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Review by James Igoe Walsh, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

States in competition with each other have powerful incentives to engage in deception. Adversaries use deception to convince each other that their resolve is high and that they possess powerful military capabilities.[1] More puzzling is why states that are aligned with each other—which is understood as "a set of mutual expectations between two or more states that they will have each other's support in disputes or wars with particular other states"[2]—engage in deception. Aligned states would seem, at first glance, to have good reasons to share information about their intentions and plans with each other comprehensively. This sharing facilitates coordination policies towards a common foe and makes joint action more effective. Such comprehensive sharing of information does occur, but on some occasions aligned states withhold valuable information from each other or deliberately lie about their intentions and capabilities. Perhaps the most notorious recent example is the George W. Bush administration's exaggeration of claims that Iraq possessed a weapons of mass destruction program, which had the goal of persuading aligned states such as Britain, France, and Saudi Arabia to support military action against the country.[3]

This is the issue addressed in Melinda Haas and Keren Yarhi-Milo's "To Disclose or Deceive? Sharing Secret Information between Aligned States," which develops and tests a theory about the conditions under which aligned states communicate information fully with each other. They begin by identifying four types of information-sharing strategies that differ in the degree of truth-telling. At one end is collusion, in which one state (the initiator) shares with an aligned state (the partner) all information about its military plans against a third state. A strategy of compartmentalization involves sharing limited but truthful information about intentions and capabilities so that the partner is not surprised by

[1] Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of* War (New York: Free Press, 1973), and James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49:3 (Summer 1995): 379-414.

[2] Glenn H. Snyder, "Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut," *Journal of International Affairs* 44:1 (Spring/Summer 1990): 105.

[3] John J. Mearsheimer, *Why Leaders Lie: The Truth About Lying in International Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

military action. An initiator engaging in compartmentalization might, for example, withhold operational details so that the partner does not inadvertently leak sensitive information that could influence the outcome of a planned military operation. More deceptive is a strategy of concealment, in which the initiator deliberately withholds from the partner key information about its intentions and plans. Least truthful is the strategy of lying, in which the initiator communicates untrue information to the partner in order to give a misleading impression of its plans.

The article develops a novel theory to explain the conditions under which initiators adopt one of these strategies of sharing information with a partner. The key factors in this theory are the degree to which the state needs the partner's military capabilities to achieve its objectives against an adversary, its beliefs about whether the partner will use these capabilities to support military action, and its understanding of the costs that the state would incur if deceived the partner by concealing information or lying. These deception costs are crucial driver of the theory's expectations. For example, one might think that needing the partner's active support, and believing that this support will be forthcoming, drives the initiator to share more truthfully. But this depends on the degree to which the initiator thinks it will pay costs for being detected in deceiving its partner. When such costs are higher, it is indeed the case that the initiator has strong incentives to share truthfully, since doing so not only increases the chance of military success but also maintains the alignment with the partner. But low costs for deception create incentives to lie. Doing so will persuade the partner to support military action that it would view as risky or unnecessary, but leave the partner with few realistic opportunities to retaliate against the initiator. In other words, the theory expects that lying is most common with partners who have useful capabilities and shared intentions, but only when the costs of engaging in deception are low; otherwise, the initiator will share information fully with a strategy of collusion. Similarly, states can share some information honestly (i.e., compartmentalize) when the partner's capabilities to support the military mission are limited and deception costs are high, but will hold back relevant information (i.e., conceal) when such costs are low.

Haas and Yarhi-Milo assess this theory with four historical case studies that vary the degree to which initiators employed the four strategies of information sharing: France and Israel in the Suez Crisis of 1956 (collusion), Israel's attack on a nuclear reactor in Syria in 2007 (compartmentalization), Israel, Britain, and France during the Suez Crisis of 1956 (concealment), and Israeli attempts to convince the United States to use military force against Iran's nuclear program after 2010 (lying). Drawing on secondary and some primary sources, they assess the degree to which the initiator in each case understood partners' relevant capabilities, their intentions to support or oppose the planned attack, and the costs of engaging in deception. They conclude that the theory lines up well with the available historical record.

The most novel contribution of the theory, which appears to be borne out in the case studies, is the emphasis on the importance of deception costs. A somewhat counterintuitive conclusion of the article is that states have incentives to lie to partners even when the latter have useful capabilities and aligned interests. This is illustrated in the case of Israel's threats to attack Iran's nuclear program in 2011 and 2012. The authors conclude that Israel judged its military capabilities as insufficient to successfully cripple the Iranian program, a task that only the United States could effectively complete. They also conclude that while the United States and Israel shared the goal of ending the Iranian program, the United States was committed to achieving this objective with diplomacy rather than force. Faced with the need for American support, this led Israel to launch a military build-up with the goal of signaling to the United States that it planned to attack unilaterally, and that the United States' interests would be better served if it participated in such an attack rather than opposed it. The effort to convince the United States collaborate in an attack on Iran failed, which highlights both the scope of the theory the article advances and an important avenue for future research.

The dependent variable of the theory developed in the article concerns the conditions under which states implement distinct information strategies, rather than the conditions under which such strategies have their desired effect. This means that an initiator, such as Israel in the case of the Iranian nuclear program, might pursue an information-sharing strategy but then realize that this strategy had little effect on the choices of the partner. At the same time, though, we should expect states to condition their selection of an information-sharing strategy on an estimate of its likely effects. This suggests that future work might further enrich, or perhaps alter, the theory advanced here by explicitly considering the conditions under which distinct information-sharing strategies do and do not 'work.' In their discussion of the

strategy of concealment, for example, the authors write that "concealment might be difficult, however, especially when the Partner has good intelligence capabilities; when the Initiator is a democracy, in which leaks are common; and when the operation is so big or complex that maintaining operational secrecy until it is completed might be difficult" (138). This suggests that these factors should condition an initiator's willingness to engage in this form of deception.

More generally, it seems important to recognize that states realize they are vulnerable to information manipulation not only by adversaries but also by the states with whom they are aligned. One response to the possibility of being deceived is to always discount information shared by an initiator. But doing so leaves potentially large gains on the table. In the issue area analyzed in this article, for example, pursuing this strategy would mean forgoing the possibility of mutually-beneficial joint intervention against an adversary. Recognizing this, aligned states might carefully design other aspects of their relationship to make deception more difficult or to raise the costs of deception. For example, seconding military or intelligence personnel to each other's armed services or intelligence agencies not only increases joint military effectiveness, but also gives each state 'eyes and ears' on the ground to detect potential deception by a partner. Similarly, investing in shared facilities, such as listening posts or military bases, raises the costs of deception by permitting each participating state to withdraw or reduce their commitments to such ventures.[4]

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[4] James Igoe Walsh, *International Politics of Intelligence Sharing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).