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Phil M. Haun. *Coercion, Survival, and War: Why Weak States Resist the United States.*

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Introduction by Dan Byman, Georgetown University and Senior Fellow, the Brookings Institution

Philip Haun's *Coercion, Survival and War: Why Weak States Resist the United States* is a much-needed book. After over a decade where the struggle against terrorism dominated policy, conflicts among states—such as the tension between China and Japan over disputed islands or European and U.S. efforts to push back against Russia's attempts to expand its sphere of influence—are now at the front and center of policymakers' concerns and may prove the most important security issues for the Trump administration.

Haun's work presents a general theory of coercive failure, arguing that too often coercers insist on too much—in particular demands for regime change and surrendering territory. Such demands are politically impossible for leaders of target states to meet, leading to coercive failure. Haun surveys a range of coercion cases to draw his general conclusions and then offers in-depth case studies to extract the details necessary to prove his arguments. As with many studies of coercion, Haun's work focuses on the U.S. experience. All four reviewers praise the book as well as critique it, and in doing so they offer insights for the study of coercion in general.

The reviewers agree that *Coercion, Survival, and War* brings much-needed nuance to the field. It does not fall into the trap of assuming that rhetoric and policy statements necessarily reflect leaders' true goals. Haun and the reviewers present explanations for why powerful states might present impractical demands that they know are not likely to be met and why they then issue insincere threats they know they will not carry out. These threats can be a prelude to other strategies, including a box to check to justify war, as well as satisfying domestic politics or simply wanting aggressors to pay at least some price for their bellicose actions.

Dan Altman argues Haun's work is less compelling as a general theory. Altman and other reviewers point out exceptions to his generalizations, particularly when one draws on non-U.S. cases. As Todd Sescher contends, demands for regime change and to surrender territory do at times work – not frequently, but enough to be seriously considered.

Part of the complexity of coercion is that there is a built-in selection bias on both sides. The United States or other major powers might focus their coercive energies in cases where success is more likely, but conversely, challenger states may factor in the response of possible enemies before they act. Perception and misperception also matter tremendously here: too often leaders are naïve and optimistic about how others will respond to their aggression and threats.

A particular difficulty is measuring political will. Andrew Stigler points out that we have metrics for a state's overall power, but determining when a leader will cave to outside pressure is harder to measure – the target leader himself may not know the answer, worrying about his own people's morale and resilience but at times finding this more enduring, or wondering whether his state's ability to repress is more effective than anticipated.

Most of all, Haun and the reviewers make clear that coercion needs to be considered in context. As Christine M. Leah contends, institutions might make most coercion unnecessary as they offer a non-violent alternative and the norm of violent intervention is weakened. On the other hand, they can add legitimacy to coercive threats, making them more powerful. Coercion is often interwoven among the actors. In 2016, the United

States and its European allies tried to coerce Russia to abandon its support for separatists in eastern Ukraine through economic pressure, diplomatic condemnation, and limited military assistance to Ukraine. Russia is using special operations and other means to press Kiev to allow a high degree of autonomy in the east, while Kiev is trying to convince local actors to bow to its power. All are coercing, and most are being coerced at the same time.

Finally, coercive threats must be seen across a spectrum of policy options. Limited force can be a prelude to greater force or even all-out war. It can also be paired with concessions to soften the blow.

In the end, the field of coercion remains wide open for study. Most of the classic works emphasize bipolar Cold War confrontations and the risk of a nuclear exchange. There is much to be done to advance and modify these concepts to apply them to the complexity of today's world.

Participants:

Phil Haun is Professor and Dean of Academics at the U.S. Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from MIT, and is a research affiliate with MIT's Security Studies Program. His latest article is "Breaker of Armies: Air Power in the Easter Offensive and the Myth of Linebacker I and II in the Vietnam War" *International Security* (Winter 2016). He has just completed a manuscript *The Book of ACTS: Lectures of the Air Corps Tactical School and American Strategic Bombing in World War II*.

Daniel Byman is a Professor and Senior Associate Dean at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and a Senior Fellow at the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. Byman has written widely on a range of topics related to terrorism, international security, and the Middle East. His books include *The Dynamics of Coercion* (Cambridge, 2002; co-authored with Matthew Waxman); *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism* (Cambridge 2005) and *A High Price: The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism* (Oxford, 2011). His latest book is *Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, and the Global Jihadist Movement: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford, 2015). Byman received his BA in religion from Amherst College and his Ph.D. in political science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Dan Altman is a postdoctoral fellow with the International Security Program at the Belfer Center at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. In August 2017, he starts as an Assistant Professor in the Political Science Department at Georgia State University. His research examines strategy and statecraft on the brink of war. He is developing a book manuscript, *Red Lines in International Politics*, and his research is published or forthcoming in *International Studies Quarterly* and *Security Studies*.

Christine M. Leah is a postdoctoral fellow with the grand strategy program at Yale University. She is the author of *Australia and the Bomb* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), and has published in *Comparative Strategy*, the *Journal of Strategic Studies*, *Asian Security*, the *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, *The National Interest*, and with RSIS and RAND.

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Andrew L. Stigler is an Associate Professor at the Naval War College. He is currently working on a book project, *The Military: A Presidential Briefing Book* for Transaction.

Review by Dan Altman, Belfer Center, Harvard Kennedy School

In *Coercion, Survival, and War*, Phil Haun takes up one of the most policy-relevant questions of the post-Cold War era: why does the United States find it so difficult – and so often fail – to coerce weaker states? Drawing on long-duration case studies of Iraq, Libya, and Yugoslavia as well as a survey of U.S. threats and uses of force in crises since 1945, Haun argues that U.S. coercion often fails because the United States makes demands that threaten the survival of weaker states, leading such states to resist rather than concede.

In making his argument, Haun integrates two realities that other studies of coercion too often sweep under the rug. First, many coercive threats are insincere; the coercer expects and may even desire that they fail. U.S. demands that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein vacate Kuwait within only a few days (in 1991) and give up power (in 2003) illustrate the point. This harkens back (in my mind) to Richard Ned Lebow's classic distinction between "brinkmanship" crises and "justification-of-hostility" crises.¹ Where Haun's study may be unique, however, is that it does not stop there. Even when it is true that the United States made coercive threats that it expected to fail, Haun still wants to understand why those threats do in fact fail and, by implication, why it is that the United States had such low expectations for them despite its power advantage. As Haun shows, these questions are crucial for understanding how the United States eventually prevails in some of these conflicts.

Second, Haun deserves credit for writing a book on coercion that so explicitly acknowledges the reality that coercion is often (I suspect: usually) not the way in which gains are made. Instead, states often take gains by other means such as brute force. My own research on *faits accomplis* underscores this point, showing, for instance, that states acquire territory ten times more often by unilaterally seizing it (e.g., the Crimean Peninsula) than by coercion.² Standalone theories of coercion and coercive bargaining suffer when they fail to address the interplay between coercion and the alternative policy options that states so often use instead.

My primary criticism of the book is that Haun offers a specific explanation for a general phenomenon. Although the survival argument is compelling, it cannot explain why coercion tends to fail even when survival is not at stake, which many studies suggest is the case. This implies the need for a more universal theory of coercion's ineffectiveness. If some other argument explains the failure of coercion in general, there may not be a puzzle left for the survival argument to explain.

Haun's study joins those of Andrew Mack, Ivan Arreguin-Toft, Todd Sechser, and others in taking up the puzzle of the inability of strong states to leverage their strength to consistently coerce weak states.³ In turn,

¹ Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War: The Nature of International Crisis* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

² Dan Altman, "By Fait Accompli, Not Coercion: How States Wrest Territory from Their Adversaries," *International Studies Quarterly*, forthcoming.

³ Andrew Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict," *World Politics* 27:2 (1975): 175-200; Ivan Arreguin-Toft, "How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict," *International Security* 26:1 (2001): 93-128; Todd S. Sechser, "Goliath's Curse: Coercive Threats and Asymmetric Power," *International Organization* 64:4 (2010): 627-660.

these studies join a crowded field of findings that coercion is surprisingly ineffective for strategic bombing, terrorism, economic sanctions, nuclear powers, regime change, acquiring territory, and more.⁴ Although there are studies taking the opposite view in some of those areas,⁵ the broader pattern here strikes me as almost as clear as the evidence indicating democracies rarely fight each other: coercion just does not work very well or very often. There are clear successes like that of Nazi Germany in the Munich Crisis, but failures are more the norm. In fact, studies showing that coercion often fails for great powers against weaker states, like this one, are particularly valuable for making this point. That power asymmetry should create ‘easy cases’ for coercion to succeed, but it still nonetheless fails.

Given the ubiquity of coercion’s inefficacy, I have become more and more skeptical of any theory of coercion that offers an explanation for it that is specific to one type of actor, issue area, or mode of coercion. Perhaps it really is the case that there is something idiosyncratic in each of these domains – something like the way in which large power asymmetries bring survival fears to the fore – that inhibits each type of coercion. More likely, I suspect, there are general reasons why coercion rarely succeeds that extend across all of these domains. Until the field comes to better understand the general reasons for the inefficacy of coercion, it is hard to know how much, if any, scope there is for specific explanations.

Take, for instance, the role of territory in Haun’s argument. Like Robert Pape, Haun regards territory as a high-stakes issue, sometimes verging on assuming that territorial stakes and state survival go hand in hand. This is undoubtedly true some of the time, and Haun does focus on ‘homeland territory.’ However, survival is not at risk in most territorial conflicts. Conflicts over tiny regions with little more than symbolic value are more the norm than the exception. To list just a few examples: the Siachen Glacier, the Paracel Islands, Damansky/Zhenbao Island, Goa, Cenepa, Badme, Imia, the Hanish Islands, Abu Musa, Parsley Island, and the Falkland Islands. This matters because even in these numerous non-survival territorial conflicts, coercion still does not work. Take Goa as an example. India was overwhelmingly more powerful than Portugal when it came to a conflict over Goa. Portugal’s survival was certainly not at stake; Goa was part of India’s homeland, not Portugal’s. Yet, India’s threats still failed to convince Portugal to concede. India eventually abandoned coercion and seized Goa by force. This suggests the need for a more general and sweeping explanation for the ineffectiveness of coercion.

A related concern I wish Haun had addressed in more empirical detail: was survival truly at stake as much as his argument would seem to require? In Bosnia and in the First Gulf War, the target of the coercive threats largely lost on the battlefield what the coercive demand had asked them to give up, yet the Republika Srpska

⁴ Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996); Max Abrahms, “The Political Effectiveness of Terrorism Revisited,” *Comparative Political Studies* 45:3 (2012): 366-393; Robert A. Pape, “Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work,” *International Security* 22:2 (1997): 90-136; Richard K. Betts, *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1987); Todd S. Sechser and Matthew Fuhrmann, “Crisis Bargaining and Nuclear Blackmail,” *International Organization* 67:1 (2013): 173-195; Melissa Willard-Foster, *Costs of Peace in a World of Asymmetric Power: Why Major Powers Depose Foreign Regimes*, Book Manuscript; Altman, “By Fait Accompli Not Coercion.”

⁵ Matthew Kroenig, “Nuclear Superiority and the Balance of Resolve: Explaining Nuclear Crisis Outcomes,” *International Organization* 67:1 (2013): 141-171; Robert A. Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005); Kimberly Ann Elliott, “The Sanctions Glass: Half Full or Completely Empty?” *International Security* 23:1 (1998): 50-65.

and the Hussein regime in Baghdad remained. How does this square with the survival argument? By extension, why is it that certain concessions threaten regime survival via a domestic political mechanism, but other concessions (or the same concession later in time under changed circumstances) do not? Is this predictable *ex ante*?

A more specific area of disagreement arises from repeated claims along the lines of the following: “In theory, coercion should always succeed, as the United States should choose a coercive strategy only when it expects the targeted state will acquiesce” (2). Although correct in part, it is no more correct than the countervailing claim: in theory, coercion should never succeed, as the target of the threat should avoid adopting a policy that it expects the United States will be able to coerce it into reversing. Haun identifies one selection effect, but not the other that tends to offset it. After taking both into account, the deductive expectation about the effectiveness of coercion is murky and indeterminate. Fortunately, Haun merely uses this point to further justify his empirical puzzle, but I believe the puzzle – the failure of many U.S. coercive threats – needs no added justification.

Finally, Haun’s book left me wondering about an important question of policy, one that I will pose here. Suppose it is in fact true, as Haun shows in fairly compelling fashion, that the United States has a history of making insincere coercive threats with severe demands likely to be unacceptable to the target. Suppose that the United States does indeed do this as a smokescreen to legitimize the use of brute force after the target state rejects the demands, proving that diplomacy was tried. What does this mean for American foreign policy? Is this dishonesty (for lack of a better term) sustainable? Is it truly optimal? Is there a way to do without it? The option to simply demand much less than can be achieved with brute force comes at a self-evident cost. Is there no better solution?

Review by Christine M. Leah, Yale University

This book presents an interesting and persuasive theory as to why the United States coerces weak states, and why coercion often fails, leading the U.S. instead to employ brute military force. Indeed, in recent history the United States has been the power that most often initiates crises with much weaker states. In theory, the U.S. should make only those threats that it is willing to follow through with, and demands to which the target will likely concede. The U.S. has adopted coercive strategies in 75 percent of its asymmetric crises since World War Two, and coercion has succeeded in just half of those instances. This raises, then, the question as to why weaker states would resist such a preponderant global military power. According to Phil Haun, weaker states will resist when the costs of acquiescing to American demands are too high. And to some extent, it is the fault of the United States when coercion often fails: the costs demanded by Washington from the weaker state are often too high. In most cases, the very survival of the state itself is at risk, or at the very least, a significant violation of its sovereignty. In some instances this means the legitimacy of the regime: if the weaker state concedes, it may be perceived by its domestic populace as being weak.

Haun's book presents a variety of case studies that support his theory of coercion that is specific to asymmetric interstate conflicts. It differs from the standard 'commitment model,' which says that a weak state's resistance is based more on the impact a concession would have on future crises in terms of credibility and reputation. The cases include America's confrontations with Iraq under Saddam Hussein, Libya's nascent weapons of mass destruction (WMD) program, and the Kosovo crisis. Haun provides a three-part theory as to why coercion fails.

First, asymmetric conflict may fail because of the very disparity in power that defines it – an imbalance that induces a powerful challenger to make high demands of a weak target. As a result, it is easier and less costly for the great power to threaten and carry out violence. Oddly enough, the author claims that for a great power to opt for a coercion, rather than a brute-force strategy, the concessions made by the target state must also be high. It is not clear why this should be so – this should depend on context. But as Haun does point out, the higher the concessions to be made by the target state, the more likely those are to threaten the survival of the state.

Second, concessions can threaten state sovereignty. And only in rare occasions have states been willing to sacrifice or compromise their sovereignty. As such, whilst the probability of actually winning against a great power is low, the prospect of conceding territory and compromising part of the homeland is even less appealing. Third, as stated earlier, regime change is also a significant threat. If the regime appears weak to actors within the state itself who see the regime as being weak against the militarily superior state, this can also explain why states do not back down.

This raises the question: instead of coercion, why does the U.S. not use brute force straight away? Haun's implicit conclusion is cynical but probably somewhat true: the dynamics of coercion give time to mobilize military force. In addition, strong states tend to approach international institutions before resorting to violence, not only because it allows for force mobilization, but because this also provides the strong state with greater legitimacy in its use of force if diplomacy fails. The author even claims that sometimes this could be deliberate, providing the example of President George W. Bush during the crisis over Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) program, who apparently counted on coercive diplomacy to fail and thus provide justification for the war he and his administration had already decided on.

According to Haun, the failure of coercion also stems from the asymmetry of *interests*; the great power will have more limited interests than the weaker power. Weaker states thus have more resolve, and thus crisis outcomes are not determined by the relative military balance per se, but by how much the weaker state is willing to endure in terms of punishment. As such, if the minimal concession the challenger is willing to accept exceeds the maximal demand for which the target will concede, then no coercion range exists, and the challenger should instead adopt a brute-force strategy. However, too often the U.S. employs coercive measures that are likely to fail, also in part because it expects quick and decisive victories in the case that this approach fails. And indeed the costs for America imposing coercive measures are low in comparison to how much the weaker state is ready to concede.

Interestingly, as the author points out, international institutions may actually *contribute* to challenger coercion failure. He writes, “since World War II there has developed an increased expectation that states attempt to resolve their conflicts through negotiation or... the United Nations... Attempting to negotiate first may lessen external diplomatic and internal political costs... This may not only reduce the diplomatic and political costs of war but may also increase the great power’s probability of victory when this gains allies and/or isolates the target state” (47).

Each case presented by Haun is compelling. For instance, in the Libyan case, the author explains that coercion worked because the survival hypothesis presented at the beginning of the book correctly expected coercion to succeed, as neither the Libyan state, nor the regime, was likely endangered by Libya abandoning a WMD program that consisted only of chemical weapons.

The book presents an interesting and compelling theory as to why coercion by the United States often fails, and why the U.S. resorts to employing brute force to achieve its objectives against weaker states. However, the text itself is quite repetitive; different aspects of the theory and variables are stated again and again in each chapter, which impedes the flow of what would otherwise be a more pleasant and engaging read, because the author really does present some interesting findings. The first three chapters in particular are quite repetitive and could have been melded into just two. There is also a lot of going back and forth between the various concepts and issues addressed, making for additional repetitiveness, which somewhat undermines the logical progression and flow of the chapters. In addition to being an impressive piece of scholarly work, the book would have been made better by more attention to the language and presentation of ideas.

Haun does present some policy implications at the end of the work, although these remain vague and generalized, and there is little discussion as to how the U.S. could have developed a more successful coercion strategy vis-à-vis each of its adversaries. One is reminded, for instance, of the Cuban missile crisis where Attorney General Robert Kennedy met secretly with Soviet Ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Dobrynin, and indicated that in exchange for the USSR withdrawing its nuclear missiles from Cuba, the United States would remove its own Jupiter missiles from Turkey, but this could not be part of any *public* resolution of the missile crisis. As Haun points out, if a weaker state concedes, it may be seen by its domestic populace as being weak. One ‘solution’ would be for the U.S. to offer a settlement that would save embarrassment by the leader/regime of the weaker state. In short, it would have been very interesting to see an elaboration of the specifics of improved coercion strategies the U.S. could employ.

The reader is also left wondering about a number of broader issues that the scholarship speaks to. For example: what about the dynamics of coercion between states that do not have an asymmetric relationship? Is this a theory particular to the U.S.? In the past, have other great powers encountered similar issues in coercion

dynamics? And what exactly is the degree of military asymmetry needed for this theory to stand? What insights can this work give us about future competition between the U.S., other great powers, and smaller actors? Overall, this is a compelling theory with very good insights by the author, but the book itself could have been much tighter, or perhaps would have been better suited to a stand-alone article.

Review by Todd S. Sechser, University of Virginia

Coercion is back in vogue. After decades of focusing almost exclusively on deterrence, the pendulum in coercive diplomacy literature has now swung back toward the analysis of coercion—or “compellence,” as Thomas Schelling called it.¹ Whereas American scholars and policymakers during the Cold War fixated on preserving the international status quo, in the last quarter-century the question has become how to use American military might to change it. How can the United States employ the threat and limited use of military force to persuade foreign leaders to modify their behavior, give up valued possessions, or abdicate power altogether? Recent scholarly work on this question can be roughly divided into two types. One type adopts a deductive approach, using general models of conflict, bargaining, and signaling to derive testable implications about the conditions under which coercive threats can achieve their objectives.² A second collection of studies approaches the question inductively, utilizing in-depth case studies of specific historical episodes—usually involving the United States—to derive lessons about when coercive threats are likely to succeed and fail.³

Phil Haun’s excellent book *Coercion, Survival, and War* nicely combines the best of both worlds. Haun takes up a question that has often been asked in the literature on coercive diplomacy: why do coercive threats from powerful states—especially the United States—rarely succeed? In recent years, a number of studies have taken up this puzzle.⁴ Haun’s book makes an important contribution to this literature, combining deductive

¹ See Thomas C. Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 195-199; and Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 69-91.

² For example, see James D. Fearon, “Rationalist Explanations for War,” *International Organization* 49:3 (1995): 379-414; James W. Davis, Jr., *Threats and Promises: The Pursuit of International Influence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000); Kenneth A. Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Gary Schaub, “Deterrence, Compellence, and Prospect Theory,” *Political Psychology* 25:3 (2004): 389-411; Branislav L. Slantchev, *Military Threats: The Costs of Coercion and the Price of Peace* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Todd S. Sechser and Abigail S. Post, “Hand-Tying versus Muscle-Flexing in Crisis Bargaining” (typescript, University of Virginia, 2015); Todd S. Sechser and Matthew Fuhrmann, *Nuclear Weapons and Coercive Diplomacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

³ Examples of the U.S.-centric approach include Barry M. Blechman and Stephen S. Kaplan, *Force without War: U.S. Armed Forces as a Political Instrument* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1978); Alexander L. George and William E. Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview, 1994); Peter Viggo Jakobsen, *Western Use of Coercive Diplomacy After the Cold War: A Challenge for Theory and Practice* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1998); Daniel Byman and Matthew C. Waxman, *The Dynamics of Coercion: American Foreign Policy and the Limits of Military Might* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); and Robert J. Art and Patrick M. Cronin, eds., *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace, 2003).

⁴ Studies addressing the puzzle of why weak states resist powerful coercers include Todd S. Sechser, “Goliath’s Curse: Coercive Threats and Asymmetric Power,” *International Organization* 64:4 (2010): 627-660; Michael A. Allen and Benjamin O. Fordham, “From Melos to Baghdad: Explaining Resistance to Militarized Challenges from More Powerful States,” *International Studies Quarterly* 55:4 (2011): 1025-1045; Rob De Wijk, *The Art of Military Coercion: Why the West’s Military Superiority Scarcely Matters*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014); and Dianne Pfundstein Chamberlain, *Cheap Threats: Why the United States Struggles to Coerce Weak States* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2016).

theoretical logic with careful case studies to generate practical lessons about what makes U.S. coercive diplomacy effective.

Haun's argument is straightforward. He argues that the content of coercive demands is the key explanation for why U.S. coercion often fails. In his telling, two types of demands cause weak states to resist coercive attempts by great powers. First, weak states resist demands for regime change, such as George W. Bush's 2003 demand that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein step down from power (41). Second, they resist demands for homeland territory (38). Both types of demands, Haun argues, share an important feature: they place one's sovereignty at risk, which states prize more than anything else. Unwilling to pay such a high price, target states prefer to take their chances on the battlefield, slim though those chances may be. Marshaling case studies of U.S. coercive attempts against Iraq (1991 and 2003), the former Yugoslavia (1992-1995 and 1999), and Libya (1986, 1991-1999, and 2003), Haun finds support for his central claim that coercive threats succeed when survival concerns are absent (e.g., Libya in 2003), and fails when they predominate (e.g., Iraq in 2003).

This is a refreshing argument. In the coercive diplomacy literature, one finds surprisingly little discussion of the content of coercive demands. The question of what (or how much) to demand is the first question a coercer must answer, and one that requires strategic thinking. Demand too much, and the result may be an unpalatable choice between a costly war and backing down. Demand too little, and potential gains will be left on the table. How coercers balance these competing pressures at the initial stages of coercive episodes plays a central role in explaining how these episodes end.⁵ Yet theories of coercive diplomacy typically pay little heed to the nature of coercive demands, instead emphasizing factors such as power and resolve, information and signaling, and bargaining tactics as explanations for coercive outcomes.⁶ Haun's book offers a much-needed reminder that coercion depends not only on how one behaves during a confrontation, but what the confrontation is about in the first place. Some coercive demands may simply be doomed to fail.

Haun's theory is straightforward and sensible, but it is worth questioning the range of its explanatory power. *Coercion, Survival, and War* covers just seven U.S. cases across a 17-year period, but a broader look at the historical record raises questions about Haun's demand-centric model of coercive diplomacy. First, it is too pessimistic to claim that regime-change demands cannot succeed. There are many examples of leaders voluntarily abdicating in the face of coercive demands to step down. The United States successfully used coercive threats to change regimes in three Central American countries—Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and Costa Rica—during the early twentieth century. The leaders of both Armenia and Azerbaijan abdicated in the face of Soviet threats in 1920, thereby allowing their countries to be absorbed into the Soviet Union. In 1938, German leader Adolf Hitler compelled Austrian Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg to relinquish power to his pro-Nazi Interior Minister, Arthur Seyss-Inquart. U.S. military pressure helped usher Dominican leader Ramfis Trujillo into exile in 1961, and explicit U.S. threats forced the abdication of Raoul Cédras and his military regime in Haiti in 1994. These cases are anomalous for Haun's theory, which expects weak states to

⁵ Todd S. Sechser, "A Bargaining Theory of Coercion" (typescript, University of Virginia, 2015).

⁶ See, for example, the concluding chapters in George and Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*; and Art and Cronin, *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy*.

“reject demands for regime change” (4). Demands for regime change do not always work, but neither do they assure coercive failure.

Indeed, some evidence suggests that demands for regime change may actually be more likely to succeed than other types of coercive demands. The Militarized Compellent Threats (MCT) dataset, a database containing information about 210 coercive episodes around the world between 1918 and 2001, reveals that demands for regime change succeed at more than twice the rate of other types of demands (83% versus 35%).⁷ Forfeiting power at the point of a gun is undoubtedly risky, but the historical record suggests that leaders often choose peaceful abdication when faced with violent expulsion by an outside power. Haun is right to focus attention on the interests of target regimes, but the argument that regimes cling to power at all costs is too simplistic, and it is contradicted by too much evidence.

At the same time, these anomalies draw our attention to a fruitful puzzle for future exploration: why do regime-change demands appear to succeed so often? Alexander Downes, for example, argues that abdication demands succeed when the coercer can credibly threaten to expel the leader by force, and when it can assure the leader’s survival in exile.⁸ Downes’s argument suggests that Haun is too fatalistic about the inevitability of failure in coercive attempts to remove governments: great powers have a variety of tools at their disposal to convince opposing leaders that a quiet exile is preferable to suffering the grim fate of Adolf Hitler or Iraq’s Saddam Hussein.⁹

Haun also asserts that, except on rare occasions, “states will resist demands for their homeland territory” (38). Yet looking again beyond the book’s seven cases reveals that states sometimes do relinquish important territory—and even their sovereignty—in the face of coercive challenges. For example, in 1939 and 1940, the Soviet Union demanded ‘mutual assistance’ pacts from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia that included the establishment of Soviet military bases within their territory, access to their ports and airfields, and the deployment of Soviet troops. These demands escalated throughout 1940, culminating in the installation of pro-Soviet puppet governments in the three states. All of these coercive moves were accompanied by Soviet military threats, which Haun’s theory would expect to fail. Yet all three target states acquiesced at every step, ultimately paving the way for their absorption into the Soviet Union.

Even the book’s own case studies do not entirely support the homeland-territory hypothesis. Just two of the cases in *Coercion, Survival, and War* center primarily around territory: the 1990-1991 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the 1998-1999 dispute with Serbia over Kosovo. Moreover, only in the Kosovo case was the territory in question part of the target’s homeland. Yet the U.S. effort to coerce Serbia to relinquish Kosovo was successful, whereas its attempt to compel Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait was not. In other words, the book’s only case of a coercive threat over homeland territory was a success—exactly the opposite of what the

⁷ See Todd S. Sechser, “Militarized Compellent Threats, 1918–2001,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 28:4 (2011): 377–401; and Todd S. Sechser, “Reputations and Signaling in Coercive Bargaining,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (forthcoming), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002716652687>.

⁸ See Alexander B. Downes, “Step Aside or Face the Consequences: Explaining the Success and Failure of Compellent Threats to Remove Foreign Leaders” (typescript, George Washington University, 2016).

⁹ Douglas Jehl, “Haiti Generals Regain Access To \$79 Million,” *New York Times*, 14 October 1994.

theory expects. Homeland territory is obviously an extremely valuable possession, and coercive demands for territory fail with regularity.¹⁰ But they do not always fail, and the challenge for Haun and other scholars of coercive diplomacy is to explain what accounts for the difference.

In the case of Serbia, Haun argues convincingly that in the end, “Kosovo was of marginal concern to Serbians” (125). Yet this explanation raises broader questions about when target states will perceive their survival to be at risk. Haun argues that coercive demands fail when they pose a threat to the target state’s survival, but the book is vague about the conditions under which a demand will pose such a threat. A disputed territory’s location in the homeland is neither necessary for it to be seen as critical to survival, as Haun shows in the 1991 Iraq crisis; nor is it sufficient, as revealed in the Kosovo episode. Under what conditions, then, is territory—or any other issue—likely to be seen as central to a state’s survival? In each case study, Haun offers convincing arguments about whether the target regime perceived a survival threat. But at times these judgments seem more *ad hoc* than deductive, and in several cases one could envision an equally convincing counterargument. Haun argues, for example, that Libya’s Muammar Qaddafi believed that relinquishing his weapons of mass destruction (WMD) ambitions posed no risk to his regime’s survival in 2003 (167-168). But one could also argue that states should see WMD programs as critical to their security, and therefore are unlikely to give them up without a fight. Whereas the George W. Bush administration succeeded in coercing Libya to give up its nuclear program, for example, it failed to coerce North Korea to do the same. Perhaps North Korea saw its nuclear program as essential for survival while Libya did not, but it is not clear that the survival hypothesis can account for these divergent beliefs. Moreover, Qaddafi’s inability to deter Western intervention against him in 2011—resulting in his capture and killing by rebel forces—suggests that he badly miscalculated. In short, the book leaves the reader wanting more discussion of the meaning of state survival, and the conditions under which coercive demands do—and do not—threaten it.

For all these quibbles, however, Haun’s book is a valuable contribution to the literature on coercive diplomacy in U.S. foreign policy. It pushes back against the view that issues and interests are poor explanations for the outcomes of coercive challenges.¹¹ It reminds us that the outcome of a coercive episode depends critically on how it begins. Coercers must choose their demands wisely: the objectives they select in the initial stages of a crisis shape whether they will have to fight for them later on. Policymakers and scholars alike will want to take Haun’s wise counsel to heart.

¹⁰ In the 210 coercive episodes in the MCT database, coercive demands for territory fail roughly 60% of the time.

¹¹ Art and Cronin find that “there appears to be no firm relation between demand type and successful outcome” in the 16 coercive diplomacy episodes they study. Art and Cronin, *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy*, 401. Likewise, George and Simon conclude that “success or failure has little causal relation” to the type of demand. George and Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, 269. See also James D. Fearon, “Signaling Versus the Balance of Power and Interests: An Empirical Test of a Crisis Bargaining Model,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 38:2 (1994): 236-269.

Review by Andrew L. Stigler, Naval War College

During a debate over the use of force in the Balkans during President Bill Clinton's administration, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright argued "What's the point of having this superb military that you're always talking about if we can't use it?"¹ The twin sentiments expressed in this quotation—frustration, and knowledge that one possesses superior military power—explain the appeal of coercive strategies for powerful states when they are defied by weaker powers. The irritation of a nettlesome problem and the possibility of settling the issue in one's favor with a low-cost, potentially low-risk coercive strategy is a notion that can have a grinding and relentless appeal in lengthy policy deliberations.

Phil Haun develops a framework, based on James Fearon's prominent article "Rationalist Explanations of War,"² that illuminates the conditions under which successful coercion occurs. In essence, if there exists a range of possible outcomes between the target's maximum conceivable concession and the coercer's minimally acceptable demand, there is a possibility of coercive success. (25) Haun lays out an array of potential causes for coercive failure, such as incomplete information, issue indivisibility, and obstacles to making reliable commitments not to seek additional concessions in the future. (28-30) His work assesses a dataset of 23 cases (seven of them in detailed case studies) to defend his approach.

One of the more interesting features of Haun's work is that he directly confronts the issue of how states may undertake coercive efforts that the states themselves do not believe will succeed. "U.S. leaders may choose coercion when they expect, and at times even desire, the strategy to fail" (35). For example, prior to the Iraq War of 2003, the United States had decided to invade regardless of Baghdad's statements or actions. "The Iraq War is therefore a case in which the United States intended on ending the crisis through a brute force strategy but also planned on coercion failure to justify its actions" (87). This is an uncommon advantage of Haun's work, in that he does not simply take statements of policy as genuine foreign policy goals.

He offers two possible motives for choosing a strategy that one believes is unlikely to succeed. First, the coercive strategy could simply be a prelude to a brute-force strategy; a delaying tactic of sorts. Second, international norms suggest that one should try to seek one's aims by diplomatic means first, and coercive diplomacy (even coercive military force) can be seen by other states in the systems as checking the normative box on the road to war. (177-178)

This notion – that the stated goal of a policy is not expected to be achieved – might have been extended further in the work. In his discussion of the sanctions imposed on Libya following the bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Scotland on December 21, 1988, Haun explores the expected likelihood of coercive success. His model predicts that, in this case, the United States would "choose [economic] coercion only when it is preferred to accommodation, and this is the situation only when the target is expected to concede" (154).

But one can easily apply the 'false policy' logic that Haun employed earlier to economic sanctions as well. States choose economic sanctions, at times, when they want to be able to say they are doing something. This

¹ Walter Isaacson, "Madeleine's War," *Time*, 17 May 1999.

² James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49:3 (Summer 1995): 379-414.

is particularly a consideration for the United States, which has a national-security culture that often demands some form of response to crises. Presidents can be casually criticized as weak in the absence of some form of action. This would explain the increasing number of sanctions efforts, and at least part of the debate over their effectiveness. States often choose sanctions even if they suspect the odds are against success, because taking action to seem active and vigorous is part of the culture of national security.³

Haun presents two sets of circumstances when a coercing state will knowingly choose a strategy that it expects will fail. First, the coercing state may see initiating a coercive effort as being a low-cost initiative, especially if one is preparing for an expected and desired war in any event. Second, a failed coercive effort prior to a war can be an effective means of engaging in normative box-checking. In this circumstance, the pseudo-coercer wants to be able to claim later that the target state was given every chance to seize a way out prior to a devastating war.

There is possibly a third logic, however. Here, again, states can engage in a coercive effort they expect to fail simply to be able to say they are taking some form of action in a crisis situation. Although it was not ultimately an example of coercive failure, the early stages of the Kosovo campaign may offer an example of this logic. Some NATO officials prepared for a much shorter campaign, and regardless of coercive success expected to quit and say ‘we made him pay a price.’ NATO had 350 planes in range of targets in Serbia, which is about the same number as were used for the four-day campaign in Operation Desert Fox in 1998. NATO officials and President Clinton even stated the goal was only to “degrade” Serbian capability to engage in attacks on Kosovar Albanians, and the alliance conveyed no enthusiasm at the start of Operation Allied Force.⁴ If Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic had not escalated his depredations against the Kosovars, NATO might well have just stopped the campaign and declared a success in punishing the Serbs.

Another advantage of the book is that Haun selected seven in-depth case studies from just three target countries – Iraq, Serbia, and Libya. This offers the modest advantage of seeing two or three crises within the same conflict dyad. The case studies are solid yet brisk, and Haun does an excellent job of considering counterarguments.

Only a few of the points in the case studies are debatable. Haun argues that the Iraqi regime, faced with the threat of invasion in 2003, predictably resisted coercive demands that threatened the survival of the regime. (87) At some point, though, it is possible to wonder if the risks of exile are potentially more modest than that of attempting to ride out a determined invasion by the American superpower, operating under a decision calculus that had been largely shaped by the shock of 9/11.

Choosing exile would have been risky, but it is still possible that exile was the better of the two gambles. The Shah of Iran, after all, lived in exile, and was hated by many. Certainly the post-1979 Iranian government would not have minded seeing the Shah in his grave sooner, to say the least. Yet he died in exile of natural

³ For a survey of the spectrum of arguments (one of many that could be offered), see David A. Baldwin, “The Sanctions Debate and the Logic of Choice,” *International Security* 24:3 (Winter 1999/2000): 80-107.

⁴ Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O’Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO’s War to Save Kosovo* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2000), 103-105.

causes. Exile would be a risk for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, but remaining in Iraq put him in grave danger.

Haun (to this reviewer's mind) correctly assesses that the NATO ground threat to Kosovo was unconvincing. By the time Milosevic surrendered, none of the costly preparations necessary for an invasion had been made. Decidedly mixed policy signals had been sent. Haun notes that Clinton tried to resurrect the ground threat late in the war, as domestic political pressure to achieve a result increased. At the same time, Clinton was saying that NATO "ought to stay with the strategy that we have." (130) Clinton had obvious incentives to manufacture a costless bluff, as the alliance's war over Kosovo meandered on.

Haun's discussion of punishment arguably elides a key consideration – punishment strategies embrace a great deal of risk, because success depends on accurately calculating the target's willingness to bear costs. There is also a cause-and-effect element that should be understood by the policymakers. To put it most simply, the act of initiating a campaign of punishment can potentially alter a target's willingness to bear costs. Anger at perceived injustice, the 'rally round the flag' effect, perceptions of illegality and immorality on the part of the coercing party can all have a profound impact on the target's willingness to bear costs.⁵ Haun implies a potential need to re-evaluate the target's will to resist at times, such as when he suggests that powerful states "learn from a weak state's recalcitrance that the initial coercive offer requires adjustment." (173)

But the point is important enough that it should be stated baldly: for strategies relying on punishment, the coercing state cannot know the willingness of the target state to bear costs. Whereas one may measure another state's physical strength, there are no metrics for measuring will. And that willingness to bear costs can change. For denial strategies, one can potentially assess with certainty, or near-certainty, the quality of a target's military defenses. A target's willingness to absorb costs, however, cannot be so coldly ascertained, and it can vary as a consequence of events.

For example, in Kosovo, Milosevic could have decided to continue to resist beyond seventy-eight days. Haun notes that the United States "miscalculated the resolve of Milosevic" initially. (174) At the end of the war in mid-June 1999, Milosevic could have focused instead on the fact that NATO's self-imposed deadline of initiating preparations for a ground war was mere days away when he surrendered.⁶ He could have instead decided to put the alliance through the gauntlet of collectively deciding whether to prepare a ground force (they probably would have declined). This would potentially have forced NATO to send a signal of limited resolve by passing its own self-imposed deadline without action.

Haun credits NATO's success in Kosovo to the fact that "[o]ver time... doubt diminished as NATO demonstrated its resolve to continue its air campaign" (175). One can ask if this assessment is largely after-the-fact clarity regarding NATO's signals. One is also tempted to argue that the United States had, by the late 1960s, demonstrated an interest in defending South Vietnam far more convincingly than NATO showed its

⁵ For a discussion, see Stephen Peter Rosen, "War Power and the Willingness to Suffer," in Bruce M. Russett, ed., *Peace, War, and Numbers* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publishers, 1972).

⁶ On the deadline, see Katherine Q. Seelye, "Clinton Resists Renewed Calls for Ground Troops in Kosovo," *New York Times*, 19 May 1999, A10.

resolve regarding Kosovo in 1999. Diminishing doubt regarding resolve is not a guaranteed path to coercive success.

One must conclude by noting that this book is a solid achievement – a well-rounded and well-researched appraisal of coercive strategies. I believe it is more prudently considered than Robert Pape’s *Bombing to Win*⁷, and in particular the case studies are more even-handed.

A number of years ago, Eliot Cohen reminded us that a considerable amount of the appeal of air power as a tool of foreign policy is that it provides “gratification without commitment.”⁸ To an extent, this maxim can be applied to coercive strategies writ large – coercion holds out the prospect of potentially delivering a desired foreign policy goal, while the coercing state expends either costless threats of a modest amount of force. These strategies will be of particular appeal when powerful states face weaker targets, and Haun’s book provides a very useful theoretical and empirical lens through which to view these future foreign policy conundrums.

⁷ Robert A. Pape, *Bombing to Win: Air Power and Coercion in War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

⁸ Eliot Cohen, “The Mystique of U.S. Air Power,” *Foreign Affairs* 73:1 (January/February 1994), 109.

Author's Response by Phil Haun, U.S. Naval War College¹

To begin I want to thank H-Diplo for this venue for sharing my research and, particularly the reviewers for their contributions to this forum, which will expose my work to a wider audience. I appreciate all the participants' valuable contribution of time and expertise, along with their willingness to critique a colleague's work publicly and, in so doing, help to clarify my arguments and identify further research opportunities.

Before addressing the reviewers' comments, I would like to highlight three contributions of the book which evaded criticism. First, the deductive logic of the asymmetric coercion theory, based on the asymmetric coercion model and the coercion range, elicited few remarks. Though there were concerns about the range of the model's explanatory value, which I will address, the internal validity of the theory survived scrutiny. Second, neither the coding criteria nor the coding of coercion success or failure were taken to task. Since half of the book examines seven detailed case studies of U.S. asymmetric coercion against Iraq, Libya, and Serbia, the absence of comments regarding the coding of these cases I take as a validation of my analysis. Third, the book tests survival claims against an alternative commitment problem hypothesis that predicts coercion will fail as the United States cannot credibly promise not to make future demands once the targeted state concedes to current demands. I find no evidence that commitment concerns affected weak state decision-making. Given the degree to which commitment problems continue to influence the thinking of international relations scholars, I anticipated but received no pushback on this finding. For the remainder of my response, I will address the critiques which I have divided into five categories: scope conditions, case selection, and methodology; regime survival and homeland territory demands; selection effects; policy implications; and book structure.

Scope Conditions, Case Selection, and Methodology

Every researcher has to make choices as to scope conditions, case selection, and the appropriate methodology to employ. One of the most important decisions was whether my study would be restricted to cases of the United States or more broadly include other great powers or regional powers. In a previous research project I had examined asymmetric coercion by great powers from 1918-2003.² I found that coercion success varied by great power and time period. For instance, Nazi Germany was highly effective at coercion until the onset of World War II while Soviet Russia was effective before and during World War II, but less so during the Cold War. I decided to hold constant for a single powerful challenger, the United States, as I was more interested in modern cases of coercion. The United States was the most logical great power to examine since it has been involved in the largest number of asymmetric crises since World War II and because one of the book's primary audiences is that of U.S. policy practitioners.³ One of the disadvantages, on the other hand, is that it

¹ The views expressed are those of the author and do not represent those of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Navy.

² Phil Haun *On Death Ground: Why Weak States Resist Great Powers Explaining Coercion Failure in Asymmetric Interstate Conflict* Dissertation (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2010).

³ From 1950 to 2011 the United States was involved in 30 asymmetric crises compared to 14 by Russia/Soviet Union and 6 by China.

highlights a drawback of quantitative methods, which require a larger number of cases than the dataset of 24 asymmetric interstate cases of U.S. coercion since World War II. Seven of these 24 crises are detailed in qualitative case studies, while the remainder is summarized in a lengthy appendix. As Todd Sechser points out, the methodology employed in this book, that of combining a deductive formal game-theoretic model (Appendix B) with an inductive case study approach is rare, but it is one I hope other scholars trained in formal modeling and qualitative methods will consider.

Regime Change and Homeland Territory

A second series of critiques are aimed at the theory's predictions, in that the survival hypothesis does not explain all asymmetric coercion crisis outcomes. Sechser points out that the survival hypothesis does not explain the Haitian military junta's decision in 1994 to accept regime change or Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic's decision in 1999 to concede Kosovo. Dan Altman likewise expresses some frustration that a general theory of coercion remains elusive. I see two problems with these critiques. First, the bar has been set too high if an international relations theory is expected to explain the outcome of all crises. Since weak states are sovereign, it is their leaders who decide whether to concede or resist and their choices, at times, differ from what a rational theory of international relations would predict. Leaders do not always behave rationally, they may not always have sufficient information, and they may make mistakes. A more appropriate test of a social-science theory is in relative not absolute terms. Does a theory's hypothesis perform better than a random coin toss and does it perform better than other hypotheses? The survival hypothesis correctly predicted three-quarters of the asymmetric crisis outcomes, far better than the flip of a coin or the commitment problem hypothesis (which always predicts failure), both of which correctly predicted only half of the outcomes.⁴ I further sympathize with Altman's desire for a more general theory with better predictive capabilities. Hopefully, future research will provide us with one. Until then, this book makes a contribution by improving our understanding of the expected outcomes from asymmetric coercive crises.

A second challenge in theory building is how to apply it. To be of value to foreign policy decision makers, a theory must be able to generate hypotheses based on *ex ante*, observable factors. Unless U.S. policymakers can observe the explanatory variables of the asymmetric coercion model at the outset of a conflict, the applicability of the model is questionable. A primary reason for identifying demands for homeland territory and regime change as threats to state survival is not for their predictive infallibility but for their availability as factors readily observable for policy consideration. This point must not be lost. Identifying these *ex ante* factors avoids tautological argumentation and allows the survival hypothesis to be tested against actual coercion outcomes.⁵ Political scientists must be circumspect regarding any theory that either claims to predict perfectly or does not provide hypotheses that are falsifiable. The fact that the survival hypothesis does not predict all the outcomes of U.S. asymmetric coercion has more to do with the probabilistic nature of international conflict than with any shortcoming of the theory. The key is not how infallible the theory is but how useful it is.

⁴ The survival hypothesis correctly predicted 18 of the 24 U.S. asymmetric coercion crises examined in this book. Coercion success/failure rate was 50% (12 of 24).

⁵ The tautological argument is that a coercion failure must have meant that the weak state believed its survival was at stake.

A potentially more damaging argument expressed by Sechser is that demands for regime change may actually be easier to obtain through coercion than the survival hypothesis suggests. He cites eight examples of the successful coercion of regime change, but six of the cases are drawn from the interwar period, and of the other two only in the case of Haiti (1994) did the United States implement a coercive strategy.⁶ To sum, of the 24 cases of asymmetric coercion involving the United States since World War II only once (Haiti, 1994) did coercion achieve regime change.⁷ The asymmetric coercion theory predicts that the United States will not adopt a coercive strategy for the objective of regime change, choosing a brute-force strategy instead. The more interesting question is not whether U.S. coercion can achieve regime change, but why would the United States even try. I argue that for high-level objectives of regime change and homeland territory, the United States may adopt a coercive strategy it expects to fail in order to provide support and justification for a brute-force war.⁸

Still, Andy Stigler's comment on the offer of exile to a weak state's leader warrants further exploration. He notes that such an offer may increase the likelihood of coercion success. There are, however, two obstacles that must be overcome before exile can be viewed now as a viable policy option. First, an asymmetric crisis presents the United States with the challenge of garnering popular support for a military intervention against a weak state which does not threaten vital U.S. security interests. The vilification of an authoritarian leader, such as Iraq's Saddam Hussein, Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic, and Libya's Muammar Qaddafi, has long been a method employed by U.S. presidents to gain domestic support. While such a tactic may stoke the passions of the people, it may, in turn, make it difficult later to extend a golden parachute to a leader who has been characterized as a modern-day Hitler. A further wrinkle has been introduced by the involvement of the International Criminal Court. During or after a crisis, the Court may issue indictments against a weak state's leader which makes it more difficult for the United States to credibly offer exile. Though exile may be attainable in certain situations, as demonstrated by General Colin Powell in Haiti in 1994, it does warrant further research as to the conditions under which exile might achieve a successful coercive outcome.

⁶ The 1994 Haiti case is an example of coercion success but the 1961 Dominican Republic crisis, which is identified in the MID dataset but not the ICB, is better coded as a brute force strategy. The CIA conspired in the assassination of Rafael Trujillo and his son Ramfis returned to the Dominican Republic to take power but within months was forced to flee the Dominican Republic and sailed to France to seek exile. Of the 6 interwar cases cited 3 are examples of coercion success. Non-recognition by the United States did lead to President Tinoco in Costa Rica 1919 stepping down from power in 1919 and President Chamorro in Nicaragua in 1926. In the 1920s there are no crises identified between the United States and the Dominican Republic in either the International Crisis Behavior ICB dataset or the Correlates of War Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) dataset. See Sechser "Replication Data for: Militarized Compellent Threats, 1918-2001" <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataset.xhtml?persistentId=hdl:1902.1/17315>. The Soviet Union and Nazi Germany did have success at coercing regime change in the interwar period, though the Red Army invasion of Armenia and Azerbaijan are better coded as brute force since the invasion occurred before the pro-Soviet regime requested military assistance. The Nazi German annexation of Austria is the most infamous case of coercing regime change.

⁷ Even in the case of Haiti the military junta only agreed to exile when convinced that United States aircraft were enroute carrying airborne troops intending to invade and occupy the country.

⁸ The two wars with Iraq (1991, 2003), Afghanistan (2001), and Libya (2011) all fit this description.

In addition to questions over regime survival is Altman's concern as to what territorial demands constitute a threat to state survival. How much territory does a state require to remain economically, militarily, or politically viable? While these are valid questions worthy of study, they go well beyond the scope of this project. I instead assume a state is able to survive with the homeland territory it possesses. Again, as a practical matter for theory testing, homeland territory is readily observable and a common feature for all states. Homeland territory is not a perfect explanatory variable, however, and does subject hypothesis testing to the risk of producing false negatives. In 6 of the 24 cases of asymmetric coercion, U.S. demands involved the control of territory but for only 1 of these 6, in Kosovo, did coercion succeed.⁹ Altman further points out that territorial disputes are more frequently determined by brute force rather than coercion. This is in keeping with the expectations of the coercion model, but it also points out that the establishment of easily discernable borders reduces the likelihood of war, in part, because it firmly establishes what is and is not homeland territory. Altman has demonstrated in his research that certain border characteristics can actually increase the level of conflict. He is right, as not all territory is equal and a more nuanced typology for the types of territory that matter most would be useful. For this project, however, the coding of territory as homeland or otherwise was sufficient.

Several of the discussants' comments concerned Kosovo, in large part because this case produced a false negative. It was the one crisis over homeland territory for which the survival hypothesis predicted coercion failure, yet coercion proved a success. Stigler agrees with my assessment that it was a mistake by Milosevic to give up when he did. Sechser, however, critiques my analysis of the Kosovo case as "more *ad hoc* than deductive." Of course Sechser is right; since deductive reasoning predicted coercion failure, subsequent analysis as to this counterintuitive outcome is more forensic in nature, an attempt to sift through the available evidence to determine how coercion managed to succeed.¹⁰

Kosovo is also a valuable case for examining the tradeoffs a leader makes between domestic threats to regime survival and external threats to the state. To what extent does a regime leader prioritize regime over state survival? Milosevic ultimately decided that his chances of remaining in power were improved by conceding to U.S. demands for Kosovo. Rather than holding out further and having Serbia continue to suffer, his concession allowed the economy to recover. Similarly, in the 2003 Iraq War, Saddam Hussein chose a defensive posture for his forces that prioritized domestic threats to his regime over the external threat of invasion. The problem with theorizing as to which takes precedence, regime or state survival, is that of identifying *ex ante* indicators. In earlier research, I attempted to employ authoritarian regime type as a proxy variable for audience costs.¹¹ The higher the expected audience costs the more likely a leader prioritizes regime survival over the security of the state. There was unfortunately little empirical evidence supporting the notion

⁹ The six cases include three cases with North Vietnam (1964, 1965, and 1968), Iraq in the Gulf War (1991), Kosovo (1999), and the Arab Spring (2011).

¹⁰ On a personal note, the Kosovo case is the reason that I became an international relations scholar. While serving on active duty in the USAF as an A-10 pilot, I flew a number of combat missions over Kosovo. It was there that I was first drawn to the puzzle of why, with the United States' immense advantage in military power, it is so difficult to convince a weak state to comply with its will.

¹¹ I coded authoritarian regime type as military, single party, or personalist regimes employing the framework from Barbara Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles* (Lansing: University of Michigan Press, 2003)

that audience costs vary systematically by regime type.¹² The prioritization of regime versus a state's survival concerns remains a question worthy of further research.

Selection Effects

Altman offers a critique on the selection effects at play in crisis onset. The asymmetric coercion model's equilibrium condition suggests that, theoretically, coercion should always succeed: a powerful challenger should only make demands which the weak state will accept. He argues that a prior selection effect is also at work that, "coercion should never succeed, as the target of the threat should avoid adopting a policy that it expects the United States will be able to coerce it into reversing." This prior selection effect by the target state, however, does not suggest that coercion should always fail, but rather than crises should never arise. This selection effect is a valid concern for research on deterrence, but less relevant for coercion outcomes which are contingent on the crises that do occur.

Policy Implications

Three of the reviewers' comments refer to the theory's policy implications. First, Stigler suggests that coercion at times may be no more than a "do something" strategy. Though a single air raid may have no chance of coercion success, it provides a U.S. president the rhetorical argument that the administration has responded. This is an extension of the argument made in the book that economic sanctions may be more a response to domestic political concerns (19). A 'do something' strategy does help explain the United States' limited military response to the U.S. Embassy bombings in 1998. If given the opportunity for a second edition of the book, I intend to extend this argument to include a discussion on its implications to coercion outcomes. Though this does not change the asymmetric coercion theory, it could add to explanations for why coercion sometimes fails and why the United States might commence a coercive strategy, but fail to follow up with a sufficient threat of force.

Second, Altman comments on the potential long-term impact on the credibility of U.S. foreign policy that results from a 'dishonest' foreign policy of adopting a coercive strategy that is expected to fail in order to provide justification for a brute force war. Indeed, the United States has suffered a blow to its reputation in the wake of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Likewise, U.S. motives were questioned when the Obama administration expanded the UN Security Council mandate for a no drive zone to regime change for Libya in 2011 which subsequently made Security Council approval for intervening in the Syrian civil war problematic.

Third, Christine Leah brings up questions as to the applicability of asymmetric coercion theory to symmetric conflicts. Several of the lessons of asymmetric coercion do have general applicability: do not make demands that are too high or ones that the coercer is not willing to back up with a credible threat of force; trust can be built over time through the execution of tit-for-tat agreement; signaling is hard, etc. None of these insights is original, though it may still be helpful for policy makers to be reminded of the limitations of coercion at the onset of a crisis. The key difference between asymmetric and more symmetric crises is that, in an asymmetric crisis, the powerful challenger does not have its own survival at stake and therefore has the luxury of choosing whether to escalate a conflict into crisis. This is not necessarily the case with a symmetric conflict in which the

¹² For more on empirical evidence of audience costs see Marc Trachtenberg, "Audience Costs: An Historical Analysis," *Security Studies* 21:1 (2012): 3-42.

dynamics are better modeled by simultaneous rather than sequential interaction. Since World War II, there have been few great-power versus great-power military crises to provide evidence as to symmetric power dynamics. A useful study would examine regional crises in order to begin theorizing on how coercion works when the military power of opponents is more equally balanced.

Structure of Book

Finally, Leah rightly points out that the structure of the book is repetitive. The repetition is intentional, however, in an effort to instruct practitioners and graduate students who, unlike seasoned security-studies scholars, are not familiar with the coercion literature and require some reinforcement of the theory and its implications. I include a short introduction of asymmetric coercion theory at the beginning of each case-study chapter for a pragmatic reason. The individual chapters are written as stand-alone case studies that can be assigned reading for either undergraduate or graduate courses. I further include a short conclusion to summarize the main points of each chapter and how these relate to the book's overarching thesis. In part because of how I have organized the book, with practitioners and students in mind, it is now assigned by a number of professional military schools including the U.S. Army's School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) at Leavenworth, Kansas, the U.S. Air Force Air War College and School of Advanced Air and Space Power Studies (SAASS) at Montgomery, Alabama, and the U.S. Naval War College's Advanced Strategist Program (ASP) at Newport, Rhode Island. Hopefully, as a result of this roundtable discussion, international-relations professors at civilian institutions will also consider assigning chapters for their courses.