The Credibility Cartel
Extra-Governmental Organizations in U.S. National Security Politics

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Abstract

I intend this session to be a practice job talk. I am presenting it in front of two different audiences in our home workshops, as I am applying for both American Politics and International Relations jobs. Rather than create two separate papers and presentations, I am preparing a unified approach, as this best represents my research. The content of the paper includes an abbreviated portion of the theory chapter to establish sufficient context for the empirical presentation. The empirical section is also truncated to keep within conventional space limitations. The middle section, the Early Cold War, is presented in full, while the sections on World War II and the Late Cold War are summarized. The original chapter abstract follows:

This chapter presents an analytic history of moral subsidy — third-party legitimating support for the administration's agenda — in practice, showing how a set of state and extra-governmental institutions developed over the course of several decades beginning in the inter-war period. Groups that formed with the purpose of helping President Roosevelt mobilize public support for U.S. involvement in World War II proved the concept of extra-governmental collaboration. Constrained by political considerations and legal prohibitions against directing official propaganda at domestic audiences, Presidents Truman and Eisenhower recruited veterans of these interventionist public relations campaigns to promote the reconstruction of Europe, Soviet containment as laid down in NSC-68, and the explosion of public diplomacy programs that accompanied the "New Look." These extra-governmental organizations helped forge the "Cold War Consensus," and when this broke down in the late 1960s, President Nixon turned again to the very same groups to muster public support for Anti-Ballistic Missile development and Vietnamization. Under President Reagan, the White House held regular outreach meetings with outside organizations friendly to the administration's agenda on missile defense and the Central American anti-communist campaigns of the 1980s. The archival record reveals a remarkable continuity among these groups with respect to personnel, funding, and organizational design across decades of U.S. history, and provides robust confirmation of the theory of moral subsidy. Groups that executives recruit for public relations campaigns use the material and social resources to which they gain access to solidify their distinctive influence in national security politics. They re-emerge whenever the country contemplates a substantial change in policy and dominate the marketplace of persuasion, forming what I call the "credibility cartel."

Whenever the United States contemplates major changes to national security policy, experts from the military, government, and academia take to the various media making arguments about how best to fix some problem in the world. Observing this discourse, several features become clear. First, in addition to those institutions listed above, the public debate includes representatives of private not-for-profit organizations dedicated to the formulation and implementation of public policy — in other words, interest groups. Second, few of these groups ever suggest simply doing nothing. Even "doves" in these debates recommend something far more intrusive than passive toleration of the situation abroad. Most often, the dominant voices among national security interest groups offer some defense of or at most a minor adjustment to the administration's plan. Third, the interest group discourse on foreign policy has a distinctly moral inflection. Looking past individual policy debates, a final feature becomes evident: the same actors re-emerge time and again, regardless of how successful their recommendations prove.

This chapter traces the origins of a particular breed of political organization back to the inter-war years. Through a structured historical process, a tight network of pressure groups, ethnic lobbies, and think-tanks has emerged, pursuing an interventionist agenda, consolidating its influence by collaborating with presidential administrations and helping to supplement the public relations capacities of the government. Collectively, these groups have cultivated a near-monopoly on persuasive authority over matters of national security, and so constitute what I call the "credibility cartel." I argue that, despite appearances of independence, they owe their ascendent influence to government benefaction. Faced with legal and political constraints against official propaganda, the executive recruits interest groups to assist in public relations campaigns, and selects its collaborators based on two characteristics. First, groups must agree with the administration on policy. Second, they must be endowed with credibility that authorizes them to testify to the wisdom of the president's proposal. These extra-governmental organizations (EGOs) — "extra" as opposed to "non" acknowledging the close connection to the state — provide a "moral subsidy" — legitimating third-party support for the administration's national security agenda. Once recruited, they gain access to political, professional, and informational resources that enable them to consolidate

their influence. Insofar as their propaganda succeeds, they build durable constituencies in support of their position.

This argument synthesizes much of what scholars of politics already know about interest group influence. Selling policy directly to the public, according to some scholars, constitutes "outside lobbying," in contrast to the exertion of pressure on decision-makers that occurs behind closed doors.[1] I suggest that this term, though useful in some contexts, obscures the collaborative relationship groups have with government. Vanderbush and Haney show that the The Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) and Iraqi National Congress (INC) played an "interactive" role in U.S. policy toward Cuba and Iraq, assisting in the marketing of government policy at least as much as they worked to persuade decision-makers.[2] Jacobs and Shapiro argue that interest groups engage in a kind of test-marketing of the public response to various rhetorical strategies, which they label "instrumental responsiveness."[3] Like the executive, the legislature also recruits outside groups, and promotes the fortunes of their allies in order to facilitate policies they favor.[4] The current study builds upon this prior research to provide a systematic theory of interest group influence in national security politics. The deductive logic yields fresh insight into the centrality of a particular set of extra-governmental actors that have dominated their policy domain for decades. I argue that national security limits interest group influence in some ways, but improves it in others, so that the collaborative relationship with government becomes the primary means of consolidating influence.

The remainder of this paper consists of four parts. First, it summarizes the deductive logic of moral subsidy. Second, it briefly explores the normative implications of this collaborative prac-

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1. Ken Kollman, *Outside Lobbying* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, March 1998); Kenneth Goldstein, *Interest Groups, Lobbying, and Participation in America* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, August 1999); A. Trevor Thrall, "The Myth of the Outside Strategy: Mass Media News Coverage of Interest Groups," *Political Communication* 23, no. 4 (2006): 407–420; Richard L. Hall and Molly E. Reynolds, "Targeted Issue Advertising and Legislative Strategy: The Inside Ends of Outside Lobbying," *The Journal of Politics* 74, no. 03 (July 2012): 888–902.

2. Patrick J Haney and Walt Vanderbush, "The Role of Ethnic Interest Groups in U.S. Foreign Policy: The Case of the Cuban American National Foundation," *International Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (June 1999): 341–361; Walt Vanderbush and Patrick J. Haney, "Policy toward Cuba in the Clinton Administration," *Political Science Quarterly* 114, no. 3 (September 1999): 387–408; Walt Vanderbush, "Exiles and the Marketing of U.S. Policy toward Cuba and Iraq," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 5, no. 3 (July 2009): 287–306.

3. Lawrence R Jacobs and Robert Y Shapiro, *Politicians don't pander: political manipulation and the loss of democratic responsiveness* (Chicago, IL.: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

4. Scott H. Ainsworth, "The Role of Legislators in the Determination of Interest Group Influence," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (November 1997): 517–533.

tice. Third, it offers an analytic historical account of the cartel's development beginning with the mobilization of support for U.S. involvement in World War II and continuing through the Reagan administration.[5] The overall time-frame is broken into three periods: World War II, the early Cold War, and the late Cold War.[6] The paper concludes with a discussion of the cartel's fortunes after the end of the Cold War, and its future in national security politics.

1   Theory: Moral Subsidy and National Security Politics

Twentieth century liberal theorists agree that free civic engagement enables society to constrain and control the state, but they disagree about the virtues of interest groups and their impact on U.S. governance. The pluralists argue along the lines of James Madison's prescription for containing the "mischief of faction" in Federalist 10 — that a large republic with varied organized interests gives rise to cross-cutting cleavages that prevent the accumulation of power among a narrow section of the polity.[7] They see a balance among competing interests, each would-be faction holding appropriate influence over its own domain, which constrain the state from pursuing its own goals without accountability to the public it serves.[8] Other liberals challenge this optimistic assessment, arguing that the unequal distribution of resources systematically favors select groups. The same processes that constrain the state in a balanced environment propel some groups into a position of great advantage when the government expands its capacity to serve their interests, but not the needs of others.[9]

Statists, such as Eric Nordlinger, argue that in a democracy where societal and state interests

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5. The analysis is an "analytic" history in the sense that it explains change based upon a deductive model, rather than induction, pure contingency, or the raw agency of the central individuals, as traditional historical narrative might entail.

6. In the dissertation, this chapter comprises the archival exposition, and a brief review of the theory. A more complete version of the theory is included here to provide important context. The historical evidence is summarized in places in order to conform to the space allotted a conventional political science article.

7. James Madison, "Federalist #10," in *The Federalist*, The Gideon Edition, ed. George W. Carey and James McClellan (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001).

8. Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961); David Bicknell Truman, *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion*, 2 Revised (Alfred a Knopf, June 1971).

9. Grant McConnell, *Private power & American democracy*, [1st] (New York, Knopf, 1966); Theodore J Lowi, *The end of liberalism: the second republic of the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010).

diverge, the governing powers remain autonomous, free from serious constraint by civil society.[10]

Even in a pluralist's ideal, where interest groups are various, plentiful, and mobilized, the public

official can not only traverse the interest group environment freely, but can re-shape it to his own

benefit.

> To say that civil society is composed of a plethora of groups and
> potential groups, fluctuating in size, with diverse, cross-cutting and
> oft-changing interests, is to underscore the weak structure of the de-
> mand group universe, one lacking in clarity, coherence, and stabil-
> ity. It is a societal context that offers public officials many chances
> to maneuver among and between groups, evading, deflecting, and
> impeding the effective deployment of their resources by highlight-
> ing group differences or shared interests, broadening or narrowing
> group conflicts, playing off rival groups against one another, or en-
> couraging or discouraging the activation of potential groups.[11]

In the "distorted liberal state" where imbalances in social and material capital allow certain groups

to capture aspects of the governing apparatus, the state remains at least on equal footing to society,

if not dominant. Bureaucracies in these "cozy little triangles" become dependent upon interest

groups in order to function, but the relationship is reciprocal. "To the extent that public officials

have nowhere else to turn for societal support than to the specialized groups whose interests fall

within the scope of their authoritative responsibilities, the advantaged groups are also exclusively

dependent upon particular public officials."[12] Bear in mind that these represent the hard cases for

the state, wherein the preferences of empowered societal actors are both durable and divergent from

its own. Its autonomy is even greater when society shares its views, or when society's views can

be remade to resemble those of the state.[13]

The problem of interest groups, then, has two facets: undue influence by narrow factions and

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10. Nordlinger's theory is self-consciously empirical, not normative. His work is not necessarily an endorsement of state autonomy.

11. Eric A. Nordlinger, *On the autonomy of the democratic state* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), pg. 155.

12. Ibid., pg. 163.

13. Nordlinger's framework identifies three types of autonomy, assuming that the state has the capacity to translate its preferences into authoritative action. Type I is where state and societal preferences diverge. Type II is where they diverge initially, but "[p]ublic officials then purposefully bring about a shift in societal preferences to make them congruent or consonant with their own."(ibid., pg. 29). Type III is the condition of non-divergence between state and societal preferences.

the failure of civil society to constrain the state. The more commonly expressed concern involves the first, especially regarding issues of national security. In the 1930s, the Nye Committee in the Senate investigated the widely-believed claim that the munitions and banking industries pressured President Wilson into joining the U.S. in World War I, while isolationists accused British and Jewish propaganda for growing public support for U.S. involvement in World War II. Two decades later, President Eisenhower famously warned of the undue influence of the "military industrial complex" in his farewell address. More recently, the Iraq War was attended by cries of "no blood for oil." Ethnic lobbies have taken criticism for strategic blunders by U.S. policy-makers.[14] I argue that the second facet presents the greater problem, both because it expands state capacity beyond intended limits and because it helps endow certain groups with the power attributed to them by those who focus on the first.

1.1 Assumptions

The critical source of interest group influence in most U.S. politics is information, which has four types defined by two dimensions, substance and direction.[15] Technical information refers to the substantive details of public policy. Political information relates to the preferences of the constituency. Additionally, the information stream flows both ways, incoming and outgoing, in relation to policy-makers. The four resulting types of information are shown in Table 1. Incoming technical information entails surveillance of the environment to identify problems that require a government remedy and notify officials when the need arises. McCubbins and Schwartz call this the "fire alarm" model of political accountability, in contrast to the "police patrol" model, which requires active monitoring by the government.[16] Incoming political information entails probing the populace to discover their preferences over public policy, conducted through opinion polling and

14. Stanley D. Bachrack, *The Committee of One Million: China Lobby Politics, 1953-1971* (Columbia Univ Pr, November 1976); John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2007).

15. Truman, *The Governmental Process*; John Mark Hansen, *Gaining Access: Congress and the Farm Lobby, 1919-1981* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

16. Matthew D. McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz, "Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols versus Fire Alarms," *American Journal of Political Science* 28, no. 1 (1984): 165–179.

focus group studies. Outgoing technical information includes compliance training and certification for stakeholders whose interests are directly impacted by new laws and regulations. Interest groups host seminars, give conference presentations, and publish materials that inform business and other interested parties how best to comply with policy changes. Outgoing political information entails propaganda and public relations, marketing a set of policy decisions in order to persuade the public of their virtues (or vices) and reward (or punish) the responsible parties.

Table 1: Types of Interest Group Information

	Incoming	**Outgoing**
Technical	Surveillance Fire Alarms	Compliance Certification
Political	Polling Focus Groups	Propaganda Public Relations

Interest groups have influence over members of Congress because legislators represent their constituents over a broad range of issues, but have little time to gain expertise in most of them. Groups provide a "legislative subsidy," lending valuable services to representatives with busy schedules, diverse issue portfolios, and meager staff resources,[17] by sharing their expertise on matters of policy and public opinion.[18] With respect to the incoming direction, this leverage depends on interest groups' informational advantages over policy-makers. Knowing the business of farming, for example, helps determine how to achieve desired crop yields. Understanding public opinion requires a superior polling operation in the policy-maker's constituency, and its importance depends on the degree to which the public cares about the issue. In the outgoing direction, the need for public buy-in shapes interest group influence. For compliance training to matter, the policy must require that the public have a complex and critical role in its implementation. Marketing remains important as long as political power depends on public support. In domestic policy, providing legislative subsidy in all of its forms has helped to build powerful lobbies in the domains of agriculture

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17. Richard L Hall and Alan V Deardorff, "Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy," *American Political Science Review* 100, no. 01 (2006): 69–84.

18. See Krehbiel (*Information and Legislative Organization*) for an alternative solution to the problem of scarce legislative resources, namely that the chamber divides itself into committees in order to focus on particular issue areas and develop their own expertise.

policy, gun ownership rights, reproductive rights, and a host of other areas.

I make three assumptions about the distribution of political power and information from which we can deduce a distinct and coherent set of expectations about how interest groups become influential U.S. national security politics. These assumptions are 1) the president dominates security policy,[19] 2) the president has more information about national security issues than interest groups, and 3) the public pays little attention to foreign policy unless prompted by political actors. These features of the security policy domain make it difficult for interest groups to conduct meaningful surveillance but increases the effectiveness of propaganda. This inhibits their ability to influence a policy-leader's decision to intervene, but improves their ability to help the administration sell its policy to the public. Assisting the government in this way, they gain access to political, professional, and informational resources that help them build influence, and they develop constituencies among the public loyal to their position.[20]

First, the president leads on foreign policy and Congress follows.[21] Even under the most restrictive conditions, the executive remains the chief policy initiator. It sets the agenda and enjoys substantial first-mover advantage, especially on matters involving the military. Despite the legislature's obligations under the Constitution, Congress has abdicated much of its responsibility for decisions to venture abroad. The primary governing statute on national security matters prior to the Patriot Act of 2001 was the War Powers Resolution of 1973 (WPR-73). Passed to restrain an embattled President Nixon, the act also formalizes a 60-day grace period for any military deployment, mandating only that Congress be informed within forty-eight hours. Since its passage, no president has met with any congressional response stronger than a non-binding censure.[22] The

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19. Presidents are not given absolute autonomy over security policy. They face constraints under certain conditions, but they remain the initiator and driver of security policy in the overwhelming majority of cases.

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21. See Wildavsky, Moe and Howell, Schlesinger, and Canes-Wrone, Howell, and Lewis ("The Two Presidencies"; "The Two Presidencies Thesis Revisited at a Time of Political Dissensus"; "The Presidential Power of Unilateral Action"; *The Imperial Presidency*; "Executive Influence in Foreign versus Domestic Policy Making: Toward a Broader Understanding of Presidential Power") for a review of the case for presidential dominance in security affairs, Ripley and Lindsay (*Congress Resurgent*), Lindsay (*Congress and the politics of U.S. foreign policy*), Howell and Pevehouse (*While Dangers Gather*) for a review of the constraints Congress places on presidential autonomy over defense policy, and Mann and Ornstein (*The Broken Branch: How Congress is Failing America and How to Get it Back on Track*) for an argument that presidential policy dominance extends beyond the foreign policy domain.

22. Congressional action over the Iran-Contra affair was not pursued under the authority of the WPR-73, but under

Patriot Act extends executive autonomy further. Congress typically constrains the executive and empowers interest groups by mandating that certain constituencies have access to specific parts of the executive branch, but the Administrative Procedures Act exempts sensitive national security agencies.[23] Congress systematically avoids getting involved in Federal Advisory Committees that address issues of foreign policy, especially national security.[24] According to Alexis de Tocqueville, such presidential dominance is the natural condition of government. "It is chiefly in foreign relations that the executive power of a nation finds occasion to exert its skill and strength," he writes in the 1830s.[25] Given this institutional structure, the question of influence over security policy must focus principally on the executive.

Second, since the chief executive sits atop a vast information-gathering bureaucracy, interest groups seeking to influence foreign policy find it difficult to provide the president with novel technical information. Even if intelligence originates within the ranks of interest groups, it is typically routed through and vetted by government agencies. Rarely will it arrive unmolested on the desks of upper-echelon policy-makers. Modern executives have deep resources for gathering political information as well, and any organization must have a vast membership base in order to provide polling data surpassing the capabilities of a White House political team. This distribution of information weakens interest group involvement in pre-decision surveillance. Put another way, interest groups cannot easily manipulate national security decision-makers into pursuing a military adventure.

Third, the public has weak prior preferences over foreign policy.[26] Ongoing conflicts or injustices abroad rate low on the average citizen's docket of problems for the government to solve. This is not to say that the people have no position on foreign involvement, only that their stated

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the Boland Amendment, which explicitly prohibited U.S. military aid or involvement in Nicaragua, or the expenditure of executive resources to promote such intervention. The case represents one of the few examples of a Congress actively working against a sitting president on national security matter.

23. *Administrative Procedure Act*, 1946; Matthew D. McCubbins, Roger G. Noll, and Barry R. Weingast, "Administrative Procedures as Instruments of Political Control," *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 3, no. 2 (1987): 243–277.

24. See Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

25. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Delba Winthrop, orig. 1840 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

26. Brandice Canes-Wrone, *Who Leads Whom?: Presidents, Policy, and the Public* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

preferences change more easily than they do on issues pertaining to domestic policy. This further diminishes the pre-decision surveillance role of interest groups, but strengthens their position with respect to post-decision propaganda, since weaker predispositions make persuasion easier.[27] While members of the mass public may not have closely held prior preferences, they may be drawn into taking a strong stance by the coaxing of politicians and other elites. In all, *ex ante* public inattention leaves the initiating decision on security policy to the president, but creates opportunities for interest groups to become involved when the time comes to build support for a chosen policy.

Based on these assumptions, the present theory argues that the structure of national security politics renders ineffective all of the sources of information-based interest group influence except propaganda and public relations. Surveillance is handled by the massive intelligence and defense bureaucracy, which prefers to pull its own fire alarms. Polling and focus group research offers little insight into a public that pays scant attention to foreign affairs. Compliance training and certification do not play a large part in national security policy because missions are carried out by U.S. personnel in the military and diplomatic services, and the targets of security policy are mostly foreign countries and non-state actors abroad.[28] Propaganda and public relations, on the other hand, become more important because these tools work better upon weak prior preferences.

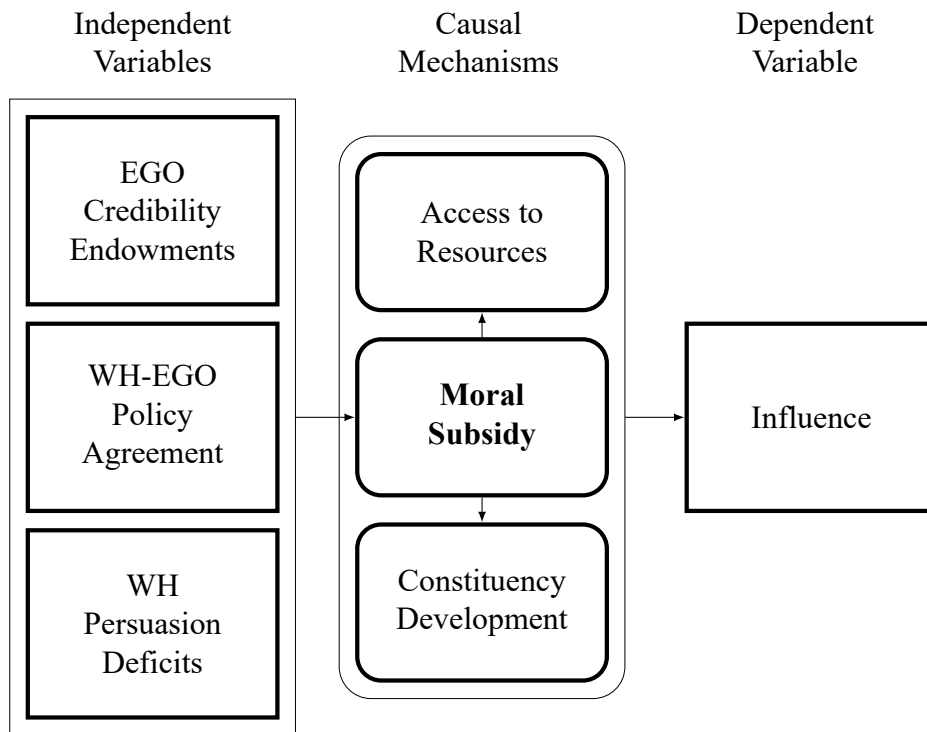## 1.2   Causal Logic and Mechanisms

The theory of moral subsidy explains what allows some interest groups to thrive in contemporary U.S. national security politics, as summarized in Figure 1. There are three primary independent

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27. As a baseline, the U.S. public does not reward unprovoked bellicosity. Presidents Woodrow Wilson and George W. Bush may be remembered for the wars in which they involved their nation, but they both campaigned on anti-interventionist platforms. One of Wilson's slogans was "he kept us out of war." Bush promised to eschew the "nation-building" policies of his predecessor. Still, opportunities for threat inflation abound (Chaim Kaufmann, "Threat Inflation and the Marketplace of Ideas," *International Security*, 2004, 5–48), and even if the public has no innate thirst for war, it can be so moved by motivated policy entrepreneurs.

28. In the nineteenth century, the demands of war were often met by voluntary associations, which provided medical services, personnel, and other logistical assistance to the state militias that comprised the national army — or armies, during the Civil War (Theda Skocpol et al., "Patriotic Partnerships: Why Great Wars Nourished American Civic Voluntarism," in *Shaped by War and Trade*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Martin Shefter [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002]). The establishment of a federal army initiated by the Dick Act in 1903 obviated the need for such material assistance by private sector organizations. There was a great deal of public civic participation in the two World Wars, but these served the needs of morale maintenance more than anything.

variables of interest.[29] Some interest groups agree with a president intent on initiating a new policy program, and some groups are endowed with characteristics that grant them credibility with the public and members of Congress — credibility that the president often does not have.[30] These qualities include educational status, military experience, international relations expertise, and cultural identification with relevant populations abroad. Finally, presidents all suffer from persuasion deficits, but the degree and quality varies depending on the domestic and international politics of the moment. Successful groups are those that take positions that align with the president's and have the specific credibility endowments that compensate for the administration's particular persuasion deficits. They become successful at specific moments, when the president faces a challenging foreign conflict or political weakness at home.

Figure 1: Theory of Moral Subsidy

Independent Variables   Causal Mechanisms   Dependent Variable

- EGO Credibility Endowments
- WH-EGO Policy Agreement
- WH Persuasion Deficits

- Access to Resources
- **Moral Subsidy**
- Constituency Development

- Influence

When all three of these conditions are satisfied, an extra-governmental organization can effec-

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29. Other conventional determinants of group success apply as background conditions – for example, the ability to overcome basic collective action problems is also necessary. See Olson (*The Logic of Collective Action*).

30. The office of President of the United States has credibility endowments of its own. The power of persuasion, of the bully pulpit, is not imaginary. However, it is limited in systematic ways. See especially Edwards (*On Deaf Ears*) for an examination of these limitations.

tively provide moral subsidy to an administration's public mobilization campaign. Those that do benefit in three ways. First, they improve the chances that their chosen policy will succeed, both within the domain of domestic politics and in the international arena. Popular policies secure the consent of domestic veto players dependent on public support themselves. They also have an easier time securing the resources necessary to implement a policy, whether funding or the recruitment of troops. The theory does not, however, put a lot of weight on the achievement of policy success in explaining the political success of EGOs. The executive, and the groups that assist it, often fail in their efforts to secure consent for its agenda, yet the collaboration still yields benefits for the recruited organizations.

The second benefit groups derive from providing moral subsidy does shape the outcome of interest. Collaboration with the executive grants outsiders access to some portion of the professional, political, and informational resources of the national security apparatus. The prestige of working with the White House helps them recruit membership and patronage.[31] Participation in a mobilization effort trains their officers for further political action and builds their political networks. In the course of a public relations campaign, the executive provides affiliated groups with privileged information through invitation-only outreach programs and other, more private, settings. All three of these types of resource help EGOs become more effective and influential, both in government and among the public at large.

The third benefit also affects EGO influence. Groups that provide moral subsidy have the opportunity to develop a constituency loyal to their position. Many studies of interest group influence, especially from the political economic perspective, define interest groups as natural constituencies. In that context, people are wedded to a set of material interests from which we can identify rationally-derived preferences by virtue of their socio-economic position. The present study employs a legal definition of interest group — any not-for-profit association with a political agenda.[32]

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31. There is an irony here. While presidents may be despised by half the population, those same people may see an invitation to even an "enemy" occupied White House as a great honor and proof of merit.

32. This definition, elaborated in the previous chapter, is based on interest group definitions provided by sociologists Laumann (*The Organizational State*) and political scientists Baumgartner and Leech (*Basic Interests*). For example, where in other works "labor" might stand as an interest group — see Narizny (*The political economy of grand strategy*) — in this study particular labor unions would be the unit of analysis.

In the domain of national security, such associations must often build a constituency from scratch, having little in the way of a natural base among the public to bring to the fight.[33] Providing moral subsidy gives EGOs and opportunity to do just that, through the attention brought to an issue by a public relations campaign coordinated in the White House.

Access to resources and constituency development form the basis of durable political influence in national security politics, especially during a time of increasing international engagement. As an expanding executive creates new demand for personnel and propaganda, those groups with professional experience, political connections, and privileged information sources have advantages over their competition. Groups with a developed constituency can mobilize public support with relative ease. As with commercial enterprises that forge a path to new markets or materials, EGOs that have provided moral subsidy can establish a kind of cartel, inviting whom they wish to join them and barring entry to their opponents. Those outside this process can survive, but they remain, for the most part, relegated to the sidelines. They may succeed in the occasional policy fight, but they do not have the same capability to build a durable legacy in national security politics.

The need for third-party propaganda arises from the nature of the policy domain, the institutional structure of democracy in the U.S., and long-standing legislation. Security policy involves foreign populations, complex strategic considerations, and violence. Despite his prominence, the president suffers from structurally induced persuasion deficits. Partisanship causes many to doubt his credibility as a witness. He is not authorized to speak on behalf of foreign populations. The evidence he offers is subject to political constraints from which other actors remain free. The importance of these deficits varies from case to case, but they routinely hamper the executive's ability to command public support. EGOs help overcome these deficits by providing moral subsidy.

The advantage the president has in foreign policy does not give him absolute procedural autonomy. He still must secure congressional consent, and the key to this is public support. Members of Congress may come to Washington as true believers in a cause, but they stay in government only

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33. This echoes Milner and Tingley (*Sailing the Water's Edge*), who argue that policies that call for using the military instrument produce little in the way of distributive consequences, so do not naturally give rise to the organization of opposing interest groups.

so long as they secure re-election. This "electoral connection" forms the basis of contemporary scholarship on the U.S. Congress.[34] The White House enlists EGOs when it needs help mobilizing the public as a lever against congressional resistance. There are legal and political reason why the White House cannot undertake a national security propaganda campaign on its own. The Smith Mundt Act of 1948 prevents the targeting of "public diplomacy" information at a home-front audience.[35] The administration has the legal right to take its case to the public directly, but it often runs a deficit in its balance of persuasive capabilities.

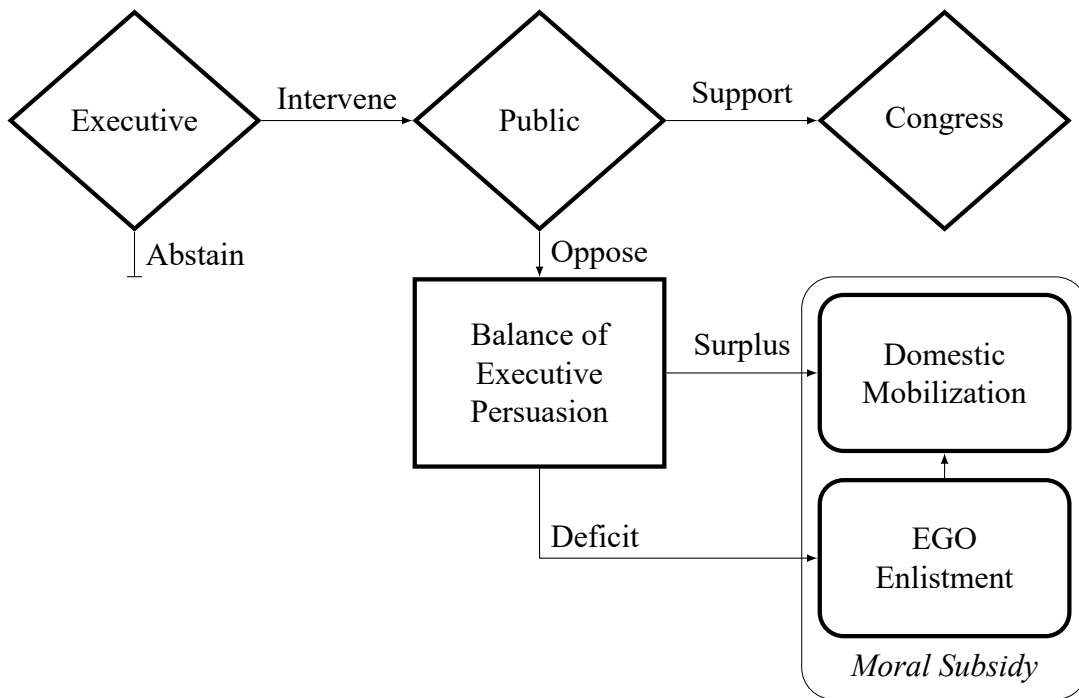**Figure 2: Executive's Decision to Enlist EGOs**

Figure 2 stylizes the executive's decision to enlist EGOs. The White House decides whether to intervene in some foreign situation, which may entail the deployment U.S. military personnel, the provision of armaments, economic support to influence the alliance choices of foreign nations, or some other policy action short of full-scale war. If the administration chooses to abstain, the decision tree terminates. If it chooses to become involved, it must evaluate whether the public supports intervention to a degree sufficient to take the matter to Congress or to take action that Congress has

34. David Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).
35. Smith Mundt was amended in 2013 to bring it up to date with modern information technology, many say with the effect of rendering it obsolete.

the power to block.[36] If the public opposes the policy, the administration must determine whether it has the capacity to persuade the public on its own. If it finds itself capable of handling its own domestic mobilization campaign, it does so and the decision tree ends with an official public relations campaign. If not, it enlists the propaganda help of EGOs. This is moral subsidy.

1.3   Instrumental Morality

The virtue of moral subsidy is ambiguous. The theory recognizes the political importance of moral reasoning, but in a particular way that does not imply any value as a guide to ethical behavior. From the perspective of a policy initiator, it is a strategic tool. For the president, it is a powerful instrument of state-building, allowing the executive to gather political power and enhance the capacity of the government to undertake ambitious projects. For interest groups, it represents an opportunity to step inside the process of governing, to become a functioning limb of the state. The moral justification they provide authorizes only the policy itself, but these extra benefits arise in addition to the initial reward of having their preference satisfied. Moreover, the treatment of morality as a resource, subject to transaction, as a value that one party can transfer to another, fits poorly into conventional conceptions of virtue based on consequence, intention, or motivation. In short, there is no reason to expect principled foreign policy to be a product of moral subsidy.

This tension between providing amoral strategic value and possessing actual moral virtue pervades the practice of moral subsidy. Victim authorization may be a *post hoc* rationalization for going to war, but the exile community supporting the intervention has a legitimate stake in seeing their lands liberated from tyranny, their family rescued from oppression, and their children able to return safely home. Cultural intelligence, though often over-sold or misused, stands a non-zero chance of mitigating harm. Expert translators may be skilled manipulators, but the public does require assistance interpreting complex choices pertaining to distant conflicts. Finally, information laundering sometimes hides the evidence of criminal activity on the part of the government, but it also protects people who risk their lives for the security of their country. In other words, moral

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36. There is no fixed threshold for public support versus opposition, which depend on several factors in the domestic and political systems, such as issue salience, mission cost, opposition party power in Congress, and others.

subsidy serves sinners and saints at the same window.

2   The Origins and Development of the Credibility Cartel

In the existing literature, Jack Snyder's Myths of Empire offers the most important general theory of interest groups in the politics of national security.[37] He argues that late industrialization concentrates economic power, which produces cartels that readily form log-rolling coalitions to pressure the state into pursuing policies that undermine the common good. They do so by promoting false beliefs about the international security environment, myths that lead to over-expansion and self-encirclement.[38] Snyder further argues that democracy guards against cartelization, log-rolling coalitions, and the belief in self-defeating myths. Empirically, the anti-Communist war in Vietnam would seem to undermine Snyder's logic, since the U.S. industrialized early and has a democratic regime, both of which inhibit cartelized politics. However, he argues that the sharing of power between the executive and small number of congressional committees makes possible a transitory form of cartelization, which explains the belief in several of the common myths of empire.[39]

Snyder's argument has a strong foundation, but applying it to the U.S. case requires a good deal of *post hoc* theorizing, and the idea that cartels survive only briefly presents serious conceptional difficulties. The theory of moral subsidy suggests three straightforward corrections to his logic, resulting in a very different explanation of American imperial overreach in southeast Asia during the Cold War. First, he overstates the role of Congress in crafting national security policy. Rather than engage in log-rolling negotiations with congressional committees at the planning stage, the executive crafts its own agenda then mobilizes public support, which exerts leverage over representatives and senators. Second, he overstates the informational advantages that imperial commercial enterprises gain from experience in the "hinterland."[40] The historical evidence presented in this chapter

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37. Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).

38. Such myths include the notion that defense is easier at greater distances from the homeland, that enemies are easily defeated "paper tigers," that losses and victories lead to more of the same, and others.

39. Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, pg. 51, 255, and 257.

40. Ibid., pg. 35.

follows the parallel growth of EGOs and the executive's own official intelligence gathering capabilities, which quickly surpass those of any independent private organization.

Third, he writes, "unless more credible sources like the press or the state can be bought or co-opted, the group's propaganda may be discounted as coming from an obviously biased source."[41] This ignores the public mistrust of official propaganda that often makes third parties more credible than the state, rather than less. It also overlooks the ease with which outside groups can present themselves as independent authoritative voices. Furthermore, co-optation does not represent the only means by with government and interest group preferences might align. The executive has a powerful incentive to recruit and cultivate EGOs, and more than sufficient means to do so. Since the inter-war years, administrations have pursued just such a strategy, which has concentrated persuasive authority among a coherent set of national security interest groups. By no means transitory, U.S. national security politics has at its core a credibility cartel.

The remainder of this chapter presents an analytic history that validates the theory of moral subsidy and explains the origins of the credibility cartel, using primary source material from nearly a dozen separate archives and secondary source histories as well. It divides the time period between the interwar years and the fall of the Soviet Union into three phases: World War II, the early Cold War, and the late Cold War. The first phase comprises the true origins of the cartel, which begins with three closely-related organizations, the Committee to Defend American by Aiding the Allies (CDA), the The Fight for Freedom Committee (FFF), and the Council for Democracy (CFD), which collaborated with President Roosevelt to mobilize support for deeper U.S. involvement in the war against the Axis Powers. In the second phase, these groups re-emerged under new names, but with many of the same personnel, funding sources, and organizational plans, in order to help implement the Marshall Plan, the national security program outlined in National Security Council Report 68 (NSC 68), and President Eisenhower's "New Look." In the final phase, the relationship between the cartel and the White became standard operating procedure, first under the direction of Charles Colson, then institutionalized in the White House Office of Public Liaison (WH/OPL). During

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41. Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, pg. 37.

the Nixon administration, the cartel helped promote the Safeguard Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) program and the policy of Vietnamization, and reprised these roles under President Reagan, promoting the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) and the administration's anti-Communist agenda in Latin America.

2.1   World War II

The origins of the credibility cartel trace back to the inter-war years.[42] Political and academic elites among the victors of the Great War established a set of institutions to understand the root causes of international military conflict and avoid another conflagration. From this effort arose The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), various university-affiliated programs, and independent citizens advocacy committees such as the League of Nations Association, with Clark M. Eichelberger (previously a lecturer in the Radcliffe Chautauqua System) as one of its executive directors.

These organizations held an internationalist world-view even during the Great Depression, when most of the government dedicated itself to the alleviation of economic distress at home. During this time the Progressives and other isolationists dominated congressional politics, having helped President Roosevelt come to power and gain passage for much of the New Deal. By the middle of the 1930s, though, most of the nascent credibility cartel institutions favored U.S. involvement in the growing conflicts in Europe and Asia, including Eichelberger. This division, between isolationists and internationalists, characterized the foreign policy debates of the 1930s.

By 1937, FDR had decided that deeper U.S. involvement in European security was necessary.[43] On October 5 in Chicago, he delivered the "Quarantine Speech" decrying isolationism and neutrality.[44] By that point, Congress had passed highly restrictive "Neutrality Acts" in three consecutive

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42. This section is presented here in summary form to conserve space. A fuller exposition of this phase is available upon request.

43. The question of FDR's desire to involve the U.S. in World War II is the subject of intense debate. See Trachtenberg, Schuessler, Trachtenberg, and Schuessler (*The Craft of International History*; "The Deception Dividend"; "Democracy, Deception, and IR Theory"; "Dan Reiter and America's Road to War in 1941"; *Deceit on the Road to War*) for arguments to the effect that FDR purposefully maneuvered the U.S. into World War II, Reiter ("Democracy, Deception, and Entry into War"; "Response to Trachtenberg, Schuessler, and Kaiser") for a rebuttal to this argument, and Kaiser ("World War or No War") for a position in between, though far more supportive of the former.

44. Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Quarantine Speech*, Chicago, October 1937.

years, barring the transfer of arms to belligerents in foreign conflicts or the use of U.S. naval ships for the same purpose.[45] The public widely rejected the president's interventionist message, and Roosevelt publicly recanted. However, he began surreptitiously to collaborate with Eichelberger, William Allen White, Ulric Bell, and others to form the CDA, the Fight for Freedom Committee (FFF), and the CFD. These groups helped mobilize public support for U.S. support for the Allies against the Nazi Reich and Imperial Japan, devising the Destroyers for Bases exchange and helping secure passage for the Lend-Lease program. They published editorials, held rallies, even established a rival newspaper in Chicago to counter the anti-interventionist Chicago Tribune.

Roosevelt needed the covert assistance of these organizations for two reasons. First, isolationism had broad support among the populace and in Congress. Senator Gerald Nye from North Dakota, an erstwhile Roosevelt ally, had stacked the Foreign Relations committee with fellow isolationists from his seat on the Republican Committee on Committees (the party organization that makes assignments to legislative committees). Charles Lindbergh, perhaps the second most popular man in the country following FDR himself, was a leading member of the The America First Committee (AFC), which modelled itself on the structure of the CDA but with a very different goal — to keep the U.S. completely isolated from the conflicts overseas.[46] The majority of citizens wanted no part of the war. Second, the President needed to enlist outside groups because official pro-war propaganda had become taboo following the perceived excesses of the Committee on Public Information (CPI) during World War I. Moreover, Nye himself had led a two-year investigation of the munitions and banking industries, blaming these special interests for U.S. entry into that conflict. Not only did FDR need to hide his own hand the production of pro-intervention propaganda, he had to choose collaborators who would not stand accused of seeking their own material profit.

The attack on Pearl Harbor and Hitler's declaration of war against the U.S. rendered moot the debate between the isolationists and interventionist and undid the absolute restriction against

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45. The 1937 Neutrality Act contained one concession, the "cash and carry" provision allowing for the sale of arms providing the purchaser provide transport and immediate cash payment. Also, Roosevelt exercised some executive discretion in the application of the Act with respect to assisting China.

46. Other luminaries of the AFC included Walt Disney, actress Lillian Gish, Sinclair Lewis, and future President Gerald Ford.

government-run propaganda. However, the effects on public opinion of the attack represented a culmination of an ongoing process. As Adam Berinsky writes, "December 7, 1941 did not represent an abrupt break with an isolationist past. Rather it marked the realization of a policy that had been in the works for some time," and "the public's reaction to [U.S. entry into the war] was the realization of long-term developments in political and military strategies on the part of partisan political actors."[47] Those actors included EGOs, specifically the nascent credibility cartel. After Pearl Harbor, the AFC disbanded and the Office of War Information (OWI) was created. Even so, the administration supplemented this internal capacity with assistance from the War Advertising Council (later called the Advertising Council, then simply AdCouncil), a private non-profit association of advertising specialists that helped generate public relations content for the war effort. The infant credibility cartel did not disappear during the war, but its role was limited.

After the war, it split into two separate factions.[48] The difference in the Cold War fates of these two factions provides critical analytic leverage for the theory of moral subsidy, showing how disagreement with the president, or merely declining to provide moral subsidy, can sideline even the most powerful third-party actors. One faction, roughly speaking the liberal institutionalist wing, turned away from the business of propaganda and returned to their inter-war efforts to establish strong inter-governmental institutions in the pursuit of cooperative security. Eichelberger, Wendell Willkie, and Eleanor Roosevelt led this faction, and created another series of organizations, including Freedom House and Americans United for World Organization. The groups maintained a presence in elite policy circles, but their reach could not match that of their former extra-governmental partners.[49] The other faction, which favored a more confrontational approach to dealing with the Soviet Union, helped build the Cold War national security apparatus, which is the subject of the next phase of this history.

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47. Adam J. Berinsky, *In Time of War: Understanding American Public Opinion from World War II to Iraq*, 1 edition (Chicago ; London: University Of Chicago Press, October 2009), pg. 51.
48. The split did not occur all at once, but gradually over the course of the decade.
49. Freedom House exists to this day, and provides useful information to security analysts inside and outside government, but its reach remains limited. The goal of world organization, on the other hand, and those who led organizations in pursuit of this goal, have fallen much further into irrelevance.

2.2 The Early Cold War

The Cold War, more than any other political event in its history, fundamentally changed the nature and scope of executive governance in the U.S.[50] After the armistice that ended World War I, the United States demobilized most of its military apparatus, laying the foundation of isolationism that made FDR's war mobilization task so difficult prior to Pearl Harbor. After World War II, while the size of the armed forces shrank considerably, President Truman retained a set of global security commitments that bore little resemblance to U.S. posture in the inter-war years. As the contours of the post-war global political order began to take shape in the last years of the 1940s, the U.S. government rebuilt its national security apparatus to fulfill its new role as a great power in the emerging bipolar structure that would define the next four decades of world politics. The National Security Act of 1947, and its amendments in the following several years, reorganized the armed forces, merged the national security cabinet departments into the Department of Defense, and created the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the National Security Council (NSC), and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Despite prior hopes that the demonstrations of military power at Hiroshima and Nagasaki would render war irrelevant, and despite the promise of peaceful international cooperation entailed in the formation of the United Nations, the U.S. entered the 1950s with a greatly expanded capability to gather foreign intelligence, threaten its geopolitical adversaries, and engage energetically in national security politics.

Alongside the growth in military and intelligence capacity, the early Cold War created opportunities for extra-governmental collaboration with newly formed agencies responsible for public diplomacy, psychological warfare, and propaganda. The Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 authorized the creation of several propaganda agencies throughout the executive tasked with stabilizing U.S. alliances and preventing the rise of communism among western nations.[51] With Congress still wary,

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50. See Sparrow (*Warfare State*) for a detailed history of executive growth during the Cold War. This of course reinforces the premises laid down in Hamilton ("Federalist #8") and Tocqueville (*Democracy in America*) that war, or the threat of war, empowers the executive. Also see Howell, Jackman, and Rogowski (*The Wartime President*) for a systematic analysis of the general proposition.

51. Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: Univ Pr of Kansas, February 2006), pg. 37.

however, of establishing an official state apparatus of domestic propaganda, the law prohibited the new agency targeting U.S. audiences with their public relations messages, declaring "no funds authorized to be appropriated to the United States Information Agency shall be used to influence public opinion in the United States, and no program material prepared by the United States Information Agency shall be distributed within the United States."[52] Nothing, however, prevented members of the administration pursuing the same extra-governmental strategy as FDR used in the late 1930s. The law even encouraged the propaganda agencies to enlist the aid of non-governmental organizations in its operations abroad.[53]

Three major national security programs describe the contours of the early Cold War, each providing important opportunities for testing and refining the practice of EGO recruitment and moral subsidy. First, the Marshall Plan rebuilt Europe, in order to prevent the continent from embracing the promise by Soviet Communism to provide a respite from poverty, as many countries threatened to do. To this end, former members of CDA and its partners re-convened to establish the Committee for the Marshall Plan (CMP). Second, NSC 68 articulated an aggressive posture with respect to containing Soviet expansion, through military buildup and, when necessary, confrontation with the USSR and its client states, a task for which several members of the NSC resigned their official posts to team up with EGO leaders to create Committee on the Present Danger (CPD). Finally, the "New Look" policy of President Eisenhower scaled back military expenditures, but ramped up the psychological warfare programs begun under Truman, recruiting members of the credibility cartel to run propaganda operations abroad and, within the constraints of the law, domestically. The power of the cartel was so great that one of its leaders, Tracy Voorhees, was quietly given the task of designing an entire agency of the U.S. executive, the United States Information Agency (USIA), which remained active for half a century. Altogether, this period involves a robust growth in propaganda aimed at foreign audiences, but fairly strict constraints against directing the same persuasive campaigns at the U.S. public. The credibility cartel assisted the Truman and Eisenhower administrations in both of these efforts, and developed its influence in the process.

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52. 22 USC Sec. 1461-1a
53. Osgood, *Total Cold War*, pg. 230.

2.2.1   The Marshall Plan

World War II left Europe in ashes. Afraid that the social welfare promised by Soviet communism would prove too attractive to the poverty-stricken nations whose economies could not recover on their own, the Truman administration decided to undertake a massive recovery effort. As made clear in an internal memorandum, the "[p]urpose of Marshall plan is to enable Europeans to have minimum of economic well-being necessary to ensure that they do not go communist."[54] The European Recovery Program ultimately provided over $12 billion in aid under the political leadership of Secretary of State George C. Marshall, and not only succeeded in preventing western European defection to the Soviet sphere, but also helped facilitate the establishment of the The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Though newly empowered by the Smith-Mundt Act to attach a promotional message to every pledged dollar of foreign aid, the same statute prohibited the domestic marketing campaign the administration needed to mobilize domestic opinion in support of the appropriations necessary to meet its promises. As Nicholas Cull writes, "[i]t was the informational equivalent of *posse comitatus*, the law forbidding domestic deployment of the U.S. military, and touched similar nerves."[55] The war had muzzled the isolationists in Congress and among the public (indeed it had converted more than a few), but interventionists in government still needed outside help convincing the country that the U.S. should not retreat back into fortress America and let Europe fend for itself.

Dean Acheson, formerly Undersecretary to Secretary Marshall at the State Department, led the effort to reconvene the citizens committee he had joined in support of FDR's interventionism. The Committee to Defend America (CDA) provided the organizational template and the leadership personnel for a new EGO to help smooth the passage of President Truman's recovery program. Before settling on the final name, they had circulated a list that included "The Committee to Defend America by Aiding Europe" and nine other suggestions with the only differences being the replacement

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54. Harry S. Truman Presidential Library (HSTL), Dean G. Acheson Papers, Box 4, Attachment to Memorandum to Mr. Stein from William P. Bundy, January 6, 1948.

55. Nicholas John Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American propaganda and public diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pg. 40.

of "Defend" with synonyms such as "Protect" and "Preserve" and several others.[56] The group's methods had changed about as much as its name. They promptly went to work producing pamphlets and creating an ostensibly apolitical public relations materials in favor of administration policy. They distributed pamphlets such as "The Marshall Plan or Else" by Livingston Hartley, former Washington, D.C. Director of the CDA, and "Who's the Man Against the Marshall Plan?" — a non-too-flattering portrait of a typical administration opponent.

Their rhetorical strategy reflected an understanding that each audience required its own type of persuasion, with the broader public demanding the starkest, most moralistic tone. Acheson revealed his strategy in a letter about an address he delivered at an elite public affairs forum,

> I heard a great number of comments that the general scheme which I followed — that is, the Commonwealth speech which tried to explain the fundamental economics of Western Europe and did not try to plunge people into humanitarian ecstacies and fright of communists — helped clarify the matter.[57]

This contrasts starkly with the mass appeal they made, printed in large block letters, "STOP STALIN NOW," explaining further that "Stalin can win his great gamble only if we betray our best interests — if we stand supinely by and permit the free people of Europe to go down one by one for lack of our economic aid to their recovery."[58] When addressing Congress, they took a mixed approach stating, "[p]assage of the bill [with reduced funding] would undo the good work that has been started in Europe and would be a blow to international trade and our own national security." With attention to the effects of party loyalty, they arranged for Senator Arthur Vandenberg (R-MI), famous for his assertion that "politics stops at the water's edge" to visit Chicago and make a speech to fellow Republicans and persuade them against isolationism.[59]

At this time, the rift between the two factions of FDR's extra-governmental coalition began to widen. Freedom House, created by Eleanor Roosevelt, Wendell Wilkie, and others in the leadership of the Fight for Freedom Committee (FFF), promoted democracy through international institutions.

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56. HSTL, The Records of the Committee for the Marshall Plan, Box 1, Letter from Hugh Moore to Fred McKee, September 8, 1947.
57. HSTL, Dean G. Acheson Papers, Box 4, Letter from Dean Acheson to John A. Ferguson, December 17, 1947.
58. HSTL, Dean G. Acheson Papers, Box 4, Facts about the Marshall Plan, February 4, 1948.
59. HSTL, Dean G. Acheson Papers, Box 4, Letter from Laird Bell to John H. Ferguson, January 14, 1948.

Clark Eichelberger, who had been among the first to rally to Roosevelt's side after the Quarantine Speech, had joined on to the CMP, but grew disillusioned with the group's militant public rhetoric. He wrote a letter to CMP Executive Committee Chairman Robert Patterson

> I am very much disturbed at the heading "Stop Stalin Now" and most of the text of the newspaper ad which has been sent around for our views.
>   The text under the heading is reminiscent of a famous ad run some years ago entitled "Stop Hitler Now." But the circumstances are very different. Germany was then at war with the Western world. To use this same play on words at this time in an ad in support of the Marshall Plan, to my way of thinking, verges on war mongering.[60]

Eichelberger preferred the liberal-institutionalist approach, promoting the United Nations (UN) as a world governing body, a cause to which he dedicated the remainder of his career. This choice alienated him from President Truman and subsequent administrations. Acheson, meanwhile, saw the UN as ineffectual due to Soviet intransigence, testifying before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs,

> [t]he United Nations would, it was planned, go forward from this start on the basis of principle and organization which would bring to the settlement of international questions the conscience of mankind and the justice of laws and procedures which dealt equally with the strong and the weak.

He adds, "[i]t is now plain that the Soviet Union does not intend to join in the task."[61] This split anticipated the direction of U.S. national security politics over the following several decades, empowering Acheson, C. D. Jackson,[62] and others who favored what would become known as the "Cold War consensus" while Eichelberger and Freedom House lagged far behind their erstwhile colleagues in terms of constituency development and access to the national security apparatus.

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60. HSTL, The Records of the Committee for the Marshall Plan, Box 2, Letter from Clark M. Eichelberger to Judge Patterson, February 13, 1948.

61. HSTL, Papers of Clark M Clifford, Box 4, Statement of the Honorable Dean Acheson Before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, January 28, 1948.

62. Jackson had been a leader of the pro-intervention Council for Democracy (CFD) during World War II. His apex came during the Eisenhower administration.

2.2.2 National Security Council Report 68 (NSC 68)

More than any other document, NSC 68 established as official national security policy President Truman's increasingly militant posture toward the Soviet Union. While primarily focused on building up military capabilities, it also included a mandate for psychological warfare — the preferred government term to describe foreign-targeted propaganda. NSC 68 made clear that the president's national security team believed that the ideological conflict mattered a great deal in the unfolding Cold War. "There is a basic conflict between the idea of freedom under a government of laws, and the idea of slavery under the grim oligarchy of the Kremlin."[63] This was a recapitulation of National Security Council Report 4 (NSC 4), which concluded

> [t]he present world situation requires the immediate strengthening and coordination of all foreign information measures of the US Government designed to influence attitudes in foreign countries in a direction favorable to the attainment of its objectives and to counteract effects of anti-US propaganda.[64]

Whether or not the council accurately assessed the importance of ideology and attitudes, these beliefs made their way into the recommendations as the Information Program.

> The primary effort will be directed at creating, in the areas and the nations of most critical importance to the achievement of national objectives of the United States, (a) popular and governmental confidence and resolution in support of the shared interests of the peoples of the free world, and (b) psychological resistance to the further expansion, whether by overt or covert means, of the influence of Soviet Communism... The peoples of the Soviet Union and its satellites, as well as the peoples of the most vulnerable areas of the free world, are primary targets of this psychological offensive.[65]

The plan called for in increase in funding and activity for the Voice of America (VOA) through the "Campaign for Truth" program, already in effect.

As with many of the recommendations in NSC 68, by July of the following year the president's national security team felt that the report had been unsuccessful in establishing an adequate inter-

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63. HSTL, Papers of Harry S Truman, President's Secretary's File (PSF), Box 180, NSC 68, April 14, 1950.
64. HSTL, Papers of Harry S Truman, PSF, Box 177, NSC 4, December 9, 1947.
65. HSTL, Papers of Harry S Truman, PSF, Box 182, NSC 68/3, December 8, 1950.

national propaganda program. In National Security Council Report 114 (NSC 114), the council produced a progress report on NSC 68, and found it sorely lacking. Meanwhile, according to the council, the Soviets had suffered no such problems. In an assessment of Soviet "psychological capabilities," they found that

> [t]he combination of the Soviet propaganda apparatus with the worldwide network of local Communist parties and front societies continues to give the Soviet Union and organizational advantage for its propaganda efforts.[66]

According to NSC 114, the U.S. needed to counter the Soviet ideological threat with a capability for coordinated psychological warfare. The effort to establish a dedicated foreign propaganda agency within the government had been ongoing since World War II, but by late into President Truman's second term, it had not come fully to fruition.

A major advance, however, had just occurred by the time NSC 114 was reported, and it set in motion a process that made propaganda a central component of U.S. national security politics. The establishment by Executive Order of the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) on April 14, 1951 constituted a serious development in the evolution of the national security apparatus. The NSC itself had only been in existence four years at that point, and its contribution to policy-making remained a matter of some doubt for many within the administration. "[T]he NSC functions as a committee of equals and not as a staff... the fallacy of conducting warfare by committee has often been demonstrated," wrote an unnamed aide, and expressed the hope that the PSB "might become a staff agency to help the President to discharge his command functions over all the varied forces of today's cold war."[67] This did not come to pass, exactly, but something very much like it did with the replacement of the PSB with the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB) early in President Eisenhower's first term.

Though now equipped with sanctioned propaganda capabilities, the government still enlisted the help of outside organizations for political reasons. They recognized, from the earliest days,

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66. HSTL, Papers of Harry S Truman, PSF, Box 184, NSC 114, August 8, 1951.
67. HSTL, Papers of Harry S Truman, Staff Member and Office Files (SMOF), PSB, Box 2, The PSB: Functional Relation to the President and the NSC, July 16, 1951.

the importance of third-party legitimation, a lesson learned from public relations experts that had provided professional advice since World War II. In particular, they adopted Edward Bernays' technique of "involving an intricate web of surrogate spokespersons, front groups, letter-writing campaigns, publicity stunts, and unlikely alliances between organizations and individuals," which "obscured the public relations person's manipulating hand."[68] The Executive Director of CARE[69] confirmed this logic. A memorandum of conversation summarizes his thoughts as follows,

> his opinion was that U.S. governmental projects were not reaching the "little man" in the various countries where the Marshall Plan, ECA, and other funds have been spent, and that in the absence of such effect, the psychological impact of U.S. programs was negative. He cited a number of examples of the differences between private and governmental operations to show the advantages in the former in effective influence on opinion through direct impact on the "little man", as well as the relatively easy techniques by which Communists could persuade people that they had got no benefit from the U.S.[70]

The PSB had understood from very early on the logic of moral subsidy, that recruiting independent sources to testify on behalf of the U.S. government would render its message more effective.

While the foreign-targeted propaganda machine had continued to grow, beginning with the affirmative provisions of the Smith-Mundt Act and the subsequent boosts it had received with NSC 4, NSC 68, and NSC 114, the prohibitions in that same law prevented the administration from targeting the U.S. public. As long as they remained on the government payroll, administration personnel were constrained in their liberty to propagandize the public. So several of them resigned, in order that they could launder persuasive information to the public. Tracy Voorhees, who had been Assistant Secretary of the Army, became Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD), which continued the work that the Committee for the Marshall Plan (CMP) had done before it. In fact, when the CMP finally dissolved, it emptied its bank account by writing a check to the

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68. See Osgood (*Total Cold War*, pg. 20). Bernays had worked in the Committee on Public Information (CPI) during World War I, the Office of War Information (OWI) during World War II, and advised the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, helping the latter foment unrest that led to the government overthrow in Guatemala.

69. Originally, the Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe, later the Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere.

70. HSTL, Papers of Harry S Truman, SMOF, PSB, Box 4, Memorandum of Conversation, January 31, 1952.

CPD.[71]

The CPD operated just as anticipated by the theory of moral subsidy, as an EGO seeking to persuade the public to support the administration's agenda, and to pressure Congress to follow along, all while maintaining an air of independence from politics. Their statement of objectives began,

> The Committee on the Present Danger is a non-partisan, non-political group of private citizens. It was formed late last year because of the deep conviction that the United States and its democratic way of life are gravely threatened by Soviet aggression.[72]

They neglected to mention the government careers many of them had just left. Though difficult to confirm, it appears that once Voorhees and others left their executive branch posts they maintained some separation from the administration. A memorandum from 1952 described the CPD and a few other groups "as channels of education and leadership in this country," but notes little coordination among them, and hesitated to recommend more systematic liaison.[73] Those constraints would loosen under President Eisenhower, and fall away completely under President Nixon.

2.2.3 The New Look

After the massive increases in military expenditures of the Truman years, President Eisenhower shifted toward a greater reliance on nuclear deterrence as opposed to open conflict, a program that came to be known as the "New Look."[74] The New Look signaled a shift in emphasis from conventional to psychological warfare, in addition to the buildup in nuclear capabilities. Kenneth Osgood writes "because the Soviets were unlikely to initiate a suicidal world war, the brunt of the Cold War effort should be directed at besting the Soviets in the political and psychological fields."[75] This re-balancing of priorities manifested itself in a re-configuration of the official national security ap-

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71. HSTL, The Records of the Committee for the Marshall Plan, Box 1, Letter from Robert Patterson to Hugh Moore, April 17, 1951.
72. HSTL, Papers of William L Clayton, Box 92, Committee on the Present Danger.
73. HSTL, Papers of Harry S Truman, SMOF, PSB, Box 2, Memorandum for Mr. Sherman From William Korns, June 4, 1952.
74. See Huntington and Gaddis (*Common Defense*; *Strategies of Containment*)
75. Osgood, *Total Cold War*, pg. 71.

paratus, and further improved the position of the credibility cartel, whose leaders found themselves at the center of the new institutional arrangement.

With the turnover to the new administration, as with many inter-party transitions, a series of government re-organization committees were formed. Among them, the Committee on International Information Activities (CIIA), also known the Jackson Committee after its Chairman William H. Jackson, convened in the first weeks of President Eisenhower's term to assess the state of international public relations efforts by the U.S. They recommended two important changes pertaining to propaganda. First, the PSB should be abolished and replaced by the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB), with an expanded mandate that explicitly integrated psychological warfare with policy coordination across agencies. This elevation of status for the political war began the re-balancing that characterized the New Look. Second, the USIA was established within the State Department, having a permanent representative on the OCB, with the mandate of improving the public image of the United States abroad.[76]

The role of the OCB, as envisioned by Chairman Jackson and the rest of the CIIA, went well beyond that of the PSB.

> The Committee conceived of the new Board as the executive arm of
> the NSC, charged with the timely and coordinated carrying out of approved policy and also with assuring that each action is so executed
> as to make its full contribution to the particular climate of opinion
> which the United States is seeking to achieve in the world.[77]

Not only had the OCB retained its responsibility to manage psychological warfare, its mandate stated that inter-agency coordination and NSC policy implementation inherently involved public relations. No aspect of the Cold War would proceed without attention paid to the propaganda value of a mission. Over the course of Eisenhower's presidency, the OCB came to occupy a increasingly central role in the national security apparatus. As the NSC itself grew into a coherent policy-making body with its own staff, the head of OCB earned full membership in the council. Its official brief

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76. The VOA was subsumed under the USIA's jurisdiction. For a comprehensive history of the USIA, see Cull (*The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*).

77. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (DDEL), Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 22, Memorandum for the President, November 2, 1954, , pg. 4.

pertained only to foreign public opinion, still enjoined by Smith-Mundt from targeting a domestic audience.

The Committee on the Present Danger (CPD) had begun the Eisenhower administration in a cautious manner, but they soon found themselves at the apex of the New Look's public diplomacy apparatus. They knew their role — to wait until the president made a decision, then to promote it if they remained in agreement. In a letter to William Clayton in April of 1953 discussing urban defense programs, Tracy Voorhees writes,

> our thinking has been that it is better for our Committee not to take any active position until the situation has clarified itself as to what the Administration will do. If President Eisenhower should decide against such an effort, we could not be effective to bring it about. If he should decide to do it, and Congress should fail to support him as to funds, we might have a real function.[78]

The president himself knew the importance of third-party support in the government's psychological warfare campaign. As Osgood writes, "Eisenhower believed that for propaganda to be effective, the hand of the government must be carefully concealed," recognizing that "viewpoints presented by seemingly independent voices would be more persuasive."[79]

Applying this same logic to the home audience, using surrogates would not only be legal, it would also prove more effective. This proved especially advantageous to credibility cartel leaders C.D. Jackson of the World War II Council for Democracy (CFD) and Voorhees of the CPD. Jackson had led the Crusade for Freedom (CFF), a CIA-supported EGO that raised money for the National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE), which itself supported the operations of the Voice of America (VOA).[80] He had a seat on the Committee on International Information Activities (CIIA), which recommended the creation of the USIA and the OCB. When this plan was implemented, Jackson also became a member of the OCB, and served as liaison to the Advertising Council, through which the administration laundered its domestic propaganda. Begun as the War Advertising Council under FDR, this association of advertising and public relations firms ran campaigns that encouraged

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78. HSTL, Papers of William L Clayton, Box 92, Letter from Tracy Voorhees to William Clayton, April 22, 1953.
79. Osgood, *Total Cold War*, pg. 77.
80. Ibid., pg. 31.

Americans to attend church (or synagogue), to conserve natural resources, and donate money to CARE, all for the sake of countering the threat of the presumably anti-theistic communist ideology at home and abroad. It had campaigned for Jackson's CFF in 1951, and the relationship proved durable.[81] When they held their annual meeting in 1953, one observer reported that Jackson "quarter-backed the proceedings."[82] Voorhees, for his part, though only listed as "of counsel" to the CIIA, headed the group that planned the organization of the USIA.[83] Few acts entail greater influence than designing a government agency, and this one remained in operation for nearly fifty years.

2.3 The Late Cold War

Over the first nearly twenty years of the Cold War, national security politics had at its core a consensus between the two major parties regarding the Soviet threat. To be sure, there remained contingents of isolationism, divisions between liberal institutionalists and militarists, and other areas of disagreement among policy-makers. Despite these differences, the first major party contender for the White House to challenge the Cold War consensus was George McGovern in 1972.[84] The consensus had collapsed by 1968, its demise made manifest by the chaos attending the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, where anti-war protestors met with a violent response by Mayor Richard J. Daley's police force.[85]

Richard Nixon entered office as the first post-consensus president, and his administration had a major impact on EGOs and national security politics. Though among the most famous White House aides for his role in Watergate, Charles Colson's job remains unknown to most. In fact, he was in charge of managing the administration's relationships with interest groups, and he used his

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81. DDEL, James M Lambie Jr Papers, Box 1, Report of Crusade for Freedom Campaign for 1951, January 15, 1952.

82. DDEL, James M Lambie Jr Papers, Box 1, Cherry Blossom Time in Washington, March 31, 1953.

83. DDEL, Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 21, Report on Operations of International Information Administration, July 31, 1953.

84. Adlai Stevenson, two-time opponent of President Eisenhower, not only supported the consensus, he helped give a bipartisan composition to several important credibility cartel EGOs. Barry Goldwater in 1964 disapproved of President Lyndon Johnson's policy in Vietnam, but primarily because he favored the use of nuclear weapons instead of U.S. marines. Hubert Humphrey suffered from his pro-war reputation as LBJ's Vice President.

85. Krebs ("How Dominant Narratives Rise and Fall: Military Conflict, Politics, and the Cold War Consensus") argues that the collapse comes as early as 1965.

position to transform the credibility cartel into a Republican party operation. He channeled tens of millions of dollars in private money into the coffers of administration-friendly think-tanks, shut down groups he felt inadequately endowed with social credibility, and prevented competition he believed would inhibit the development of a conservative extra-governmental ecosystem.

Colson turned to the credibility cartel to help secure and protect funding for the Safeguard ABM program. The lineage of the main pro-Safeguard EGO, the Citizens Committee to Safeguard America (CCSA) traces directly back to the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD), through Dean Acheson. Originally the Committee to Maintain a Prudent Defense Policy, the CCSA helped overcome Congressional reluctance to approve funding without public support. In perhaps the most blatant act of information laundering, Colson authored an essay published in the Reader's Digest, signed by CCSA figurehead and elder statesman Henry Cabot Lodge. He also helped develop the American Security Council (ASC), a private organization that he often had to explain was unrelated to the NSC. Together, they helped keep the Safeguard project alive when even the principal contractor, Bell Laboratories, wanted it cancelled. To policy-makers, they argued that the threat of a defense shield against nuclear attack would give the administration additional leverage against the Soviets in the Strategic Arms Limitations Treaty (SALT) negotiations. To the public, they simply argued that a shield was a moral necessity against against the nuclear sword.

The administration also turned to the EGO strategy in their efforts to mobilize support for "Vietnamization" — a cluster of policies that transferred power to the South Vietnamese government without appearing to retreat, declaring victory without clearly achieving it. It also meant extending the war, a prospect that the public, and many in Congress, had turned sharply against. In defense of the president, Colson helped organize and set the agenda for Americans for Winning the Peace (AWP), a group self-consciously modeled on the interventionist citizens committees of World War II. Just like the CDA, the administration tried to keep the relationship between AWP and the administration covert; maintaining the group's independence was critical to its usefulness. ASC joined Colson and AWP in this campaign.

By the time President Reagan came to power, Colson's responsibilities had been institutional-

ized in the White House Office of Public Liaison (WH/OPL), with a full staff and budget. Building on Nixon administration support, the credibility cartel had consolidated its influence as a discrete piece of the ascendent Republican party movement.[86] Following closely the direction set under Nixon, the ASC returned to support the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), Reagan's much-expanded, space-based version of the ABM program, also much-maligned by the president's political opponents. The ASC was deeply involved in the administration's Central American agenda as well, a program aimed at eradicating "Marxist-Leninism" from that part of the Western Hemisphere. This was among the highest of administration priorities in national security, and it produced the Reagan presidency's worst scandal, the Iran-Contra Affair. While unsuccessful at securing congressional consent for aiding the anti-leftist rebellion, it provided an opportunity for coalition-building among EGOs and with the White House. It may not have affected the intended change in Nicaragua, but it helped develop the political resources of the credibility cartel. It also helped establish moral subsidy as standard operating procedure in U.S. national security politics.

3 Conclusion

The three phases of the history described above provide strong support for the core propositions of the theory of moral subsidy, and explain the origins and subsequent development of the credibility cartel. FDR needed help motivating the public to support U.S. involvement in World War II, but his Quarantine Speech failed to do the job. So, third parties organized themselves into citizens committees, and collaborated with the White House to undertake an orchestrated campaign of propaganda. This proved the concept of moral subsidy. The Truman and Eisenhower administrations adopted these methods, and recruited personnel from FDR's extra-governmental allies, who brought with them the template that had worked to get the U.S. to abandon neutrality in the 1930s. By the latter years of the Cold War, the Nixon and Reagan administrations had institutionalized the nexus of government and civil society, making moral subsidy standard operating procedure.

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86. The story of the cartel under President Carter is instructive, since they largely went into official exile. Still, they hounded Carter under the auspices of "Team B" criticism of administration policy, and reconstituted the mostly dormant Committee on the Present Danger (CPD).

This was the shape of national security politics when the Soviet Union collapsed, and its legacy survived beyond the conflict that created it. Perhaps this helps to explain how the West's triumph in the Cold War never yielded the promised "peace dividend." Instead, the U.S. and its allies continued to pursue aggressive national security policies. Our "unipolar moment" was defined by those whose credibility derived from their ability to motivate the public, and by extension Congress, to favor force and confrontation.[87] Despite the end of the Cold War, U.S. forces remain in place roughly where they stood facing down the Communist bloc in eastern Europe and its proxies in east Asia. NATO continues to expand despite losing its founding purpose, creating tension in the region.[88] Military expenditures continue to account for over half of all discretionary spending. Prominent politicians and security analysts treat every last non-state militant force as if it poses a threat equivalent to the Third Reich or the USSR. The real mystery, however, is not simply the persistence of these policies, but the durability of their popularity. The current argument suggests that this pathology relates to the fact that few credible authorities had been cultivated with sufficient executive care around the premise of restraint in the decades following World War II. The final chapter of this study will explore the prospects for breaking the credibility cartel.

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87. Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (January 1990): 23–33.
88. John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 1 (1990): 5–56; John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault," *Foreign Affairs*, no. September/October (2014).

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