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Abstract

This article examines the causation and extent of interstate crisis escalation among two conflictual dyads, namely, Greece-Turkey and India-Pakistan. It draws from the International Crisis Behavior dataset to present a new sub-dataset of 12 interstate crises involving the two dyads in the period between 1987 and 2002. While crisis behavior in Greece-Turkey has frequently been analyzed within the context of two major regional organizations (NATO and the EU), Indian-Pakistani crises have been studied within the perspective of nuclear proliferation. To examine the linkage between these features and interstate crises, the article operationalizes the security dilemma and the diversionary theory of war through a probabilistic model. Using Ragin’s (2000) comparative qualitative analysis (QCA), it demonstrates that both the security dilemma and diversionary theory explain crisis escalation, although the latter covers more cases with a smaller margin of error. Moreover, the article demonstrates that Greek-Turkish crises have generally escalated to relatively low levels of conflict (threat of war or show of force) while Indian-Pakistani crises have spiraled to higher levels of confrontation (use of force). In both dyads, nuclear weapons and regional organizations have shaped the boundaries of possible escalatory action. The EU and NATO have contributed to mitigating crisis escalation and the use of force between the Aegean neighbors while unintentionally encouraging low intensity confrontations; meanwhile, in South Asia, nuclear weapons in combination with fragile domestic regimes have exacerbated crises, particularly in the form of state-sponsored unconventional warfare.

Keywords: crisis escalation, the security dilemma, diversionary theory, regional organization, nuclear weapon, democratic peace
Introduction

The article examines interstate crisis escalation in contemporary world politics, focusing on two conflictual dyads, India-Pakistan and Greece-Turkey. Crisis escalation has been a major concern in conflict studies (Brecher 1996; Brecher and Wilkenfeld, 2000; Carlson 1995; Colaresi and Thompson 2002; Geller 1990; Fearon 1994; Huth and Russett 1988; Kinsella and Russett, 2002), especially as interstate crises increase the possibility of a full-fledged war and constrained regional integration. More specifically, interstate crises in the world’s periphery are increasingly likely to cause violence than those between major powers (Brecher 1996, 219). The disruptive effects of interstate crises include the destabilization of bilateral security, the provocation of ethnic tensions in contested territories such as Kashmir, and the posing of a threat to regional and international security (Wilkenfeld et al. 2003, 279).

The article discusses the causation and extent of crisis escalation in Greece-Turkey and India-Pakistan. Conventional wisdom assumes moderate levels of escalation for these dyads in the past few decades either due to the mitigating role of regional organizations in the case of Greece-Turkey, or the ‘pacifist effect’ of nuclear weapons in the case of India-Pakistan. Yet both cases have defied conventional wisdom as they came to the brink of war on at least three occasions each in the period between 1987 and 2002. Both dyads pose theoretically intriguing questions, albeit for different reasons. On the one hand, the study of Greek-Turkish conflicts presents challenges for liberal institutionalism, while on the other, the Indian-Pakistani conflict questions nuclear deterrence theory based on neorealist theorizing. Although both approaches are based on the assumption of the anarchic nature of international politics, each addresses
anarchy in a different way. Liberal institutionalism argues that international institutions enable states to cooperate and achieve peace (Keohane and Martin 1995; Wallander et al. 1999). In particular, security institutions play a positive role in managing security issues and reducing the security dilemma (Wallander and Keohane, 1999). Meanwhile, neorealism points out that the balance of power based on nuclear deterrence maintains international stability (Mearsheimer 1990). The defensive superiority derived from nuclear deterrence reduces the security dilemma (Jervis 1978, 206-214). Thus, examining the role of the security dilemma in Greek-Turkish crises and Indian-Pakistani crises is meaningful in that it enables us to test neorealist and liberal institutionalist approaches to crisis management.

Greece-Turkey and India-Pakistan are asymmetrical dyads representing different levels of democratization,¹ a point relevant in debates on democratic peace in democratizing states. Pakistan is ‘on its way to democratization,’ while Greece, Turkey and India have democratized to a much larger extent, albeit with significant problems (e.g. the role of the military in the shaping of Turkey’s foreign policy).² Given that the major peacebuilding approach focuses on democratization in post-conflict societies, it seems important to consider whether democratization is conducive to international peace and security in terms of crisis escalation. To this end, this article operationalizes the diversionary theory of war, examining how domestic political situations affect the decision-making of political leaders about foreign affairs (Davies 2002; Levy 1992; Mitchell and Prins 2004; Tarar 2006). Simply stated, when state leaders are faced with domestic challenges, they will be tempted to go to war to divert the attention of political opponents or constituencies. In short, Greek-Turkish crises and Indian-Pakistani crises relate to several major topics of contemporary world politics: regional organizations,
nuclear weapons, and democratic peace. This article attempts to determine the implications of these factors for the theory and policy-making in world politics.

To evaluate alternative explanations of crisis behavior in Greece-Turkey and India-Pakistan, the article employs Ragin’s (2000) qualitative comparative analysis (QCA). On the one hand, QCA or semi-quantitative analysis can provide better results than single case study analysis; on the other, it cannot match the analytical vigor of large-quantitative studies. Yet scholarly work utilizing small datasets could benefit more easily from in-depth case analyses and regional expertise. Despite their advantages, large n-studies risk missing vital information essential to comparative analysis (Van Evera 1997, 49-55) or aggregating data without clear justification as to the relevance, comparability, and puzzles surrounding the universe of relevant cases. Qualitative comparative analysis could more easily engage in focused cross-regional comparisons including the study of deviant cases such as Greece-Turkey and India-Pakistan including their unique features that are “frequently hidden in the analysis of large datasets” (Lieberman 2005). Paraphrasing Lijphart (1968, 2) deviant cases have considerable theoretical significance because of the light they shed on the conditions explaining crisis escalation in world politics.

The analytical method employed in this article is both semi-quantitative and qualitative. The semi-quantitative research first assesses whether the security dilemma and the diversionary theory of war explain crisis escalation through a probabilistic model utilizing a dataset of Greek-Turkish and Indian-Pakistani crises. While literature on crisis escalation has established several theoretical models (for example, Brecher 1996; Brecher and Wilkenfeld 2000; Carlson 1995; Fearon 1994; Kinsella and Russett 2002), there have been few attempts to fully operationalize the security dilemma and
diversionary theory to study crisis escalation (Loizides 2005; under review). Ragin’s probabilistic analysis (2000, 109-110) allows researchers to ‘assess the quasi-sufficiency of causal combinations using linguistic qualifiers such as “more often than not” (.50), “usually” (.65), and “almost always” (.80)’. These benchmark proportions are measured by ‘Number of Consistent Cases Needed to Pass Probabilistic Test of Sufficiency or Necessity for Different Ns’ (Ragin 2000, 114). In other words, it is possible to apply formal statistical tests using these benchmark proportions (Ragin 2000, 109).

The article demonstrates that both the security dilemma and diversionary theory explain crisis escalation, although the latter covers more cases with a smaller margin of error. Moreover, it investigates the extent and process of crisis escalation aiming to assess why some crises escalated to the use of force while others only to the threat of war. The literature on crisis escalation has paid little attention to the extent of escalation, although use of force requires more attention than do mere threats of war. The article examines Greek-Turkish and Indian-Pakistani crises in depth and identifies those factors which influence the extent of crisis escalation under the security dilemma and/or diversionary theory. It demonstrates that Greek-Turkish crises have escalated to relatively low levels of conflict while Indian-Pakistani crises have spiraled to higher levels of confrontation. While preventing escalation to war, regional organizations such as EU and NATO have unintentionally encouraged low intensity confrontations in Greece and Turkey as both countries attempted to put pressure against each other in the negotiating table. Likewise, in India-Pakistan nuclear weapons prevented a large scale war but solidified crises at higher levels as actors felt secure enough to exacerbate conflict in the form of state-sponsored unconventional warfare. The article examines the implications of these findings for the theory and practice of international relations and
provides relevant public policy recommendations.

Securing the Nation or Manipulating the Masses

We first address the security dilemma and the diversionary theory of war. We set the variables of each theory and establish hypotheses for the causation of interstate crisis escalation.

The security dilemma

According to Booth and Wheeler (2008, 8-9), many authors define the security dilemma as a situation in which states seeking to enhance their own security make others feel less secure. Booth and Wheeler argue that this definition describes not a dilemma but a security paradox. They (2008, 4) define the security dilemma as:

a **two-level strategic predicament** in relations between states and other actors, with each level consisting of two related lemmas (or propositions that can be assumed to be valid) which force decision-makers to choose between them. The first and basic level consists of **a dilemma of interpretation** about the motives, intentions and capabilities of others; the second and derivative level consists of **a dilemma of response** about the most rational way of responding.

Drawing from this definition, the article sets variables according to Posen (1993) who has applied the concept of the security dilemma to both intrastate and interstate conflicts. Posen lists three factors which allow political leaders to take
escalatory action: (1) indistinguishability of offensive and defensive signals; (2) effectiveness of offensive policies; and (3) violent history between conflictual groups.

With respect to the first, the indistinguishability of offensive and defensive signals is a variable related to a dilemma of interpretation. As Booth and Wheeler (2008, 9) note, the clear statement of aggressive intentions is a strategic challenge, not a security dilemma. But without such signals, a state (State A) cannot judge whether the action (particularly military) of an opponent (State B) is offensive or defensive (Booth and Wheeler 2008, 4; Posen, 29-30). B could declare that its action is only for defensive purposes, a defensive action derived from B’s fear of A. However, A may not believe that B’s action is purely defensive because as Butterfield (1951, 21) argues, people cannot ‘enter into the other man’s counter-fear, or even understand why he should be particularly nervous’. Because of this problem, A cannot avoid fearing B’s aggression.

In the second case, effectiveness of offensive policies is a variable related to a dilemma of response. In crises, states need to judge whether to take offensive measures to deter their opponents (Fearon 1994, 239-244). In this situation, states are faced with the problem of future power shifts – and present ‘windows of opportunity and vulnerability’ (see Van Evera 1999, 73-86). In other words, if a state thinks that, as time passes, the opportunity to address an opponent will disappear, and its vulnerability will increase, that state will want to take preventive action now rather than later (Jervis 1978, 188-190; Posen 1993, 32-33). This calculation will affect state behavior by creating a dilemma of response, and if there are effective offensive policies in place, states will respond to a dilemma of response by adopting escalatory actions.

In the third instance, violent history is a variable which makes political leaders more amenable to a security dilemma. Posen (1993, 30) discusses the influence of
history on the security dilemma, arguing that when political leaders try to understand an opponent’s intention, they often use history. Booth and Wheeler (2008, 74) explain Posen’s argument in the context of fear. They point out that, in the case of ethnic conflict between Serbs and Croats after the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation, their violent history forced Serbs in Croatia to fear the repetition of history, and this ‘made the situation much worse’. In other words, violent history is linked to pre-existing fears.

However, violent history is common in many dyadic relationships, for example France and Germany, Japan and the United States, etc. Nonetheless, these states no longer seem to have pre-existing fears. It seems that violent history alone is not enough to cause pre-existing fear. Therefore, this article revises the third variable to ‘strategic rivalries’ (Colaresi et al. 2007), thereby developing an argument on the role of history in the security dilemma. Colaresi et al. (2007, 3-4) point out that the notion of rivalry is composed not only of competition but of the perception of threats from a rival. For example, France and Germany are not strategic rivals because, although still competing for leadership in the EU, they do not perceive each other as threats. Thus, the idea of strategic rivalry excludes dyads with a violent history now lacking a conflictual relationship. Dyads in a strategic rivalry will determine present actions by referring to the past record of conflict (Colaresi et al. 2007, 21). As Colaresi and Thompson (2002, 271) argue, pre-existing fear derived from rivalry will exacerbate the security dilemma.

Moreover, in the context of our cases, regional organizations are expected to reduce the security dilemma in Greek-Turkish crises, and in India-Pakistan, nuclear weapons are expected to have a similar effect. Hence, regional organizations and nuclear weapons are intervening variables, determining to a significant extent, the security dilemma.
Hypothesis 1: States will take escalatory action if they face a security dilemma (i.e. a combination of three variables: indistinguishability of offensive and defensive signals; effectiveness of offensive policies; and strategic rivalry). However, either the presence of regional organizations or and nuclear weapons (on both sides) will mitigate the effects of the security dilemma.

The diversionary theory of war

The basic premise of the diversionary theory of war is that state leaders will divert attention from domestic issues to external threats in order to obtain popular support and maintain power in domestic politics. Although there are various arguments about diversionary theory (see Levy 1992), as Davies (2002, 672) shows, ‘domestic problems that threaten the survival of a decision-maker can influence the conflict behavior of a state’. Such domestic challenges can be an independent variable in the composition of diversionary theory.

According to Mitchell and Prins (2004, 15-16), enduring rivalries between conflictual dyads is another important variable for diversionary theory. They (2004, 10) argue that ‘[s]tates involved in enduring rivalries understand that their environment offers greater opportunities for using diversionary force’, and conversely, when state leaders attempt to resort to diversionary use of force without enduring rivalries, they will have difficulty finding a target and persuading their constituents to accept diversionary policies. Tarar (2006) says that a target should be sufficiently strong and threatening if a political leader is to convince constituents that s/he is competent.
While Mitchell and Prins’s quantitative evidence of the correlation between diversionary politics and enduring rivalries seems strong, the definition of enduring rivalries upon which they rely could be seen as problematic. They use the definition given by Diehl and Goertz (2000, 44-46), in which enduring rivalries are ‘any of those rivalries that involve six [militarized] disputes or more and have lasted for at least 20 years’, and ‘ending somewhere between the date of the last dispute and approximately 10 years after that’ (emphasis in original). As Colaresi et al. (2007, 51-52) note, this definition assumes that a rivalry between states will emerge only after a certain period of serial militarized disputes. However, the creation of rivalries does not necessarily require a series of militarized disputes, although they certainly enhance the expectation of future conflicts. Given this imperfection in Diehl and Goertz’s definition of enduring rivalries, an alternative approach is needed.

Drawing on Colaresi et al, this article uses strategic rivalries instead of enduring rivalries, the variable mentioned in the above section on the security dilemma, and one which does not require the criterion of serial militarized disputes (Colaresi et al. 2007, 33). It approaches the concept of rivalries by taking interpretive approaches to the perceptions of political leaders. Even without frequent militarized disputes, state leaders are more tempted to target a strategic rival than a non-rival because strategic rivalries form domestic constituencies (Colaresi et al. 2007, 28). If political leaders adopt a posture of cooperation with a threatening rival, they may be deposed by opponent politicians who emphasize the danger of the rival (Colaresi 2005, 16-17; Colaresi et al. 2007, 28).

Some argue that the type of regime is a variable for diversionary theory, but as Levy (1992, 263) points out, ‘although the type of regime appears to be important, this
has yet to be explained theoretically’. Some argue that democratic states adopt
diversionary policies more often than autocratic states, but others refute this argument
(Davies 2002, 673). Therefore, using the type of regime as an independent variable
remains controversial. Instead, the level of democratization can be an intervening factor
affecting a causal pathway of diversionary theory. According to Mansfield and Snyder
(2005), incomplete democratization is prone to result in diversionary use of force.
Hence, this article hypothesizes that the more incomplete the democracies are in a dyad,
the more likely the dyad is to experience crisis escalation because of diversionary
politics.

*Hypothesis 2: When state leaders are faced simultaneously with a
domestic challenge and a strategic rivalry, they will take escalatory
action. In particular, the more incomplete the democracies are in a
dyad, the more likely the dyad is to experience escalation.*

**Assessment of the Theories through Data**

*Research design*

The dataset of interstate crises was constructed by collecting information from the ICB
Data Viewer and recently collected data on *Greek-Turkish Negotiations and Crises
1983-2003* (Loizides 2009a). It also complements information from these datasets by
using Lexis/Nexis and available secondary sources. Based on findings, the variables
identified in the preceding section are coded. The ICB Data Viewer was selected
because (1) there have been three Indian-Pakistani crises since India and Pakistan
became a nuclear dyad in 1998 (Booth and Wheeler 2008, 44), and (2) there have been
three Greek-Turkish crises since at least one of the two regional organizations became crucial to Greek-Turkish relations – one when the European Community became strongly influential on Greek-Turkish relationships after Turkey’s 1987 membership application (Rumelili 2004, 7), and the other two after NATO started to change its major role from an alliance of nations to a security management institution in 1989 (Wallander and Keohane 1999, 42). In other words, during these periods, and using the ICB Data Viewer, it is possible to measure the effect of regional organizations and nuclear weapons on crisis escalation in these two dyads.

Each independent variable mentioned above is coded on a dichotomous coding scale – 0 (non-existent) or 1 (existent). ‘The indistinguishability of offensive vs. defensive signals’ is coded to 1 if it can be argued that a state cannot be sure whether the action or attitude of an opponent is offensive or defensive. ‘Effectiveness of offensive policies’ is coded to 1 if it can be argued that a state feels an urgent need to deter an opponent. ‘Strategic rivalries’ are coded to 1 if a state regards the opponent state as a competitor, the ‘source of actual or latent threats that pose some possibility of becoming militarized’, and as an enemy (Colaresi et al. 2007, 25), or if Colaresi’s dataset (2007, 38-50) shows that a dyad has a strategic rivalry. ‘Domestic challenges’ are coded to 1 if a state has a domestic challenge which can threaten the survival of political leaders.

The dependent variable – escalatory actions – requires further explanation. A standard by which to measure escalatory actions is derived from Gochman and Maoz (1984): the threat of force, the display of force, and the use of force. This standard has been used in other studies of crisis escalation (Carlson 1995; Geller 1990) and is appropriate here. The variable is coded to 1 if a state undertakes a policy involving the threat of force, the display of force, or the use of force.
Ragin’s causal combinations model (2000, 88-119) enables researchers to understand the causal complexity of social phenomena, making it a good research model to assess the validity of the security dilemma and diversionary theory. Ragin argues that a social phenomenon generally results from several different causal combinations of conditions. This article assumes that two different causal combinations – the security dilemma or diversionary theory – could cause states to take escalatory action. Ragin’s model also permits a small-n probabilistic analysis to explain – and predict – social phenomena. As Van Evera (1997, 8) says, ‘[n]early all social science laws are probabilistic’, and a probabilistic model is required to measure the sufficiency of causal combinations. Ragin (2000, 109) notes that research into social phenomena tends to be exposed to empirical data containing ‘error, chance, randomness and other factors’, motivating researchers to ‘employ analytic techniques that make some use of probability theory, especially techniques that address the problem of drawing inferences from imperfect evidence’.

Results

Each crisis is coded as listed in Table 1. Crises are named according to the state involved, the characteristic of the crisis, and the year. For example, no.1 ‘G-CyprusS30098’ means that Greece had a crisis regarding the Cyprus S-300 missiles in 1998.6 Because an interstate crisis is experienced by a dyad, there are two cases for one interstate crisis (one case measuring the reaction of each side). For example, the Greek-Turkish Cyprus S-300 missile crisis in 1998 is composed of G-CyprusS30098 (Greece’s side) and T-CyprusS30098 (Turkey’s side).
The results show two important points. First, out of 12 cases, all experienced crisis escalation. Given that the dataset is composed of interstate crises of conflictual dyads, this is understandable, since conflictual dyads frequently resort to escalation. Second, nine cases have all the independent variables of the security dilemma and led to escalatory actions. Eleven have all the independent variables of diversionary theory and resulted in escalatory actions. These features are listed in Table 2 and Table 3. Only one case (G-CyprusS30098) experienced escalatory actions without either the security dilemma or diversionary theory, suggesting that escalation was caused by a set of different explanations.

When these results are measured according to Ragin’s ‘Number of Consistent Cases Needed to Pass Probabilistic Test of Sufficiency or Necessity for Different Ns’ (2000, 114), the security dilemma passes the test of the .65 probability with .05 percent margin of error, and diversionary theory passes the test of the .65 probability with .01 percent margin of error. In other words, both the security dilemma and diversionary theory explain crisis escalation ‘usually’, although the latter covers more cases with a smaller margin of error than the former. This finding confirms the two hypotheses given
earlier as to the extent of these probabilities and indicates that the reformulated versions of the security dilemma and diversionary theory of war explain interstate crisis escalation.

However, seeing only the presence or absence of escalatory actions is not enough, since there are major differences in the extent of escalation. While some crises escalated only as far as political rhetoric threatening war, others went farther, resulting in coercive policies such as the mobilization of troops or even military clashes. A few studies identify the extent of crisis escalation (Carlson 1995; Geller 1990), differentiating the escalation of a crisis through five levels: (1) no action (the minimum, or no escalation); (2) the threat of war; (3) the show/display of force; (4) the use of force; and (5) war (the maximum). The most important boundary is between the show of force and the use of force because there is a ‘fundamental distinction between coercive behavior where force is and is not employed’ (Geller 1990, 303, footnote 18). Put otherwise, the extent of escalation can be demarcated dichotomously: ‘high’ (the use of force and war) and ‘low’ (the threat of war and the show of force). Table 4 shows the extent of escalation of each crisis.

Please insert ‘Table 4: Intervening Factors and the extent of escalation’.

All Indian-Pakistani crises show high escalation, while all Greek-Turkish ones show lower degrees of escalation. This suggests that, on the one hand, regional organizations are a factor that mitigates crisis escalation or freezes escalation at lower levels. Nuclear weapons, on the other hand, instigate crisis escalation, particularly through opportunities for state-sponsored sub-conventional insurgency. As shown in the
discussion of the cases below, nuclear weapons and regional organizations determine the impact of security dilemmas and diversionary politics and shape the boundaries of possible escalatory action.

An alternative explanation points to the types of regimes in South Asia compared to those in the Eastern Mediterranean. It could be argued that the levels of democratic consolidation in Greece-Turkey are higher, thus explaining lower levels of confrontation than in India-Pakistan. Greece was the most democratic, and while India was as democratic as Turkey, Pakistan was far less democratic in the period covered in this study (Vanhanen 2007); however, both dyads had at least one emerging democracy during this period.

**Reassessing Crisis Escalation**

*The Greek-Turkish crises and regional organizations*

Although Greece and Turkey escalated their crisis behavior, crisis escalation was actually inhibited at lower levels by NATO and the EU. The empirical evidence from the Greek-Turkish crises demonstrates that the presence of regional organizations which cover states in a conflictual relationship is conducive to inhibiting a higher escalation of interstate crises or the use of force/war for two reasons. First, for the most part, the EU and NATO contributed to mitigating the Greek-Turkish crises through socialization and third-party mediation (Tsakonas 2010). Mitchell and Hensel (2007, 724) argue that third-party intervention by regional organizations can reduce the security dilemma by providing conflictual dyads with assurances that long-term cooperation will benefit their national interests. Specifically, the incentives and disincentives of the EU/EC discouraged Greece and Turkey from going to war. Neither side nor their leaderships
could play the nationalist card to such an extent as to harm relations with the EU/EC. Greece was in a vulnerable position within the Union due to its endemic economic crises, while Turkey was anxious to make progress in its EU/EC membership (Rumelili 2003, 223; Loizides 2002). While Mitchell (2006, 26-27) demonstrates that joint regional organization membership increases the probability of militarizing disputes, this is only partly true for Greece and Turkey, since the two countries reached the brink of war in multiple crises but never fought one in the past few decades, unlike other conflictual dyads.

One possible explanation for the low intensity of the Greek-Turkish conflict is Greece’s refusal to endorse Turkey’s EU accession unless the latter ceased its occupation of Cyprus and resolved the Aegean issue. Although at times, Turkey considered a compromise, it opted to escalate conflict, putting pressure on Greece and the EU. However, it never caused confrontation to such an extent as to irreversibly terminate its EU ambitions. Likewise, Greece’s limited confrontational attitude has derived from its precarious position within the EU, aiming for negotiation gains but minimizing the possibility of major Turkish or EU reprisals. In other words, in the case of the Greek-Turkish dyad, EU accession dynamics led to low levels of conflict instead of conflict resolution between the two countries.

The Greek-Turkish crises provide insights for a discussion on international institutions between neorealism and liberal institutionalism. Mearsheimer (1994/1995; 1995) argues that international institutions do not prevent states from going to war. They do not independently affect state behaviors and are the outcome of state behaviors based on self-interested calculations. Based on this assumption, Mearsheimer argues that international institutions do not cause peace. Taking the opposite point of view, namely,
liberal institutionalism, Keohane and Martin (1995) and Wallander et al. (1999) argue that international institutions affect the calculation of national interest and promote reciprocal cooperation between states and are, therefore, an element of a lasting peace.

In the case of the Greek-Turkish crises, liberal institutionalism seems to reflect crisis behavior better than neorealism. Although Mearsheimer (1995, 87) argues that empirical evidence does not support the institutionalist argument that institutions can cause peace, the empirical evidence of this article demonstrates that regional organizations can prevent high levels of escalation even in the presence of acute security dilemmas and diversionary environments. More specifically, two regional organizations, the EU and NATO, contributed to mitigating – although admittedly did not completely eradicate – Greek-Turkish crises. Thus, for our cases, Mearsheimer underestimates the role of international institutions in limiting escalations by overlooking the mediating role and values of regional organizations.

Nor does liberal institutionalism fully explain relations between conflict and international institutions because, as Krebs (1999) and Rumelili (2003) demonstrate in the Greek-Turkish conflict, regional organizations sometimes have negative influences on conflict rather than promoting cooperation. In more recent literature, liberal institutionalists appear to admit this point (for example, see Wallander and Keohane 1999, 42-43). Nevertheless, it can be argued that liberal institutionalism explains the role of regional organizations in recent interstate crises more precisely than neorealism, because the former expects that international institutions can cause peace through security management roles (Wallander and Keohane 1999), whereas the latter does not. In fact, both Krebs (1999, 369) and Rumelili (2003, 217) admit that the negative influences of the EU or NATO do not mean that the Greek-Turkish conflict would have
been more easily mitigated if these regional organizations had not been involved. The validity of their argument becomes evident if one considers the gradual improvement in Greek-Turkish relations in the past decade especially following the 1999 earthquakes and if one compares Greece-Turkey with parts of the globe lacking cross-country regional institutions, such as the Indian subcontinent.

The Indian-Pakistani crises, nuclear weapons and democratic peace
As one of the main arguments based on neorealism, nuclear deterrence theory assumes that the mutual possession of nuclear weapons provides effective deterrence because the damage caused by nuclear war is huge, and the costs of war outweigh its benefits (Mearsheimer 1990, 19-20; Waltz 2003, 6-9). Nevertheless, the India-Pakistan crises escalated to the use of force under conditions of mutual nuclear weapons. In fact, as nuclear deterrence theorist Hagerty (2009, 109-110) acknowledges, even proponents of nuclear deterrence do not claim that nuclear weapons can curb any level or type of military aggression; rather, they argue that nuclear deterrence will prevent only the use of nuclear weapons and conventional war. But the sheer persistence of India-Pakistan rivalry is a puzzle when we consider that other long-running conflicts in different parts of the world have ended with or without the presence of nuclear weapons (Paul 2005). For each of India and Pakistan, there is a different set of explanations as to why nuclear weapons did not prevent use of force in crisis escalation.

In the case of Pakistan, Mansfield and Snyder (2005, 241) argue that ‘the gap between demands for mass political participation and weak state institutions has repeatedly created incentives for both civilian and military politicians to play the nationalist card to gamble on establishing a base of mass legitimacy’. This has been a
historical tendency in Pakistan but best exemplified in the 1999 Kargil crisis which escalated to a minor war after the Pakistani military attempted to sideline the civilian leadership of the country (Mansfield and Snyder 2005, 241-249; Hagerty 2009, 102; Paul 2009). The civilian government had no power over the military and was eventually overthrown by the Chief of Army Staff Perez Musharraf and the Pakistani army in October 1999 (Hagerty 2009, 100). Likewise, in the 2001 crisis, Musharraf – then President – was reluctant to suppress terrorist groups because he was restricted by the entrenchment of militant groups and their supporters within the institutions of the state (Mansfield and Snyder 2005, 249). In short, political leaders of weak governments are faced with more domestic challenges than those of strong ones and more likely to play the nationalist card either to placate extremists or secure widespread public support.

Nuclear weapons made this tendency worse. As Bajpai (2009, 170) argues, mutual nuclear weapons ‘created the conditions under which one side, Pakistan, felt that the fear of nuclear war allowed it to prosecute an insurgency/terror war against India’. In other words, nuclear weapons provided a sense of false security that allowed more space for diversionary politics to play an even bigger role as Pakistani leaders underestimated the possibility of Indian reprisals (Nayar and Paul 2003, 91). Mutual possession of nuclear weapons led to military confrontations rather than peace, and political leaders took advantage of their opponents’ fears of nuclear war, using insurgency or terrorist attacks to achieve their political aims. As Pakistan’s cases show, nuclear weapons in combination with fragile domestic politics are an intervening factor to enhance the extent of crisis escalation caused by the diversionary theory of war.

Likewise in India, the Kashmir conflict had an impact on crisis escalation under conditions of mutual nuclear weapons deterrence. India had suffered from
Kashmiri insurgents for a long time, and, therefore, the stability of Kashmir was a crucial agenda item. From an Indian standpoint, Kashmir is an integral part of India by virtue of legal accession signed by its leader and legitimized by subsequent elections (Paul 2005, 9). Although India began to be successful in suppressing Kashmiri insurgency before the 1999 crisis (Ganguly and Hagerty 2005, 151), this limited success was marred by a series of crises for which India believed Pakistan was, directly or indirectly, responsible. During the crises, India suspected that Pakistan supported and even engaged in Kashmiri insurgency; Pakistan initially denied this but indirectly admitted its involvement later, during the 1999 crisis. This intensified India’s security dilemma, because Pakistan’s signals were indistinguishable – whether offensive or defensive.

Mutual nuclear weapons are supposed to reduce the security dilemma by making offensive policies ineffective under fear of nuclear war or nuclear deterrence (Jervis 1978, 206-214). However, as noted above, Pakistan took advantage of India’s fear of nuclear war, resorting to war at the unconventional/sub-conventional level of unofficial operations or terrorist attacks. Therefore, security dilemmas at the unconventional/sub-conventional level were intensified rather than reduced by nuclear deterrence. In sum, nuclear weapons in combination with fragile domestic politics exacerbated the crises, particularly in the form of state-sponsored unconventional/sub-conventional warfare.

Because all crises were initiated by Pakistan’s use of force – whether unofficial Pakistani army operations or Kashmiri terrorist attacks – India needed to respond with force if it wished to bargain at the same level. For example, in the 1999 crisis, Joeck (2009, 128) argues that ‘[w]ith Pakistan’s seizure of the Kargil heights, India was forced
to take the initiative – to compel a change on Pakistan’s part and escalate the competition in risk taking’. In the crises during 2001-2002, India escalated military measures to demonstrate its resolve to pressure Pakistan into addressing insurgency (Swami 2009, 144; Ganguly and Hagerty 2005, 177). These actions suggest that because the Kashmiri insurgency had perpetuated insecurity for India, India could not give way to Pakistan and let it continue to conduct unconventional/sub-conventional war. Thus, the mutual possession of nuclear weapons under unconventional/sub-conventional war was an intervening factor enhancing the extent of crisis escalation. Given that the Kashmir conflict cannot be resolved without cooperation between India and Pakistan, Indian-Pakistani crises and the Kashmir conflict exacerbate each other, making it important to simultaneously address the resolution of Kashmir and other India-Pakistani conflicts.

The Indian-Pakistani crises show another important aspect of contemporary international politics. As noted above, Pakistani political leaders chose the diversionary use of force when facing domestic challenges, namely, its weak democratic institutions and unstable political situations. It is sometimes argued that spreading democracy is conducive to international peace and security (Russett 1993; Doyle 1986). However, the example of Pakistan suggests that introducing democratic institutions prematurely does not necessarily lead to peace, because a transitional process to democracy is prone to violence and political instability (Mansfield and Snyder 2005; Snyder 2000). The case of Greece-Turkey after 1987 also suggests that under the influence of regional organizations, democratizing regimes engage in diversionary behavior; however, in this instance, the extent of escalation was constrained by the effects of regional integration enabling democratic consolidation, by economic development, and by international
influences as well as the remarkable civil society rapprochement following the Greek-Turkish earthquakes of 1999 (Loizides, 2009b). Therefore, in terms of crisis management, it is possible to argue that regional integration is highly preferable to securitization through the use of nuclear weapons.

**Conclusions**

To recapitulate, a discussion of Greek-Turkish and Indian-Pakistani crises yields important insights into the study of international security, and while admittedly limited in scope – drawing only from two dyads – the article’s findings have broad theoretical and public policy implications. More specifically, the article considers the causation and extent of interstate crisis escalation, operationalizing the security dilemma and the diversionary theory of war and establishing a sub-dataset of interstate crises between 1987 and 2002. The results of the semi-quantitative research show that both the security dilemma and diversionary theory ‘usually’ explain crisis escalation, although the latter covers more cases with less margin of error than the former. In short, both analytical frameworks can help policymakers foresee crisis escalation, thus enhancing international crisis management tools. Although prediction in social science is much more difficult than in hard science, the prediction of social phenomena is still desirable because of major policy implications (Mearsheimer 1990, 9).

Moreover, a comparative study of the Greek-Turkish and Indian-Pakistani crises is useful in contrasting the role of regional institutions and nuclear weapons, particularly in re-shaping security dilemmas or diversionary nationalism. As the article points out, neither regional organizations nor nuclear weapons minimize crisis escalation among conflictual dyads; however, both factors reshape the boundaries of
possible escalatory action. On the one hand, the presence of regional organizations mitigates the nature of interstate crisis escalation, admittedly, without eliminating low intensity confrontations. On the other, nuclear weapons freeze the extent of crisis escalation but at higher levels of intensity, including the use of unconventional warfare such as support for terrorist groups.

These insights imply that the two hypotheses established before are supported except for the role of regional organizations and mutual nuclear weapons to mitigate the security dilemma while the latter is more ineffective than the former. There are two possible explanations. First, while not yet theoretically explained, it could be argued that the security dilemma and the diversionary theory of war interact with each other and this interaction allows crises to escalate more easily. As Mitchell and Prins (2004) argue, external opportunity-rich environments (enduring rivalries in their arguments) facilitate diversionary use of force. Security dilemmas might also offer opportunities for hawks to make diversionary strategies more attractive. Hence, if there is a precondition of making diversionary politics work, both institutional theory and nuclear deterrence theory have difficulties in mitigating the security dilemma in comparison with the situation where only the security dilemma affects a dyad’s relation. Nevertheless, as discussed above, regional organizations did a better job than mutual nuclear weapons because they also limited diversionary politics by affecting rational expectations that the states doing something unacceptable for the organizations would not be rewarded by them.

Second, nuclear deterrence theory assumes that it deters only escalation to total war. It would not work when it is used for crisis management as the cases of Indian-Pakistani crises showed because even nuclear deterrence theorists acknowledge
that nuclear deterrence does not assure preventing minor military confrontations from occurring. On the other hand, liberal institutionalism is built on the premise that it can lead to lasting peace, and this suggests that it is aimed at not only preventing war but also managing conflict at a lower level as the EU and NATO play this role in Greek-Turkish conflict. War is not the only case which international society should take into consideration; rather, crisis escalation is also a major concern because, as noted in the introduction, interstate crises destabilize bilateral security, provoke ethnic tensions in disputed territories, and cause a threat to regional and international security. Given these points, nuclear deterrence theory would not be appropriate for policymaking, and liberal institutionalism would be more helpful to attempt not only war prevention but also crisis mitigation.

While the hypothesis on diversionary theory was basically confirmed, there still remains a puzzle on incomplete democratization. As Greek-Turkish relations show and advocates of democratic theory expect, joint democracies are more conducive to stable interstate relations than joint non-democracies (Russett 1993; Doyle 1986). However, as Pakistan’s incomplete democracy demonstrates, domestic politics tend to be fragile during transitional process to democracy and prone to diversionary nationalism (Mansfield and Snyder 2005; Snyder 2000). Therefore, there is a dilemma of democratization: which is more appropriate, helping non-democratic regimes to be stable or imposing democratic systems on them. Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis; it is only when conditions favor peaceful democratization that supporting and promoting democratization would become a reliable option. This dilemma should wait for further study.

In conclusion, the article underscores the importance of preventing nuclear
proliferation particularly in areas of the planet with acute ethnic disputes, weak regimes, and absent regional organizations. Although ethnic conflict management, regional integration, and nuclear non-proliferation are valuable in themselves, the study helps draw the critical linkages among these priorities in foreign policymaking. In Greece-Turkey and more importantly in India-Pakistan, the international community should promote the development of regional organizations, the establishment of stable domestic politics, and the commitment to resolving intrastate conflicts. The recent humanitarian disaster in Pakistan following the 2010 floods also offers an opportunity to improve the landscape of bilateral state relationships in South Asia. Taking advantage of humanitarian emergencies to improve regional relations is not without a precedent. The 1999 earthquakes in Greece and Turkey have served as departure moment in the improvement in Greek-Turkish relations. Following the earthquakes peacemakers have successfully transformed the symbolic landscape of Greek-Turkish relations stabilizing for the first time in recent history one of the most conflictual dyads in world politics. Following the Greek-Turkish as well as the example of the Marshall Plan in post-WWII Europe, the international community could help mitigate interstate crises in India-Pakistan by linking foreign aid to taking steps towards regional integration as well as strengthening the current role of regional organizations in South Asia and other conflict-prone parts of the planet.
Notes
1 A criterion to measure the index of democracy is Tatu Vanhanen’s Measures of Democracy 1810-2006 (2007). For arguments on Pakistan’s incomplete democratization, see Mansfield and Snyder (2005, 241-249).
2 According to Vanhanen (2007), during 1987-2006, the average score of democratization of each state was: Greece, 36.025; Turkey, 21.615; India, 20.03; Pakistan, 7.15.
3 In this article the QCA (or ‘semi-quantitative’) approach covers probabilistic models based on 30 or fewer cases. For details of this model, see Ragin (2000, 112-115).
4 For example, see Brecher (1996), Colaresi and Thompson (2002), Huth and Russett (1998), and Kinsella and Russett (2002). These studies did not focus on the extent of crisis escalation, but there are a few studies on the topic (Carlson 1995; Geller 1990).
5 For details on each of the crises and correspondence between the author’s dataset and the ICB Data Viewer Crisis Summary, see Table 6 in Appendix.
6 The descriptions of each crisis can be seen in Appendix.
7 What demarcates war from the use of force is 1,000 or more battle fatalities (Gochman and Maoz 1984, 589; see also Small and Singer 1982).


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(Spring): 27-47,


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*International Studies Quarterly* 50: 169-188.


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*Conflict Resolution* 47, no. 3 (June): 279-301.
### Table 1: Event crisis data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Event crisis</th>
<th>Offensive vs. defensive signals indistinguishability</th>
<th>Effectiveness of offensive policies</th>
<th>Strategic rivalries</th>
<th>Domestic challenges</th>
<th>Escalatory actions (dependent variable)</th>
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Table 2: The result of the security dilemma

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<th>Cases</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
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Table 3: The result of the diversionary theory of war

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<td>T-AegKardak96</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G-AegeanOil87</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T-AegeanOil87</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I-Kalchak02</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P-Kalchak02</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Crises where an escalatory action was expected but did not occur despite the</td>
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### Table 4: Intervening factors and the extent of escalation

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Event crisis</th>
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<th>Regional organizations</th>
<th>Nuclear weapons</th>
<th>Incomplete democracy</th>
<th>The extent of escalation</th>
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<td>0</td>
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</table>

Note: SD is the security dilemma, DT is diversionary theory, TOW is the threat of war, SOF is the show of force, and UOF is the use of force.