

Paper I by

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The US Hegemony Dilemma and European Missile Production

Thanks to its unparalleled defense budget, the United States possesses a comparative advantage in arms production. This confronts US allies with the US hegemony dilemma, a trade-off between efficiency and autonomy. Allies can procure comparably cheap high-end weaponry from US sources instead of securing more costly autonomy in arms supply. Overall, US defense industrial market power forces its allies to specialize in arms production, thus, to decide what kinds of weapon systems to produce on their own. Given this need to specialize caused by US hegemony in the defense industrial order, what explains US allies' defense industrial specialization? I confine my analysis to Europe since it represents an especially interesting case with its unparalleled regional economic and political integration and its relationship to the US shaped by geostrategic cooperation on the one hand, and industrial competition on the other hand. Furthermore, I focus on the missile sector, a rather understudied arms production sector compared to fighter aircraft and drones. I argue that since the US is the structural constraint that sets the conditions under which European defense industries operate Europeans seek to strike a balance between efficiency, i.e., buying American, autonomy, i.e., producing nationally, and cooperation. I leverage market size, understood as the national market but also the market countries expect to sell to, as the central variable explaining European missile production decisions. These production and export decisions have important political implications because they shape countries' foreign policies decisively. According to conventional wisdom, a country's grand strategy shapes its defense industrial policy. I argue that this causal relationship is more complicated and that a country's defense industrial policy has a profound effect on its grand strategy.

Paper II by

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Outsourcing Security, Managing Risk:

National security states and the privatization of defense research

21st century states have increasingly outsourced security and defense to the market, acting as regulators of the tools of violence rather than owners of the tools of violence. While the phenomenon is now recognizable and common, it remains puzzling because a core feature of modern states is their legitimate political authority to control the ‘public good’ of national security within their territory. Advanced industrial democratic polities such as the US, European states, and the EU, however, have transferred significant aspects of domestic and foreign security power to private, market actors. I argue that outsourcing has not been driven by strategy but by a changing risk tolerance on the part of security bureaucracies. In a reversal of how 20th Century states absorbed political, financial, and legal risk for their societies and markets, states—under certain conditions—are shedding their willingness and ability to absorb public goods across the board, including the public good of security. Decisions to outsource have occurred when government personnel made low-level decisions to cede the authority of their agencies to the market, due to transparency, accountability, legal reporting, or financial pressures on their bureaucracies. In a number of critical functions, sovereign security power is now disaggregated and diffused into the market, without sovereign or strategic prerogatives. This paper evaluates one of these phenomena: the diffusion of public-sector defense R&D funding from state bureaucracies to the private sector, in the form of private, industry R&D funding of military prototypes. It evaluates original cross-national data on industry self-funding of defense technology amongst advanced industrial states, including firms active in the European and North American national defense markets.

Paper III by

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The United States and the Eternal Dream of Missile Defense

Why and how do states decide to develop different weapon systems within a similar domain of warfare? For example, why does the United States invest in ever-more expansive forms of national missile defense, while France briefly dabbled in such matters and the United Kingdom has been reluctant to do so? Contrary to the assumption in the existing literature that states know the future threat environment and are able to develop suitable military technology in response to it, I argue that ideas, particularly those about the future, play a critical role in shaping states' decisions about military technology. Because the future is unknown, domestic actors imagine radically different future states of the world. These ideas—what I call “images of warfare,” consisting of actors' construction of future threat environment and their theory of victory—shape actors' preferences for weapons systems. Not all of these ideas, however, are equally influential. In order to transform their ideas into actual capabilities, actors need to build cross-cutting coalitions within the broader defense community around their “imagined security interests.” The ability of these actors to build such a coalition and funnel their ideas through the state's decision-making process is shaped by the political opportunity structure, more specifically the level of openness of the relevant institutions. I explore these dynamics through an in-depth case study of the development of missile defense capabilities in the United States from the 1980s until the mid-1990s.

Paper IV by

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The Arms Industry During (and After) the War in Ukraine

The first large, interstate war between two conventional militaries has undermined beliefs about the generation of military power and reshaped the global arms industry. Power projection weapons appear to fail in the face of a determined anti-access/area-denial system. The United States must come to terms with its inability to produce munitions at scale. Russia, the world's second largest arms exporter, has seen its weapons perform poorly, lost access to vital weapons subcomponents from abroad, and must concentrate on supplying its own forces over exports. Smaller players play prominent roles: South Korea has emerged as a major supplier of arms to Europe, Iran now supports the Russian air campaign, and Turkey's drone transfers have shaped the battlefield. A private company, SpaceX, has played a more important role in defending Ukraine than have most European states. This paper will organize and begin to explain these developments with a simple political economic model of arms production.