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Question:

The proposed research will explore the correlation between military resources and state preferences in the international system. Specifically, the research will test whether a relationship exists between military resources and the apparent divergence of preferences between the U.S. and its traditional NATO allies.

Existing Literature:

A wide body of foreign policy literature has addressed the apparent divergence of transatlantic preferences since the end of the Cold War. In both popular and academic circles, a debate exists over whether the United States and its European allies continue to share mutual interests in the international system. While certain observers argued that the fall of Soviet communism would usher in a new era of cooperation among liberal democracies, others suggested that the disappearance of the counterweight to U.S. hegemony would likely result in a concerted effort by European states to balance American power (Huntington 1999).

This proposal will proceed on the assumption that transatlantic relations in the post-Cold War era may be characterized by a divergence of preferences. Numerous scholars of international politics have asserted that the U.S. and its European allies no longer share a common worldview. In addition, a growing number of empirical studies have been conducted to qualify the claim that U.S. and European preferences have been drifting apart since the early 1990s. I will briefly summarize the studies that have been most influential in formulating this

research proposal. Then, I will review both structural and rational-choice theories of international relations that may help explain this phenomenon.

Robert Kagan's recently published article, "Power and Weakness" (2003), provides the primary inspiration for the subject of this article's analysis. Kagan proposes that the apparent divergence in transatlantic preferences derives fundamentally from a widening power gap. Defining power in terms of military capabilities, Kagan argues that European states have grown less supportive of the U.S. agenda as they have seen their militaries decline in relative strength. Unchallenged and unrivaled in their tremendous capacity to conduct military operations around the globe, Americans have developed a distinct set of international preferences based upon their capabilities. Europeans, whose collective military resources have declined since the end of the Cold War, have come to develop alternative preferences.

Kagan portrays the dual caricatures of contemporary American and European preferences. Americans are thought to be more inclined towards policies of coercion when facing adversaries. Seeking finality in international affairs, they often prefer unilateral actions that decisively confront real or potential threats. Consequently, they are more likely to favor the use of force, and frequently operate outside of the multilateral framework. Conversely, Europeans are viewed as favoring "soft" power; they insist upon policies characterized by subtlety and nuance. They emphasize diplomacy and economic ties that bind nations together. Multilateral institutions constitute the ideal framework for confronting problematic states, and political incentives are considered more useful than economic sanctions or military threats.

In acknowledging that these caricatures exist as broad generalizations, Kagan nevertheless contends that they reveal fundamental truths about the diverging perceptions of American and European policymakers. He suggests that the divergence results from a power gap

that has persisted since the end of the Second World War. While the “unique geopolitical circumstances” of the Cold War masked the irrelevancy of European power, the post-Cold War era has cast the power gap in harsh light. Whereas U.S. defense expenditures fell slightly, or remained flat, in the period following the Cold War, European governments allowed their average defense spending to fall below two percent of GDP. Consequently, Europeans now prefer foreign policies emphasizing “soft” power precisely because they are unable to exercise power effectively, and have developed a distinctive set of ideals and principles based upon their material circumstances.

Kagan suggests that Europe strives to counter U.S. hegemony, not by competing with it in material terms, but by “multilateralizing” it. Unable or unwilling to develop significant military capabilities of their own, European governments hope to balance the U.S. in the framework of international organizations.

The primary weakness of Kagan’s argument is that it provides no quantitative, empirical basis for its claims. Consequently, his theory on the relationship between resources and preferences fails to convincingly establish a causal model on state behavior in the international arena. My research will attempt to qualify Kagan’s implicit model through empirical analyses of the correlation between the growing military resource gap and the divergence of transatlantic preferences.

Measuring international preferences in quantitative terms constitutes a challenge in its own right. Among the few political scientists who have attempted to do so, Erik Voeten has conducted empirical research on the functioning of multilateral organizations that will be useful for this study. In “Resisting the Lonely Superpower” (2002), Voeten explores the increasing isolation of U.S. policies in the United Nations. Restricting his analysis to the post-Cold War

period, Voeten attempts to distinguish changes in policy preferences from changes in the agenda. Using the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) as his framework, Voeten finds that even as policy preferences have widened at a constant rate since the early 1990s, the agenda has also become consistently more negative for the U.S.

Voeten utilizes UN roll-call voting records, in conjunction with State Department publications on U.S. preferences in the UNGA, to develop a database of votes deemed important to American interests. He proposes a statistical model, based upon item-response theory and the spatial theory of voting, to construct state preference measures on a pro-anti U.S. continuum. According to Voeten's empirical model, state preferences in the UNGA have steadily diverged from the U.S. preferred position since 1991. Though he does not correlate his findings with any potential explanatory variables, he does note that "there are some interesting differences between countries in the extent to which they have shifted their preferences from the U.S." (Voeten 23). Specifically, Voeten discovers that Samuel Huntington's theory of a "clash of civilizations" finds no empirical support in his data. Inserting dummy variables for Huntington's five main civilizations (the West, Islam, Latin American, African, and Orthodox), Voeten establishes that variations between countries in the extent to which they diverge from the U.S. are not caused by civilizational differences.

Importantly, Voeten identifies a relationship between democratic liberalism and state voting preferences. Although he finds that liberal states are much closer to the U.S. ideal point than illiberal states, he also discovers that liberal democracies have diverged from the U.S. at a similar rate compared to the rest of the world. Additionally, states that have become more liberal during the post-Cold War period shift towards the American position, countering the general trend away from the U.S.

In another article, “The Political Origins of the UN Security Council’s Ability to Legitimize the Use of Force” (2003), Voeten explores the widespread assumption among state actors that UN Security Council approval is beneficial when undertaking military operations. He examines competing theories as to why the Security Council is able to confer legitimacy. The Security Council process, emphasizing established legal procedures and international norms, may be seen as a legitimizing factor. Military action undertaken with Security Council approval may be perceived as functioning in pursuit of certain “public goods”. Additionally, the Security Council process may be valued as a means to restricting the unrivaled hegemony of the U.S.

Voeten suggests that the last explanation serves as the most compelling argument for why states perceive the Security Council process to be legitimate. This theory complements the Kagan model through its suggestion that states seek to restrain the U.S. on the sole basis of its extraordinary power. Essentially, the Security Council process has taken on greater value in the post-Cold War era through its ability to “multilateralize” American military capacity. Though Voeten’s study focuses its analysis on a different multilateral context, the Security Council, his conclusions address both the cause and effect of changing international preferences relative to the U.S. As states seek to counter unchecked U.S. military power, they increasingly value multilateral institutions as a means to balancing U.S. hegemony.

A realist interpretation of international responses to U.S. global hegemony may be found in Samuel Huntington’s article, “The Lonely Superpower” (1999). Applying a structural analysis to international relations in the post Cold-War era, Huntington suggests that the current international system may not be classified as unipolar, bipolar, or multipolar. Instead, he argues that the U.S. finds itself in “a strange hybrid, a uni-multipolar system with one superpower and several major powers” (Huntington 1). Huntington identifies three contemporary classifications

of world powers: the American superpower, major regional powers, and minor regional powers. As the U.S. seeks to create a unipolar system in which it is free to pursue its interests absent significant restraints, other major powers will step up their efforts to balance American influence.

Consequently, Huntington suggests that the U.S. has increasingly found its preferred positions isolated in the international community. He attributes this phenomenon to a reaction against U.S. efforts to create a unipolar world. As it seeks to fashion the preferences of other states to its liking, or assumes that its interests coincide with the interests of the larger international community, the U.S. actually promotes anti-hegemonic cooperation among lesser powers.

Huntington acknowledges that a broad-based, formal anti-American coalition has yet to emerge. In realist terms, such a coalition would be defined by a group of major powers vying to compete with the U.S. in terms of “hard” power, or military capabilities. Huntington proposes a variety of explanations for the lack of true anti-hegemonic alliance. First, he suggests that development of an anti-American alliance may just be in its early stages. Second, he stipulates that the U.S. offers a variety of incentives for countries to abstain from open opposition to its agenda. Third, he suggests that the multicivilizational nature of the second tier of world powers renders any potential cooperation problematic. Fourth, Huntington proposes that the interests of the third tier of regional powers often run counter to the major regional powers, and consequently they will be unlikely to join in any anti-hegemonic coalition.

Among numerous minor anti-hegemonic trends, Huntington singles out the development of the European Union as the most significant. Though European integration predates the fall of the Berlin Wall, the most significant steps towards a supranational system of European

governance (and the prospect of a united Europe as a counterweight to U.S. hegemony) have arguably occurred in the post-Cold War period. While Huntington acknowledges the role cultural commonalities play in fostering cooperation between the U.S. and Europe, he also points out that “the dynamics of power encourage rivalry” (Huntington 8).

Huntington’s realist perspective assumes that any true anti-hegemonic coalition will strive to compete with the U.S. in terms of raw power. At the same time, he concedes that opposition to U.S. policies has already emerged among its traditional European allies. Whether these “anti-hegemonic rumblings” constitute the early stages of an emerging anti-American bloc, or represent a distinct approach to countering U.S. hegemony, will be explored further in the causal model.

IR Theory and Preferences in the UNGA

International relations theory attempts to identify the underlying factors influencing state behavior in the international system. This paper will draw upon two competing theories of international relations in order to offer a theoretical framework for its proposed empirical analyses. The first theory that I will explore is a structural theory of international politics, widely known as realism. The structural emphasis of realism offers possible explanations as to the current trend of anti-hegemonic voting behavior in the UNGA. The second school of theory that I will analyze is categorized as rational-choice theory. In taking into consideration both domestic and international preferences, rational-choice theory offers distinct advantages to other theories of international relations. Namely, it excludes neither domestic forces nor the international structure in formulating its criteria for state preferences. This flexible approach will prove advantageous in constructing the causal explanation for anti-U.S. voting.

Structural realism existed as the preeminent theory of international relations during the Cold War. Though various interpretations of international politics fall under the umbrella of realist theory, I will focus on neorealism as the most influential contemporary school of structural politics. Developed by Kenneth Waltz in his “Theory of International Politics” (1979), neorealism emphasizes the structure of the international system as the primary determinant of state behavior. Proceeding from the assumption that the international system is anarchic, neorealism dictates that states operate as units within a larger system of states. Seeking to maximize their power and security, states will react to changes in the distribution of power by forming blocs. A fundamental tenet of neorealism stipulates that “variations in the distribution of capabilities across states produce different configurations of the balance of power” (Mastanduno 52). According to Waltz’s theory, bipolar systems are the most stable, and the least likely to result in major conflict. Multipolar systems, such as existed in Europe at the outbreak of the First World War, are inherently less stable than bipolar systems. A unipolar environment will result in other states seeking to balance the power of the hegemonic state.

Rational-choice theories of international politics offer a game-theoretic framework for predicting outcomes in the international system. In determining their actions, states take into consideration a variety of factors that will contribute to the overall expected-utility of a specific policy. Policymaker preferences are factored against domestic considerations and the distribution of power among states. In constructing state preferences, rational-choice theorists factor in perceptions, risk-aversion, and expectations. The result is a comprehensive approach to international relations theory, which allows for the inclusion of both domestic pressures and structural realities of the international system as determinants of state behavior.

Causal Model:

The end of the Cold War was characterized as a truly unipolar moment for U.S. hegemony in the international system. As the Soviet Union's collapse constituted the death of Marxist ideology as an alternative to American democratic capitalism, it also removed the sole counterweight to U.S. military power around the globe. The vast military resources that had been amassed and deployed worldwide to counter the spread of Soviet communism now remained at the disposal of U.S. policymakers seeking to uphold their standards of international security. As Kagan notes:

“[the] ‘unipolar moment’ had an entirely natural and predictable consequence: it made the United States more willing to use force abroad. With the check of Soviet power removed, the United States was free to intervene practically wherever and whenever it chose- a fact reflected in the proliferation of overseas military interventions” (Kagan 5).

Indeed, the U.S. undertook more military interventions in the decade following the Soviet collapse than it had during most of the Cold War. According to Kagan, this overt display of U.S. military power had an unsettling effect on America's European allies. European policy elites and, to a lesser extent, the European public expressed anxiety over the emergence of an American *hyperpuissance*.

At the same time, despite their apparent qualms regarding unchecked American military power, European governments allowed their own military capabilities to decline relative to the U.S. As U.S. defense spending remained above three percent of GDP in the post-Cold War period, European defense expenditures dropped below two percent on average. Kagan argues

that this trend has led to the observed divergence in policy perspectives that characterizes current transatlantic relations.

Kagan's model is based upon the premise that European states have developed different policy preferences than the U.S. precisely because they lack a comparable capacity to project military power. The caricature of European foreign policy as preferring "soft" power holds true, according to Kagan, because European governments naturally prefer foreign policy instruments that they themselves are capable of wielding. In his own words: "[A]ppeasement is never a dirty word to those whose genuine weakness offers few appealing alternatives. For them, it is a policy of sophistication" (Kagan 5). Kagan further argues that European governments are now engaged in an effort to multilateralize U.S. power. Not aspiring to wield power themselves, European policymakers hope to balance U.S. hegemony in the context of multilateral organizations.

This proposition corroborates Voeten's theory on the legitimizing effect of the UN Security Council, which suggests that the primary value attached to the Security Council derives from its ability to constrain American power. It would also serve as a potential explanation for the trend in anti-American voting observed in the UNGA: the divergence of European state preferences from the U.S. ideal position reflects the desire of European governments to balance American power in the multilateral framework. The increasing military gap would thereby encourage efforts by European governments to counter American policies in the UNGA. Consequently, a correlation should emerge between the widening of the military resource gap and the widening of the transatlantic preference gap.

However, in light of structural theories of international politics, this proposition appears problematic. As Waltz's theory of neorealism emphasizes the inherent tendency among states to seek a balance of power in the international system, European governments would be expected to

increase military expenditures in order to counter American unipolarity. While Huntington proposes various explanations for the apparent non-emergence of a counter-hegemonic bloc, the rise in anti-U.S. voting behavior in the UNGA suggests that European states are already fundamentally reacting to American power.

Rational-choice theory offers a means of reconciling the Kagan model with traditional realist assumptions on state behavior. In factoring domestic political forces into state preferences in the international system, this theory provides broader insights as to the nature of anti-U.S. voting among America's traditional European allies. The application of rational-choice theory to this proposal's causal model depends fundamentally on Kagan's assumptions that European societies have become averse to significantly increasing military expenditures.

While European states may value the establishment of a balance to U.S. power, they are also disinclined to increase military expenditures in order to achieve this goal. Relative to domestic political pressures, Kagan suggests that Europeans are unwilling to divert significant resources from social programs to military programs (Kagan 4). He further emphasizes that the specific historical experience of Europe following the two World Wars has been fundamental in forming an ideology opposed to military action. Domestic political considerations thus constrain European states from aggressively building up their militaries in response to American hegemony. Consequently, European policymakers derive a greater expected utility from countering U.S. influence in the context of multilateral organizations than they would in seeking to rival U.S. military strength in raw terms.

This model proposes that the European trend of anti-American voting in the UNGA represents an anti-hegemonic response to unchecked U.S. military power. In conjunction with traditional realist expectations, European states are forming a coherent coalition to rival U.S.

hegemony. However, as a result of domestic political restraints, they are limited to countering the U.S. in the framework of multilateral organizations.

Testable Hypotheses:

I expect to find that the trend of anti-U.S. voting is positively correlated to the decline of European military resources. Specifically, the Voeten preference score for a given state should diverge from the American ideal point as military resources decrease relative to the U.S. In addition to Voeten scores, I will also compare state preferences using Erik Gartzke's database on roll-call voting in the UNGA, and juxtapose these values against military resource indicators. A similar relationship should emerge: Gartzke's preference values for state affinity in the UNGA should drop as the military resource gap widens between the U.S. and a given European country. States that have significantly reduced their military capabilities should be more inclined to vote against the U.S. preferred position. Conversely, states that have reduced their capabilities to a lesser extent should vote closer to the U.S. idea point. I will use dummy variables for each country in the sample in order to isolate any potential systematic effects that would bias the regression.

Data:

The study will examine national military resource indicators in comparison with voting records in the UN General Assembly. The independent variables pertaining to military capabilities will include defense spending levels, defense spending as a proportion of GDP, and the Correlates of War Project's indexed scores for military capabilities (all values adjusted for

inflation). The values for European states for these variables will be measured as a proportion of their resources relative to those of the U.S. for each year in the sample for the Voeten measures (1991-2001) and the Gartzke affinity scores (1985-1996). Statistical information on military indicators will be obtained from the CIA World Fact Book and the Correlates of War Military Capabilities dataset.

The dependent variable indicating UN voting behavior will exist in two forms. I will use both the Voeten and Gartzke measures for state preferences. The sample of countries will be defined as the traditional (Cold War era) NATO allies of the U.S., excluding Turkey. This sample constitutes fourteen countries, and substitutes West Germany for the Germany in the years prior to German reunification. The Voeten analysis measures state preferences relative to the U.S. ideal point. Voeten fixes the U.S. ideal point at -3.67 , and then tracks the evolution of other state preferences annually over the post-Cold War period (1991-2001). I will measure the gap between the U.S. preferred position and the observed values for state preferences in a given year. The dataset containing Voeten's preference scores will soon be available online. The Gartzke method derives values for state affinity in the UNGA based upon observed voting behavior between 1946 and 1996. Gartzke measures affinity in pairs of states on a scale between -1 and 1 . For the purposes of my research, I will limit my sample to his affinity scores comparing the U.S. to its fourteen traditional NATO allies. I will restrict my analysis to the period between 1985 and 1996, in order to determine if a significant change occurs in the divergence of state preferences in the transition period leading into the post-Cold War era. These measures already incorporate the preference gap between the U.S. and a given state, and are currently available online via Gartzke's website.

Empirical Analyses:

I will be conducting empirical analysis in order to determine whether the size of the gap between the U.S. and its allies in terms of military resources is related to state preferences in the UN. The prediction, based upon the paper's causal model, is that the likelihood of a state to vote in conjunction with the U.S. position will be lower as the proportion of that state's military resources to the U.S. decreases. The equation symbolizing this relationship may be stated as follows:

$$y = \beta a + f + \epsilon$$

The variables denote military resources, represented by total defense expenditure, defense expenditure as a proportion of GDP, and the COW indexed value, as related to a state's voting behavior within the UNGA relative to the U.S. preferred position. The "y" variable denotes the state's relative position, in a given year, to the U.S. ideal point, and will represent both the gap in the Voeten measures between the U.S. and a given state and the Gartzke affinity scores. The "a" variable will be defined by the three aforementioned measurements of military resources for a European state taken as a fraction of the corresponding U.S. measure for a given year. The "f" value denotes a control variable for each state in the sample. These dummy variables constitute fixed-effects aimed at isolating any systematic qualities that might alter the regression pattern for a given state.

Regression analysis will be conducted to establish whether or not a strong correlation exists between military indicators and voting preferences. As both the trend of anti-U.S. voting and declining military resources are already established as independent phenomenon, my analysis will determine whether the size of the military resource gap leads to varying

propensities to oppose U.S. policies.

Conclusion:

My proposed research will attempt to add to the growing body of empirical studies on the subject of state preferences in the international context. Though I will not attempt to derive my own values for state preferences, I will attempt to develop a causal explanation for the divergence of preferences between the U.S. and its traditional NATO allies in the UNGA. Namely, the widening military gap has encouraged Western European states to drift towards an anti-hegemonic voting bloc.

Numerous potential flaws exist in the context of this study. First, the relatively small sample of states and the short timeframe are arguably inadequate for an appropriate empirical study. Second, military resource indicators are admittedly arbitrary measures for evaluating the nature of total state power in the international system. Third, because I do not derive my own preference values, my empirical research will suffer from any preexisting flaws in the methodologies of Gartzke and Voeten. Fourth, the dependency of the causal model on Kagan's assertion that European states have become disinclined towards increasing spending on military resources is problematic. While opinion polls and historical realities may substantiate this claim, it nevertheless constitutes an improvable assumption about the nature of contemporary European society.

