When Is Domestic Political Unrest Related to International Conflict? Diversionary Theory and Japanese Foreign Policy, 1890–1941[1]

Natsuko H. Nicholls

University of Michigan

Paul K. Huth

University of Maryland

and

Benjamin J. Appel

University of Maryland

In this article, we seek to advance the theoretic and empirical literature on the diversionary use of force. We argue that state leaders are more likely to engage in diversionary foreign policy behavior when opposition groups from within the winning coalition press for policy changes, but the government rejects those policy demands. Only when domestic unrest threatens a loss of political support from groups that are politically important to the leadership do we expect leaders to try and rally their support through heightened international conflict. We test this argument in an analysis of Japanese foreign policy behavior from 1890 to 1941 regarding (i) the initiation of military threats, (ii) concessions in negotiations, and (iii) the escalation of military confrontations. Drawing upon new data sets collected on Japanese domestic politics and foreign relations, we find strong support for our argument in a series of statistical tests.

There is an extensive scholarly literature on the relationship between domestic and international conflict. In this paper, we focus on the ''diversionary use of force'' literature in which the central question is whether political leaders experiencing internal political turmoil are more likely to engage in confrontational foreign policy behavior. A common claim is that during such periods of domestic unrest, government leaders attempt to divert public and elite attention away from internal problems by initiating and escalating international conflicts. The argument is that leaders anticipate rallying domestic support in opposition to an external threat, which should weaken prevailing domestic political discontent

and help to restore their position of political leadership. This argument, however, has not been well supported by empirical tests in the quantitative literature. We argue that theoretic and research design problems help to explain why the diversionary literature has not generated more supportive findings. In this paper, we therefore seek to advance the diversionary literature both theoretically and empirically by addressing what we consider to be shortcomings in the existing literature. In so doing, our empirical tests of a reformulated diversionary theory produce strong and consistent empirical results.

Our theoretic contribution is to identify the more specific conditions under which domestic political unrest leads to foreign conflict. Our re-formulation of diversionary theory leads us to the conclusion that the relationship between domestic political unrest and confrontational foreign policy behavior is more complex and contingent than is often recognized in the existing literature. Specifically, we argue that the diversionary use of force depends crucially upon the political salience of opposition groups and the response of the government to opposition demands. When governments fail to accommodate the policy demands of opposition groups that form part of the regime's winning coalition, leaders have strong diversionary incentives to engage in international conflict. In contrast, if the government accommodates opposition demands, or adopts a hard-line position against groups that are not within its winning coalition, then we argue there is no reason to expect leaders to engage in diversionary foreign policy behavior.

Empirically, our contributions center on the use of an alternative research design in which tests of diversionary behavior are situated in the context of a state's ongoing foreign policy relationships with countries that are of central concern to its security policy. Furthermore, we move away from commonly employed country-year research designs and instead break down each year within Japan into varying periods of domestic unrest and no unrest. As a result, we are able to more precisely test for the relationship between domestic unrest and diversionary foreign policy behavior across different stages in the development of international disputes as well as among multiple potential targets of such actions. Thus, rather than treating the use of force as the sole dependent variable (DV), we consider different policy choices that confront leaders over the course of an international dispute.[2] Three DVs are therefore analyzed: (i) the initiation of confrontational military policies to challenge the status quo, (ii) the decisions to offer/withhold concessions during periods of negotiations in rounds of talks, and (iii) the military confrontation stage in which escalation/de-escalation of threats occur. At each stage, we argue that diversionary incentives can influence foreign policy decisions, and we find strong empirical support for our theoretic arguments.

We test our argument on an original data set that contains detailed information on Japanese domestic politics and international relations with four principal countries (China, Russia, Great Britain, and the United States) from the period beginning in 1890, the year of the first Imperial Diet of Japan, and ending in 1941 with the outbreak of the Word War II in the Pacific.[3] Japan presents a good case for our analyses as the country experienced considerable political change and instability that challenged the power and authority of incumbent regimes. At the same time, Japanese foreign policy was characterized by considerable

---

[2] See Huth and Allee (2002) for a general analysis of different stages in the study of international disputes and conflicts.

[3] The Imperial Diet, Japan's modern legislature, was established by the Meiji Constitution in February 1889 and the Diet first met in November 1890. The Diet consisted of a House of Representatives and a House of Peers. The House of Representatives was directly elected, though based on a limited franchise, while the House of Peers consisted of high ranking nobles (Hunter 1984).

variation in diplomatic and military relations with these four countries which were at the center of Japanese national security policy.[4]

The remainder of the paper unfolds as follows. First, we review the existing literature on diversionary theory with a focus on a few key theoretic and empirical issues. Second, we present our theoretic framework and derive testable hypotheses. Third, we present our research design for statistical analyses and discuss how the dependent and independent variables are measured. Fourth, we report the results of statistical analyses. Fifth, we present a case study of the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894 to illustrate the relationship between diversionary incentives and confrontational Japanese foreign policy behavior as suggested by the statistical findings. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of the implications of our findings for diversionary theory and directions for future research.

Review of Literature

In response to the problems with the early literature, over the past two decades, research on diversionary theory has been directed toward improving the theoretic foundations of arguments as well as developing better research designs to test more sophisticated hypotheses.[5] The research focus has shifted from the question of whether domestic unrest provides leaders with an incentive to engage in diversionary conflict to whether the ''willingness'' to divert attention externally is constrained by the ''opportunity'' to do so. As such, researchers have attempted to develop hypotheses explaining when the environment (both domestic and international) is conducive to diversionary behavior.[6]

With respect to the opportunity to engage in diversionary theory, Meernik and Waterman (1996) argue that states face varying international threat environments and therefore the likelihood of diversionary actions is conditioned by the international threat opportunities that state leaders face during periods of domestic unrest.[7] Other scholars have also considered the international context and its consequences for state leaders to engage in diversionary foreign policy actions. Smith (1996), for example, argues that potential targets of diversionary actions can act strategically to try and reduce the likelihood that they in fact become the targets of military threats and uses of force. By avoiding hard-line policies and even initiating more cooperative policies, they can seek to undermine justifications for confrontational policies by leaders motivated by diversionary incentives.[8]

Scholars have also looked at the willingness of executives to engage in diversionary behavior by analyzing the relationship between policy substitutability at the domestic level and international conflict. For example, Meernik and Waterman (1996) and Bennett and Nordstrom (2000) argue that it is important to look for occasions where state leaders refrained from taking military action, or stopped military operations in order to appease domestic discontent.[9] Consequently, Bennett and Nordstrom argue that substitutability should be

---

[4] The logic of selecting these four states as Japan's potential diversionary foreign targets is discussed in the following paragraphs.

[5] In his widely cited review, Jack Levy (1989) concludes that the early diversionary literature suffered from flawed theories and research designs.

[6] See, for example, Morgan and Bickers (1992), Meernik and Waterman (1996), Smith (1996), Gelpi (1997), Leeds and Davis (1997), Meernik (2000), Chiozza and Goemans (2003, 2004), Mitchell and Prins (2004), DeRouen and Goldfinch (2005), Tarar (2006), Kisangani and Pickering (2007), Sobek (2007), Brulé (2008b), Foster (2008).

[7] They further contend that the international threat environment is a more powerful explanation of a states' involvement in international conflicts than domestic unrest.

[8] Leeds and Davis (1997), Clark (2003), Chiozza and Goemans (2004), Tarar (2006), and Foster (2008) also argue that strategic interaction may play a role in determining whether leaders act on their diversionary incentives.

[9] Other studies that consider decisions to not use force or take forceful action include DeRouen (2003), Sathasivam (2003), Tarar (2006), and Brulé (2008a).

investigated through better specification of models and the use of multinomial logit analysis techniques.

Gelpi (1997) argues, moreover, that the policy substitutability is directly relevant to the problem of how leaders respond to domestic unrest. In his analysis, state leaders across any type of regime can choose among at least three strategies when faced with domestic unrest: (i) accept the demands of the dissatisfied groups, (ii) repress the dissatisfied groups by force, or (iii) divert the public's attention by using force internationally. Likewise, Huth and Lust-Okar (1998) focus on the decision of state leaders to either repress or accommodate the demands of political opposition, and on how that decision has implications for whether states' leaders pursue a more aggressive foreign policy.

Finally, Morgan and Bickers (1992) present a useful theoretic framework for analyzing diversionary actions. Of critical importance is their argument that state leaders view an erosion of domestic support more seriously when it comes from within segments of society that form part of the leader's base of political support than when it comes from other domestic groups. In their analysis, they find that the diversionary uses of force is more likely when US presidents face low approval ratings among their own party members.[10]

To conclude our review of the literature, we summarize three insights that we incorporate into our work based on prior research. First, we agree with Morgan and Bickers (1992) on the theoretic importance of relating diversionary incentives to the concept of coalition support, i.e., the erosion of domestic political support from within a government's winning coalition increases diversionary incentives. Second, we incorporate the idea of domestic and foreign policy substitutability into our theoretic framework. Third, we believe the likelihood of diversionary foreign policy behavior is related to the international opportunities state leaders have to confront other countries with confrontational policies. As a result, our research design and models for empirical testing seek to take into account the varying disputes and threats faced by Japanese leaders internationally.

Theoretic Reformulation

We put forward a general argument which generates hypotheses that explain what diplomatic and military policies are likely to be chosen by state leaders under varying conditions of domestic political unrest. We first describe the stages that are associated with the development of international disputes, as our hypotheses capture foreign policy alternatives that change over the course of an international dispute. We then develop the argument and related hypotheses that explain what choices foreign policy leaders are likely to make regarding the use of diplomacy and/or military force.

International Disputes and Foreign Policy Choices

International disputes arise when a state is dissatisfied with the status quo in issue areas involving other states. If a state finds itself dissatisfied with the current status quo, a state may attempt to challenge the prevailing status quo by taking diplomatic and/or military measures against a rival state. If a challenger state initiates a call for negotiations, the challenger state and a target state may then enter into talks. Instead of diplomatic measures, a challenger state could also initiate coercive military measures to try and change the status quo with a foreign opponent. Once a challenger threatens military force and a target state reciprocates, the two states then find themselves engaged in a military confrontation. In this study, then, we consider three stages of international disputes: (i)

---

[10] Foster and Palmer (2006), however, were unable to confirm these results using updated data.

the initiation of confrontational military policies to challenge the status quo ver-
sus seeking negotiations or taking no actions, (ii) the outcome of negotiations
over disputed issues once talks have been pursued by both parties, and (iii) the
possible escalation of military confrontations to the outbreak of war.

   This framework is applied to analyzing Japan's foreign relations with four
specific states, China, Russia, Great Britain, and the United States, from 1890–
1941. We selected these countries because during this time period foreign
relations with these countries largely determined the international threat envi-
ronment within which Japanese policy makers operated. Because we believe
that a leader's incentives to engage in diversionary actions are constrained by
international target opportunities, it is important to focus our analysis on
those countries that have important and ongoing foreign policy interactions
with Japan.[11]

   Also, our specific focus on Japan's international relations with these four states
makes sense in terms of the logic underlying the diversionary theory. For politi-
cally insecure Japanese leaders to effectively induce ''in-group'' unity and cohe-
sion and therefore rally domestic support behind the leadership, an ''outside''
target must be widely perceived among the Japanese populace as a foreign adver-
sary. Drawing on the secondary historical literature (for example, Mayo 1970;
Nish 1977, 1985, 1990; Myers and Peattie 1984), we argue that within Japan there
were generally shared perceptions among elites and attentive publics that rela-
tions with China, Russia, Great Britain, and the United States remained consis-
tently salient with respect to issues and disputes relating to (i) bilateral trade
and foreign economic policies, (ii) territorial disputes, (iii) arms control and
competition over naval forces, and (iv) competition over political and economic
interests within China and Korea.[12]

Building a Theory of Diversionary Foreign Policy Choices

We begin by discussing the concept of domestic political unrest. Generally, schol-
ars use domestic unrest as an inclusive term for different types of internal political
opposition to governments, including anti-government protests, demonstrations
and riots, political terrorism and assassinations, rebellions, and radical move-
ments.[13] We define domestic political unrest as various types of opposition chal-
lenges targeted at the incumbent government and its policies. Although the type
of political challenge against the leadership could vary from labor protests to
student demonstrations to an attempted coup by the military, in each case differ-
ent opposition groups—labor, students, and the military—present demands and
pressure the leadership for policy changes.

   It is important to also consider the political saliency of opposition groups dur-
ing periods of domestic unrest. We argue that not all types of political opposi-
tion threaten an incumbent's leadership, but rather only political challenges
coming from certain opposition groups threaten an incumbent leader's reten-
tion of power. We further argue that some political challenges originate from
groups that provide more critical support for incumbent leaders to stay in offi-
ce—that is, a coalition of groups that the incumbent regime relies on for hold-
ing power. Political leaders do not need to assure continued support from all
groups, but can attain and retain power by bringing together a coalition of
groups that are strong enough to defeat other challenges to the government.

---

   [11] See Sprecher and DeRouen (2002) and DeRouen and Sprecher (2006) for related work in the diversionary
theory literature that utilizes a dyadic-based analysis.
   [12] We draw upon the classic argument in social psychology that conflict behavior with out-groups can serve to
foster social cohesion among in-groups (for example, Simmel 1955; Coser 1956).
   [13] Banks (1994) uses eight categories: assassinations, general strikes, guerrilla warfare, government crises,
purges, riots, revolutions, and anti-government demonstrations.

While the size and composition of key support groups for incumbents differ across types of political regimes, all must rely on the support of a winning coalition in some form to maintain power (for example, Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson, and Morrow 2003).

Given that an incumbent's leadership hinges upon maintaining a coalition, we expect that the incumbent is most concerned about losing coalitional support by rejecting demands from certain groups within that winning coalition. In general, government leaders have alternatives in responding to domestic political challenges—i.e., to reject or accept opposition demands. Regardless of which political groups are confronting the leadership, when the government accedes to the policy demands of the opposition, the immediate political crisis is expected to subside and therefore diversionary incentives for leaders should be weak. On the other hand, if the government rejects the opposition's policy claims, then leaders continue to face domestic political opposition and discontent. While it is less threatening for the leadership to reject demands that come from politically marginal groups, it is more difficult but sometimes necessary to reject demands of certain groups within the winning coalition. The reason for this is that winning coalitions are typically comprised of multiple groups who do not necessarily share the same policy preferences across diverse domestic and foreign policy issue areas. As a result, in fashioning a winning coalition, the leadership often times has to balance competing or varying interests among his coalition supporters. The leadership then must make hard choices over competing policy demands, given resource and other constraints. This means that, at times, the leadership is forced to be selective in choosing what policies to implement, which results in the rejection of policy demands from certain coalition partners.

One example of domestic unrest that we develop in greater detail in our case study concerns the political disputes between Prime Minister Itō and two of his coalition partners, the Jiyutō (Liberal Party) and Kokumin Kyōkai (political group) in 1894. Both Kokumin Kyōkai and the Jiyutō were part of the winning coalition[14] mainly because the Itō cabinet needed to rely on the Kokumin Kyōkai for armament expansion and industrialization, whereas the support of Jiyutō on the issue of foreign treaty revisions was valuable (Mutsu 1982). By May 1894, however, cooperation between these political allies collapsed to the point where the Jiyutō demanded budgetary and land tax reform, while Kokumin Kyōkai challenged the cabinet over revising unequal treaties with Western powers. Despite the demands emanating from these two groups inside his larger coalition, the Prime Minister rejected their demands and instead continued to implement his preferred domestic and foreign policies with the support of the other coalition members (Banno 1992).

If an incumbent leader fails to accept demands from selective groups within its winning coalition, the incumbent is threatened with the loss of political support that is important to the retention of power. It is in this situation where leadership faces declining support from some of its political allies, where we expect the use of diversionary foreign policies. We believe it theoretically crucial, then, to understand where political opposition is coming from. By distinguishing between unrest emanating from groups within or outside the winning coalition, we can identify those particular domestic political conditions under which a state leader is motivated to adopt hostile policies abroad in pursuit of domestic rally effects.[15]

---

[14] The larger winning coalition included the Genrō (elder statesmen), oligarchic elites from specific clans, the military leadership of the Navy and Army, and two smaller parties: Chuō Club and Kinki Kokutai.

[15] See MacKuen (1983) and Fordham (1998), however, for arguments about why groups from outside the winning coalition may also have an effect on diversionary behavior.

TABLE 1. *Diversionary Incentives Based on Government Responses to Domestic Opposition*

	Demands from groups inside ruling coalition	*Demands from groups outside ruling coalition*
Government accommodates demands	1 Low probability of diversionary foreign policy action	2 Low probability of diversionary foreign policy action
Government rejects demands	3 High probability of diversionary foreign policy action	4 Low probability of diversionary foreign policy action

In Table 1, we summarize our argument by considering four different situations of domestic political unrest. The four different situations reflect which domestic political groups make demands and how the government responds to those demands. We argue that when incumbent leaders reject coalition member demands (cell 3), the probability of diversionary foreign policy actions is greatest, whereas in all of the remaining cases of domestic unrest (cells 1, 2, and 4), we argue that governments are unlikely to engage in diversionary foreign policy actions. We state our first hypothesis formally as:

Hypothesis 1: *When domestic unrest is marked by government leaders rejecting demands from groups within the winning coalition, leaders are:*
   (a) more likely to initiate military threats compared to either diplomatic initiatives or to refrain from actions to challenge the foreign policy status quo with a rival state
   (b) less likely to make concessions in negotiations with a rival state, and
   (c) more likely to escalate ongoing military confrontations with a rival state.

In the challenge the status quo stage (H1a), we posit that political leaders with diversionary incentives will initiate military threats over a disputed issue, but will not pursue diplomatic initiatives for the same domestic reason. While one could argue that a call for negotiations can be advanced in a hostile manner (for example, the target of the proposal is blamed for the dispute, the initiator seeks to legitimize its unyielding position, and demands are made on the target to make key policy concessions), we think that such diplomatic initiatives are likely to be less effective than military threats in generating domestic rallying effects as a call for negotiations is often viewed as a less confrontational policy designed to resolve disputes.[16] We argue that government leaders will generally not find diplomatic policy initiatives useful for diversionary purposes, and therefore, in a pair-wise comparison between threatening military force and initiating a call for negotiations, the initiation of military threats will be preferred over pursuing a call for negotiations largely because the former is more likely to produce diversionary benefits compared to the latter.

In H1b, we consider how domestic political unrest influences the adoption by state leaders of intransigent policies during negotiations. We argue that leaders with diversionary incentives are more likely to adopt uncompromising behavior when they are engaged in negotiations during rounds of talks. We expect that these leaders are likely to hold firm and make few concessions in negotiations with a foreign adversary, because in this way leaders are able to demonstrate to their domestic political allies their resolve in defending national interests. In contrast, we believe that concessions on important issues in international disputes run the risk of generating only further controversy and discontent among those coalition groups who are challenging the government on other policy issues. We argue that a safer political strategy at a time of political weakness is to

---

[16] Additionally, it can be difficult to draw a distinction between diplomatic initiatives for friendly vs. hostile talks when coding data.

adopt a firm line in negotiations and to lay the blame for any failure of negotiations on the foreign adversary.

Finally, in H1c we consider the decision of whether to escalate a militarized dispute. We argue that if state leaders are engaged in ongoing military confrontations with international rivals, they are more likely to resort to higher levels of escalation when they have diversionary incentives. The reason is that state leaders with diversionary incentives understand that military actions will generate stronger rallying effects if they are associated with favorable foreign policy outcomes. As a result, such leaders will be more motivated to achieve a favorable crisis outcome either through escalating coercive threats, or by decisive military action in an armed conflict.

While domestic political unrest is the focus of our theoretic and empirical analyses, it is also important to consider controls that take into account the international security context in which foreign policy choices are made. First, we expect that as Japan becomes stronger militarily relative to its rivals, it is more likely to adopt confrontational policies across the three equations.[17] Second, when Japan has common security ties with its rival or is involved in a military dispute with another rival, we believe that it is more likely to adopt cooperative policies across the three equations.[18] Third, Japan is more likely to be cooperative when the rival engages in more accommodative behavior toward it, whereas if the rival relies on confrontational policies, Japan is more likely to do the same.[19] Fourth, in the negotiations and escalation equations, we include a control for whether Japan was the initiator of talks or the militarized dispute.[20] If Japanese leaders initiated talks, we believe that it is more likely to make concessions, and if Japan initiated military threats, it is more likely to escalate the military confrontation.[21]

Finally, we include two variables that address potential time-related effects in challenging the status quo equation. First, we include a control for the length of domestic unrest/no unrest periods. Second, following Beck, Katz, and Tucker (1998) we control for the effects of time by including a counter for the time that elapses between decisions to either pursue negotiations or initiate hostilities.

Research Design and Variable Measurement

We test our hypotheses by analyzing Japanese foreign policy toward four rival states: China, Russia, the UK, and the United States for the period 1890–1941. As already described, we examine Japanese foreign policy at three different stages of ongoing disputes with these countries.

---

[17] By confrontational, we mean that Japan is more likely to initiate military threats, less likely to make concessions, and more likely to escalate.

[18] By cooperative, we mean that Japan is less likely to initiate military threats, more likely to make concessions, and less likely to escalate military confrontations.

[19] As we discuss in the following paragraphs, the coding rules for the rival foreign policy variable differs across the three equations.

[20] We therefore attempt to take into account possible selection effects. We cannot run a Heckman selection model on these two equations because either Japan or rival states could have been the party to initiate actions that lead to the round of talks or the militarized disputes. To run a Heckman model would require us to restrict the analysis in the negotiations equation to only those rounds of talks initiated by Japan (less than 50%, see Table 2), or in the military escalation equation to those militarized disputes initiated by Japan (about 62%, see Table 3). As our focus is on testing diversionary theory, we do not want to limit the analysis to Japan as the initiator because we expect diversionary incentives to influence Japanese behavior regardless of whether it initiated talks or a militarized dispute.

[21] As economic stability may also be related to diversionary incentives, we also included an economic growth variable in our three equations as a robustness check. Our results remained the same, and the effect of economic growth was inconsistent across the equations.

TABLE 2. Rounds of Talks between Japan and Rival States, 1890–1941

	Total number of rounds of talks	*Initiated by Japan*	*Initiated by rival*
China–Japan	91	52	39
Russia–Japan	59	28	31
UK–Japan	71	28	43
United States–Japan	74	32	42
Total	295	139	156

Selection of Cases

In the first equation, we test whether domestic political unrest influences Japanese initiatives to challenge the foreign policy status quo with its four rival states.[22] We identified 98 ''unrest'' periods and 76 ''no-unrest'' periods within Japan from 1890–1941.[23] The 98 discrete periods of domestic unrest were identified from a number of Japanese sources and these and other sources on Japanese domestic politics were used to identify whether groups making demands were part of the government's winning coalition (for example, Dai Nihon Teikoku Gikaishi Kankōkai 1926–1930; Masumi 1966; Scalapino 1967; Teikoku Gikai 1975–1979; Kokushi Daijiten Henshū Iinkai 1979–1997; Shiratori 1981; Inoue, Nagahara, Kodama, and Okubo 1984–1990). There were 76 different periods when Japanese leaders encountered no policy disputes with domestic opposition groups. The total number of observations for the first equation totals 696.[24]

In the second equation, Japanese negotiation behavior is the DV and we test whether domestic political conditions in Japan influence decisions to offer concessions. A round of talks is the unit of observation; during 1890–1941, Japan was involved in 295 rounds of talks with China, Russia, the UK, or the United States (see Table 2). A wide range of Japanese diplomatic histories and archival sources were consulted in the process of developing this negotiation data set.[25]

In the last equation, we focus on Japanese escalation behavior in ongoing militarized conflicts with the four rival states. We test whether conditions of domestic unrest influence Japanese decisions to increase, decrease, or hold steady the number of Japanese troops deployed during the course of a military crisis that could threaten war. The unit of observation, therefore, is a militarized dispute between Japan and any one of its four rivals, China, Russia, the UK, and the United States, from 1890–1941. Once again, Japanese primary and secondary sources were heavily drawn upon in constructing this data set.[26] As shown in Table 3, we identified 68 military conflicts between Japan and the four rival states between 1890 and 1941.

Measurement of Dependent Variables

For the first DV in Equation 1, we code three outcomes: (i) no action and therefore maintenance of the status quo; (ii) attempt to open diplomatic talks and negotiations; and (iii) initiation of a threat or use of military force.

---

[22] We also checked to see whether there was a problem with reverse causality in our results. To do this, we regressed (using logit) the onset of domestic unrest on Japanese MID involvement against rival states. We found no support for the claim that current military hostilities causes an increase in the probability of domestic unrest occurring.

[23] As a sensitivity check, we also tested our analysis using a dyad-monthly data set. Our results across all three DVs remained very consistent and are available as part of our replication data set.

[24] We multiply 174 (the sum of 98 unrest and 76 no-unrest cases) by 4 (the number of Japan's rival states).

[25] The primary sources include archival documents from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gaimushō (1936–1963, 1949–1951, 1964–1987, 1965–1966, 1988, 1996) and Gaimushō Chōsabu (1998). The secondary sources include Crowley (1966), Kajima (1970–1974), Okamoto (1970), Hosoya (1971), Morley (1974), Shinobu (1974), Nish (1977), Kajima (1980), Ikei (1982), Kajima Heiwa Kenkyūjo (1983–1985), Hunter (1984), Beasley (1987).

[26] *Ibid.* In addition, we also utilized Takeuchi (1935), Iriye (1965, 1987), Mitani (1997), and Katō (2002).

TABLE 3. Military Conflicts between Japan and Rival States, 1890–1941

	Total number of military conflicts	*Initiated by Japan*	*Initiated by rival*
China–Japan	36	24	12
Russia–Japan	23	12	11
UK–Japan	6	4	2
US–Japan	3	2	1
Total	68	42	26

The second DV is the outcome of negotiations involving Japan and its four rival states. A value of 1 is recorded if Japan offers concessions to a rival state, and 0 if no concessions were made.

The final DV is Japanese policy in military confrontations. Conceptually, we posit three main policy alternatives: (i) maintaining the existing number of troops deployed at the onset of the military confrontation; (ii) escalating the confrontation with the reinforcement of additional armed forces; or (iii) de-escalating by reducing the number of armed forces. To measure these outcomes, we use changes in the number of Japanese troops deployed in the course of a military confrontation. We subtracted the number of troops engaged at the outset (for example, a display of force or limited use of force) from the total number engaged when either the confrontation ended short of war, or it escalated to the outbreak of war. Once again, we drew heavily upon Japanese sources for data on troop numbers deployed over the course of a military confrontation.[27] Positive values indicate that the Japanese government decided to escalate the level of hostilities against a rival state. Likewise, negative numbers indicate a decision to de-escalate the level of hostilities against the rival.

To code each of our response variables, we relied upon secondary historical works as well as Japanese archival sources (see footnote 25).

Measurement of Explanatory Variables

We begin with the coding procedures for our key diversionary hypothesis and then we turn to the control variables:

Domestic Political Unrest and Diversionary Incentives

To test H1, we need to first code two separate variables from which an interaction term can be created. The first variable measures whether opposition groups making demands on the government are inside or outside the winning coalition that forms the base of political support for the government (a value of 1 if inside the coalition and 0 otherwise). The second variable measures whether the government rejects or accommodates the demands of domestic opposition groups (a value of 1 if demands are rejected and 0 otherwise). The interaction term, which tests HI, is generated by multiplying these two individual variables.

Drawing upon a wide range of Japanese and English-language sources, we were able to identify 98 cases of domestic unrest, as well as which groups challenged the government and what was the policy response of the leadership to the opposition it faced (Dai Nihon Teikoku Gikaishi Kankōkai 1926–1930; Scalapino 1967; Teikoku Gikai 1975–1979; Kokushi Daijiten Henshū Iinkai 1979–1997; Inoue et al. 1984–1990; Shūgiin and Sangiin 1990). These same sources were relied upon to identify which groups formed the winning coalition for different governments. Opposition groups such as political parities not constituting a part

---

[27] In addition to the sources listed in footnote 24, we also utilized Takeuchi (1935), Fujiwara (1961), Iriye (1965, 1987), Mitani (1997), and Katō (2002).

of a coalition cabinet were consistently judged to be outside winning coalitions, while opposition groups such as coalitional political parties, ministers within an incumbent cabinet, and Army generals at ministerial posts within cabinets (particularly after the attempted coup in 1936) were coded as within the winning coalition.

Relative Military Capabilities

This variable measures Japanese military strength against rival states and is created by taking the average of three different ratios (military personnel, military expenditure, and expenditures per soldier for both Japan and rival states), each of which are adjusted by distance from each state to locations where military conflicts were most likely, given the particular disputes between Japan and each of the rival states (Bueno de Mesquita 1981). We relied upon the Correlates of War (COW) Project Data Set on National Material Capabilities, 1816–2001 (NMC Dataset Version 3.02) to code this variable. Missing Chinese data—mostly for 1890–1920—was filled in by consulting the volumes of *China Year Book* (1912–1919, 1922, 1924–1928) and a secondary source (Yang 1985). In the status quo and negotiation equations, we logged this variable to control for its skewed distribution. In the escalation equation, we created another control variable concerning the relative military capabilities at the local level between Japan and its rival states. This variable is measured by the number of troops (measured in units of 10,000), stationed prior to the outbreak of military disputes in the specific location where the disputes began.

Alliances

We construct a dummy variable to indicate the presence of security ties between Japan and a given rival state. A value of 1 is coded if Japan and its foreign opponent have a formal military alliance (defense pact, an entente, nonaggression pacts or consultation pacts). To identify such alliances, we relied upon COW Formal Interstate Alliance Data Set, 1816–2000 (Alliance Dataset Version 3.03, 2003) and the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) dataset (Leeds, Ritter, Mitchell, and Long 2002; Leeds 2005).

Issues at Stake

A value of 1 is recorded if the subject of negotiations concerned disputed territories between Japan and rival states, and 0 otherwise. Japanese sources describedearlier to build a data set on rounds of talks (see footnotes 25 and 26) were also used to code this variable.

Other Dispute Involvement

This variable is created specifically for the first equation because of the way we structure the data for estimating this model. As noted earlier, we observe Japanese foreign policy actions against four rival states during each period of unrest/no-unrest. We therefore create a dummy variable for whether Japan is engaged in military hostilities against other rival states. For example, if Japan threatens or uses force against Russia during a given unrest period, this variable is recorded as a 1 for the remaining rival states, China, the UK, and the United States. Similarly, we also control for the whether the rival state is involved in military hostilities against other states.

Rival's Foreign Policy Behavior

In the initiation equation, two separate variables are used. The first variable receives a 1 if the rival pursued diplomatic efforts and 0 otherwise. The second variable receives a 1 if the rival initiated a military threat and 0 otherwise. The comparison (or omitted) category is no foreign policy action. This variable is

coded to be time sensitive to our DV. For no-unrest observations, we code the highest level of the rival's foreign policy actions taken during the duration of the observation. For unrest periods and because of possible concerns of endogeneity, we code the rival's foreign policy behavior based on actions taken after the unrest period begins, but before we code the foreign policy actions taken by Japan.

In the negotiations equation, the rival's foreign policy behavior is a dummy variable with a value of 1 for making concessions and 0 otherwise. We include two variables in the escalation equation. The first variable measures the number of troops that rival states deployed or withdrew in the course of the military confrontation with Japan (measured in units of 10,000 soldiers). The second variable receives a 1 if a rival concedes to Japan in the militarized dispute and 0 otherwise.

Lengths of Unrest/No-Unrest Period
This variable applies to only the initiation model and measures the number of months for each period of domestic unrest or no unrest. While the duration of unrest periods fluctuates only between 1 and 4 months, no-unrest periods vary from 1 to 26 months (though 80% are actually 4 months or less).

Japan as an Initiator
This dummy variable is recorded a 1 if Japan is the initiator of a round of talks for the negotiation model and zero otherwise. In the escalation equation, a value of 1 is coded if Japan initiated a military conflict and zero otherwise. Coding Japan as the initiator of talks is taken from our data set on rounds of talks (see footnote 19), while military threat initiations were coded based on the COW Data Set on Militarized Interstate Disputes (see Ghosn, Palmer, and Bremer 2004), Brecher and Wilkenfeld (2000), as well as Japanese sources (see footnote 25).

Data Analysis

We employ three statistical models to test our hypotheses. In the first set of tests, we analyze Japan's diplomatic and military attempts to change the status quo in relations with rival states. The three values on the DV described earlier are treated as categorical but not strictly ordered. As a result, we use multinomial logit models in which pair-wise comparisons can be made among the three categories of the DV. In the second set of tests, we examine Japan's negotiation behavior in rounds of talks and we use logistic models given the dichotomous coding of outcomes on the DV. Finally, in the third set of analyses, we test hypotheses on escalation behavior in military confrontations and we use ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, given the continuous measure of the DV.[28]

Multinomial Logit Results for Foreign Policy Initiation Models

In Table 4, we present our multinomial results. Two pair-wise comparisons are of theoretic interest in testing H1a: (i) initiating military threats vs. diplomatic initiatives to seek negotiations, and (ii) initiating military threats vs. no actions to challenge the status quo.

---

[28] We also tested for multicollinearity across our three equations but found little evidence of it in any equations using model-based diagnostics, such as the variance inflation factor, eigenvalues, condition index, and the determinant of the correlation matrix. However, the auxiliary R^2 for the interaction term in Equation 3 is .90. This is largely due to the fact that we use an interaction in a data set with only 68 observations. Nevertheless, our model diagnostics indicated that multicollinearity was not a serious problem for the full model.

Table 4. Multinomial Logit Analysis of Japanese Decisions to Challenge the Status Quo

	Military threat initiation vs. diplomatic initiation	Military threat initiation vs. maintain status quo
Group inside coalition	−1.221 (0.808)*	−0.635 (0.767)
Government rejects demands	−2.167 (1.044)**	−1.415 (1.019)*
Group inside coalition × government rejects demands	3.643 (1.282)***	2.554 (1.234)**
Military balance (ln)	1.229 (0.516)***	1.209 (0.489)***
Common security ties	−1.476 (0.853)**	1.634 (0.829)**
Japan in other MID	0.837 (0.404)**	0.510 (0.361)*
Rival state in other MID	−0.404 (0.551)	−0.273 (0.502)
Length of unrest/no-unrest period	−0.0003 (0.0444)	0.101 (0.0411)***
Rival initiated negotiation	1.007 (0.490)**	0.714 (0.427)**
Rival initiated threat	−0.224 (0.950)	0.327 (0.854)
Time counter	−0.0006 (0.0146)	−0.010 (0.0129)
Constant	−0.0916 (0.610)	−2.104 (0.540)***

(*Notes.* Observations = 696. *$p < .1$, **$p < .05$, ***$p < .01$ All tests of significance are one-tailed with robust standard errors.)

We see in Table 4 that for both pair-wise comparisons, the interaction terms are positive and highly significant as expected, but one cannot draw any confident conclusions about the significance of these interaction terms by simply looking at these reported results, given the complexities of interpreting interaction terms in nonlinear models (for example, Kam and Franzese 2007). Instead, we must turn to the first differences to discern the significance of these interaction terms which are presented in Table 5.[29]

In Table 5, we see that the substantive effects of the interaction term are indeed significant. Specifically, Japan is 400% more likely to threaten force when it rejects demands conditional on whether the demands are from groups inside the winning coalition's base. Similarly, Japan is 185% more likely to initiate hostilities when the demands are from groups within the winning coalition conditional on whether the government rejected such demands. Both of these findings strongly support our central argument that diversionary incentives are greatest when government leaders reject domestic opposition demands and those demands come from groups who are part of the leadership's winning coalition.

These supportive findings for H1a hold while controlling for other influences on decisions to threaten force.[30] First, in Table 5, we see that as Japan moves from a position of military weakness to an advantage, it is about 191% more likely to threaten force. Second, Japan is nearly 74% less likely to engage in hostilities when it has an alliance with its rival. Third, Japan, contrary to our expectations, is 71% more likely to threaten or use force when it is engaged in hostilities against another rival. Finally, there is a percentage change of 49% in the probability of Japan threatening force when the rival state has offered concessions.[31]

---

[29] Following Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2005), we run 10,000 simulations with Clarify (King, Tomz, and Wittenberg 2000) to compute the first differences and standard errors in order to determine the significance of the interaction term.

[30] Because of space constraints, we only present the first difference and marginal effects (Equation 3) for our statistically significant control variables.

[31] We do not compute the first differences for the length variable even though it is significant in one of the pair-wise comparisons. We only include this variable because it controls for the way we organized our data set, but it is not of substantive importance to our analysis.

TABLE 5. Predicted Probabilities of Japan Initiating Military Threats

Explanatory variables	Change in variable	Baseline probability (%)	Post-change probability (%)	First difference	Percentage change
Group inside coalition conditional on government rejects demands	No to yes	2.1	6.0	3.9% (.022)	185.7
Government rejects demand conditional on group inside coalition	No to yes	1.2	6.0	4.8% (.025)	400
Military balance (ln)	1:4 to 4:1	2.4	7.0	4.6%	191.7
Common security ties	No to yes	3.8	1.0	−2.8%	−73.7
Japan in other MID	No to yes	3.8	6.5	2.7%	71.1
Rival's initiated concessions	No to yes	3.8	7.9	5.9%	49.2

(*Notes.* In calculating the predicted probabilities, all other variables are held at their mean or modal values. The statistical program Clarify (King et al. 2000) was used for calculating predicted probabilities. We report the standard errors for the first differences for the interaction terms as it is necessary to compute the standard errors associated with probability changes to determine if the interaction term is significant.)

Logit Results for Negotiation Outcome Model

The central hypothesis (H1b) is that under conditions of domestic unrest that create diversionary incentives, Japanese leaders should be less likely to make concessions. The results of the logit analysis are presented in Table 6 with the first differences reported in Table 7.

As we can see, the logit findings are supportive of our key hypothesis. The estimated coefficient on the interaction term is negative and significant ($b = -2.438$, $p < .016$), which is consistent with our expectation that government leaders are more likely to demonstrate intransigent behavior in negotiations when they face a loss of support from domestic groups that form part of their winning coalition. However, as noted previously, we must calculate the first differences to be confident about the substantive significance of the interaction term. In Table 7, we find that Japan is 82% less likely to offer concessions when it rejects demands, conditional on whether the demands are from groups inside the winning coalition's base of political support. Similarly, Japan is nearly 65% less likely to offer concessions when the demands are from the groups within the winning coalition conditional on whether the government rejects such demands. Both of these results strongly support our central claim regarding the effects of domestic unrest on concession-making behavior. When diversionary incentives were

TABLE 6. Logit Model of Concessions by Japan in Negotiations

	Concessions
Group inside coalition	−0.327 (0.422)
Government rejects demands	1.103 (0.995)
Group inside coalition × government rejects demands	−2.438 (1.137)**
Common security ties	0.442 (0.226)**
Military balance (ln)	0.694 (0.313)**
Talks initiated by Japan	−0.403 (0.273)*
Territorial issues at stake	−0.606 (0.340)**
Rival's negotiation behavior	1.326 (0.275)***
Constant	−0.0158 (0.346)

(*Notes.* Observations = 295. *$p < .10$, **$p < .05$, ***$p < .01$ All tests of significance are one-tailed with robust standard errors.)

Table 7. Predicted Probabilities of Concessions by Japan in Negotiations

Explanatory variables	Change in variable	Baseline probability (%)	Post-change probability (%)	First difference	Percentage change
Group inside coalition conditional on government rejects demands	No to yes	31.7	11.2	−20.5% (.094)	−64.7
Government rejects demand conditional on group inside coalition	No to yes	62.7	11.2	−51.5% (.20)	−82.1
Military balance (ln)	1:4 to 4:1	34.1	45.1	21.0%	61.8
Common security ties	No to yes	38.4	55.1	16.7%	43.5
Territorial issues at stake	No to yes	38.4	25.8	−12.6%	−32.8
Rival's initiated concessions	No to yes	38.4	69.6	31.2%	81.3

(*Notes.* In calculating the predicted probabilities, all other variables are held at their mean or modal values. The statistical program Clarify (King et al. 2000) was used for calculating predicted probabilities. We report the standard errors for the first differences for the interaction terms as it is necessary to compute the standard errors associated with probability changes to determine if the interaction term is significant.)

present, Japanese leaders were far less likely to make concessions and instead were more likely to adopt a hard-line bargaining position.

Several of the control variables are supported by the logit findings (Table 6). First, alliance ties produced a percentage change of 43% in Japanese concessions (Table 7). Second, when the negotiations involved territorial issues, Japan is almost 33% less likely to offer concessions. Contrary to our expectations, however, Japan is about 62% more likely to make concessions when it has greater military capabilities (that is, move the military balance from the 20th to 80th percentile). Finally, we see that accommodating behavior by a rival in negotiations resulted in a percentage change of 81% in concession-making by Japan.

Results for Military Escalation Model

In our data set, there are 68 military conflicts between 1890–1941 in which Japan directly confronts one of the four rival states, China, Russia, the UK, and the United States. Unlike the first two analyses, the DV here is continuous as we measure the change in the number of armed forces deployed from the beginning to the end of a military confrontation. The results of an OLS regression are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Estimates of Japanese Troops Deployed or Withdrawn in Militarized Disputes

	Level of escalation
Group inside coalition	−2,807.1 (2,473.6)
Government rejects demands	−1,002.2 (3,832.6)
Group inside coalition × government rejects demands	15,189.5 (7,663.5)**
Overall military balance	57,010.4 (26,185.7)**
Local military balance	−3,098.2 (1,680.3)**
Common security ties	−9,143.5 (10,109.5)
Japan initiated conflict	4,100.5 (2,467.5)**
Rival's concession to Japan	−5,617.5 (2,578.9)**
Rival's number of troops deployed	401.4 (171.1)**
Constant	−22,744.2 (10,821.4)**

(*Notes.* Observations = 68. R^2 = 0.4477. *$p < 0.1$, **$p < 0.05$, ***$p < .01$. All tests of significance are one-tailed with robust standard errors.)

We find support for our primary hypothesis that when domestic unrest creates diversionary incentives, Japanese leaders will escalate militarized disputes by deploying a greater number of troops during the military confrontation (H1c). In Table 8, the coefficient for the interaction term of the government rejecting demands from groups within the winning coalition is positive and significant as expected. This supports our argument that when Japanese leaders faced a loss of political support from groups within their winning coalition, they were more motivated to try and rally their support by a stronger show of force and therefore committed more troops to armed operations.[32] Specifically, we find that based on the marginal effects for the interaction term, Japan deploys almost 15,000 more troops when it rejects the demands of coalition partners, conditional on the demands being made by groups from within the winning coalition. Likewise, there is an increase of over 12,000 troops when the demands are from within the coalition conditional on Japan rejecting the demands.

Several of the control variables in the equation also help explain Japanese troop level commitments. First, Japan reduces the number of troops by about 3,000 over the course of the military crisis when it has a more favorable local balance of forces. On the other hand, the stronger Japan is in the overall balance of forces, the more willing it is to escalate the militarized dispute by deploying an additional 57,000 troops to the area of direct confrontation. Third, when a rival state increases its forces by 10,000 soldiers, Japan increases its own troops by about 4,000. Conversely, Japan withdraws about 5,600 soldiers following a rival's state acceptance of Japanese demands. Finally, if Japan is the initiator of the militarized dispute, it increases the number of troops deployed by more than 4,000.

Case Study

We now turn to a case study of the outbreak of war between Japan and China in 1894. This case nicely illustrates how diversionary incentives influenced all three of the DVs we have tested: the initiation of military threats by Japan, the withholding of concessions by Japan in negotiations, and finally the large-scale escalation of force by Japan. We first discuss the domestic unrest in May and June of 1894 between Prime Minister Itō Hirobumi and his coalition partners, the Jiyutō and Kokumin Kyōkai, and then relate this to Japan's confrontational policies toward China that lead to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in August 1894. Many scholars have, in fact, argued that the Sino-Japanese War is a case of the diversionary use of force by Japan. For example, Akita (1967:117, 256) argues that ''one of the most widely held beliefs on the cause of the war is that Itō, distracted beyond endurance by his difficulties with the Diet, brought about the war to shift the nation's attention abroad and away from internal affairs. … (Itō) had looked to a war with China as a possible solution for the Japanese constitutional difficulty.'' Likewise, Nish argues that ''[Foreign Minister] Mutsu and Prime Minister Itō must have been sorely tempted to adopt a course which would have been popular with the people and the Diet: to send a force to Korea in order to quench the passions which had been aroused in Japan and to neutralize political opposition'' (Nish 1977:36).

Prime Minister Itō Hirobumi and his cabinet came to power in August 1892 on a platform of expansionist policies. In the following year, an increasing number of political elites in the government began to advocate for closer relations with popular parties to strengthen their political coalition (Banno 1992). Consequently,

---

[32] We also need to estimate the marginal effects of the interaction term in this OLS model (Kam and Franzese 2007). The marginal effect of the interaction term, group inside coalition conditional on government rejects demands ($b = 12,382.5$, $p < .10$), and government rejects demands conditional on group inside coalition ($b = 14,187.31$, $p < .01$) are both significant.

Prime Minister Itō decided to officially ally with the Jiyutō and Kokumin Kyōkai. Most of Itō's cabinet ministers regarded both of these parties as their political allies, mainly because the cabinet needed to rely on the Kokumin Kyōkai for support on armament expansion and industrialization, while Jiyutō was supportive on the key issue of foreign treaty revision (Mutsu 1982). As a result, the winning collation was expanded to include these two parties.[33]

For Itō Hirobumi, the Jiyutō, with 32% of the seats in the House of Representatives, was an attractive ally, because Itō already had close connections with the party leaders. To join the coalition and gain the status of a major party, the Jiyutō was forced to compromise with the government over budgetary and administration issues such as armaments expansion, land taxes, and the development of industry (Itō 1991). Nevertheless, the party joined the winning coalition in the hope of advancing some of its agenda, especially land-tax reduction. Relations between Jiyutō and Itō started to deteriorate, however, with disagreements over domestic policy, especially during the sixth Diet session (May 15 1894–June 5 1894) (Banno 1992; Komiya 1995). Specifically, the Jiyutō decided to denounce the Itō cabinet for failing to achieve budget and administrative reform relating to land assessment and tax reduction and institutional reform of the Navy (Itō 1991). The Itō cabinet refused to accept the demands, which provoked the Jiyutō to condemn the government and to submit new tax cutting and impeachment bills in May 1894 (Takeuchi 1935; Banno 1992).

At the same time, Prime Minister Itō also found himself in conflict with Kokumin Kyōkai during the sixth Diet. The Kokumin Kyōkai was considered a natural ally because they agreed with the government on a range of policies such as the development of armed forces, expansion of national power, the promotion of industry, and a high level of taxation. However, a dispute emerged over the so-called unequal foreign treaties.[34] Although both the government and Kokumin Kyōkai shared an ultimate goal of gaining equal status for Japan by revising the treaties, they disagreed on the timing and means to do so (Itō 1991). For example, the Itō cabinet attempted to initiate separate negotiations with each country, beginning with Great Britain. The leadership of Kokumin Kyōkai, however, viewed Itō's negotiation policy as too ''dependent'' on the Western powers. Consequently, the move to negotiate with the British was challenged by the Kokumin Kyōkai. Moreover, other groups critical of the Itō government's treaty revision policy rapidly grew in number and became more institutionally organized and the Kokumin Kyōkai played a vital role in this process (Banno 1992; Komiya 1995). Consequently, the Kokumin Kyōkai changed its position from a reliable ally to a party demanding the government alter its strategy in negotiating the unequal treaties. Despite the pressure from Kokumin Kyōkai, the Prime Minister rejected its demands in May 1894 and continued to negotiate with the British.

Thus, given the aforementioned political attacks from two members of the winning coalition, Prime Minister Itō's political standing and credibility had been severely damaged by the beginning of June 1894. As we argued in our theoretic framework, therefore, Premier Itō found himself engaged in a period of domestic political unrest that should have generated diversionary incentives. Indeed, as Foreign Minister Mutsu indicated in his letter to Japanese diplomat Aoki Shuzo, cabinet downfall was becoming imminent and inevitable unless some sort of astonishing international event could distract the people's attention away from domestic problems (Akita 1967; Mutsu 1982).

On the verge of the cabinet collapsing, heightened international tension emerged in neighboring Korea as an internal crisis broke out in the spring of

---

[33] See note 14 for the other members of the winning coalition.

[34] Since 1858, Japanese relations with foreign powers were governed by these treaties, which deprived Japan of tariff autonomy and stipulated extraterritoriality for foreigners in Japan (Akita 1967).

1894. For over two decades, the independence of Korea was an important foreign policy dispute between Japan and China, in which Japan challenged Korea's subordination to China with the goal of establishing its own dominating sphere of influence in the Korean peninsula. Specifically, from the end of March 1894, Korea was engulfed in a civil conflict involving the poorly trained forces of the government fighting against the followers of a religious movement, calling themselves Tonghak (Paine 2003). By the end of May, the violence within Korea had escalated further between the Tonghak and Korean forces loyal to King Kojong. Japan was quick to seize on the domestic uprisings as an opportunity to take forceful actions that would challenge Chinese rights in Korea (Nish 1977).

On June 2, 1894, without an official request from Korea for Japanese assistance, the cabinet decided to send Japanese troops (a mixed brigade of about 7,000 soldiers) and war vessels to secure Japanese interests in Korea (Kajima 1970–1974; Okumura 1995). By June 5, the Itō administration had already established its Imperial Headquarters in Hiroshima and dispatched a group of soldiers (from the fifth Division of the Army) to Inch'on, the port closest to Seoul. Thus, consistent with Hypothesis 1a, the Itō cabinet initiated a military confrontation with Korea and China in part to offset the political discontent of its coalitional partners over domestic policy and to divert criticism away from the controversy over the unequal treaties. Indeed, as Banno (1992) argued, the political instability at home was an important cause of aggressive Japanese policies against China in Korea.

The benefit of engaging in international conflict, namely a rally-round-the-flag effect, came immediately as the leadership of both the Kokumin Kyōkai and Jiyutō parties quickly endorsed the government's choice of military action in dealing with the Tonghak uprising. Additionally, parliamentary members, army officers, and newspapers all clamored for and supported strong action against Korea and China (Banno 1992). For instance, the newspaper, Nihon Shimbun, which previously had strongly criticized the government over the policy of treaty revision, began to express openly its support for the government's confrontation with China over Korean matters (Inoue et al. 1984–1990). Furthermore, this rapid change in the opposition's policy from confronting the government to strongly supporting it took place despite Itō's decision on June 2 to dissolve the Diet against the opposition's objections.

On June 11, only 9 days after the initial deployment of forces by Japan, Korean government forces and insurgents concluded an armistice on June 11 ending the domestic turmoil within Korea, but not the crisis between Japan and China. While China, on the following day, suggested that both Japan and China withdraw from Korea (Kajima 1970–1974), Japan responded with a hard-line policy of maintaining its expanded military presence in Korea and seeking to displace China as the dominant external power within Korea. In order to do this, on June 16 the Itō cabinet proposed to hold negotiations with China on a set of proposals for implementing political reform in Korea (Gaimushō 1988). Prime Minister Itō took a hard-line stance in negotiations by making several demands on China and Korea with the intent of ensuring that diplomacy would fail and thus forcing a larger military confrontation with China. On June 21, China, as expected, responded by objecting to what it viewed as a Japanese plan to interfere in Korean internal affairs. In turn, the Itō administration replied to the Chinese representative by indicating that Japan would not withdraw troops from Korea until its far-reaching reform program had been implemented (Mutsu 1982).

Despite the inability of the two countries to reach agreement in the June negotiations, Japan and China held a second round of talks in Beijing on July 10. Negotiations were again stalemated as Japan refused to make any concessions. Upon the breakdown of talks, Prime Minister Itō signed an official note on July

12, warning China for the second time that Japan would break off its diplomatic relationship with China unless the Japanese proposal was accepted. By July 17, after a number of cabinet meetings, Prime Minister Itō and his ministers approved an ultimatum, which China received on July 19. Within 5 days, China had to either accept the Japanese proposal on Korean reforms or face the threat of force by Japan (Mutsu 1982). In sum, given the diversionary incentives motivating the Itō government, the Prime Minister took a hard-line stance in both rounds of negotiations during June and July with China, which is consistent with our theory and Hypothesis 1b.

While the Itō administration was engaged in the aforementioned rounds of talks, it also accelerated its military preparation for war with China. On June 2, 2,000 Japanese troops landed, and then marched into Seoul by June 5; an additional 5,000 fully equipped troops disembarked on June 15. By the end of June, 10 Japanese warships were patrolling the Korean waters and about 7,000 Japanese troops were stationed on Korean soil, as opposed to 2,100 Chinese forces stationed there (Fujimura 1973). By mid-July, the Itō cabinet was preparing further military actions at the time an ultimatum was issued to China. In particular, Prime Minister Itō ordered Navy Minister Saigo to take any necessary naval actions when the ultimatum became due (Takeuchi 1935). The Imperial Headquarters in Hiroshima was instructed to propose three principle military strategies that reflected possible scenarios of naval battles with Chinese forces (Kajima 1970–1974; Fujimura 1973). Additionally, within Korea, Japanese forces seized control of the royal palace in Soeul and formed a puppet government which then formally requested that Japan expel all Chinese forces (by now more than 15,000) from Korea.

The due date for the ultimatum was set for July 25, and on this very day, hostilities broke out at Asan and P'ung. Japanese and Chinese warships started exchanging fire near P'ung Island (Battle of P'ung) and Japan sank a Chinese vessel, killing over 1,000 troops. Shortly thereafter, on August 1, 1894, the Japanese government declared war against China. The war lasted for 9 months, ending with a Japanese military victory, and the two countries signed the peace treaty at Shimonoseki in Japan on April 17, 1895. The military escalation of the crisis between China and Japan from early June to the outbreak of the war in August conforms closely to our theory and Hypothesis 1c. The Itō government, with strong diversionary incentives, seemed resolved from the outset to use force to displace Chinese influence and therefore substantially increased its military presence in Korea, made plans for war, and aggressively confronted Chinese naval forces just as diplomatic efforts to coerce China into making major concessions had failed.

Conclusion

In this article, we developed and then tested an argument about why diversionary foreign policy actions are only to be expected when leaders reject the policy demands of groups that are part of the winning coalition. Only when faced with a loss of political support from such allies are leaders motivated to try and rally their support through confrontational policies abroad. In contrast, we argue that when domestic unrest is characterized by leaders either accommodating political opposition or rejecting the demands of opposition groups that are outside the winning coalition, leaders have few reasons to engage in diversionary foreign policy behavior. As a result, we believe that it is critical to distinguish among domestic unrest cases in terms of whether the opposition is within or outside the winning coalition and whether the government accommodates or rejects opposition demands, and that such distinctions constitute an important theoretic contribution to the literature on diversionary theory.

We test our argument in a series of statistical analyses of Japanese foreign policy behavior from 1890 to 1941. Across all three stages of our analysis, the statistical findings are consistent and supportive of our argument. As expected, only domestic political unrest resulting from incumbent leaders' rejection of coalition demands caused them to initiate confrontational military policies, to adopt more hard-line negotiating policies, and to escalate ongoing military conflicts.

There are several directions to consider in future research that build upon the results of this study. Theoretically, the analysis could be extended by developing models to explain when governments are likely to accommodate or reject the demands of political opposition groups. If such models are developed, this would help to further elucidate the domestic and international conditions that create incentives for diversionary foreign policy by driving the theoretic analysis back one step further in the causal chain. Another important theoretic issue to consider is our claim that diversionary theory is best understood as a theory of the timing of confrontational foreign policy behavior as opposed to a direct and central cause of international conflict. We do not attempt in this study to directly address this question but instead we adopt a research design strategy that situates the analysis of diversionary behavior in the context of ongoing disputes and relations with major rival states. In the absence of existing disputes and unsettled issues in foreign relations with other countries, we do not think that conditions of domestic unrest are likely to cause leaders to pursue highly conflictual policies internationally. Put differently, we see diversionary theory as a proximate causal explanation of conflict behavior as opposed to a theory that identifies underlying causes of international crises and war. We think this is an important question to grapple with in future research.

Empirically, the generalizability of our argument needs to be tested much more systematically by extending large-n analyses across different temporal and spatial domains. At the same time, our theoretic approach does place limits on the use of large cross-national time series data sets to test our arguments. The primary reason is that quite detailed information is needed in cases of domestic unrest, in order to determine whether diversionary incentives are present for incumbent leaders. As result, it is likely that further statistical testing of the theory will center on single countries such as we have done, or larger efforts in which a small number of countries are pooled together for comparative analyses.

References

Akita, George. (1967) *Foundations of Constitutional Government in Modern Japan, 1886–1900.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Banks, Arthur. (1994) *Cross-National Time-Series Data Archive.* Binghamton, NY: Center for Social Analysis, State University of New York at Binghamton.

Banno, Junji. (1992) *The Establishment of the Japanese Constitutional System.* London: Routledge.

Beasley, W.G.. (1987) *Japanese Imperialism 1894–1945.* Oxford: Claredon Press.

Beck, Nathaniel, Jonathan Katz, and Richard Tucker. (1998) Taking Time Seriously: Time–Series-Cross-Section Analysis with a Binary Dependent Variable. *American Journal of Political Science* 42 (4): 1260–1288.

Bennett, Scott, and Timothy Nordstrom. (2000) Foreign Policy Substitutability and Internal Economic Problems in Enduring Rivalries. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44 (1): 33–61.

Brambor, Thomas, William Clark, and Matt Golder. (2005) Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analyses. *Political Analysis* 14 (1): 63–82.

Brecher, Michael, and Jonathan Wilkenfeld. (2000) *A Study of Crisis.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Brulé, David J. (2008a) The Poliheuristic Research Program: An Assessment and Suggestions for Further Progress. *International Studies Review* 10 (2): 266–293.

Brulé, David J. (2008b) Congress, Presidential Approval, and U.S. *Dispute Initiation. Foreign Policy Analysis* 4 (4): 349–370.

BUENO DE MESQUITA, BRUCE. (1981) *The War Trap*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

BUENO DE MESQUITA, BRUCE, ALASTAIR SMITH, RANDOLPH SIVERSON, AND JAMES MORROW. (2003) *The Logic of Political Survival*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

China Year Book. (1912–1919, 1922, 1924–1928) Shanghai: North China Daily News & Herald.

CHIOZZA, GIACOMO, AND H.E. GOEMANS. (2003) Peace through Insecurity: Tenure and International Conflict. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 47 (4): 443–467.

CHIOZZA, GIACOMO, AND H.E. GOEMANS. (2004) International Conflict and the Tenure of Leaders: Is War Still *Ex Post* Inefficient? *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (3): 604–619.

CLARK, DAVID. (2003) Can Strategic Interaction Divert Diversionary Behavior? A Model of U.S. Conflict Propensity. *Journal of Politics* 65 (4): 1013–1039.

COSER, LEWIS. (1956) *The Function of Social Conflict*. New York: Free Press.

CROWLEY, JAMES. (1966) *Quest for Autonomy: National Security and Foreign Policy 1930–1938*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

DAI NIHON TEIKOKU GIKAISHI KANKŌKAI. (1926–1930) *Dai Nihon Teikoku Gikai shi, Record of the Imperial Japanese Diet*. Shizuoka: Dai Nihon Teikoku Gikaishi Kankōkai Shuppankai.

DEROUEN JR, KARL (2003) Decision Not to Use Force at Dien Bien Phu: A Poliheuristic Perspective. In *Integrating Cognitive and Rational Theories of Foreign Policy Decision Making*, edited by Alex Mintz. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

DEROUEN JR, KARL, AND SHAUN GOLDFINCH. (2005) Putting the Numbers to Work: Implications for Violence Prevention. *Journal of Peace Research* 4 (1): 27–45.

DEROUEN JR, KARL, AND CHRISTOPHER SPRECHER. (2006) Arab Behaviour Towards Israel: Strategic Avoidance or Exploiting Opportunities? *British Journal of Political Science* 36 (3): 549–560.

FORDHAM, BENJAMIN. (1998) Partisanship, Macroeconomic Policy, and U.S. Uses of Force, 1949–1994. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42 (4): 418–439.

FOSTER, DENNIS M. (2008) Comfort to Our Adversaries? Partisan Ideology, Domestic Vulnerability, and Strategic Targeting. *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4 (4): 419–436.

FOSTER, DENNIS M., AND GLENN PALMER. (2006) Presidents, Public Opinion, and Diversionary Behavior: The Role of Partisan Support Reconsidered. *Foreign Policy Analysis* 2 (3): 269–288.

FUJIMURA, MICHIO. (1973) *Nisshin Sensō*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.

FUJIWARA, AKIRA. (1961) *Gunjishi*. Tokyo: Tokyo Keizai Shimpōsha.

GAIMUSHŌ. (1936–1963) *Dai Nihon Gaikō Bunsho*. Tokyo: Gaimushō.

GAIMUSHŌ. (1949–1951) *Archives in the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1868–1945*. Washington: Photoduplication Service, Library of Congress.

GAIMUSHŌ. (1964–1987) *Nihon Gaikō Bunsho:Taishō*. Tokyo: Gaimushō.

GAIMUSHŌ. (1965–1966) *Nihon Giakō Nenpyō Narabi Shuyō Monjo 1840–1945*, Vol. 1. Tokyo: Hara shobō.

GAIMUSHŌ. (1988) *Nihon Gaikō Bunsho: Shōwaki I*. Tokyo: Gaimushō.

GAIMUSHŌ. (1996) *Nihon Gaikō Bunsho: Shōwaki II*. Tokyo: Gaimushō.

GAIMUSHŌ CHŌSABU. (1998) *Sekai Taisen Kankei Nihon Gaikō Bunsho*. Tokyo: Gaimushō.

GELPI, CHISTOPHER. (1997) Democratic Diversions: Governmental Structure and the Externalization of Domestic Conflict. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41 (2): 255–282.

GHOSN, FATEN, GLENN PALMER, AND STUART BREMER. (2004) The MID3 Data Set, 1993–2001: Procedures, Coding Rules, and Description. *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 21: 133–154.

HOSOYA, CHIHIRO. (1971) *Nichibei Kankei shi*. Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppan.

HUNTER, JANET. (1984) *Concise Dictionary of Modern Japanese History*. Berkley: University of California Press.

HUTH, PAUL, AND TODD ALLEE. (2002) *The Democratic Peace and Territorial Conflict in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

HUTH, PAUL, AND ELLEN LUST-OKAR. (1998) Foreign Policy Choices and Domestic Politics: A Reexamination of the Link between Domestic and International Conflict. In *Conflict in World Politics: Advances in the Study of Crisis, War and Peace*, edited by Frank Harvey, and Ben Mor. New York: St. Martin's Press.

IKEI, MASARU. (1982) *Nihon Gaiko shi Gaisetsu*. Tokyo: Keiō Tsūshin.

INOUE, MITSUSADA, KEIJI NAGAHARA, KŌTA KODAMA, AND TOSHIKANE ŌKUBO. (1984–1990) *Nihon Rekishi Taikei*. Vols 1–6. Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha.

IRIYE, AKIRA. (1965) *After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921–1931*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

IRIYE, AKIRA. (1987) *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific*. New York: Longman.

ITŌ, YUKIO. (1991) Shoki Gikai ki no Jiyutō. In *Gendai Nihon no Seitō to Kanryō*, edited by Yamamoto Shirō. Tokyo: Tokyo Sōgensha.

Kajima, Morinosuke, Ed. (1970–1974) *Nihon Gaikōshi*. Tokyo: Kajima Heiwa Kenkyūjo.

Kajima, Morinosuke. (1980) *The Diplomacy of Japan 1894–1922*, Vols 1–3. Tokyo: Kajima Heiwa Kenkyūjo Shuppan.

Kajima Heiwa Kenkyūjo, Ed. (1983–1985) *Nihon Gaikō Shuyō Bunsho Nenpyō*. Tokyo: Hara Shobō.

Kam, Cindy, and Robert J. Franzese. (2007) *Modeling and Interpreting Interactive Hypotheses in Regression Analysis*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Katō, Yōko. (2002) *Sensō no Nihon Kingendai shi*. Tokyo: Kōdansha.

King, Gary, Michael Tomz, and Jason Wittenberg. (2000) Making the Most of Statistical Analyses: Improving Interpretation and Presentation. *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (2): 341–355.

Kisangani, Emizet F., and Jeffrey Pickering. (2007) Diverting with Benevolent Military Force: Reducing Risks and Rising Above Strategic Behavior. *International Studies Quarterly* 51 (2): 277–299.

Kokushi Daijiten Henshū Iinkai, Ed. (1979–1997) *Kokushi Daijiten*, Vols 1–15. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan.

Komiya, Kazuo. (1995) Shoki Gikaiki no Jōyaku Kaisei Mondai to Seikai Saihen Mondai. *Nenpō Kindai Nihon Kenyū* 17: 1–31.

Leeds, Brett Ashley. (2005) *Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) Codebook*. Version 3.0. Available at http://atop.rice.edu/download/ATOPcdbk.pdf. (Accessed October 27, 2008.)

Leeds, Brett Ashley, and David Davis. (1997) Domestic Political Vulnerability and International Disputes. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41 (6): 814–834.

Leeds, Brett Ashley, Jeffrey Ritter, Sara McLaughlin Mitchell, and Andrew Long. (2002) Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions, 1815–1944. *International Interactions* 28 (3): 237–260.

Levy, Jack. (1989) The Diversionary Theory of War: A Critique. In *Handbook of War Studies*, edited by Manus I. Midlarsky. London: Unwin-Hyman.

MacKuen, Michael B. (1983) Political Drama, Economic Conditions, and the Dynamics of Presidential Popularity. *American Journal of Political Science* 27 (2): 165–192.

Masumi, Junnosuke. (1966) *Nihon Seitō Shiron*, Vols 1–5. Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppan.

Mayo, Marlene, Ed. (1970) *The Emergence of Imperial Japan: Self-Defense or Calculated Aggression?* Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company.

Meernik, James. (2000) Modeling International Crises and the Political Use of Military Force by the USA. *Journal of Peace Research* 37 (5): 547–562.

Meernik, James, and Peter Waterman. (1996) The Myth of the Diversionary Use of Force by American Presidents. *Political Research Quarterly* 49 (3): 573–590.

Mitani, Taichirō. (1997) *Kindai Nihon no Sensō to Seiji*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.

Mitchell, Sara McLaughlin, and Brandon C. Prins. (2004) Rivalry and Diversionary Uses of Force. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48 (6): 937–961.

Morgan, Clifton, and Kenneth Bickers. (1992) Domestic Discontent and the External Use of Force. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 36 (1): 25–52.

Morley, James, Ed. (1974) *Japan's Foreign Policy 1868–1941: Research Guide*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Mutsu, Munemitsu. (1982) *Kenkenroku: A Diplomatic Record of the Sino-Japanese War, 1894–1995*. Translated by Gordon Mark Berger. Tokyo: Tokyo University Press.

Myers, Ramon, and Mark Peattie, Eds. (1984) *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Nish, Ian. (1977) *Japanese Foreign Policy 1869–1942: Kasumigaseki to Miyakezaka*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Nish, Ian. (1985) *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*. London: Longman.

Nish, Ian. (1990) An Overview of Relations between China and Japan, 1895–1945. *China Quarterly* 124 (4): 601–623.

Okamoto, Shumpei. (1970) *The Japanese Oligarchy and the Russo-Japanese War*. New York: Colombia University Press.

Okumura, Fusao. (1995) *The Japanese Oligarchy and the Russo-Japanese War*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Paine, S.C.M. (2003) *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sathasivam, Kanishkam. (2003) ''No Other Choice'': Pakistan's Decision to Test the Bomb. In *Integrating Cognitive and Rational Theories of Foreign Policy Decision Making*, edited by Alex Mintz. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Scalapino, Robert. (1967) *Democracy and the Party Movement in Prewar Japan*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Shinobu, Seizaburō. (1974) *Nihon Gaikōshi 1853–1972*, Vols 1–2. Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha.

Shiratori, Rei, Ed. (1981) *Nihon no Naikaku*, Vols 1–2. Tokyo: Shimpyō ron.

Shūgiin and Sangiin, Eds. (1990) *Gikai Seido Hyaku-nen shi: Teikoku Gikai shi*. Vols 1–2. Tokyo: Ōkura-shō Insatsu Kyoku.

Simmel, George. (1955) *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Smith, Alastair. (1996) Diversionary Foreign Policy and Democratic Systems. *International Studies Quarterly* 40 (1): 133–153.

Sobek, David. (2007) Rallying Around the *Podesta*: Testing Diversionary Theory Across Time. *Journal of Peace Research* 44 (1): 29–45.

Sprecher, Christopher, and Karl DeRouen Jr. (2002) Israeli Military Actions and Internalization-Externalization Processes. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46 (2): 244–259.

Takeuchi, Tatsuji. (1935) *War and Diplomacy in the Japanese Empire*. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company.

Tarar, Ahmer. (2006) Diversionary Incentives and the Bargaining Approach to War. *International Studies Quarterly* 50 (1): 169–188.

Teikoku Gikai. (1975–1979) *Teikoku Gikaishi*, Vols 1–54. Kyoto: Shakai Mondai Shiryō Kenkyūkai.

Yang, Yinpu. (1985) *Min guo caizheng shi*. Beijing: Zhongguo cai zheng jing ji chu ban she.