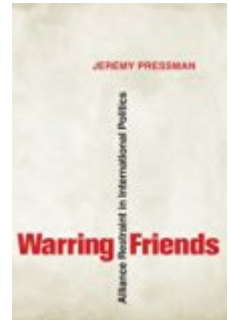**Jeremy Pressman.** *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008. x + 178 pp. $18.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-8014-7443-9.

Reviewed by Jeffrey W. Taliaferro

In an essay written more than thirty years ago, historian Paul W. Schroeder observed that alliances can be both "weapons of security and instruments of management." He cited several examples from modern European history suggesting that the desire to control one's allies was a frequent occurrence. Ultimately, however, he did not systematically address the questions of when, why, or how alliance restraint will likely occur. Instead, he concluded that there was no "magic formula for using alliances as tools for management for the purpose of promoting international peace and stability."[1] What is surprising is that international relations scholars devoted so little attention to the dynamics of alliance restraint for the next three decades, thus leaving the following questions largely unaddressed: How often do states ally primarily as a strategy to restrain their would-be allies, rather than primarily as a means to deter or defeat a common adversary? Under what conditions are allies more likely to succeed in restraining each other from undertaking provocative and arguably counterproductive mili-

tary actions toward third parties? Are "special relationships" between liberal democracies, such as the United States' longstanding alliances with Great Britain and Israel, more likely to embody a norm of cooperation and successful restraint than other types of alliances?

In *Warring Friends*, Jeremy Pressman addresses each of the above questions. He draws on and critiques rival alliance theories taken from structural realism, constructivism, liberalism, and (neoliberal) institutionalism. Pressman then develops a neoclassical realist theory, which posits a crucial role for the ability of more powerful states to mobilize their power resources to restrain their allies. As he puts it, "The 800-pound gorilla has to throw its weight around; merely being heavy is not enough to force allies into line" (p. 2). He defines "alliance restraint" as "an actual or anticipated diplomatic effort by one ally to influence a second ally not to proceed with a proposed policy or not to continue with an existing military policy" (p. 6). Restraint, however, only pertains to at-

tempts to influence allied states' military policies, including military interventions, war, arms sales, nuclear proliferation, and the formation of alliances with third parties.

Pressman advances four propositions: First, states forge alliances to restrain their would-be allies more often than existing international relations theories would have us believe. Second, the success or failure of restraint within an existing alliance is not simply a function of the relative power distribution between allies. Rather, successful restraint depends on the ability and willingness of the more powerful ally to mobilize its power resources. As Pressman writes, "If the powerful ally mobilizes, it can compel weaker allies to be restrained. If the powerful ally is the restrainee, it can mobilize its power resources to go it alone and ignore the restraint attempt" (p. 15). Third, several conditions affect the likelihood of power mobilization in cases of alliance restraint: deception by the weaker ally; the degree of unity within the restrainer's leadership; the restrainer's hierarchy of national security objectives; and the availability of alternative pathways (or strategies) to the same outcome its weaker ally seeks. Fourth, the dynamics of alliance restraint are different from efforts to influence policies among non-allies.

This is a well-written, historically rich, and theoretically smart book. It is also surprisingly brief. In less than 174 pages, Pressman examines eighteen cases of alliance formation and alliance restraint over the span of 150 years. Chapter 2 establishes the plausibility of the author's theory by examining six cases of bilateral or multilateral alliance formation: Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1879; Great Britain and Japan in 1902; the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and West Germany in 1949; the United States and South Korea in 1953; the United States and Taiwan in 1954; and Egypt and Syria in 1964-66. Drawing largely on secondary sources and published documents, Pressman finds strong evidence that the states initiating the alliance (Germany, Britain, the United States, and Egypt) did so, at least in part, to prevent their would-be allies (Austria, Japan, West Germany, South Korea, Taiwan, and Syria, respectively) from dragging them into unwanted war with a regional adversary (North Korea, China, and Israel) or a great power (Russia and later the Soviet Union).

The bulk of *Warring Friends* concerns the dynamics of restraint within the U.S.-British and the U.S.-Israeli alliances. Chapter 3 examines four cases in which the United States or Britain attempted to restrain the other during the Cold War. The cases are: the successful effort by President Harry S. Truman, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, and Secretary of Defense Robert A. Lovett to dissuade Prime Minister Clement Atlee's government from using force to halt Iran's nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in 1951; the successful effort by Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill's government to dissuade the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration from sending forces to relieve besieged French forces in Indochina in 1954; the subsequent unsuccessful effort by the Churchill government to prevent the Eisenhower administration from sending forces to defend Taiwan in 1954-55; and the Suez War of 1956. Suez really constitutes two cases. In the first, the Eisenhower administration failed to restrain the government of Prime Minister Antony Eden from using force to reverse Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal. In the second, President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles used economic means to force the Eden government to accept a UN-sponsored cease-fire and then to withdraw British troops from Egypt.

Chapter 4 examines eight cases where the United States attempted to restrain Israel: the John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson administration's failure to halt Israeli nuclear weapons development in the early 1960s; the Johnson administration's failure to prevent Prime Minister

Levi Eshkol's government from launching a preemptive attack on the Egyptian and Syrian armies in June 1967; the successful effort by the Richard Nixon administration to dissuade Eshkol's successor, Golda Meir, and her defense minister, Moshe Dayan, from launching a preemptive attack on Egyptian forces in 1973; the Jimmy Carter administration's inability to restrain small Israeli operation against Lebanon in 1977; the Ronald Reagan administration's failure to restrain Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Defense Minister Ariel Sharon from launching a full-scale invasion of Lebanon in 1982; the George H. W. Bush administration's successful effort to restrain Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and his government from retaliating against Iraqi ballistic (SCUD) missile attacks in the 1991 Persian Gulf War; and the efforts by the William Clinton and the George W. Bush administrations to dissuade Prime Minister Ehud Barak and his successor Sharon from selling advanced airborne early warning systems and upgrading previously purchased Harpy anti-radar drones to the People's Republic of China in 2000 and 2005, respectively.

The dynamics of alliance restraint pose various anomalies for existing international relations theories. Structural realists, such as Kenneth N. Waltz and Stephen M. Walt, argue that states generally forge alliances to aggregate their material capabilities against a common adversary (balancing). Balance-of-power and balance-of-threat theories expect that alliances will be temporary marriages of convenience and that the more powerful state will generally prevail in intra-alliance disputes.[2] However, weaker states sometimes prevail in disputes with stronger allies, and neither theory appears to explain the circumstances under which this is more likely to occur. Simply looking at relative power distributions or the existence of common threats does not explain why the more powerful United States acquiesced to British objections to military intervention in Indochina. Nor, as Pressman notes, do purely sys-

temic theories explain why the United States successfully restrained Israel in 1973, 1977, 1991, and 2000/2005, but failed to do so in 1961-63, 1967, and 1982.

Institutionalists like G. John Ikenberry argue that multilateral alliances (which are a subset of international institutions) not only facilitate mutually beneficial cooperation among their members states, but also restrict the autonomy of their more powerful members. Specifically, by engaging in what Ikenberry terms "institutional binding," the United States not only facilitates cooperation, but actually reduces the implications of asymmetries of power between itself and other states.[3] Then again, NATO is unique among military alliances in its sheer degree of institutionalization. Historically, most alliances have been mutual defense pacts or ad hoc war fighting coalitions. NATO has only fought one war in its sixty-year history: the 1999 Kosovo War (Operation Allied Force) against Serbia. NATO came perilously close to losing that war precisely because its institutional framework made decision making so cumbersome. More often than not, as Pressman's case studies illustrate, the United States either flaunts institutional frameworks or rewrites the rules to suit its purposes.

Finally, constructivists, such as Thomas Risse, and some liberals, such as John M. Owen, argue that alliances among liberal democracies embody shared identities and norms of consultation and mutual respect, which, in turn, minimizes the likelihood of serious disagreements among allies. [4] For all of the rhetoric about an Anglo-American special relationship based on shared values, culture, and democratic principles, Pressman compiles substantial evidence that realpolitik considerations were paramount in shaping the interalliance strategies of successive presidents and prime ministers. Nor is this pattern confined to Anglo-American relations. Pressman writes, "Israel and the United States did not coordinate their policies, and Israel often relied on deception to try

to avoid American restraint efforts. Deception featured prominent in four of the seven cases [examined in chapter 4]: Israeli nuclear proliferation, Israel's intervention in Lebanon with U.S. military equipment, Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and Israel's arms sale to China in 2004-2005" (p. 118).

The one minor weakness of *Warring Friends* lies in the use of the term "power mobilization" in reference to the explanatory variable. Pressman explicitly draws on Randall Schweller's recent book, *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power* (2006). Schweller, like many social scientists, uses the term "power mobilization" to refer to a state's ability to extract societal resources for internal balancing (arms racing) or external balancing (alliance formation). Successful alliance restraint, in contrast, seems to depend less on the stronger state's ability to extract and mobilize resources from society (a process that often takes months or years) than on the willingness and ability of national elites to use existing resources (power-in-being) to influence allies.

This quibble aside, *Warring Friends* is a superb contribution to the literature on alliance politics and neoclassical realism. It should be required reading for scholars and students of security studies, international history and politics, and international relations theory for some time to come.

Notes

[1]. Paul W. Schroeder, "Alliances, 1815-1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management," in *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems,* ed. Klaus Knorr (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1975), 227-263, quotations on 227, 256.

[2]. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House, 1979); and Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

[3]. G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

[4]. John M. Owen IV, "Transnational Liberalism and American Primacy; or Benignity is in the Eye of the Beholder," in *America Unrivaled: The Future of the Balance of Power*, ed. G. John Ikenberry (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 239-259; and Thomas Risse, "U.S. Power in a Liberal Security Community," ibid., 260-283.

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