

A Farewell to Arms Autonomy?

An Analysis of International Arms Cooperation in U.S. Security Alliances in the Post-Cold War Era

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Research Question

States have historically preferred to produce their own armaments over reliance on foreign sources for defense-related goods. However, the last decades of the 20th century saw a rise in collaborative arms development agreements between states, contradicting realist theory. Why has there been a sudden rise in the codevelopment of arms in recent decades?

Hypotheses

H₁: Decreases in defense spending across member states of a security alliance leads to an increase in collaborative defense projects.

H₂: International collaboration is a response to the high costs of technological inputs for advanced weaponry.

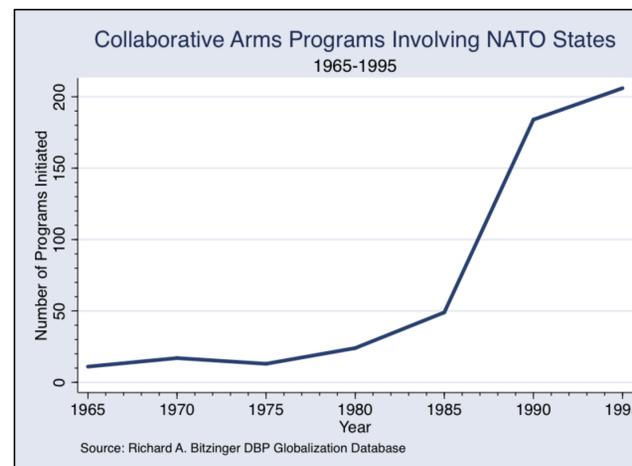
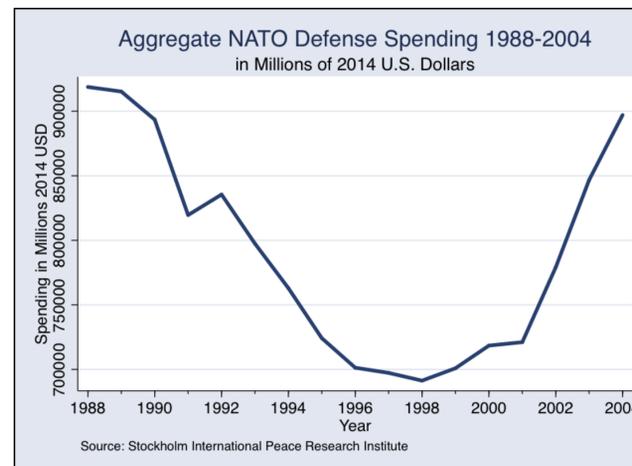
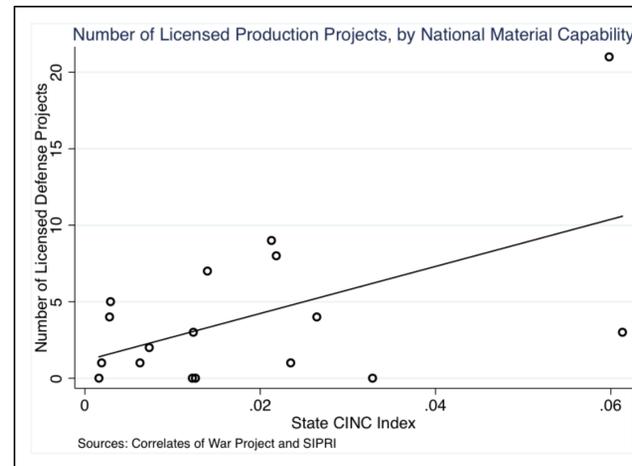
H₃: Small states in an asymmetrical alliance prefer to collaborate on arms because of access to foreign technology and economic stimulation of domestic industrial base.

H₄: Large states agree to collaborate with small states when defense budgets are low and foreign competition is high.

Research Design

- Use defense spending data to analyze trends
- Compare to globalized arms data from Defense Budget Project
- Case study of the F-35, largest collaborative weapons project to date, analyze motives and outcomes

Data



The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter

- Collaboration between nine countries
- Official objective was to lower costs and risks associated with research and development
- Partner states offered economic offsets
- U.S. pitched F-35 participation to states that now had domestic alternatives as a result of technology diffusion
- Partner states have taken issue with unequal distribution of economic benefits and technology
- U.S. promotion of the F-35 to allies can be viewed as a means to maintain market influence in a time of growing competition

Conclusions

- The F-35 case suggests the United States has adjusted its policy to increased development costs and foreign competition
- U.S. allies apply value to purchasing American arms because of increased influence in the alliance
- If the perception of U.S. hegemony changes among allies, they may be less willing to agree to collaborate with U.S.
- This research contributes to filling in gap on collaboration, builds upon Bitzinger's IAC dataset

Acknowledgements

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