Decision makers have always worried about credibility. They have believed that by failing to follow through on a threat, or by abandoning an ally, their conduct will embolden adversaries or undermine alliance commitments. This is particularly true for decision makers in the United States of America: many lives have been lost in wars fought with the goal of preserving US credibility. Thomas Schelling writes that “We lost thirty thousand dead in Korea to save face . . . and it was undoubtedly worth it,” because it established “Soviet expectations about the behavior of the United States.” If actions in one situation reveal a national character, which can be used to predict behavior in other situations, then geographically discrete problems are, in fact, interdependent: what happens in Europe could affect Asia and vice versa. At the outbreak of the Korean War, President Harry S. Truman proclaimed that “If aggression were allowed to succeed in Korea, it would be an open invitation to new acts of aggression elsewhere.”

During the Cold War, deterrence theorists assumed that commitments were interdependent. These ideas—especially of how an adversary will assess the credibility of Washington’s threats—are still immensely influential today. In 2012 President Barack Obama infamously drew a “red line” on the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian civil war, but was excoriated when he later backed down from the threat of force. The controversy about this red line centered on the credibility of a threat issued to an adversary, but recent events have generated interest in the credibility—interdependent or not—of security promises made to allies. Though this concept has not received the same scholarly attention as threats issued to adversaries, wars can also be fought with the goal of preserving trust between allies. US policy throughout the Cold War was often influenced by the belief that disloyalty to one ally would send shockwaves through the system of anti-Communist alliances, tempting allies to either defect or adopt a neutral position between the West and the Communist bloc. President Lyndon B. Johnson said that if the United States were “driven from the field in Viet-Nam, then no nation
[could] ever again have the same confidence in American promise or in American protection.”

Such ideas persisted even after the Cold War had subsided. Though Washington is no longer formally committed to defend Taiwan through a military alliance, theorists and former US officials have argued that if Washington were to allow Taiwan to be forcibly reunited with mainland China, it would damage Washington’s treaty alliances in Asia. The starkest assessment is that of John Mearsheimer, who writes that “If the United States were to sever its military ties with Taiwan or fail to defend it in a crisis with China, that would surely send a strong signal to America’s other allies in the region that they cannot rely on the United States for protection. Policy makers in Washington will go to great lengths to avoid that outcome and instead maintain America’s reputation as a reliable partner. This means they will be inclined to back Taiwan no matter what.”

Nancy Bernkopf Tucker and Bonnie Glaser have also written that “U.S. inconstancy could convince American allies and friends to rely less on Washington, undertake an arms race, and/or bandwagon with China.” The consensus among academics and policymakers today appears to be similar to that of the Cold War era: the United States cannot—without calamitous consequences—be disloyal to an ally. If Washington is disloyal to one ally, then other allies will regard the US as unreliable and will look elsewhere for security.

More recently, these ideas of interdependence have again featured in considerations of European and Asian security. When Russia invaded and annexed Crimea in 2014, there were suggestions that Washington’s inaction unnerved its allies. Though Ukraine was not a treaty ally, the 1994 Budapest Memorandum pledged that the United States, Russia, and the United Kingdom would “respect the Independence and Sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine.” Half a world away, in Asia, reports suggested that Washington’s decision to not forcefully oppose Russian aggression “caused deep concern among already skittish Japanese officials.” According to one “senior American military official,” the Japanese “keep asking, ‘Are you going to do the same thing to us when something happens?’”

Washington has recently felt the need to reassure its allies in Asia about the strength of its alliances. US treaty allies in the region—Japan, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, and Australia—have worried that China’s activities in the South China Sea pose a threat to regional security and stability. In addition to seizing disputed territory at the Scarborough Shoal, China has reclaimed land from the sea and placed military equipment on these newly constructed islands. In response, the United States has conducted freedom of navigation operations: military maneuvers in which a US Navy vessel sails within twelve nautical miles of a Chinese-held island. The New York Times reported that such operations were intended “to rea-
sure allies . . . that the United States would stand up to China’s efforts to unilaterally change facts on the ground.”

Today, these Asian allies are heavily reliant on Washington for their security. They are concerned about China’s rise and its willingness to threaten and use force. Though Japan, South Korea, and Australia possess advanced military capabilities, all rely on US extended nuclear deterrence. For these nations, reliable alliance promises are of the utmost importance. In 2016, then Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump indicated that he was dissatisfied with the US alliance commitments to South Korea and Japan, which generated speculation that if these allies feared abandonment they might develop their own nuclear weapons. This, in turn, could generate regional security dilemmas and further nuclear proliferation.

The examples, theories, and arguments discussed above are premised on the belief that a state’s commitments—whether threats to adversaries or promises to allies—are interdependent. During the Cold War, these beliefs took the form of the domino theory, which exercised an immense influence on US behavior. For alliances, this conventional wisdom suggests that interdependence is governed by whether or not a state’s conduct demonstrates loyalty to its allies. In both the alliance politics literature and policymaking circles, the belief that interdependence and loyalty are linked is perhaps the most important theory of alliance system management. It is also wrong.

My Argument in Brief

Working deductively from the existing literatures on alliance politics, deterrence theory, and international reputation, in this book I develop and test three hypotheses which form what I call the alliance audience effect theory. My first hypothesis is that US allies monitor Washington’s behavior in its other alliances, and these observations influence their perceptions of US reliability. Significantly, reliability is not synonymous with loyalty. An unreliable ally is one that poses a risk of abandonment or entrapment. Allies do not want Washington to demonstrate indiscriminate loyalty but instead want their relationship with the US to pose no alliance risks. I show how in some situations, US disloyalty to one ally will be desired—even encouraged—by Washington’s other allies.

My second hypothesis is that if these allies assess the United States to be unreliable, they will act to improve their own level of security. If the US is unreliable because it poses risks of entrapment, an ally might attempt to restrain Washington, launch a peace initiative, distance itself from US policy, or even abrogate its alliance. If the US is unreliable because it poses risks of abandonment, an ally might attempt to draw closer to Washington, increase
its own military capabilities, seek new allies, or even build nuclear weapons. States will not happily sit idle while their ally’s reliability declines.

My third hypothesis expects this prospect of alliance interdependence to affect US policy. Alliance interdependence and concern for credibility are often conceived as limiting Washington’s policy freedom and posing severe entanglement risks, but these concerns are not supported by the empirical evidence I examine. Instead of alliance interdependence serving solely to constrain the United States, an awareness of these connections enables policymakers in Washington to manipulate alliance interdependence for their own purposes. This is a remarkably different way of thinking about interdependence. I show that the United States can set the example of acceptable allied behavior in one alliance and this will be observed by—and will influence—other allies. In other cases, the possibly adverse consequences of interdependence can be mitigated if Washington adroitly manages several alliances simultaneously.

Though prominent and influential during the Cold War, deterrence theory’s beliefs about the interdependence of commitments have been challenged in recent decades, especially by “reputation skeptic” scholars. My answer to this book’s research question—how, if at all, are alliances interdependent?—contributes to this debate between deterrence theory and more recent scholarship on international reputation. Alliance interdependence does exist, but it is not contingent on a moral quality of loyalty: it is instead underpinned by assessments of reliability, which concerns the degree to which shared interests enable allies to cooperate and rely on each other. In expecting alliances to be interdependent based on judgments of loyalty, for decades scholars have been looking in the right place, but for the wrong thing.

The Importance of the Alliance Audience Effect

In developing the alliance audience effect framework, this book makes four important contributions to theories of alliance politics.

The first contribution is to carefully delineate between loyalty and reliability: these are not synonymous. While deterrence theory holds that Washington’s disloyalty to an ally will undermine or destroy its other alliances—because these allies will assume the United States to have a national character trait of disloyalty—I demonstrate that states are not always concerned about Washington’s general loyalty to its other allies. Instead of focusing on a national character trait of loyalty, each ally focuses on whether the US is likely to be reliable. Reliability, discussed at length in chapter 1, is partially determined by the extent to which allies share convergent interests about an issue on which they expect to cooperate. It is also affected by the military capabilities possessed by each allied state and whether the allies can agree on how to pursue their convergent interests.
INTRODUCTION

Though some reputation skeptics argue that alliances are not interdependent, this book shows that US allies do monitor Washington’s conduct in its other alliances in order to better understand US interests, the extent to which they are valued, and the capabilities it can use to pursue these interests. Allies ask: Do US interests align with those of my state? Can and will the US work with my state—using effective military force, if necessary—to achieve those interests? If all the answers are yes, then allies will perceive the US to be reliable. But if Washington’s behavior suggests that it does not share the ally’s interests and is likely to adopt policies—such as recklessly risking war or reneging on promises of military support—that pose entrapment or abandonment risks, then the ally will regard the US as unreliable.

This might seem more complicated than deterrence theory’s rule of thumb that “loyalty matters” or the reputation skeptic conclusion that because commitments are not interdependent states should never worry about their reputations. However, it can be reduced to an even simpler maxim: “national interests matter most.” Though decision makers in Washington might worry that disloyalty to one ally will unnerve other allies, those other allies will welcome this instance of disloyalty if it is in their own national interest. Allies do observe how the United States behaves within its other alliances but they are not looking for virtuous moral conduct that exemplifies a national character trait of loyalty, which can then be expected in other alliance interactions. Instead, they look for evidence that Washington’s interests remain convergent with their own and that the US therefore remains a reliable ally.

My second contribution is to demonstrate that states do not have a collective or universal alliance reputation. The alliance audience effect theory expects that one ally might regard a specific action as proof that Washington’s reliability has declined, while another ally—with different interests—might interpret the same action as positive proof of US reliability. The alliance audience effect framework rejects the idea that universal or collective reputations exist and instead shows that different allies have different interests, and thus they draw different conclusions about US behavior. Because allies do not evaluate US policies against an objective moral standard like loyalty, but instead assess whether US actions further their own interests, a universal and collective belief about a state’s reliability cannot form.

The third contribution is to partially rehabilitate one element of deterrence theory. Though some reputation skeptics argue that the United States should not worry about allies doubting its resolve, I demonstrate that it is usually in Washington’s interest to maintain an image of alliance reliability. If an ally fears that the US is likely to abandon it in its moment of need, it might increase its own defense capabilities, form new alliances, or conciliate adversaries. If the ally fears that US actions might prompt an unwanted conflict, or even drag the ally into undesired hostilities, it will seek to reduce the likelihood of violence: it will attempt to restrain the US, launch peace efforts,
or threaten to stand aside if conflict breaks out. Thus, it is usually—but not always—in Washington’s interest for its allies to perceive its commitments as reliable. Declining US reliability can lead to insecurity, which in turn can prompt undesired behavior—such as bandwagoning, adopting a neutral stance, or even the development of nuclear weapons programs—that runs contrary to Washington’s goals.

The book’s fourth contribution is to show that in some circumstances, alliance interdependence can be used to pursue US interests. Because decision makers in Washington have often believed that other allies will react adversely to any instance of disloyalty, alliance interdependence is usually thought of only in negative terms: the need to demonstrate loyalty limits US policy options and entraps Washington in undesired conflicts. But historically, the United States has managed alliance interdependence in two ways: it has avoided undesired system effects through simultaneous alliance management and it has used interdependence to set the example of acceptable allied behavior.

The “set the example” approach enables Washington to use alliance interdependence for its own ends. An example is set when US policymakers choose and/or reject policies based on how they might be perceived by other allies. Washington can adopt a policy in one alliance and expect other allies to observe, and be influenced by, the precedent. For example, Washington might deal harshly with an obstinate ally to publicly demonstrate to other allies—to set the example—that such behavior will not be tolerated. US policymakers can manipulate this interdependence to encourage and discourage certain types of allied behavior.

When Washington expects allies to be worried by developments within another alliance, it can manage this interdependence through “simultaneous alliance management.” For example, knowing that some allies will be unnerved by Washington’s policy toward another ally, US officials might seek to reassure these allies that this policy does not reduce Washington’s reliability. Such reassurance might be provided through closer consultations, additional promises of military support, transfers of equipment, or even the stationing of US forces on the allies’ soil.

In summary, the alliance audience effect theory proposes that alliances are interdependent but argues that this is not underpinned by a national character trait that manifests as an international reputation for loyalty. Allies do not judge US policies against a moral yardstick of loyalty or disloyalty. Instead, interdependence is governed by each state’s beliefs about its ally’s reliability. Counterintuitively, if Washington’s disloyalty to an ally reduces the risk of a war that other allies wish to avoid, or if it enhances Washington’s ability to keep separate security promises, then this disloyalty might even be welcomed by those other allies.
Research Question and Case Study Selection

This book does not set out to conclusively settle the question of alliance interdependence or to determine under what conditions alliance interdependence is more or less prevalent. Before these can be addressed, a more fundamental question must be answered: How, if at all, are alliance commitments interdependent? To answer this, I use existing literature on alliance politics, credibility, and reputation to deductively generate the three hypotheses which form the alliance audience effect theory. I then test these against Asian alliance interactions during the first twenty years of the Cold War. This period and this region were selected for five reasons.

First, the Asian alliance system between 1949 and 1969 provides case studies that span almost the full spectrum of alliance behavior: alliance formation, alliance politics during a crisis, and peacetime alliance management. The only aspect unexamined is that of alliance abrogation. Thus, if an alliance audience effect is present in all of these varied case studies, it suggests the framework has a higher degree of generalizability. Testing against only a limited subset of alliance interactions—for example, only against cases of abandonment in wartime—would dramatically limit the theory’s generalizability. Furthermore, as explained in chapter 1, studies that focus solely on moments of crisis fundamentally misconstrue how alliance trust operates.

Second, these alliances were formed after the advent and use of nuclear weapons. Though many treatments of alliance politics and international reputation note that nuclear weapons may influence interdependence, some consider only pre-1945 case studies. The advent of nuclear weapons meant that the rapid destruction of entire nations became feasible, and so alliances—particularly those that provide extended nuclear deterrence—took on a new importance. Previously, a state may have been able to defend its allies without incurring substantial risk of damage within its own borders, but the Cold War’s nuclear balance often removed this possibility. Furthermore, because of the long timeframes involved in developing nuclear weapons, alliance reliability probably became more important. In an age of nuclear weapons, if an ally’s promise of extended nuclear deterrence is suddenly shown to be unreliable, this could immediately and drastically render a state insecure and vulnerable to nuclear coercion or attack. Thus, a theory of alliance reliability tested against modern case studies may have greater explanatory power for contemporary situations, where the nuclear element remains influential.

Third, the 1949–1969 period was chosen because several important variables—US capabilities, the global and regional balance of power, the presence of nuclear weapons, the lines of enmity and amity in Asia—can be held as reasonably constant. As a result, the exact reasons for varying levels of allied confidence in US reliability can be more clearly identified. From the
late 1960s onward, there was significant uncertainty about the level of Washington’s commitment to Asian security. The Guam Doctrine announcement of July 1969—in which President Richard Nixon stated that allies in Asia would continue to receive Washington’s support but would have to take primary responsibility for their own defense—recast the US commitment to Asian security. Gradual U.S.-China rapprochement, vacillation, and abrupt decision making concerning troop positioning in South Korea in 1971, as well as President Nixon’s visit to China in 1972, also had a significant impact on allies in Asia. As many different events after 1969 cast doubt on the US role in Asia, it would be more difficult to confidently isolate the exact reasons for variance in allied perceptions of US reliability.

Fourth, testing the theory against Asian alliance case studies generates conclusions of significant policy relevance today. Though Taiwan and New Zealand are no longer formal US allies, the overall structure of the Asian alliance network remains intact and it is—depending on who is asked—either the source of, or the possible solution to, contemporary security tensions. Despite the importance of this system, few academic works consider the issue of interdependence between the alliances. The common assumption—that disloyalty to one ally will undermine or destroy the alliance system—is very questionable, but rarely questioned.

Finally, the “hub and spoke” structure of the Asian alliance system facilitates the task of observing and evaluating instances of alliance interdependence. In the period examined, the United States formed bilateral alliances with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines, and also a trilateral alliance with Australia and New Zealand. There are usually only two actors within the alliance—the United States and its local partner. When interactions within one alliance are observed by other allies, it is easier to identify the cause and result of any reliability concerns. The task of clearly and confidently identifying instances of interdependence within a multilateral alliance, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or South-east Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), is not impossible, but is necessarily more complicated. With so many states involved, it is far more difficult to precisely identify the reasons for a particular change in defense policy. By examining mainly bilateral alliance case studies, it is possible to mitigate these issues and more precisely identify and evaluate reliability concerns.

Importantly, this is not to say that similar dynamics do not operate within multilateral alliances. In the book’s conclusion, I conduct a plausibility probe to determine if the theory can be applied to the multilateral SEATO alliance. However, alliance interdependence can be more clearly observed and process-traced in a bilateral alliance structure. Accordingly, testing the theory in a bilateral setting also sheds light on how such dynamics might operate in a multilateral alliance and thus will aid subsequent investigations of multilateral alliances.
Based on a preliminary analysis of the Asian alliance system in the Cold War, possible case studies were identified. Both the First and Second Taiwan Strait Crises were suitable for testing the theory, but the comparatively short second crisis (1958) was excluded because an examination of the prolonged first crisis (1954–1955) enabled a more thorough investigation of the US policymaking approach. Furthermore, the crisis dynamics, and their influence on alliance interdependence, do not appear to vary significantly across the two situations. The regional reaction to the Guam Doctrine of 1969 was also considered, but ultimately rejected, because Washington’s behavior was not confined to a specific alliance relationship. President Carter’s plans to withdraw US forces from the Korean Peninsula was another possible case study, but other works have already examined these events and their conclusions support the alliance audience effect.  

This process of elimination left a small group of events in which US behavior in one bilateral alliance was (a) observable by other allies and (b) significant for the security of these allies and thus relevant to Washington’s reliability. These case studies (outlined below) were selected on the basis that the independent variable of my first hypothesis (i.e., US behavior in one alliance relationship) had to be observable and significant. I do not expect every minor interaction within an alliance to be closely scrutinized by other allies, but significant interactions—those that suggest a discrepancy between true interests of the United States and those it publicly professes—provide suitable case studies. The theory expects allies to monitor such interactions closely because they provide opportunities to better understand Washington’s interests and thus better assess its reliability. Alliance interdependence is expected only when the ally observing US behavior regards it as significant and relevant to Washington’s reliability and its own security.

**Methodology**

I use primary sources, and a process tracing method, to demonstrate how the alliance audience effect operated between 1949 and 1969. Secondary sources are also used, but this book makes a substantial and significant empirical contribution through the use of declassified documents. For the earlier case studies, I use the US government’s *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS) series wherever possible. In later chapters, I rely more heavily on documents obtained from the US government’s National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and presidential libraries. The records at NARA—comprising State Department cables, memorandums, letters, intelligence assessments, minutes of meetings, and records of conversation—were especially important for tracing causation in the more recent case studies. They provide accurate information on diplomatic communication between the United States
and its allies, as well as the internal deliberations of the US government. I also conducted research at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, the Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library, the National Archives of Australia, and the archive of John Foster Dulles’s personal papers at Princeton University’s Seeley G. Mudd Library.

Though data from archives in South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, and the Philippines could have been sought, the decision to focus on US records was made for four reasons. First, US archives contain data on each of the alliances, whereas other national archives contain more limited information specific to that country and its alliance with the United States. Second, language issues would have complicated efforts to obtain declassified documents from Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, or the Philippines. Though such sources would have provided valuable alternative perspectives on certain events, the need to translate such documents would have reduced the overall amount of data that could be collected, collated, and analyzed. As this book focuses on the question of interdependence among several different alliances, it necessarily prioritizes breadth over depth. Third, US archives are the most complete and comprehensive: scholars of Asian alliances typically rely on these sources as some Asian archives are fragmentary or access is restricted. Finally, it was not necessary to go beyond US documents to test the theoretical framework: each of the hypotheses can be satisfactorily tested using these sources.

This reliance on US archival material entails some minor risks but these are not insurmountable. Perhaps the most significant concern is that allies might exaggerate their complaints about Washington’s unreliability in an effort to bargain with—and extract greater defense commitments from—the United States. Stephen Walt has suggested that US allies in Asia have been able to “get Uncle Sucker to take on more burdens by complaining that they had doubts about American resolve.” If US diplomats or intelligence agencies failed to detect these exaggerations, they would not be reflected in official US documents. However, it is unlikely that this issue could be addressed even with the use of other archives: if allies ever did attempt to manipulate Washington in this manner, they are unlikely to ever declassify material that would reveal such behavior. Furthermore, in the US documents I examined there is often critical examination of, and speculation about, the motives of allied leaders. This increases the likelihood that US diplomats would detect exaggerated complaints made to bolster bargaining positions. Indeed, as shown in chapter 3, Washington sometimes adopted particular alliance policies to set an example that it would not allow its foreign policy to be manipulated by an ally.

Across these institutions, I examined tens of thousands of documents. The availability of such information enables the use of a forensic process tracing methodology that allows causal patterns to be identified, followed, and tested. To empirically test my hypotheses, this approach is best for identify-
ing and contextualizing the factors that influenced reliability perceptions and decision making within alliances. To identify causal patterns, it is necessary to closely trace the evolution of views in Washington and allied capitals, and explain what led to these changes. The only way to demonstrate such causation satisfactorily is through archival research and process tracing methods. Although they do not explain their choice of methodology in these terms, other authors focusing on alliance management have chosen to avoid quantitative approaches in favor of qualitative, historically based process tracing. Two of the most prominent scholars researching alliances in Asia—Victor Cha and Thomas Christensen—have both used historical case studies and process tracing methods.19 As Alexander George and Andrew Bennett write, process tracing does “not seek to replicate the logic of scientific experimentation . . . [but] to uncover a causal chain coupling independent variables with dependent variables and evidence of the causal mechanisms posited by a theory.”20 Accordingly, this method is well suited to testing and developing the alliance audience effect framework.

Outline of the Book

In chapter 1, I examine the existing literature on credibility, reliability, reputation, and alliances. I further explicate the difference between loyalty and reliability, and develop the three hypotheses that form the alliance audience effect theory.

Chapter 2 examines the creation of Washington’s alliances with Japan, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand, and how the formation of these security pacts was influenced by US conduct toward the republics of Korea and China. I explain how the US response to the Korean War was critical in influencing the outlook of regional states and their attitude toward security cooperation with the United States.

Chapter 3 considers the formation of the alliances between the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) and between the US and the Republic of China (ROC), as well as the initial stages of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. I show that the ROC’s beliefs about US reliability were influenced by how Washington had treated the ROK and how the US used this interdependence to obtain pledges of restraint from Taipei. When these promises were secured, the US concluded an alliance with Nationalist China in late 1954.

The signing of this treaty occurred shortly before an escalation of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, and this is the focus of chapter 4.21 This chapter clearly illustrates and firmly justifies my delineation between loyalty and reliability. Washington’s excessive loyalty to Taiwan—and the risks of war this posed—caused some allies to assess that US reliability had decreased, so they worked to restrain the United States and reduce the risk of war.
These events had a profound effect on Washington’s most important regional ally, Japan, and the revision of the US-Japan alliance is examined in chapter 5. Japanese perceptions of US reliability—which were strongly affected by the First Taiwan Strait Crisis—were key influences on the treaty revision negotiations. The new treaty, signed in 1960, enabled Tokyo to veto some US military operations from bases in mainland Japan and thus improved Japan’s opinion of Washington’s reliability.

Chapter 6 examines the negotiations to transfer administrative control of Okinawa back to Japan. Okinawa was particularly important for the defense of the ROK and ROC, and these states worried that reversion of the island to Japanese control would reduce US basing rights and thus would imperil their own security. The chapter shows how Washington can simultaneously manage different alliances to prevent or limit undesired consequences.

I conclude the book by examining the case studies against the expectations of the alliance audience effect theory. I consider what events since 1969 might support or challenge the theoretical framework and also examine the framework’s relevance to other aspects of alliance theory. A short plausibility probe applies my theory to the failure of a multilateral alliance—SEATO—to uphold a security guarantee it provided to Laos. Finally, I briefly apply my findings to the current security situation in Asia.

Although this is not a history book, because it seeks to identify and examine alliance interdependence—something considered by few authors—it does make a significant contribution to the historical record. Rather than US preferences determining the hub and spoke structure of the US alliance system, as Cha argues, my research supports more recent scholarship which highlights the agency of US allies and the importance of their preferences. It also shows how interdependence between legally discrete alliance commitments both influenced Washington and was used by Washington to pursue US interests in the region.