109.

[36]Burg, *Wiener Kongreß*, 91-93.

victim to a military counter-intervention by a third state.[37]   Accordingly, the Berlin Convention is to be seen, first and formost, as a symbol of counter-revolutionary cooperation and not so much as its necessary precondition or useful facilitator.

Europe and the Persistence of Cooperation after World War I

The period of partnership between the three European victors Britain, France and Italy continued until 1925.[38]   To be sure, Anglo-French relations cooled off in the early 1920´s when both powers quarreled over the post-war settlement in the Near East,[39] disagreed on the enforcement of German reparations[40] and had some acerbic exchanges on the designs behind French procurement of war planes and submarines.[41] Nevertheless, the two powers did not become real rivals. Even at the low point of their relations, London and Paris did not become engaged in an arms race or a competition for allies. Neither did they exchange threats of war. Instead, governments in both London and Paris assumed that their countries would fight the next war again as allies.[42] Not surprisingly, then, their estrangement did not last for long. Most of the controversial issues were soon resolved at the conferences in Washington (1921/22), Lausanne (1922/23), and Locarno (1925) that successfully dealt with the naval, Near Eastern, and German problems, respectively.[43]

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[37]Harald Müller, "Der Weg nach Münchengrätz. Voraussetzungen, Bedingungen und Grenzen der Reaktivierung des reaktionären Bündnisses der Habsburger und Hohenzollern mit den Romanows im Herbst 1833," *Jahrbuch für Geschichte* 21 (1980): 7-62, at 56-58.

[38] For broad overviews of the diplomatic history of that period see Albrecht-Carrié, *A Diplomatic History of Europe Since the Congress of Vienna* (New York: Harper, 1958); Raymond Cartier, *Le monde entre deux guerres: 1919-1939* (Paris: Larousse, 1974); Gottfried Niedhart, *Internationale Beziehungen 1917-1947* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1989); Sally Marks, *The Illusion of Peace. International Relations in Europe 1918-1933* (London: Macmillan, 1976); Graham Ross, *The Great Powers and the Decline of the European States System, 1914-1945* (London: Longman, 1983); and William J. Newman, *The Balance of Power in the Interwar Years, 1919-1939* (New York: Random House, 1968). For an overall account see Raymond J. Sontag, *A Broken World. 1919-1939* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).

[39] Henry H. Cumming, *Franco-British Rivalry in the Post-War Near East. The Decline of French Influence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938); Harold Nicolson, *Curzon: The Last Phase, 1919-1925. A Study in Post-War Diplomacy* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1934, reprint 1974); F. S. Northedge, *The Troubled Giant. Britain among the Great Powers, 1916-1939* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1966), chap. VI.

[40] Wm. Laird Kleine-Ahlbrandt, *The Burden of Victory. France, Britain and the Enforcement of the Versailles Peace, 1919-1925* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1995); Marc Trachtenberg, *Reparation in World Politics. France and European Economic Diplomacy, 1916-1923* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980); Stephen A. Schuker, *The End of French Predominance in Europe. The Financial Crisis of 1924 and the Adoption of the Dawes Plan* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1976).

[41] John Robert Ferris, *Men, Money, and Diplomacy: The Evolution of British Strategic Policy, 1919-26* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 127-32, 149; Georges Suarez, *Briand. Sa vie. Son œuvre, Tome V: L'Artisan de la Paix, 1918-1923* (Paris: Libraire Plon, 1941); chap. VII.

[42] Anne Orde, *Great Britain and International Security, 1920-1926* (London: Swift Printers, 1978), 13-36, 66 and 157; Judith M. Hughes, *To the Maginot Line. The Politics of French Military Preparation in the 1920's* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 57 and 95-96.

[43] On the Lausanne conference and the settlement of the Near Eastern problems see Nicolson, *Curzon*, chaps. X- XI; Cumming, *Franco-British Rivalry*, 189-208; and Roderic H. Davison, "Turkish Diplomacy from Mudros to Lausanne," in *The Diplomats, 1919-1939*, eds. Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 202-205; on the naval aspect of the Washington conference see Stephen Roskill, *Naval Policy Between the Wars. Volume I: The Period of Anglo-American*

In contrast, by the mid 1920´s, Franco-Italian relations changed from cooperation to conflict. Despite its grave disappointment about the outcomes of the Paris Peace conference, for a number of years Italy by and large had pursued a low profile in foreign policy and had remained a loyal security partner of its allies. In most crises and at the major international conferences Rome had played a constructive role in line with the requirements of allied solidarity.[44] In late 1925, however, Italy started to pursue a much more assertive policy. This shift brought about a rivalry with France which only in 1933 gave way to a brief détente soon to be followed by yet more intense confrontation. Whereas Rome's relations with London remained friendly throughout the 1920´s, after 1925 Mussolini initiated a great number of diplomatic and clandestine activities to undermine French political predominance in the Balkans. Thus, in the words of a leading diplomatic historian of the period, "France – and by extension France's allies in central and southeastern Europe – emerged as Italy's chosen enemy and prey."[45] Increasingly, Italy began to call for the revision of the Versailles peace order so dear to France. In addition, both countries became engaged in a naval arms competition which threatened French lines of communication in the Mediterranean.[46] Gradually, France and Italy perceived each other as potential enemies. This assumption was reflected in the work of military planners who began to design detailed plans for the anticipated military confrontation.[47]

From an instititutionalist point of view it is hardly surprising that Britain, France and Italy continued their wartime security cooperation once the central powers had been defeated. Inspite of the initial marginalization of the League of Nations, allied security cooperation was significantly institutionalized in the early post-war period, especially if the consultative framework after World War I is compared to the post-Napoleonic concert. Of course, the network of regimes was far from optimal. An ideal institution for fostering close security partnership would have been designed differently. Thus, the allied Supreme Council, the conference of the allied ambassadors in Paris and the League of Nation had some obvious weaknesses as concerned precision of rules and procedures, particularly those for deterring or punishing would-be transgressors. Nor did all their major members

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Antagonism, 1919-1929 (London: Collins, 1968), chap. VIII; as well as Harold and Margaret Sprout, *Toward a New Order of Sea Power. American Naval Policy and the World Scene, 1918-1922*, 2nd edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), chaps. IX-XIII.

[44] See the sources listed in the preceding footnote as well as Alan Cassels, *Mussolini's Early Diplomacy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); Maxwell H. H. Macartney and Paul Cremona, *Italy's Foreign and Colonial Policy, 1914-1937* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938).

[45] Cassels, *Mussolini's Early Diplomacy*, 391. See also Kevin Kenyon, *Italy, Hungary, and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia* (Diss. Indiana University) 1993, 180-227; William I. Shorrock, "France, Italy, and the Eastern Mediterranean in the 1920s," *The International History Review* 8, no. 1 (February 1986): 70-82.

[46] Stephen Roskill, *Naval Policy Between the Wars II: The Period of Reluctant Rearmament, 1930-1939* (London: Collins, 1976), 27 and 183-84; Macartney/Cremona, *Italy's Foreign and Colonial Policy*, 137 and 263-67; Christopher Hall, *Britain, America and Arms Control, 1921-1937* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), chap. 4.

[47] Brian R. Sullivan, *A Thirst for Glory: Mussolini, the Italian Military and the Fascist Regime, 1922-1936* (New York: Diss. Columbia University, 1984), 200-202; Edward David Keeton, *Briand's Locarno Policy. French Economics, Politics, and Diplomacy, 1925-1929* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987), 100-101, 290 and 310-311; William I. Shorrock, *From Ally to Enemy. The Enigma of Fascist Italy in French Diplomacy, 1920-1940* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1988), 60-61.

concur in the desired division of labor between those bodies.[48]

Such weaknesses, however, were compensated by many institutional strengths, in particular those of the Conference of Ambassadors set up to watch over the proper implementation of the Paris peace treaties. Among other things, the conference convened very frequently (roughly once a week during the first four years of its operation), the institution obliged the allies to hold joint consultations and to share relevant information and it mandated mutual solidarity vis-à-vis the vanquished states. Besides, both the conference and the Supreme Council stood in direct continuity of the war-time councils, and their agendas covered a wide range of issues. As a result, linkage strategies became easier, while for transgressors the risk increased that opportunistic behavior in one area would provoke retaliation or unwanted imitation in other issue areas. In this way, the Conference of Ambassadors could play an important role which, according to one expert, made it into a kind of "European Directorate".[49] For the League of Nations the victors initially left only the treatment of secondary problems or the kind of issues the allies considered extremely hard to solve. Consequently, during the eraly 1920's the conference and the Supreme Council clearly ecclipsed the organization in Geneva.[50] Thus the League's operation was not crucial for the continuation of allied security partnership.

As with the post-Napoleonic concert period, later institutional developments shed little light on the eventual deterioation of great power relations. The collapse of Franco-Italian cooperation in the mid 1920's was neither preceded nor accompanied by an overall decline of international institutions. Of course, the allied Supreme Council and, even more so, the Conference of Ambassadors were increasingly marginalized during the period in question, as and more territorial and disarmament stipulations laid down in the peace treaties had finally been implemented.[51] At first glance, the growing obsolescence of the inter-allied bodies might explain the Italo-French rivalry which soon followed that institutional change. Yet the declining importance of these bodies were roughly compensated by the rise of the League of Nations which, according to some observers, experienced its "golden era" in the mid to late 1920's.[52] By that time the League had completed its years of growth and consolidation. The growing frequency of council

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[48]Jürgen Heideking, "Oberster Rat -- Botschafterkonferenz -- Völkerbund. Drei Formen multilateraler Diplomatie nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg," *Historische Zeitschrift* 231, 589-630.

[49]Gerhard P. Pink, *The Conference of Ambassadors, Paris 1920-31: Its history, the theoretical aspects of its work, and its place in international organization* (Geneva: Geneva Studies, Vol. XII, nos. 4-5, 1942), 276; Jürgen Heideking, *Areopag der Diplomaten. Die Pariser Botschafterkonferenz der alliierten Hauptmächte und die Probleme der europäischen Politik 1920-1931* (Husum: Matthiesen, 1979), 32, 43 and 341-43. In light of its importance it seems rather surprising that in their discussion of post-war institutions Wallander and Keohane do not even mention the Conference of Ambassadors. "Risk, Threat, and Security Institutions," 37-39.

[50]Francis P. Walters, *A History of the League of Nations* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 93-94; Heideking, *Areopag der Diplomaten*, 203.

[51]Heideking, op. cit., 32 and 349-50; Heideking, "Oberster Rat," 612-14.

[52]Heideking, "Oberster Rat," 628; Alfred Pfeil, *Der Völkerbund. Literaturbericht und kritische Darstellung seiner Geschichte* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), 81. For similar assessments see Walters, *History of the League*, 295-97; Graham Ross, *The Great Powers and the Decline of the European States System, 1914-1945* (London: Longman, 1983), 119; George Scott, *The Rise and Fall of the League of Nations* (London: Hutchinson, 1973), 180.

sessions, the greater involvement of the great powers´ foreign secretaries, improvements in the League's procedures for arbitration and crisis prevention, and the successful mediation of the Greco-Bulgarian conflict in 1925, all this added up to greater trust in the effectiveness of the world organization.[53]

In addition, the great powers' representatives increasingly met for informal consultations. Under the pretense of discussing issues in connection with the Locarno Treaty the foreign secretaries of Belgium, Britain, Germany, France and Italy as well as a Japanese ambassador regularly convened for the so-called Locarno tea parties. These closed-door exchanges proved very useful for open debates on diplomatic problems. As a result, when they operated successfully, the "tea parties" often left just secondary issues for official clarification and settlement in the League council.[54] In this manner, the formal mechanisms of the League were partly overshadowed by a revival of the old concert customs of the early 19th century.[55] Overall, however, by the mid 1920's the institutional network had not experienced any significant decline which might account for the ensuing collpase of Franco-Italian security cooperation.

Nor was there any conspicious weakening of norms, rules or procedures with special relevance for relations between Paris and Rome. Hence, institutional history can tell us little as to why France and Italy turned into rivals, while, at the same time, London's relations with Paris and Rome remained rather cordial. In fact, there was hardly any difference in the institutionalization of those three dyads. During the mid to late 1920's, all three powers were active in the same major security institutions: the League, the Conference of Ambassadors and the Locarno framework, including the "tea parties". Essentially, the institutional set-up was thus the same for all three states.

The major difference distinguishing the three European victors was not the supply of institutional mechanisms and solutions but rather the demand for them. The latter significantly diminished on the Italian side once Mussolini had succeeded in consolidating his authoritarian rule. The dictator in Rome tended to see international politics as an unforgiving zero-sum game in which only the fittest peoples could survive and prosper. Consequently, he attached little value to international regimes and organizations meant for facilitating long-term cooperation. In particular, he despised the League for the greater say it gave to smaller states.[56] Mussolini, therefore, had little use for strong international institutions that might have constrained the desired expansion of Italian power and influence. Hence, the collapse of Franco-Italian cooperation was above all a consequence of the change in Italian preferences. As a result of geography and Mussolini's image of France as a decadent power France and its allies in central and

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[53]Walters, *History of the League*, 297 and 299; David Armstrong, Lorna Lloyd and John Redmond, *From Versailles to Maastricht: International Organisation in the Twentieth Century* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1996), 34-40; John Barros, *The League of Nations and the Great Powers. The Greek-Bulgarian Incident*, 1925 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970).

[54]Walters, *History of the League*, 335-47; Scott, *Rise and Fall of the League*, 163-65; Pfeil, *Völkerbund*, 95-96.

[55]Walters, op. cit., 342; Pfeil, op. cit., 96; Ross, *Decline of the European States System*, 119; Sally Marks, *The Illusion of Peace: International Relations in Europe 1918-1933* (London: Macmillan, 1976), 81-82.

[56]Macartney and Cremona, *Italy's Foreign and Colonial Policy*, 242-56.

southeastern Europe became the targets of Italy's revisionist ambitions.[57]

The Far East and the Reemergence of Rivalry after World War I

During the inter-war period security affairs in East Asia and the Pacific theater were largely determined by the interaction between the three maritime powers Britain, Japan and the United States. Up to the early 1930´s, these three states preserved a long, if at times somewhat fragile security partnership. After some initial misgivings between Tôkyô and Washington, the three powers reached a broad settlement for their disputes on China and maritime armaments. The ensuing Washington agreements gave rise to a decade of collaboration.[58] In war-torn China the maritime powers refrained from exploiting the existing power vacuum. Instead, they often cooperated in protecting the extra-territorial privileges of their local concessions.[59] Competitive procurement of capital ships had effectively been laid to rest by the Washington agreements. Even in the unlimited classes (i.e. cruisers, destroyers and submarines) the three powers managed to avoid an arms race.[60] As late as 1930, they also succeeded in closing this loophole when Britain, Japan and the United States agreed on the extension of the arms control regime to those smallervessels.[61] At the turn of the decade, then, diplomats in Washington and London were rather optimistic that their partnership with Japan was bound to continue.[62]

Instead, in 1931 the Japanese invasion of Manchuria brought the period of great power partnership to a sudden end.[63] Yet although, in the years thereafter, Japan continued on

[57]Cassels, *Mussolini's Early Diplomacy*, 391; William I. Shorrock, *From Ally to Enemy. The Enigma of Fascist Italy in French Diplomacy, 1920-1940* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1988), 49 and 60; Kenyon, *Italy, Hungary, and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*.

[58] Ian H. Nish, *Alliance in Decline. A Study in Anglo-Japanese Relations 1908-23* (London: Athlone Press, 1972), chap. XXII; Roger Dingman, *Power in the Pacific. The Origins of Naval Arms Limitation, 1914-1922*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), chap. 12; Roskill, *Naval Policy Between the Wars. Vol. I: The Period of Anglo-American Antagonism, 1919-1929* (London: Collins, 1968), chap. VIII; Sprout and Sprout, *Toward a New Order*, chaps. IX-XIII.

[59] Akira Iriye, *After Imperialism. The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), 45-46, 69-70, 80 and 86-87. Wm. Roger Louis, *British Strategy in the Far East, 1919-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 120-21; Richard Dean Burns and Edward M. Bennett, eds., *Diplomats in Crisis. United States-Chinese-Japanese Relations, 1919-1941* (Santa Barbara: Clio Press, 1974); Dorothy Borg, *American Policy and the Chinese Revolution, 1925-1928* (New York MacMillan, 1947).

[60] See Robert Gordon Kaufman, *Arms Control during the Pre-Nuclear Era. The United States and Naval Limitation between the two World Wars* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 78-82 and 206; Roskill, *Naval Policy,* Vol. I, 420, 460-66 and 564; Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery* (London: Allen Lane, 1976), 273-74 and 278-79; James Neidpath, *The Singapore Naval Base and the Defence of Britain's Eastern Empire, 1919-1941* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), chap. V.

[61] Kaufman, *Arms Control*, 129-38; and Stephen Roskill, *Naval Policy Between the Wars. Vol. II: The Period of Reluctant Rearmament, 1930-1939* (London: Collins, 1976), chap. II.

[62] Paul Haggie, *Britannia at Bay. The Defence of the British Empire against Japan, 1931-1941* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 5; Christopher Thorne, *The Limits of Foreign Policy. The West, the League and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931-1933* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972), 43-44; Thomas Buckley, "John Van Antwerp MacMurray: The Diplomacy of an American Mandarin, in *Diplomats in Crisis*, eds. Burns and Bennett, 27-48, at 42 and 44.

[63] Sadako N. Ogata, *Defiance in Manchuria: The Making of Japanese Foreign Policy, 1931-1932* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964); James B. Crowley, *Japan's Quest for Autonomy. National Security and*

its path of continental expansion, at first the two western powers refrained from active containment policies. Nor did they substantially increase their naval armaments.[64] Rivalry, as defined in this paper, did only evolve after 1935 when Britain started to confront the expansion of Japanese power. To this end, London began to give increasing financial and logistical support to nationalist China in its gradually escalating conflict with Japan. In addition, the British government finally shed its reluctant arms policy and authorized the procurement of 16 capital ships and 23 cruisers to meet the challenge of Japan's accelerated ship construction.[65] At first, the United States did not participate in British containment efforts. Washington waited until 1938, when it finally began serious naval rearmament and commenced a policy of cautious support for China. During the subsequent years, the U.S. increasingly installed economic sanctions against Japan. After the fall of France, Washington at last initiated a huge naval arms program to address the threat from the axis powers.[66]

There was no close correlation between the level of institutionalization and the extent to which the three maritime powers cooperated during the interwar period. Of course, there was a rough covariance between both variables if U.S.-Japanese relations before and after the Washington Treaties of 1922 are compared. As a matter of fact, the establishment of the so-called Washington System coincided with a substantial improvement of transpacific relations. Still, the Washington treaties were more a consequence rather than a cause of enhanced interest in cooperation. More important, the accords brought about regimes that lacked precise and comprehensive regulations while containing some remarkable inconsistencies. The Nine Power Treaty that was supposed to reformulate China's position vis-à-vis the colonial powers was quite weakly institutionalized. Its most important principles and norms were not specified by more detailed rules. Even worse, some of those norms and principles were inconsistent or rested on illusionary assumptions. Thus, despite various conflicts beween autonomous war lords and irrespective of the numerous extraterritorial privileges which the great powers enjoyed the treaty was based on the premise that China was effectively ruled by a single government

Foreign Policy, 1930-1938 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), chaps. II-III; Ian Nish, *Japan's Struggle with Internationalism: Japan, China and the League of Nations, 1931-3* (London: Kegan Paul, 1993), chaps. 1-4.

[64] Dorothy Borg, *The United States and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1933-1938. From the Manchurian Incident Through the Initial Stage of the Undeclared Sino-Japanese War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964); Ann Trotter, *Britain and East Asia, 1933-1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Stephen Lyon Endicott, *Diplomacy and Enterprise. British China Policy 1933-1937* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975); Roskill, *Naval Policy*, Vol. II, 161-62, 175-78 and 187; Haggie, *Britannia at Bay*, 73; Stephen E. Pelz, *Race to Pearl Harbor. The Failure of the Second London Naval Conference and the Onset of World War II* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), 76-82.

[65] Trotter, *Britain and East Asia*, 210-211 and 217; Endicott, *Diplomacy and Enterprise*, 122-23, 161-62, 170 and 181; Bradford A. Lee, *Britain and the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1939. A Study in the Dilemmas of British Decline* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973), 17-18, 48-49, 85-87 and 162-65; Peter Lowe, *Great Britain and the Origins of the Pacific War. A Study of British Policy in East Asia 1937-1941* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), 41-42, 53 and 58-62; Louis, *British Strategy*, 253-55; Roskill, *Naval Policy*, Vol. II, 216-219 and 279; N. H. Gibbs, *Grand Strategy. Vol. I: Rearmament Policy* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1976), 333-338.

[66] Roskill, *Naval Policy*, Vol. II, 469-70; Pelz, *Race to Pearl Harbor*, 204 and 209-210; Jonathan G. Utley, *Going to War with Japan, 1937-1941* (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1985); Michael A. Barnhart, *Japan Prepares for Total War. The Search for Economic Security, 1919-1941* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987).

which could speak for the whole of the country.[67] The Five Power Treaty on naval arms control established a more elaborate and consistent regime. It fixed precise upper limits and contained detailed rules for force reductions. Yet the treaty failed to include any verification regulations, a void which seems almost unthinkable for present day arms control regimes. Obviously, such a regime already presupposed a lot of mutual confidence and restraint instead of bringing them about.[68]

In light of the gaps and inconsistencies which always hampered the regimes, the eventual collapse of great power cooperation can hardly be attributed to institutional erosion. Because the pertinent regimes were weakly institutionalized from their very creation, any further weakening was unlikely to have strong effects on the interaction among the naval powers. As a matter of fact, it could even be argued that at the beginning of the 1930's some of the pertinent institutions were in a slightly better shape than during the preceding decade of cooperation. As pointed out in the preceding case study, the League of Nations which had played but a marginal role in the early 1920's had gained considerable prestige during the second part of the decade.[69] Even more important for the Far Eastern region was the successful conclusion of the London naval conference in 1930. During their joint review of the Washington arms regime the tree maritime powers agreed to extend the existing limitations from capital ships to cruisers and other smaller vessels. Moreover, the three parties also accepted the innovative obligation to disclose their annual procurement projects in advance.[70]

The one institution which experienced significant decline during the 1920's was the Nine Power regime for China. Due to the advances of Chinese nationalism and the Guomindang movement the powers' semi-colonial regime increasingly appeared threatened and anachronistic. As a consequence, in its China policy each of the three naval powers began to emphasize bilateral channels at the expense of multilateral diplomacy within the Nine Power framework.[71] Yet the powers did not see the regime's erosion as an irreversible process which doomed any efforts to restart closer policy coordination. In the late 1920's, Japan's liberal administration, in particular, drew the opposite conclusion when it tried to revive the great power partnership for Chinese issues. As a matter of fact, Tokyo's interest in multilateral cooperation increased well up to the fateful Manchurian incident staged by the imperial army.[72]

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[67]Endicott, *Diplomacy and Enterprise*, 11; Gilbert Ziebura, *Weltwirtschaft und Weltpolitik, 1922/24-1931. Zwischen Rekonstruktion und Zusammenbruch* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984), 128-29.

[68]Kaufman, *Arms Control*, 97-108.

[69]In this context, one might add the observation that in 1929 the Kellogg Briand Pact went into force and with it one additional treaty constraining the use of force. However, the anti-war pact scarcely went beyond a general outlawing of military aggression. It did not include any rules and procedures for arbitration, consultation or the sanctioning of would-be transgressors. Accordingly, the pact was largely an exercise in declaratory policy. Eva Buchheit, *Der Briand-Kellogg-Pakt von 1928 – Machtpolitik oder Friedensstreben?* (Münster: LIT-Verlag, 1998).

[70]Roskill, *Naval Policy*, Vol. II, chap. II; Kaufman, *Arms Control*, 129-38; Christopher Hall, *Britain, America and Arms Control, 1921-1937* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 226-230.

[71]Borg, *American Policy*, 130-38, 238, 353 and 420; Iriye, *After Imperialism*, 87 and 121-22.

[72]Iriye, *After Imperialism*, 242; Ian H. Nish, *Japanese Foreign Policy 1869-1942. Kasumigaseki to Miyakezaka* (London: Routledge, 1977), 160 and 165-66.

Finally, institutional developments tell us little on the issue why cooperation abruptly broke down in two particular dyads, that is, between Japan and the Anglo-Saxon powers, while it lingered on between Washington and London. I is hard to argue that, at the eve of the Manchurian incident, institutional links between the two latter capitals were in a better shape than between them and Tokyo. Arguably, due to their common membership in the League of Nations relations between Britain and Japan were even better institutionalized than London's relations with Washington. Of course, there was growing frustration with the so-called Washington system in Japan. However, this feeling was limited to some groups within society, in particular to farmers resentful of growing U.S. protectionism, army officers disliking low military budgets and Chinese nationalist agitation, and admirals adamantly opposed to the lower Japanese ceilings in the London arms treaty.[73] This disillusion was not shared by the government and the social segments which supported it. Moreover, it had no negative impact on the other powers' willingness to stick to the cooperative approach. It was only the upheaval in the distribution of power between the military and the liberal administration which put an end to Japan's cooperative diplomacy. Trilateral security partnership fell victim to a profound shift in Japanese preferences rather than to the evolution or diminished appreciation of international institutions.[74]

Reemergence of Rivalry after World War II

For the purposes of this paper, the story of the beginnings of the Cold War needs little rehearsal. Nobody would question that security cooperation between the Soviet Union and its two Anglo-Saxon allies collapsed between 1945 and 1947 while, at the same time, London and Washington reinforced their war-time partnership. Again, this outcome is not closely associated with the institutional features of the post-war period. Under more propitious circumstances the established institutions would have been fairly adequate for prolonging the allies' partnership. Certainly, the quality of institutionalization was not ideal -- a verdict that especially applies to inter-allied bodies like the Council of Foreign Ministers and the allied control councils. Yet there was also the newly founded United Nations whose charter placed severe constraints on its members' freedom of action. Had its norms been honestly respected by the great powers, they would have shrank from many actions which significantly hastened the outbreak of the Cold War. Hence, it seems fair to say that the onset of the Cold War can hardly be explained by reference to a false design of international institutions.

The inter-allied councils suffered mostly from their weak institutionalization and from the vague and ambiguous post-war goals which the three chief executives had agreed upon.

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[73] Akira Iriye, "The Failure of Economic Expansion: 1918-1931," in *Japan in Crisis. Essays on Taisho Democracy*, eds. Bernard S. Silberman and Harry D. Harootunian (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), 237-69; Takashi Ito, "Conflicts and Coalitions in Japan, 1930: Political Groups and the London Naval Disarmament Conference," in Sven Groennings, E.W. Kelley, and Michael Leiserson, eds., *The Study of Coalition Behavior: Theoretical Perspectives and Cases from Four Continents* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), 160-76.

[74] It is a sad irony that the army officers' plot at Mukden was partly hastened by their perception of major progress being made in Japanese-Chinese negotiations on Japanese rights in Manchuria. Nish, *Japanese Foreign Policy*, 177; Crowley, Japan's *Quest for Autonomy*, 118-119.

Just like the congress system of the post-Napoleonic era the Council of Foreign Ministers completely lacked explicit rules of procedure. It was, for instance, far from clear what specific circumstances warranted the Concil's gathering. In this regard, the Yalta protocol merely stipulated that the foreign secretaries "should meet as often as necessary, probably about every three or four months".[75] There was, moreover, no clear-cut rule forbidding unilateral moves. If such a norm existed at all, it only followed implicitly from agreement on the Council's chief purposes which consisted in the joint settlement of post-war territorial disputes and the drafting of the peace treaties.[76]

The substantial directives that had been agreed upon at the great war-time conferences could not really compensate for these regulatory deficits. Given their extremely antagonistic ideologies and diverging social systems the allies could hardly assume that they would concurr in the interpretation of vaguley formulated goals, such as destroying "the last vestiges of Nazism and Fascism", creating "democratic institutions", forming "interim governmental authorities broadly representative of all democratic elements in the population" and establishing "through free elections...governments responsive to the will of the people".[77] On top of this very broad wording came oral statements in which Chuchill and Roosevelt had agreed to Stalin's ambition to establish "friendly governments" in some neighboring countries. Hence, it was only natural that the Soviet dictator rarely implemented the Yalta declaration in accordance with western interpretations.[78] The Allied Control Councils set up for the local coordination of occupation policies could not compensate for such deficiencies. According to the armistice regulations, overall political authority rested with the commanding officer of the occupation forces. Representatives of the other victors had to be consulted but exercised no veto power concerning the implementation of the Yalta decisions. Although the Anglo-Saxon powers were fully aware of the risks this one-sided division of responsibilities implied they undertook merely lukewarm efforts to strengthen the role of their local representatives.[79]

By comparison to the inter-allied bodies, the newly established United Nations were far better institutionalized. The substantial and procedural norms and rules of the world organization were much more specific and thus more useful for preventing the collapse of Big Three cooperation. Although the great powers could exercise their veto rights in the

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[75]"Protocol of the Proceedings of the Crimea Conference", reprinted in John L. Snell, ed., *The Meaning of Yalta: Big Three Diplomacy and the New Balance of Power* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1956), 209-217, at 216.

[76]Patricia Dawson Ward, *The Threat of Peace: James F. Byrnes and the Council of Foreign Ministers, 1945-1946* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1979), chap. 1 and p. 151; Robert L. Messer, *The End of an Alliance. James F. Byrnes, Roosevelt, Truman, and the Origins of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, N.C., University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 109-110.

[77]All quotes from the "Declaration on Liberated Europe" as reprinted in Snell, ed., *The Meaning of Yalta*, 211-212.

[78]Messer, *End of an Alliance*, 53-64; Bruce Robellet Kuniholm, *The Origins of the Cold War in the Near East: Great Power Conflict and Diplomacy in Iran, Turkey, and Greece* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), 109-125.

[79]John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 88-92; Geir Lundestad, *The American "Empire" and Other Studies of US Foreign Policy in a Comparative Perspective* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1990), 160 and 163.

Security Council to forestall common actions and sanctions, the UN charter's norms and principles clearly constrained the legal threat or use of force. If adequately respected, the charter would have prevented the dominant states from most unilateral moves to enhance their power at the expense of other UN members. Art. 2, for instance, committed all members to respect each other's sovereign equality, to "settle their international disputes by peaceful means", and to forego "the threat and use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any state". Serious international disputes had to be brought before the Security Council (Art. 37). Accordingly, the charter left little leeway for unilaterally exploiting crises and conflicts, as their settlement was largely reserved for common decisions in the UN Security Council.

If the post-war institutions failed to prevent the collapse of great power cooperation this was less due to particular deficiencies in their design but rather a result of the limited respect they enjoyed. By and large, the UN system and the inter-allied bodies might have sufficed to avoid the Cold War, if only the Big Three governments had seriously tried both to comply with their norms and rules and to make use of their procedures for consultations and dispute settlement. Despite some grey areas and inconsistencies, few conflicts and crises that fueled inter-allied distrust erupted because the institutions were so inconsistent and incomplete that cooperative solutions were almost impossible. Instead, it is rather obvious that in the majority of cases goverments, particularly the Soviet leaders, deliberately violated pertinent norms and agreements. This becomes evident from both the Kremlin's conduct in Eastern and Central Europe as well as from Moscow's policies in the crises over Iran and the Turkish straits.[80] Only the tensions arising in conjunction with the Marshall Plan can be considered an exception from this rule. At that time, however, Western suspicions had already reached quite a high level. As a consequence, it did not take any further Soviet threats or actions to provoke western countermeasures. Even without such additional moves, Western governments felt compelled to preempt the political destabilization of Western Europe with a comprehensive program for economic recovery.

Can different levels of institutionalization account for the fact that rivalry developed between the Soviet Union and the two Anglo-Saxon powers instead of emerging between the latter two? Only to a very limited extent. Of course, war-time collaboration was more intense between the U.S. and Britain than between the latter two powers and the Kremlin. In the various theaters in Europe, Africa, the Atlantic Ocean and the Far East, in the field of intelligence and nuclear weapons, and in peace-time planning London and Washington achieved a level of coordination and integration unknown in Soviet relations with the Western allies.[81] However, the immediate post-war trend clearly indicated that this special war-time relationship was evaporating fast. American Land Lease deliveries to Britain were cancelled just as abruptly as those to the Soviets. Anglo-American nuclear cooperation was unilaterally stopped at the behest of the U.S. Congress. Above all, U.S.

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[80]See the very candid recollections by then foreign minister Molotov quoted in *Molotov Remembers: Inside Kremlin Politics: Conversations with Felix Chuev*, ed. Albert Resis (Chicago, Ill.: Ivan R. Dee, 1993), 51 and 74.

[81]Ironically, a formal alliance existed only between Britain and the Soviet Union. Yet this treaty can hardly be regarded the foundation of a very elaborate institution. By the end of the war, decision makers in London no longer considered the treaty very important. Victor Rothwell, *Britain and the Cold War, 1941-1947* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982), 275.

foreign policy makers, foremost among them Secrfetary Byrnes, cultivated an image of equidistance by avoiding all moves the Kremlin might interpret as an Anglo-American "ganging up". Just the "Combined Chiefs of Staff" in Washington continued to operate as a relic of closer Anglo-American coordination.[82] Apart from that, there was no Anglo-American security institution or any cooperative project that would have excluded the Soviet Union. At the time in question, therefore, it would seem far-fetched to argue that ongoing political trends and institutional developments did forshadow close Anglo-American cooperation at the expense of Moscow.

Conclusion

International institutions did not significantly influence the overall development of security relations in the aftermath of major wars. Otherwise one should observe a much closer correlation between the persistence and intensity of cooperation, on the one hand, and the strength of pertinent institutions, on the other. In fact, however, as far as any correlation can be detected at all, it is rather a negative one! Though the famous post-Vienna concert was hardly institutionalized at all, the great power coalition which endured for the longest period was precisely the anti-Napoleonic alliance. The Far Eastern security partnership established between the three naval powers after World War I ranks second in terms of endurance, although the relevant institutional framework suffered from major gaps and inconsistencies. On the other hand, despite joint participation in stronger regimes such as the Conference of Ambassadors and the League of Nations, Franco-Italian cooperation collapsed within six years after the end of World War I. Likewise, the Council of Foreign Ministers and the quite comprehensive framework of the United Nations failed to prevent the fast collapse of the Anti-Hitler coalition. Obviously, this overall picture is hard to square with the claim that instititutions strongly influence great power relations. Otherwise, the evolution of postwar security cooperation should more closely reflect different levels of institutionalization.

This skeptical view is corroborated by the within-case comparisons undertaken in this paper. In no case did the disintegration of cooperation follow a conspicious decline in the overall level of institutionalization. To be sure, some of the post-war institutions went through temporary periods of decline or neglect, yet often these regimes recovered soon thereafter or the emerging regulatory void was filled or otherwise compensated by other institutions. Even the growing strains Chinese nationalism caused for the Nine-Power-Regime concerning interwar China can only partly account for Japan's later turn to confrontation. Disillusion with this regime was far much stronger among military extremists than it was felt within government circles. Hence it seems very questionable if the erosion of this particular regime would have sufficed to bring about Tokyo's policy change. Obviously, the ultimate cause of Japan's turn to confrontation was the exchange of dominant political elites.

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[82]Elisabeth Barker, *The British between the Superpowers, 1945-50* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), chap. 2; Alan Bullock, *Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary, 1945-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), chaps. 4-5; Christopher J. Bartlett, *'The Special Relationship': a Political History of Anglo-American Relations since 1945* (London: Longman, 1992), 4-16.

Neither do regime changes readily explain why some particular powers became rivals while others continued their security cooperation. In none of the cases the level of institutionalization of enduring partnerships conspiciously differed from that within those great power dyads which experienced a collapse of cooperation. Apparently, differences in institutional constraints on behavior, inter-state transactions costs, or mandated provision of information mattered far less than national preferences which were not related to the particular institutional environment.

According to these findings, realists and pluralist liberals seem to be correct when they ascribe only limited influence to international security institutions. To be sure, the case studies underscore the fact that, in the aftermath of great wars, the victorious allies always established new or adapted existing institutions for prolonging their security collaboration. At the very least, this implies that the victors deemed such regimes useful for managing their future relations. More striking, however, is the fact that some of these stabilizing institutions were set up after rather short negotiations and at times when a cooperative relationship was already in place. Thus, Anglo-American relations had already been quite constructive in the years preceding the Washington Conference of 1921/22, and after the revolutions of 1830/31 the three eastern powers let pass three years before they codified their conservative partnership in two short treaty articles.

When national preferences are compatible and such basic harmony can be credibly signalled international security regimes are hardly needed for an immediate stabilization of security partnerships. Instead, formalization can often be readily deferred until one of the partners deems it useful. Under such propitious circumstances, transaction costs for setting up an institution ad hoc are comparatively low. Hence, the prior existence of a security regime is hardly necessary. What really counts is the compatibility of preferences and the tranparency of national decision making processes. Apparently then, efficient institutions can be created most easily in those situations where they are hardly required for fostering trust and transparency. Democracies, for instance, can institutionalize their mutual relations more easily and effectively than autocracies, yet they depend far less on international institutions for providing them with information on their democratic partners.

All this points to the conclusion that the explanatory value and range of institutionalist theory should be outlined with greater caution. Obviously, the background conditions institutionalists mention for the efficient operation of security regimes have a much greater impact on great power behavior than the institutions themselves. This raises the question if institutionalism can really be considered a useful theory of explaining international relations in general or whether it should rather be seen as a useful approach for specific cases of international interactions, notably when preferences are ambigious and information is scarce. At least, it appears a bit overdrawn to contend that institutionalism can subsume theories, such as neorealism, which actually contain hypotheses on national preference formation.[83]

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[83]See Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power*, 15, for such a claim.