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The Study of Appeasement

> Since the Munich Conference in 1938, "appeasement" as a policy has been in disrepute and has been regarded as inappropriate under every conceivable set of circumstances. This is unfortunate, because there are historical examples in which appeasement has succeeded. Contending states have not only avoided conflict but also achieved a relationship satisfactory to both.
>
> Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*

> For the present era, it is critically important to understand how appeasement can succeed or fail, without being swayed by false lessons from the 1930s.
>
> Fred Iklé, *Every War Must End*

On 30 September 1938, Neville Chamberlain returned to London from his conference with Adolf Hitler in Munich. Appearing at the window of his official residence at 10 Downing Street, the British prime minister waved a slip of paper bearing Hitler's signature and triumphantly declared to the cheering crowd the achievement of "peace for our time." Chamberlain believed that by permitting Germany to annex the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia he could satisfy her territorial ambitions and avert a European conflict. History records that he was wrong. In short order, German forces not only seized the remainder of Czechoslovakia, but invaded Poland as well. Less than a year after his meeting with the German chancellor, the war Chamberlain had tried so hard to avoid began.

Chamberlain's failure etched itself indelibly on the minds of postwar scholars and policymakers. Heeding Santayana's famous dictum that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it,"[1] many in the West embraced the so-called "Munich analogy," the chief lesson of which was that making concessions to a hostile state could not succeed in pacifying it and thus preventing war. Instead, a policy of "appeasement" only made conflict more likely by emboldening the aggressor and encouraging him to put forth ever increasing demands. In the words of the French proverb, "L'appetit vient en mangeant"—appetite grows with eating.[2]

The futility of appeasement and the dangers of appearing weak were elaborated by American scholars in what became known as the "deterrence model" of international politics, a perspective which reigned almost unchallenged for several decades, and which remains widely accepted even today.[3] This model, implicitly or explicitly, was also adopted by U.S. officials and provided much of the intellectual foundation for the strategy of "containment" pursued by the United States with respect to communism throughout the Cold War.[4] In particular, it strongly influenced Washington's strategy in relations with the Soviet Union, in the minds of many policymakers the postwar reincarnation of Hitlerian Germany.[5] As historians have noted, the decisions of various administrations not to share the secret of the atomic bomb with the Soviets, to intervene in Korea, to take a hard line in Cuba, and to fight in Vietnam were in large part determined by the perceived need to maintain a resolute opposition to the expansionist aims of the Soviet Union.[6] The guiding principle of America's Cold War policy was stated clearly by Clark Clifford, special counsel to President Harry Truman, in a 1946 report: "The language of military power is the only language which disciples of power politics understand. The United States must use that language in order that Soviet leaders will realize that our government is determined to uphold the interests of its citizens and the rights of small nations. Compromise and concessions are considered, by the Soviets, to be evidences of weakness and they are encouraged by our 'retreats' to make new and greater demands."[7]

American policymakers have, of course, applied the "lessons of Munich" in relations with other states as well. The decision by the Bush administration to intervene in the Persian Gulf after the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in August of 1990 was, for example, clearly informed by memories of the 1930s. Within a week of the attack, President Bush, explaining to the American public his decision to send U.S. military forces

into the region, compared Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to Hitler and stated flatly that "if history teaches us anything, it is that we must resist aggression, or it will destroy our freedoms. Appeasement does not work."[8] Two months later, Bush repeated this message, telling a gathering of military personnel that Iraq would not be allowed to retain Kuwait. Said the president, "In World War II, the world paid dearly for appeasing an aggressor who could have been stopped. Appeasement leads only to further aggression and, ultimately, to war. And we are not going to make the mistake of appeasement again."[9]

Despite this anti-appeasement mindset, the government of the United States has from time to time pursued policies of conciliation. Examples include, somewhat ironically, the Bush administration's attempts during the late 1980s to secure the friendship of Saddam Hussein, as well the strategy of "engagement" it applied to China in the aftermath of the 1990 massacre in Tienanmen Square.[10] Nevertheless, American officials have scrupulously avoided attaching the label "appeasement" to any of these policies. Their caution in this regard seems justified, for in the United States appeasement has acquired such an odious reputation that any policy that remotely smacks of it is suspect. As Jack Plano and Roy Olton observe, "The charge of appeasement is often invoked as a term of opprobrium applied to any concession granted to a diplomatic opponent."[11] Thus, during the 1970s, conservative critics of détente sought, with some success, to discredit the policy by equating it with appeasement in the public mind.[12] Throughout the Cold War, arms control negotiations and agreements were tarred by their opponents with the appeasement brush. Even the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, a relatively modest pact, and one concluded by the most aggressively anti-communist administration since the Truman era, was labeled "appeasement" by prominent members of the president's own party. Congressman Jack Kemp termed it a "nuclear Munich," while evangelist and fellow presidential candidate Pat Robertson charged that Ronald Reagan, in his advocacy of the treaty, "sounded like Neville Chamberlain."[13] Howard Phillips and Richard Viguerie, leading conservatives, formed an "Anti-Appeasement Alliance" in an unsuccessful attempt to block the treaty's ratification.[14]

The Critique of Appeasement

Clearly, as Gilpin writes, appeasement is "in disrepute."[15] Indeed, there exists in the United States a widespread belief in a kind of iron law: "If

appeasement, then World War III."[16] Why should this be true? What exactly is wrong with appeasement? The conventional wisdom, grounded in the experience of Munich, holds that the policy is flawed in two fundamental respects. First, dissatisfied states and their leaders cannot be appeased. The offering of inducements cannot redress grievances and turn a disgruntled adversary into a friend or even a benevolent neutral. As one author states, "When faced with an aggressor, threats and force are necessary. Concessions may serve important tactical needs, but they will not meet the underlying sources of dissatisfaction."[17] Second, appeasement is dangerous because it undermines subsequent attempts at deterrence. Rather than simply failing to prevent aggression, it actually serves to promote it.

It does so in either (or both) of two ways. First, by ceding strategically valuable territory or abandoning certain of its defenses, the appeaser allows the military balance to shift in favor of the potential aggressor, eroding the former's deterrent capacity. This might be called the "material effect" of appeasement. Thus, for example, the abandonment of formidable Czech defenses in 1938 at Munich and the loss of the Czech Army in March of 1939 shifted the military balance toward Germany and rendered her attack on Poland more likely to succeed.[18]

Second, and much more critical, is what one can term the "psychological effect" of appeasement. Specifically, it is argued that appeasement gravely weakens the credibility of deterrent threats. Once it has received inducements, the adversary refuses to accept the possibility that the government of the conciliatory state will later stand firm. It thus advances new and more far-reaching demands. When the government of the appeasing state responds to these demands by issuing a deterrent threat, it is not believed. Ultimately, deterrence fails, and the appeasing state must go to war if it wishes to defend its interests.[19] The real tragedy of Munich, from this perspective, was not that Anglo-French concessions failed to satisfy Hitler in September of 1938—although that was bad enough—but that they encouraged him to attack Poland a year later, in blatant disregard of warnings from London and Paris that they would intervene.[20]

The Need for Reconsideration

Although this critique of appeasement is deeply ingrained in the American consciousness, there is surprisingly little evidence to support it. No systematic analyses of cases of attempted appeasement exist, and there is no reason to believe, *a priori,* that concessions never work, that it is impos-

sible to satisfy a dissatisfied state or leader.[21] Indeed, simple logic suggests otherwise. Not every statesman is a Hitler or even a Stalin. Not every state that makes demands has unlimited ambitions. As Robert Jervis notes, "Our memories of Hitler have tended to obscure the fact that most statesmen are unwilling to pay an exorbitant price for a chance at expansion. More moderate leaders are apt to become defenders of the status quo when they receive significant concessions. Of course the value of these concessions to the status quo power may be high enough to justify resistance and even war, but the demands are not always the tip of an iceberg. To use the more common metaphor, the appetite does not always grow with the eating."[22]

As I shall argue later, cases of successful appeasement can be found. But even if they could not, this would not in itself prove the futility of the strategy. Defenders of deterrence have recently argued that, contrary to claims made by critics, most deterrence failures can be attributed mainly to improper implementation of a deterrent policy, rather than to flaws in the underlying model of state behavior on which the policy is based.[23] While this dispute remains unresolved, it offers an important lesson to those who would reject appeasement because of its failures, without investigating their causes. Failed attempts at appeasement must be scrutinized in order to determine whether the outcome was primarily the result of policy mistakes—which could presumably be remedied by policymakers—or the consequence of erroneous assumptions made by appeasement about the nature of states and of their interactions.

There is also only minimal evidence to support the second major criticism of appeasement: that by undermining a state's credibility, it renders later attempts at deterrence futile. Glenn Snyder and Paul Diesing, in their study of crisis bargaining, found that states did not generally base expectations regarding others' behavior on their past actions.[24] Paul Huth and Bruce Russett similarly concluded that, in terms of what makes deterrence work, "the defender's past behavior in crises seems to make no systematic difference."[25]

In a more recent study of immediate-extended deterrence, Huth identified eight cases in which a prior confrontation between the potential attacker and the defender had ended with the defender suffering a put-down or diplomatic defeat. The defender succeeded in deterring the potential attacker in only two of these cases, failing in the other six. This success rate of 25 percent compared poorly with the overall deterrence success rate of nearly 60 percent in the 58 cases examined by Huth and

suggested that the defender's credibility had in fact been damaged by his previous crisis behavior. Indeed, on the basis of his statistical analysis, Huth concluded that by backing down in the previous confrontation, the defender had reduced his chances of deterrence success by 42 percent.[26]

Huth's findings appear to substantiate the conventional wisdom regarding appeasement, but they are far from conclusive. First, although his data suggest that conciliation makes deterrence more difficult than it would otherwise be, they do not support the more extreme belief that appeasement makes deterrence impossible. Indeed, as noted above, in two of the eight cases examined by Huth in which a state sought to deter an adversary after conciliating this same opponent in a previous encounter, the state succeeded. Probabilistic laws generated from the aggregate analysis of a large number of cases may tell us something about the effect of appeasement on deterrence in general. They cannot, however, tell us anything about the effect of appeasement on deterrence in a given situation. In particular, they cannot explain why concessions may have a harmful, even fatal, impact in certain cases and not in others.

Second, Huth's study did not address the impact of appeasement on general—as opposed to immediate—deterrence. While his data indicate that past concessions may hamper efforts at deterrence once some act of aggression has been threatened, they are silent as to whether concessions may help to prevent the issuance of such threats, thereby averting future immediate-deterrence confrontations.[27]

Perhaps most crucially, Huth concluded that the prospects for successful deterrence were reduced not only if a state had backed down in a previous confrontation with its adversary. They were also diminished—by 32 percent—if in that encounter the state had adopted an unyielding posture and forced its opponent into a diplomatic defeat. This suggests that appeasement is not significantly worse from the standpoint of future efforts at deterrence than its principal alternative: a deterrent or compellent policy. And it casts doubt upon the claim that reputation for weakness and lack of credibility play an important role in producing deterrence failures. As Jonathan Mercer has written, "If a history of prevailing *or* backing down prompts a challenge, then a state's reputation cannot be the cause of these outcomes."[28] Similarly, from his reexamination of Huth's data and methodology, James Fearon has concluded that "the data do not provide significant support for the hypothesis . . . that being highly conciliatory leads the challenger to discredit the defender's threats in subsequent crises." According to Fearon, only the fact that a previous crisis

occurred, rather than the adoption in that crisis of a particular strategy by the defender, is a predictor of immediate deterrence failure.[29]

Mercer's *Reputation and International Politics* represents the first systematic analysis of the formation and effects of states' international reputations. Drawing on theory from social psychology, Mercer hypothesizes that a state will attribute desirable behavior by its adversary to situational imperatives or constraints rather than the adversary's disposition. For example, "the adversary yielded in the confrontation because he was forced to do so by circumstances, not because he lacked resolve." Because reputation is based upon (perceived) disposition, only a dispositional explanation can lead a state to confer a reputation on another. Desirable behavior by an adversary, since it is attributed to situation and not disposition, will not result in a reputation being conferred. It follows that appeasement—which is in most cases likely to be regarded as desirable behavior by one's opponent—should not cause a state to acquire a reputation for irresolution and should not undermine its credibility. Mercer's analysis of historical cases generally confirms his hypothesis. He finds, contrary to the conventional wisdom, that commitments are independent, not interdependent: "Decision-makers do not consistently use another state's past behavior . . . to predict that state's behavior."[30] Crucially, he concludes, "Adversaries rarely get reputations for lacking resolve."[31]

Although the absence of evidence for the traditional critique—and the evidence offered by Mercer against it—warrant, by themselves, a reconsideration of appeasement, there exists another, perhaps equally compelling, reason to undertake the task. It is the problems associated with the alternative to appeasement, threat-based influence strategies, and particularly with deterrence.

One of the reasons deterrence has often seemed preferable to appeasement is that it is widely regarded as being less expensive.[32] Inducements, after all, require one to concede something, presumably something of value—national territory in perhaps the most extreme case. Threats on the other hand, do not require one to sacrifice anything up front. Thus, even if appeasement could be as successful as deterrence in preventing an adversary's hostile action, threats would still be the preferred mode of influence.

There are, however, serious difficulties with this notion. Deterrent threats, even when they work, are hardly costless. General deterrence in particular may require an extensive commitment of human and material resources over a considerable period of time. A state may, in some cases,

feel obliged to resort to military action in order to maintain its reputation for firmness. The Vietnam War, fought, as was the war in Korea, partly for the symbolic purpose of demonstrating American resolve, cost tens of thousands of lives and caused great social upheaval.[33] During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union spent literally trillions of dollars for the purpose of deterring one another. Although the effects of defense spending have been hotly debated, there is substantial evidence that the investment of resources in military rather than civilian production has damaged the American economy.[34] Influential analysts have contended that America's refusal to abandon some of her overseas commitments is hastening the decline of the United States as a great power.[35] And there exists an almost remarkable consensus among policymakers and scholars that excessive military expenditures played a major role in the dramatic deterioration and eventual collapse of the Soviet economy. Given the fact that deterrence can be exceedingly expensive, the possibility that under some circumstances appeasement would be a less costly option surely exists. Indeed, as we shall see, British appeasement of the United States around the turn of the century was prompted in considerable part by the (accurate) perception that concessions were the less expensive alternative.[36]

Beyond this, and more importantly, there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that deterrent threats work less often than commonly believed. Huth's study found that efforts at immediate-extended deterrence failed in roughly 40 percent of the cases, and his critics have claimed that this may, for methodological reasons, understate the true rate of failure.[37] The causes of deterrence failure are varied. More traditional rational-model theorists, including Huth, emphasize such factors as threats that are not credible and military balances favoring the potential attacker, while psychological theorists, among them Lebow and Stein, stress elements such as domestic and international insecurities that cause leaders to act aggressively even when threats are credible and military balances unfavorable.[38] In any event, deterrence is hardly failure-proof; the conditions for successful deterrence may often be difficult or even impossible to fulfill.

Given the less than overwhelming evidence for its supposed futility and the acknowledged problems with its alternatives, a reappraisal of appeasement as a diplomatic strategy is clearly in order. Unlike deterrence or compellence (coercive diplomacy), however, appeasement has received little attention from political scientists and other students of international

politics.[39] A few scholars, it should be noted, have considered the efficacy of a policy of concessions. David Baldwin, in his essay, "The Power of Positive Sanctions," argued that rewards and promises could sometimes induce states to modify their behavior.[40] But this piece, while suggestive, was not an empirical study. More recently, Russell Leng and Hugh Wheeler examined the effectiveness of what they termed an "appeasing strategy" in the resolution of international crises.[41] They found that such an approach was rarely, if ever, successful; it scored lower than any of the half dozen or so other strategies also examined. However, the way in which Leng and Wheeler defined policy outcomes virtually guaranteed this result. The authors characterized as a failure any case in which a given strategy led to either war or diplomatic defeat. But appeasement in a crisis may be essentially a policy of diplomatic defeat undertaken in the hope of easing tensions and averting war. Leng and Wheeler's definition thus borders on the tautological. Moreover, if preventing war is the ultimate objective of the strategy, only the outbreak of war constitutes its failure. Reinterpreting Leng and Wheeler's data according to this standard, it appears that appeasement actually succeeded in five of the six cases in which it was attempted—a success rate of better than 80 percent.

For Leng and Wheeler, appeasement represents one value of an independent variable—bargaining strategy—that helps to explain their dependent variable: crisis outcome. In much the same way, Huth treats prior conciliation of an adversary as a causal factor helping to explain deterrence success or failure. Importantly, these scholars do not seek to account for the success or failure of appeasement *itself.* Indeed, relatively little effort has been made to identify conditions under which a conciliatory policy will succeed or fail.[42] Even historians treating the most famous case—Anglo-French efforts to accommodate Germany during the 1930s—have devoted themselves to explaining why appeasement was pursued while ignoring almost entirely the question of why it did not work.[43] Thus this study seeks to fill, at least in part, what must be regarded as a significant gap in the international relations literature.

Toward a Theory of Appeasement

Cases examined in subsequent chapters of this book confirm the observation made by Gilpin, Jervis, and others that appeasement *can* work.[44] Inducements can remove the causes of tension between states without prompting further demands or overt acts of aggression. Of course, ap-

peasement can also fail. What is needed, then, is a theory to explain why appeasement succeeded or failed in certain historical cases, to predict with some degree of accuracy its prospects in future situations, and to provide policymakers with guidance regarding both the appropriateness of the policy and its proper implementation.

Defining Appeasement

The first step in developing a theory of appeasement is to define the term itself. Unfortunately, as we have noted, the word "appeasement" has been used widely and almost indiscriminately for symbolic and partisan political purposes. Moreover, even among students of international politics there exists no consensus as to its precise meaning. What is a policy of appeasement, properly defined?

According to Gordon Craig and Alexander George, in the language of classical European diplomacy, "appeasement" referred to "the reduction of tension between [two states] by the methodical removal of the principal causes of conflict and disagreement between them."[45] It was a more ambitious undertaking than, for example, detente, which sought to reduce hostility without resolving its underlying causes, or entente, which attempted to settle only a limited range of issues. Ideally, appeasement (sometimes accompanied by alliance), represented the culmination of a process of tension-reduction, which began with detente and progressed through rapprochement and entente before reaching its final stage.[46]

As a stage, perhaps the highest stage, of tension-reduction between states, appeasement could only be the result of policies aimed at its achievement. While policies of appeasement could be, and sometimes were, pursued by both parties to a conflict, typically one side took the lead in initiating the settlement process and made the greater sacrifices. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this role of "appeaser" was played most consistently by the government of Great Britain. In fact, historian Paul Kennedy has traced the development of a "tradition of appeasement" among British statesmen from the 1860s to the 1930s.[47]

As Kennedy notes, prior to Munich, appeasement—"the policy of settling international (or, for that matter, domestic) quarrels by admitting and satisfying grievances through rational negotiation and compromise, thereby avoiding the resort to an armed conflict which would be expensive, bloody, and possibly very dangerous"—was widely regarded as being

"constructive, positive, honourable." It was, in short, a policy of which one could be proud rather than a policy of which one had to be ashamed.[48]

The catastrophic failure of appeasement during the 1920s and 1930s, however, changed the meaning of the term, and especially its connotation.[49] Appeasement was no longer simply defined according to its ends (the reduction of tension, the avoidance of conflict) or its means (the satisfaction of grievances via concession and/or compromise). Rather, judgments—invariably unfavorable—were added regarding the efficacy, and often the morality, of the policy. Thus, states *Webster's,* to appease is "to conciliate or buy off (a potential aggressor) by political or economic concessions [usually] *at the sacrifice of principles.*"[50] In one of the most important books on postwar U.S. foreign policy, Hans Morgenthau defined appeasement as "a *politically unwise* negotiated settlement that misjudges the interests and power involved," adding, "We speak of appeasement when a nation surrenders one of its vital interests without obtaining anything worth while in return."[51]

Confronted by the dramatic shift in definitions of appeasement, some students of international politics have employed the term in both its prewar and its postwar meanings. In their 1950 volume, *International Relations in the Age of the Conflict between Dictatorship and Democracy,* Robert Strausz-Hupé and Stefan Possony defined appeasement as "any policy designed to alleviate grievances through compromise and concession that otherwise may lead to war." Praising this approach, the authors wrote, "Although appeasement is merely a method and can, like any method, be used clumsily and inappropriately, it is a method of adaptation that is indispensable and recurrent in any foreign policy." Later, however, they condemned what they referred to as "appeasement in the proper sense" (where concessions were not reciprocated), noting "the futility of such a policy."[52]

Given the semantic confusion to which "appeasement" is susceptible, and its frequent use—and misuse—as a term of derogation, perhaps the word itself should be abandoned, in favor of some more neutral term like "conciliation" or "accommodation." Such action seems undesirable, however, given the prominent place of "appeasement" in the lexicon of classical diplomacy, as well as the futility of attempting to remove it from contemporary political discourse. Instead, it would appear preferable to define the term as specifically as possible, and to return it to something approximating its traditional meaning, free from the negative connotations with which it has been more recently burdened.[53] That is what this study seeks to do.

This study defines appeasement as *the policy of reducing tensions with one's adversary by removing the causes of conflict and disagreement.* Several aspects of this definition should be emphasized. First, appeasement is not incompatible with compromise, reciprocity, and mutual accommodation. It does not require that one make unilateral concessions. It does, however, imply that a state pursuing a policy of appeasement will usually take the initiative in offering inducements and will ultimately make greater sacrifices than its opponent. Second, nothing in this definition excludes the possibility, or the desirability, of combining appeasement with deterrent threats in a mixed influence strategy. In the pursuit of certain objectives—for example, the prevention of war—appeasement can be viewed as an alternative to deterrence, but also as a potential complement to it.[54] Third, the definition of appeasement offered here does not specify the extent to which the appeaser aims to reduce tensions with its adversary nor the ultimate objective the reduction in tensions is intended to achieve. As I shall argue, appeasement may be put to a variety of purposes. Finally, this definition of appeasement says nothing about the morality or immorality of the policy, nor about its ultimate success or failure.

Objectives of Appeasement

Appeasement, as it has been defined here, is a policy of tension-reduction. However, this definition specifies neither the degree to which tensions are to be reduced nor the policy's ultimate objective. In fact, states may engage in appeasement for a variety of reasons. An objective-based typology of appeasement policies thus seems essential to any study of this subject.

Cases examined later in this volume suggest that at the most fundamental level appeasement policies differ from one another along two dimensions: (1) the time horizon to which they apply (short term versus long term), and (2) whether they seek to maintain or to alter the international status quo. These same characteristics have traditionally been employed by students of international politics to differentiate among threat-based influence strategies. A difference in time horizon, of course, underlies the distinction between immediate and general deterrence, while whether a state is attempting to preserve or to change the international status quo constitutes the basis for distinguishing between deterrence and compellence (or coercive diplomacy).[55] By combining them, one can generate a simple four-fold typology of appeasement objectives, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. A Typology of Appeasement Objectives		
	Short Term	**Long Term**
Maintenance of Status Quo	Crisis Resolution	Crisis Prevention
Alteration of Status Quo	Limited Political Trade	Friendship/Alliance

As a short-term strategy for maintaining the international status quo, appeasement may be a policy of *crisis resolution*. Confronted by an adversary threatening it or another area to which it is committed, a state may try to avert conflict by meeting some or all of its opponent's demands. This was the goal of Anglo-French concessions to Germany at Munich, of the 1898 French retreat from Fashoda in the face of British threats, and of the Soviet Union's acquiescence to American demands in withdrawing its nuclear missiles from Cuba, to name just several examples.[56]

Appeasement that seeks to maintain the status quo over the long term may aim at *crisis prevention*. Because crisis resolution is often problematic, a state that truly wishes to avoid conflict is not likely to be satisfied with trying to cope with crises as they arise. Rather, it will prefer to forestall the outbreak of potentially explosive disputes. Certain British attempts to appease the United States around the turn of the century had this objective. So did the Nixon-Kissinger efforts at detente with the Soviet Union.

As a strategy hoping to effect a short-term alteration of the international status quo, appeasement seeks a *limited political trade*. In return for its concessions, the appeaser expects some specific form of reciprocation on the part of its adversary. The effort in the early 1990s by the Clinton administration to induce North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program is an excellent example of this form of appeasement. So, too, is Willy Brandt's policy of Ostpolitik directed at the German Democratic Republic, and its sponsor, the Soviet Union, during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Finally, appeasement that aims to achieve a long-term alteration of the international status quo may be characterized as a policy of *friendship* and/or *alliance*. By reducing tensions with an adversary, the appeaser attempts to fundamentally change the nature of its relationship with that country, securing good will and cooperation on matters of common con-

cern. Britain's appeasement of the United States was ultimately of this type; so, too, was French appeasement of Great Britain in the aftermath of the 1898 Fashoda Crisis. Some efforts at appeasement, of course, do not fit neatly into one or another of these categories. Indeed, policies of appeasement often have both a minimum goal (e.g., crisis resolution) and a maximum goal (e.g., reconciliation or alliance).

Regardless of their objective(s), appeasement policies are undertaken for the preservation and advancement of what states—or more properly, decision makers within them—perceive to be their interests. States wish to resolve crises, prevent crises, and obtain friends and allies for a wide variety of reasons, which are not always easy to categorize. Some of these may be rooted in the economic, political, cultural, or military relationships between them and their adversaries. A state may, for example, want to avoid conflict with an opponent for whom it feels an ideological or cultural affinity. It may wish to protect important financial or commercial connections. It may fear military defeat or devastation in the event of war. Other reasons may derive from perceived imperatives of the international system, especially the need to confront threats, immediate or longer term, to national security. Historically, the preservation of a favorable balance of power has been a principal aim of appeasing states, including the preeminent conciliator, Great Britain. Indeed, as Paul Schroeder has written, from the middle of the nineteenth century to the 1930s, Britain's "policy of appeasement was essentially the same as the policy (supposed or so-called) of maintaining the balance of power in Europe."[57]

How Appeasement Reduces Tensions

Appeasement aims to reduce tensions with an adversary by removing the causes of conflict and disagreement. But what is the process by which this tension reduction is supposed to occur? Cases examined in this study indicate that policymakers attempting appeasement have seen the strategy as operating through at least four distinct mechanisms.

The first of these is *satiation*—satisfying the hunger of a greedy, expansionist state. This is, of course, the popular view of appeasement, and of the best-known example of the policy: the effort by Britain and France to conciliate Nazi Germany during the 1930s. Interestingly, however, in their approach to Hitler, French and British policymakers did not employ inducements solely, and in the early years of the policy not even mainly, for the purpose of satiation. Besides satiation, they also had three other

purposes in mind. One of these was *reassurance*—increasing an insecure state's confidence in the safety of its international and/or domestic position. Another was *socialization*—an effort to inculcate cooperative norms of behavior into an "uncivilized" state or leader and, thereby, hopefully bringing it into the role of a responsible, legitimate actor in the existing international system. Although it is convenient and often useful to think of satiation, reassurance, and socialization as being directed at a unitary, monolithic state, in fact each of these mechanisms operates, in the final analysis, on individuals and groups of individuals within the state. Thus, in confronting Germany, British policymakers also sought to achieve appeasement via a fourth mechanism: *manipulation of the political balance within the adversary*—weakening the proponents of a hostile, aggressive policy and strengthening the advocates of cooperation. Policies of appeasement pursued by other governments in other contexts—especially American policy toward the Soviet Union during the 1940s and the Bush administration's approach to Iraq under Saddam Hussein—contained elements of each of these approaches.

Recently, scholars, particularly Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, have begun to investigate the prospects for reassuring an insecure adversary. Most of this work has consisted of: developing a critique of the theory of deterrence, outlining an alternative "reassurance model," and identifying and illustrating with historical examples a number of specific reassurance policies.[58] To date, however, detailed empirical analyses of cases of successful and unsuccessful reassurance remain few and far between. Still less attention has been paid by students of international politics to the possibilities of reforming so-called "rogue" states or leaders. One study of the subject, by Robert Litwak, is now currently underway.[59]

The three primary mechanisms of tension reduction—satiation, reassurance, and socialization—imply, of course, different causes of conflict and disagreement among states and different reasons for hostility on the part of one's opponent. In this sense, appeasement, unlike deterrence, does not rely upon a particular theory of motivation. For this reason, it may hold greater attraction for policymakers uncertain as to the underlying sources of an adversary's behavior.

Methodology

In working toward a theory of appeasement, this study relies primarily upon what Alexander George has called the method of "structured, fo-

cused comparison."[60] This technique, a refined version of the so-called "comparative method," requires the researcher to undertake a detailed examination of a small number of cases.[61] The same set of questions is asked of each of the cases, allowing the identification of crucial similarities and differences among them. The object of the process is the development of "contingent generalizations"—statements regarding conditions, or sets of conditions, under which certain outcomes are likely to occur.[62]

The theory-building utility of this approach, which has become increasingly popular in recent years, has been the subject of some debate. Proponents of deductive theory have criticized empirical generalizations as deficient in several respects.[63] First, such generalizations are not parsimonious, since they usually incorporate a multiplicity of variables. Second, they are typological rather than universalistic; hence they do not provide either a comprehensive explanation for a phenomenon (e.g., deterrence failure) or a general prescription for policymakers to follow. Third, because they are empirical rather than logical, they are by nature incapable of generating counterintuitive hypotheses or "theoretical surprises."

In addition, contingent generalizations are held to suffer from weaknesses of the comparative case study method from which they are derived. Because only a few cases are considered, one's results cannot be viewed with the same degree of confidence as those from large-n, statistical studies. Moreover, key variables tend to be operationalized less precisely than in formal, quantitative analyses. As a result, comparative methodologies often cannot provide conclusive empirical verification of theoretical propositions.[64]

Advocates of the comparative case study approach note that deductive methods and statistical testing techniques confront obstacles to successful theory-building that are equally formidable.[65] More importantly, the alleged deficiencies of contingent generalizations, while real, are hardly fatal, and are compensated for by certain advantages. The inability to produce counterintuitive hypotheses, for example, is offset by a closer approximation to historical reality—a better empirical fit—which is regarded by some theorists as more crucial than theoretical surprise. A less parsimonious explanation, which takes into account a greater number of variables, is often a more accurate explanation, and is therefore capable of generating better predictions. For similar reasons, a typological theory, which identifies different causal patterns for the same phenomenon, is much more likely to provide useful guidance to policymakers than a universalistic theory that prescribes the same course of action under every set of circumstances.[66]

Even the method's critics admit that "well-designed case-study tests may not be decisive, but they can be highly enlightening and strongly persuasive."[67] Comparative analyses, unlike large-n, statistical analyses, are sensitive to the unique characteristics of specific cases. More importantly, because they require the detailed examination of individual case histories, they are ideally suited to the identification of causal variables and of the relationships among these variables. Comparative case studies can thus play an especially useful role in the development of theoretical propositions and in the building of theories.[68]

Questions on Appeasement

The method of structured, focused comparison requires that the researcher pose the same series of questions to each of the historical cases being considered.[69] In the case of appeasement, which has been the subject of relatively little scholarly investigation, specific, well-developed theoretical propositions are lacking. However, some fairly general questions may be deduced from the logic according to which an appeasement policy is presumed to operate. Others may be derived from the conventional critique of appeasement, or from theories of international politics that seem to bear upon the issue. Still others may arise during the course of examining cases of appeasement themselves.

What questions should be asked in pursuit of a theory of appeasement? As noted previously, policies of appeasement may be employed in a variety of situations for a variety of reasons. Before engaging in a detailed examination of any case of attempted appeasement it would seem necessary to inquire as to why the policy was undertaken. Hence we must ask:

> Question 1: What objective(s) did policymakers in the appeasing state seek in pursuing a policy of appeasement vis-à-vis the adversary?

It is worth emphasizing that policymakers in the appeasing state—and their counterparts in the adversary's government—are unlikely to be of a single mind. Differences of opinion regarding the objectives of appeasement, and issues raised by each of the questions that follow, are discussed in the case studies. In any event, once policymakers in a state have decided to employ a policy of appeasement, for whatever purpose, they must implement it. Appeasement, as it has been defined here, involves

making concessions designed to satisfy at least some of an adversary's grievances. An obvious question, therefore, is:

> Question 2: What concessions did policymakers in the appeasing state offer to their adversary?

The very logic by which a policy of appeasement is supposed to operate suggests that the perception of concessions by the adversary's decision makers will be a critical factor—even *the* critical factor—in determining whether appeasement succeeds or fails. Hence:

> Question 3: How did the adversary's decision makers perceive the concessions offered by the appeasing state?

Here we will want to know not only the extent to which concessions were perceived as satisfying the adversary's grievances, but also the degree to which they were viewed as a sign of weakness and an invitation to additional demands or further aggressive behavior. More importantly, we will want to understand *why* the adversary's decision makers perceived the concessions the way they did. To gain such an understanding we must ask:

> Question 4: What factors accounted for the perception of the appeasing state's concessions by the adversary's decision makers?

In seeking an answer to this question, we must cast a broad net, for we do not want to exclude from our consideration any important variable. At the same time, however, the international relations literature can provide us with some guidance regarding the most potentially fruitful areas of investigation. In particular, writings on the causes of cooperation among states suggest that two basic types of factors are likely to affect an adversary's perception of concessions. "Structural factors" are those rooted in the nature of the adversary, in the bilateral relationship between the adversary and the appeasing state, and in the international environment in which the attempt at appeasement takes place. They may include the adversary's motives and objectives, the degree to which it is risk-acceptant or risk-averse, the importance it attaches to various interests, the economic, political, military, and ideological relations between the adversary and the appeaser, and the presence or absence of diplomatic or strategic con-

straints on the adversary's behavior. By contrast, "process factors" have to do with the way in which a policy of appeasement is implemented. Much of the literature on international cooperation suggests, for example, that so-called "strategies of reciprocity"—GRIT, Tit-for-Tat, Firm-but-Flexible—are superior to purely accommodative strategies in eliciting cooperative behavior.[70] Similarly, scholars have argued that concessions are most likely to be effective when coupled with a resolute deterrence posture in a policy of "generosity from strength."[71] Still other studies have suggested that appeasing states may influence their adversary's perception of concessions in a desired manner by presenting them as being motivated by factors other than weakness, such as "justice" or "principle."[72]

Depending upon how they view the appeasing state's concessions, the adversary's decision makers may respond in several ways. First, they may modify their behavior and/or attitude so that the objectives of the appeasing state are met. Second, they may alter their behavior and/or attitude in ways that fulfill some but not all of the appeasing state's aims. Third, they may decline to change their attitude and/or behavior, perhaps even acting directly contrary to the wishes of the appeasing state. Fourth, they may attempt to bargain or negotiate in order to secure better terms. Hence we ask:

> Question 5: What was the response, if any, of the adversary's decision makers to concessions offered by the appeasing state?

Unless the adversary's response is seen by policymakers in the appeasing state as fulfilling all of their objectives, these policymakers will be themselves confronted with the need to make a critical decision. At the most fundamental level, they must choose between continuing the policy of appeasement and attempting to obtain a more favorable response, or abandoning it in favor of some alternative. Two final questions are:

> Question 6: How did policymakers in the appeasing state perceive the adversary's response to their concessions?

> Question 7: What decision(s) regarding the continuation of their appeasement policy did policymakers in the appeasing state make on the basis of their perception of the adversary's response?

If policymakers in the appeasing state elect to maintain a policy of

appeasement, question 7 logically returns one to question 2. Indeed, as the case studies will make clear, efforts at appeasement frequently involve an iterative process of concession and response (i.e. bargaining); thus in a single case a researcher must ask the same series of questions over and over again. Although this complicates the investigator's task, it is not without benefit. Since each iteration of the appeasement process in effect represents a distinct case, the sample of cases becomes larger when "sub-cases" or "cases-within-cases" are taken into account. As a result, the researcher's findings may be considered somewhat more conclusive than would otherwise be true.

Selection of Cases

The cases for any structured, focused comparison must be selected with some care. In a study of appeasement, the researcher should, insofar as possible, include historical examples reflecting the range of objectives appeasement policies may be intended to achieve, as well as the diversity of their outcomes. Comparisons among cases with disparate outcomes are, of course, strengthened if the cases resemble one another in other respects, while comparisons among cases with similar outcomes are enhanced if the cases otherwise differ.

Unfortunately, appeasement, perhaps in part because of its reputation, has not been employed by states as frequently as more coercive strategies. One study of "accommodation" identified only thirty-five instances of the phenomenon between 339 B.C. and 1949.[73] Researchers in the Correlates of War Project estimated that in the roughly six hundred militarized interstate disputes that occurred from 1816 to 1985, appeasement—as they defined it—"occurred in fewer than thirty cases."[74]

Because of the relative infrequency with which the policy has been pursued, and the fact that in some instances diplomatic documentation and other evidence needed for a reasonably thorough investigation is lacking, the selection of cases for this study was not a simple task. Nevertheless, it did prove possible to identify a number of cases which could be adequately researched and which, for the most part, fulfilled the requirements of a structured, focused comparison. These cases are:

1. Great Britain's appeasement of the United States from 1895 to about 1905, reflected especially in British concessions on the Venezuelan

boundary issue, the question of the Central American canal, and the dispute over the border between Canada and Alaska.

2. Great Britain's attempted appeasement of Germany during the 1930s, represented not only by the Munich Agreement, but also by prior efforts to conciliate Germany with territorial and economic concessions.

3. Great Britain's and the United States' attempted appeasement of the Soviet Union during the mid-1940s, reflected mainly in concessions made regarding the disposition of territory and the composition of governments in Central and Eastern Europe following World War II.

4. The United States' attempted appeasement of Iraq from 1989 to 1990, represented by concessions made to the government of Iraqi president Saddam Hussein by the Bush administration.

5. The United States' appeasement of North Korea from 1988 to 1994, represented by its effort to persuade the North Korean government to abandon its nuclear weapons program in return for nuclear reactors and other political and economic inducements.

Appeasement and Engagement

Unlike "appeasement," the term "engagement" pervades contemporary U.S. diplomatic discourse. The official national security policy of the Clinton administration is "engagement and enlargement" of the zone of market-capitalist, liberal-democratic states.[75] Engagement is Washington's current policy toward China and, to a lesser extent, Vietnam and other countries. It has also been advocated by certain analysts as the best approach to dealing with Fidel Castro's Cuba.[76] What is engagement, and what is the connection, if any, between engagement and appeasement?

The Clinton administration formally articulated its vision of engagement in *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement,* published in 1996. Throughout much of this document, the policy is defined in broad, grand-strategic terms. Engagement is essentially a synonym for involvement overseas, the opposite of disengagement or isolation. Its components include maintaining strong defense capabilities, combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, fighting drug trafficking, participating in peacekeeping operations, and increasing American access to foreign markets. At the level of grand strategy, engagement calls for active, multifaceted U.S. involvement abroad in order to ensure that America's economic, ideological, and security interests are protected and advanced.[77] This is not, however, how most ana-

lysts and practitioners of contemporary U.S. foreign policy tend to think of engagement.

Engagement, as typically conceived, is not a global national security strategy, but an approach to dealing with a specific state (or states) exhibiting hostile or otherwise undesirable behavior. In this more common sense of the term, "engagement" is often contrasted with "containment." Rather than confronting one's opponent through economic sanctions or even military threats, engagement involves establishing or enhancing contacts, communication, and exchanges, especially in the commercial realm.[78] This notion of engagement is articulated in those portions of *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* in which the document discusses China and certain other countries, and is the basis of America's current China policy. In fact, however, it predates the Clinton presidency. U.S. administrations from Nixon to Reagan pursued engagement with respect to South Africa and the practice of apartheid. The Bush administration did so in its approach to China before and after the shooting of pro-democracy demonstrators in Tienanmen Square.[79]

Various types of engagement—comprehensive, constructive, conditional, coercive—have been employed or advocated, but they share the same basic objectives: (1) to integrate the adversary into the international system, with its institutions, legal rules, and norms; (2) to maintain open channels for cooperation in areas of mutual interest; and (3) to gain leverage in order to influence the adversary's domestic and/or international behavior.[80] Often, as with China, for example, the hope is that engagement will lead to liberalization of the target state's economy and, in turn, to liberalization and democratization of its political system.

Critics of engagement—and there are many—consider it "a modern form of appeasement."[81] Their insinuation that engagement is therefore doomed to fail can be disputed, but as a matter of definition they have a point. Appeasement and engagement share a number of attributes. Both are nonconfrontational approaches to dealing with an adversary. Each hopes eventually to produce a relaxation of tensions with the opponent and some modification of its internal and/or external behavior. Each relies, in part, on the offering of inducements. Each sees some role for socialization or learning on the part of the adversary, as well as the potential value of reassurance.

Appeasement and engagement are not identical. Appeasement can be a strategy with short-run aims, while engagement almost necessarily implies a lengthy process and a distant time horizon. More importantly,

engagement is a broader, more wide-ranging approach to dealing with an opponent. It places greater emphasis on cooperation on matters of mutual interest, enmeshing the adversary in a web of commercial connections, rules, and institutions, on the development of increased leverage, and on shaping the long-term evolution of the adversary's economic and/or political system. Appeasement tends to be somewhat narrower in scope, relying more heavily on inducements to remove the causes of conflict and reduce tensions.

Nevertheless, appeasement and engagement are similar, and the two strategies overlap in certain respects. Several of the cases of appeasement examined in this volume contained elements of engagement, and could perhaps be interpreted by some as examples of the latter rather than of the former. It may, in fact, be appropriate to think of appeasement as a subcategory of engagement. For these reasons, this work on appeasement is intended to be of interest to scholars who study engagement and of relevance to practitioners of foreign policy who must decide whether and how to pursue such a strategy.