

**Politically Motivated Opposition to War:
A Comparative Study of the United States in the Quasi-War and the War of 1812**

William F. Mabe, Jr. and Jack S. Levy

Department of Political Science
Rutgers University
89 George Street
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1411
Mabe: billmabe@rci.rutgers.edu
Levy: jacklevy@rci.rutgers.edu; 732/932-1073

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ABSTRACT

If the diversionary theory of war is right that political leaders sometimes go to war because they anticipate that it will bolster their domestic political support, it follows that there may be a domestic opposition group that expects to suffer politically from a military success and that may therefore oppose war to prevent a loss of political power. Although this hypothesis of politically-motivated opposition to war is a logical extension of diversionary theory, it has been neglected in the literature. Whereas Schultz's (1998, 1999) model of crisis bargaining predicts that groups out of power in democratic states will oppose what they expect will be an unpopular war in order to position themselves to make a political gain, our diversionary/opposition hypothesis predicts that opposition groups may try to block a war they expect to be popular in order to avoid the losses that will accompany the government's gains. Whereas opposition to an unpopular war will undermine the credibility of the government's external threats in Schultz's model, the diversionary/opposition hypothesis predicts that the attempt to block a popular war may actually enhance the credibility of the government's threat, because such opposition arises in precisely those situations that the government has the most to gain from war. This implies that, contrary to Schultz, the act of opposition to war carries no information about the government's likely bargaining behavior unless that act is coupled with information about the opposition's motivations for opposing war or its expectations about the likely popularity of war.

We define politically-motivated opposition to war, analytically distinguish it from alternative explanations for organized opposition to war, assess the relative explanatory power of these alternative hypotheses for the United States in the Quasi-War of 1798 and the War of 1812, analyze the implications of these two cases for Schultz's (1998, 1999) model of crisis bargaining and for the diversionary/opposition hypothesis, and suggest a research design for further testing these two perspectives.

The diversionary theory of war maintains that political leaders sometimes go to war because they anticipate that war will bolster their domestic political support. The theory has generated a lively research program that includes historical, case study, quantitative empirical, and formal approaches (Mayer, 1977; Russett, 1990; James and ONeal, 1991; Morgan and Bickers, 1992; Gelpi, 1997; Leeds and Davis, 1997; Gowa, 1998; Richards et al., 1995; Downs and Rocke, 1994; Smith, 1996; for a review see Levy, 1989). In focusing on the political incentives of the government and neglecting those of the opposition, however, scholars have missed an important implication of diversionary theory. Just as political leaders sometimes resort to force because they expect to benefit from successful military action, regardless of the consequences for the country as a whole, domestic opposition groups may actively oppose war (or the use of force short of war) because they expect to suffer politically from a diplomatic or military success.¹ If the opposition can prevent war from occurring, it can prevent the government from reaping the political gain that would follow from a successful war and thus avoid a relative political loss for itself.²

That political calculations may motivate opposition to war is also a central assumption of Schultz's (1998, 1999) model of crisis bargaining involving a democratic initiator. Schultz argues that in a democratic state opposition parties compete for political power with the governing party and thus have antithetical interests. When the government's policies are successful it gains in political support while the opposition suffers a relative political loss. Schultz's (1998) game-theoretic model begins when the government makes a demand of another state and backs that demand with the threat of force. Although the government may have an incentive to bluff in such a foreign policy crisis, particularly if it expects that any ensuing war

would be unsuccessful or otherwise unpopular, the opposition has no incentive to support the government's threat if it, like the government, anticipates an unpopular war. Rather, under these circumstances the opposition has an incentive to go on record as opposing war in order to exploit popular discontent and reap a domestic political gain for itself.

While the diversionary/opposition hypothesis implies that the opposition may oppose the external use of force when it expects that such use of force will be successful or otherwise popular, in order to deny the government a political gain, Schultz's (1998, 1999) model predicts that the opposition will actively oppose war when it anticipates that the war will be unpopular or unsuccessful, in order to exploit the negative political fallout and secure for itself a domestic political gain. Thus the two models yield conflicting testable implications. Whereas Schultz's model predicts that expectations of a popular war are a sufficient condition for opposition support of the government's threat and any war that might follow, the diversionary/opposition hypothesis predicts that the opposition will sometimes oppose war under these circumstances. Stated differently, if we observe opposition to war we can infer from Schultz's model that the opposition anticipates an unpopular war, whereas the diversionary/opposition hypothesis implies that the opposition expects either a popular or an unpopular war.

The different predictions of the Schultz (1998, 1999) and diversionary/opposition hypotheses regarding the conditions under which oppositions will actively oppose war, and particularly the different inferences that we can draw after observing active opposition to war, have important implications for crisis bargaining. In Schultz's model, opposition to war in a democratic state diminishes the credibility of the government's threat because it signals to the target state that the opposition, and hence the government, expects an unsuccessful or otherwise

unpopular war that will hurt the government politically.³ The target state infers that the government is bluffing and therefore is more likely to resist the government's demand. The diversionary/opposition hypothesis predicts that opposition to war in a democratic state can reflect either expectations of an unpopular war—and the opposition's hope of reaping domestic political gains by going on record opposed to war—or a popular war, which the opposition attempts to block in order to deny the government the political gains that would follow from it. In the second instance, the implications for the credibility of the government's threat are the opposite of what Schultz predicts, for by implementing the threat the government can reap domestic political gains, which should enhance rather than diminish the credibility of the government's threat. Because opposition to war can arise either when elites expect that the war will be popular or when they expect that it will be unpopular, the behavior is not in itself informative and has no implications for whether the government is more or less likely to carry through with its threat, and therefore no implications for whether the target state is more or less likely to stand firm.

There are, of course, other reasons why the opposition may come out against war. They may believe that war would be contrary to national security, that it would incur significant economic and social costs, that it would result in a restriction on domestic liberty, that it would not be morally justified under the circumstances, or that it would be contrary to the basic values of society. We do not deny that these other motivations exist or that they may be the most important factors in some situations. Our aim in this paper, however, is to emphasize the previously neglected role of partisan political interests in driving opposition to war, and to demonstrate empirically that this motivation can have important causal impact.⁴

In this paper, we address three questions. First, and most importantly, do oppositions oppose war for political reasons, as both the diversionary/opposition hypothesis and Schultz's theory of crisis bargaining imply? Second, do oppositions oppose war to make political gains in the expectation of an unpopular war, as Schultz argues, or do they attempt to block a war that they expect will be successful and generate political gains for the party in power, as the diversionary/opposition hypothesis implies? Or, can both expectations lead to opposition to war? Third, how do these different motivations for opposing war actually influence crisis bargaining? In particular, does opposition to war undermine the credibility of a government's threat to use force, or reinforce it?

To answer the first two questions, we identify alternative explanations for organized opposition to war, distinguish them from the partisan politics explanation, and delineate the different political incentives that oppositions might have for opposing war. We then assess the relative explanatory power of each in two cases involving the United States: the Quasi-War of 1798 and the War of 1812.⁵ To answer the third question, we examine how political opposition affected the credibility of the threats that the United States issued in the two crises. We find that political self-interest played a central role in the Republicans' opposition to war in 1798 and in the Federalists' opposition to war in 1812. We also find that opposition in fact diminished the credibility of American threats against both France in 1798 and Britain in 1812. It is less clear from the historical record, however, whether this loss of credibility resulted from the target state's inference that opposition to war signaled that the government would incur domestic costs from war (the Schultz model) or whether the loss of credibility resulted from the target state's

inference that the opposition would be able to veto a government decision for war (the diversionary/opposition hypothesis).

The Schultz Model and the Diversionary/Opposition Hypothesis

Although the diversionary theory of war implicitly assumes the existence of a political opposition with which a government competes for political power, diversionary theorists focus on the choices facing political leaders and the consequences of those choices for their domestic support levels, while denying any active or strategic role to the opposition. There is a substantial literature in comparative politics on political oppositions (Dahl 1973; McLennan 1973), but this work ignores foreign policy. There is also a small but growing body of international relations literature on political opposition and foreign policy (Hagan 1987, 1993; Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1990; Schultz 1998, 1999; Gaubatz 1997). These represent important first steps in the study of political opposition and foreign policy, but only Schultz's model of crisis bargaining bears directly on the question of why organized opposition to war might arise and how that opposition might affect the likelihood of war.⁶

Schultz (1998, 1999) argues that democracies are better able than non-democracies to send credible signals of their resolve in crises because they permit public contestation.⁷ When a democratic government threatens a rival state with the use of force, the rival state can observe whether the opposition supports or opposes the use of force and use this information to make inferences about the credibility of the government's threat. While governments have incentives to bluff in their bargaining with rival states, the opposition--which wants to unseat its

government and which therefore shares with the adversary an interest in limiting the success of the government-- has no incentive to support a government's bluff.

Because the government and the opposition have competing interests, Schultz (1998, 1999) argues that the opposition will support the government's threat if and only if it thinks the use of force will be politically popular, for otherwise the opposition could make a political gain by opposing war.⁸ Thus, if the opposition backs the government's threat, the target state can infer that the opposition expects that war will be politically popular. This would reduce the costs to the government of any escalation of the crisis and consequently enhance the credibility of its threat. This, in turn, decreases the target state's incentives to adopt hard-line bargaining tactics and thus reduces the probability of war by miscalculation. When the opposition opposes the government's threat to use force, on the other hand, the target state infers that the government may not make good on its threat because doing so would hurt it politically. The target state is then more likely to resist the government's demand. The government anticipates this and, rather than face an unyielding adversary without domestic support, does not make the initial threat under these circumstances.

Since they prohibit public contestation, non-democratic states do not share these signaling dynamics. Schultz's (1998, 1999) model suggests that a democracy is less likely than a non-democracy to make threats in the absence of public support, so that when a democracy makes threats it is more likely to carry them out than is a non-democracy.⁹

Schultz's (1998, 1999) signaling model of crisis bargaining is based on several key assumptions, two of which are relevant for our purposes. First, Schultz assumes that the government and the opposition draw the same conclusion about how the electorate will respond

if the government uses force in a crisis. Therefore, if the opposition expects the use of force to be unpopular, we can assume that the government has the same expectation. Second, Schultz assumes that the opposition cannot veto the government's decisions and hence cannot block war.¹⁰ If we relax either of these assumptions and allow for the possibility that either the government and the opposition can hold different opinions about the electorate's reaction to the use of force, or that the opposition can prevent the government from initiating war, then we can show that the behavior of the opposition, contrary to Schultz, is not by itself informative of the credibility of the government's threat against the adversary.

With respect to the first assumption, if two competing political parties have different beliefs about the electorate then they may well draw different conclusions about the anticipated popularity of war. Consequently, the opposition may oppose a war that the government expects will be popular. In this case, opposition to war may not signal a lack of resolve on the part of the government because the government has simply drawn different conclusions about public support for war, expects the war to be popular, and is committed to carrying out its threat in order to reap an expected political gain.

The government and opposition may have different beliefs about the distribution of popular opinion if they interpret current information through different conceptual lenses or if they use the same information to update (in Bayesian terms) different prior probability assessments. If selection into government and opposition roles has anything to do with the different assumptions of competing political elites about the nature of public opinion, and it often does, each of these causal paths is likely to occur. Government and opposition may reach these disparate conclusions in any type of democratic political system, whether parliamentary or presidential.

As for the second assumption, when the opposition lacks the ability to prevent the government from going to war, as in Schultz's model, all it can do is go on record as opposing the war. The opposition will only do this when it thinks the war will be unpopular and wants to position itself to make a political gain.

When we relax this assumption, however, and allow an opposition some probability of blocking war if it attempts to do so, the opposition's motivations for opposing war become important, for different motivations send different signals about the government's resolve to the target state. If the opposition expects that the war will be unpopular, it will oppose war in order to exploit public resentment and thereby make a political gain at the expense of the government (as in the Schultz model). If the opposition expects that the war will be popular, however, and if it believes that it has a good chance of blocking war, it may oppose war in order to deny the government the political gain that would invariably follow from a popular war. Although opposition that emerges for the former reason diminishes the credibility of the government's threat (as Schultz argues), opposition that arises for the second reason may have the opposite effect and reinforce the credibility of the government's threat, because the government can make a domestic political gain by implementing the threat. Thus if we allow for the possibility that the opposition can block war, the observation of opposition to war carries no information, by itself, regarding the expected popularity of the war or the credibility of the government's threat. In the absence of further information about the opposition's expectations and motivations, the target state cannot conclude from the opposition's behavior whether the government will stand firm or yield in the next stage of the crisis, and the danger of a war by miscalculation is not reduced.

Whether oppositions actually oppose war to avoid political losses depends on whether there exist political systems where the opposition would have the capability of blocking the government's policy initiatives as well as on whether the opposition would benefit more from opposing a potentially popular war than from some other course of action. We treat each of these issues in turn.

There are many democracies, both parliamentary and presidential, where the opposition is likely to have some reasonable chance of blocking a government decision to go to war. In a parliamentary system, under majority governments, the executive is assured a legislative majority by definition and hence the opposition has little, if any, chance of blocking the executive's initiatives such as a declaration of war. Under a minority government, however, the opposition parties by definition control more votes in the legislature than does the party that controls the executive. This creates the possibility that the opposition parties may together be able to block a governmental decision for war.¹¹

In presidential systems, when the executive's party secures a comfortable majority of seats in the legislature, the opposition faces the same plight as its counterpart in a parliamentary democracy--it cannot block the executive's actions and can at best go on record as opposing those that it expects will be unpopular. In a presidential system where the executive lacks a solid legislative majority, however, the opposition will have the political strength to veto measures that it opposes, including declarations of war.¹² Presidential systems currently constitute a significant proportion of the world's democracies.¹³ In short, the evidence suggests that there are a significant number of democratic political systems where the opposition could succeed in blocking war.

The foregoing suggests that oppositions in many states may have the ability to vote down their governments' attempts to declare war. Whether oppositions actually attempt to prevent a war that they expect will be popular is a different question, however, for such action can be quite risky. While the opposition's best outcome is the avoidance of war, its worst outcome is the occurrence of a successful war that it attempts to block—as opposing war may stigmatize the opposition as unpatriotic—and its middle outcome is a successful war that it makes no attempt to stop. The dilemma for the opposition is whether to oppose war in the hope of securing its best outcome at the risk of ending up with its worst outcome. This will depend on the opposition's assessment of the costs and benefits of these various outcomes and particularly on its estimated probability of blocking war if it attempts to do so.

When there is substantial public support for the use of force prior to war, the opposition will be unlikely to oppose war because it would likely suffer political costs for doing so. Such a dynamic may have deterred opposition to the Spanish American War (Gould, 1982). Often, however, public support for the use of force before a war begins is lower than the level of support for using force after a war has begun, for wars usually generate a “rally around the flag” effect (Kernell, 1978; Russett, 1990).¹⁴ When the opposition has the political strength to block war and the public is not highly bellicose before a possible war, the opposition may attempt to block war. How the opposition acts will depend on its expectations regarding the probability of successfully blocking war if it attempts to do so, the extent and duration of the political gain the government will receive from a successful war, what the government will do with its increased political influence, and also on the risk orientation of the opposition. If the opposition expects that the government will use its increased power from the successful conflict to destroy or significantly

marginalize the opposition, then it has little to lose by attempting to prevent the war from occurring.¹⁵ Such opposition may be especially likely in new democracies where the rival political parties are more likely to fear permanent exclusion from politics.

The foregoing discussion indicates that opposition to war is a theoretically significant but understudied phenomenon. We need a better understanding of when organized opposition to war is likely to arise, and this requires an examination of the different motivations that might lead opposition parties to come out against war. This is by no means an easy task, as a wide range of different considerations may motivate opposition parties. Oppositions may be driven by beliefs about the national interest and the optimum means of achieving it, whether defined in terms of power, wealth, or ideology. They may be concerned about the domestic consequences of war, including its internal economic or human costs, social dislocation, increased centralization of political power in the state, or general infringements on domestic liberty. Opposition to war may also be motivated by principle, by beliefs that the use of force is morally wrong, or at least disproportionate to the political objectives at stake. Opposition to war might also reflect sectional interests, whether economic or identity-based. Finally, as we have argued, opposition to war may be motivated by the partisan self-interest of the party (or parties) out of power.

Determining which of these explanations accounts for an opposition party's decision to oppose war is difficult, in part because political actors, government and opposition alike, have incentives to conceal any parochial self-interest driving their behavior. Just as governments who engage in the diversionary use of force rationalize their behavior in terms of the national interest, oppositions who oppose war generally rationalize their position in terms of stated fears that war

would have adverse consequences for national security, economic welfare, and the preservation of liberty at home, as well as of concerns about the morality of violence.

Research Design

Our purpose is to demonstrate that partisan political interest is a potentially powerful explanation for opposition to war in certain situations, to distinguish oppositions that arise from expectations of popular wars and of unpopular wars, and to examine how this opposition affects the credibility of a government's threats against foreign adversaries.

We test the political self-interest hypothesis against alternative explanations based on national security and economic welfare of the country, domestic political liberty, ideological affinities with the adversary, moral inhibitions, and sectional interests. We approach this task through a comparative case study of the behavior of political oppositions in two successive American crises: the Quasi-War with France in 1798 and the War of 1812 with Britain.

These two cases constitute an extremely useful paired comparison for the purposes of controlling for other variables and eliminating contending explanations. The roles of the two leading political parties, the Federalists and the Republicans, were reversed in the two crises: the Federalists were in power in 1798 and pushed for war against France in the face of Republican opposition, while in 1812 the governing Republicans pushed for war with England in face of opposition from the Federalists. Little else changed in the fifteen years between the two crises, however, and this allows us to require that a valid explanation of a party's opposition to war when it was out of power also be consistent with that party's behavior when it was in power.

We focus on the political party as our unit of analysis, and our dependent variable is the stance of each of the major political parties on war or peace during a crisis.¹⁶ Because each party supported war in one crisis but opposed it in another, our research strategy follows Mill's (1950: 211-21) method of difference and Przeworski and Teune's (1970) most similar systems design. This allows us to rule out alternative explanations based on explanatory variables that did not covary with the dependent variable.¹⁷

As Mill (1950) recognized, the method of difference does not in itself permit us to establish causality because more than one variable typically covaries with the dependent variable. To overcome the limitations of the method of difference, we employ process tracing to determine which of the explanations that covaried with the dependent variable best explains why the parties opposed war (Bennett and George, 1997). For each of the alternative explanations, we discuss the causal mechanisms involved and generate one or more testable implications, which we then compare against the historical record. Combining the correlational design with process tracing permits a more powerful test of alternative explanations for Republican and Federalist opposition to war than would using either technique in isolation.

In addition to permitting a rigorous test concerning the political motives of the opposition, these cases also allow us to test Schultz's hypothesis that opposition to war undermines the credibility of the government's external threat. After we evaluate the expectations and motives that drove each party to oppose war, we examine whether opposition undermined the credibility of the US government's threats.

Historical Overview of the Quasi-War of 1798 and the War of 1812

Beginning in the 1790s, two political parties, the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans (hereafter, the Republicans), vied for political power. In 1796, the Federalist Party's candidate, John Adams, won the election to succeed George Washington as president. The Republican Party's candidate for president, Thomas Jefferson, was elected vice president and became one of Adams' two chief political rivals.¹⁸ Adams' other political adversary was fellow-Federalist Alexander Hamilton.¹⁹ Whereas Adams' drew support from the moderate Federalists, Hamilton drew his support from the High Federalists, who were more loyal to Great Britain, more hostile to France, and geographically concentrated along the coast (Dauer, 1957:6-7; DeConde, 1966: 77).²⁰ Jefferson and the Republicans won the presidency in 1800, retained it in the 1804 election and again in 1808 under Madison.

When Adams took office, the central problem that the United States confronted was France's seizure of American commercial vessels that traded with Great Britain, a leading opponent of France in the Wars of the French Revolution and subsequent Napoleonic Wars. This had been occurring continuously since the ratification of Jay's Treaty in 1795 through 1798 (DeConde, 1966: 9). Although some American officials wanted war, Adams decided to appoint a special diplomatic mission in October 1797 to negotiate an end to hostilities (DeConde, 1966: 11). The French, however, rebuffed Adams' negotiating team when it arrived in France in October 1797. France's treatment of the American envoys throughout the Fall and Winter outraged Adams and Americans generally and developed into a crisis known as the XYZ Affair (Stinchcombe, 1980).

In March 1798, Adams penned a declaration of war that he intended to submit for congressional ratification (DeConde, 1966: 67-8). He eventually decided against presenting the declaration to Congress, however, because he feared that doing so might have endangered the lives of his negotiators who remained in France, and because he thought the majority Republican Congress would vote down his war declaration (DeConde, 1966: 68-9). Domestic opposition to war thus partly accounts for why the United States did not go to war with France in March 1798. Adams opted instead for fighting an undeclared “quasi-war” against French shipping, hoping that France's continued belligerence would provoke the American public in favor of a declared war. Adams also proposed measures for military preparedness in case relations between the United States and France escalated to full-scale war (DeConde, 1966: 69).

During the summer of 1798, the Federalist Party divided over additional belligerent measures. The majority of the Adams administration, though not Adams himself, favored a scheme whereby the United States would declare war on France, form a de facto alliance with Great Britain, and invade Spain's colonies in Louisiana and the Floridas. The United States never declared war on France, nor implemented the invasion plan, however, because in October 1798 Adams abruptly reversed course, favoring a peaceful resolution of the conflict to war. In 1800, the belligerents settled their differences in the Treaty of Mortefontaine (DeConde, 1966).

By 1812, Great Britain and France had been at war for much of the previous two decades, and during this period each had seized many American commercial ships that they suspected of trading with the other. The British also engaged in a policy of impressment, by which they forcibly removed Americans from US ships and forced them to serve in the Royal Navy (Zimmerman, 1925: 59-75). Beginning in 1805, British ship seizures escalated. After first

rejecting an 1806 compromise that his diplomats had negotiated with Great Britain, the following year Jefferson adopted the first in a series of embargoes and nonimportation acts. Known collectively as the restrictive system, the policies were intended to compel Great Britain, and to a lesser extent France, to respect American maritime rights (Hickey, 1989: 19). Unfortunately for the United States, the restrictive system hurt the American economy much more than it did the British. Republican James Madison maintained his predecessor's economic policies when he became president in 1808.

As the economic measures failed to induce a change in British policy, congressional Republicans agitated for war. In November 1811, the Twelfth, or War, Congress convened for the first time.²¹ On June 1, 1812, Madison submitted a secret war message to Congress (Perkins, 1963: 431-432 and Hickey, 1989: 44). Although all forty congressional Federalists voted against war, the declaration passed as 98 of 120 Republicans voted in favor (Brown, 1964: 44-5).²²

Alternative Explanations for Opposition to War in 1798 and 1812

In this section, we test our hypothesis of politically motivated opposition to war against alternative explanations based on commercial and military threats to the national interest, concerns for domestic liberty, the morality of war, ideological affinities, and sectional interests.

Partisan Political Interest

The partisan politics explanation holds that the Republicans in 1798 and then the Federalists in 1812 opposed war because each believed that it was in their partisan political interest to do so. Republicans in 1798 feared that the Federalists would make political gains

from a popular war and use those gains to limit their political influence. In 1812, the Federalists expected that war would be unpopular and hoped to make a political gain by opposing war.

In the Quasi-War, Republicans clearly feared suffering political losses if the United States went to war. Jefferson had long distrusted Federalist motives, and "neither Washington nor anyone else could drive from his head the obsession that monarchy was just around the corner, that Hamilton and his fiscalist, anglocrat followers were plotting to make an end to republican government in America" (Elkins and McItrick, 1993: 338). Madison feared that war merely provided the Federalists a pretext for suppressing dissent. In describing the effects of Federalist war preparations, Madison lamented to Jefferson that "Perhaps it is a universal truth that the loss of liberty at home is to be charged to provisions against danger, real or pretended, from abroad" (Madison to Jefferson, in Smith, 1996: 1048).

As it turned out, Republican fears were well founded. Federalists used the Sedition Act of 1798 to jail Republicans, especially journalists whose writings irked them, and they used the Naturalization Act to disqualify many recently immigrated, pro-Republican, Irish voters (DeConde, 1966: 98-103, Smith, 1956: 22).²³

Although it is clear that a war would have been an undesirable outcome for the Republicans in 1798, a strategy of actively opposing war carried significant risks: had they tried but failed to block war they could have been branded as unpatriotic and perhaps even treasonous, which would have resulted in their worst outcome. The Republicans were confident, however, that they had the political strength to block a war with France (Smith, 1995: 999; DeConde, 1966: 62). They thought that a majority of Americans favored war with France in 1798 (DeConde, 1966: 75-76, 81), but also that the Federalists, as the governing party, would reap

most of the political benefits from a successful war. Republican support for a popular war would have resulted in a net relative gain for the Federalists, a gain that Federalists would have used to marginalize the Republicans further, and was consequently not a viable Republican strategy. Thus, although politics motivated Republican opposition to war in 1798, the Republicans' undertook this opposition not in hopes of making a political gain from an unpopular war but instead to avert a relative political loss from a popular war.

Earlier we noted Adams' abrupt change in his position on war with France in October 1798. This reversal is also consistent with the politically motivated opposition to war hypothesis, but in an intra-party context. Between March and September 1798, Adams favored war with France. During this period, Adams sought to capitalize on popular support for war by inciting pro-war sentiments in public appearances (DeConde, 1966: 81). In October, however, Adams suddenly turned against war with France and began to favor a peaceful settlement to the Franco-American naval conflict.

To explain this we note that between the summer and fall of 1798, the only variable that changed significantly was the political benefit to Adams of war with France. At the end of the summer, Hamilton finagled, despite Adams' objections, an appointment as the de facto leader of the US Army. Once this appointment was finalized at the end of September, Adams thought that Hamilton would reap the glory of a full-scale war with France, just as Washington had benefited politically from commanding the Revolutionary Army. Eleven days after Hamilton's appointment, Adams turned against war and favored seeking a negotiated peace with France. A consensus of historians has concluded that Adams turned against war because war was no longer in his political self-interest (DeConde, 1966: 112; Jones, 1985: 38; Smith, 1962: 984).²⁴

In 1812, Federalists had three political motivations for opposing war. First, before the war began, many Federalists believed, contrary to Republicans, that the war would be unpopular and that they could capitalize on the public's antiwar sentiment to return to power. The Federalists had learned from the state elections of 1811 and 1812 that opposition to war could be politically beneficial in New England (Perkins, 1963). As for the country as a whole, some Federalists (wrongly) estimated that eighty or ninety percent of Americans opposed war (Perkins, 1963: 395-6). Expecting an unpopular war, Federalists opposed war in hopes of making a political gain. Prominent Federalists like New York congressman Harmanus Bleecker thought that war would end "the reign of theory, sophistry, and false philosophy" and expel the Republicans from power (quoted in Perkins, 1963: 395 and Hickey, 1989: 73-4). Brown (1964: 188) concludes that the Federalists thought that opposing the war "would eventually return them to power."

After the war began, Federalist expectations proved incorrect, as initially the war was generally popular (Adams, 1986: 667).²⁵ Recognizing that military success would generate a political gain for the Republicans and a corresponding loss for themselves, some Federalists even hoped for military defeat. In a letter to Timothy Pickering, Alexander Hanson wrote: "A few hard blows struck [by the British] in the right place would be of great service to the country" (quoted in Adams, 1986: 667). Benjamin Stoddert echoed this sentiment in a letter to James McHenry: "Success in this War, would most probably be the worst kind of ruin. There is but one way to save our Country ... change the administration" (Stoddert to McHenry, July 15, 1812 in Steiner, 1907: 581).

Second, Federalists feared that if the United States happened to succeed in its war objectives and take Canada or Florida, admitting the new territories would dilute Federalist strength because the new citizens would vote Republican. Hickey (1972: 161) contends that the New England Federalists in particular feared that Republican "schemes for territorial aggrandizement ... would lessen their influence in the union."

Finally, Federalists opposed the war because they viewed it as a Republican excuse to weaken the Federalist Party by curtailing domestic liberties, particularly their own (Hickey, 1978: 26). Massachusetts' Governor Strong expressed this concern, "A man who has a large army at his control must have the virtue of a Washington, not to make use of it, for his own aggrandizement'" (Cress, 1987: 136).

National Interest Explanations

In opposing war, both Republicans (in 1798) and Federalists (in 1812) contended that the threat from the rival state was insignificant, and that the United States was unprepared for war. In 1812, Federalists argued that war would be disastrous because it would lead to a British invasion of the United States.

The Commercial Threat

Republicans in 1798 and Federalists in 1812 justified their opposition to war on the grounds that the adversary's threat to American interests was not sufficient to warrant a military solution. Republicans argued that the damage the French inflicted on American commerce in 1798 did not justify war (DeConde, 1966: 70; Smith, 1996: 1029), but that the British disruption of American trade in 1812 did (Stagg, 1983). The Federalists, on the other hand, saw sufficient

cause for war in French attacks on American commerce in 1798 (DeConde, 1966), but not in Britain's trade restricting actions fourteen years later (Hickey, 1989). If we can show that the French commercial threat in 1798 was roughly comparable to the British commercial threat in 1812, then we can reject the argument that the primary motivation for opposition to war in each case was the belief that these European powers posed insignificant threats to American commerce.

The French threat to American commerce in 1798 was comparable in magnitude to the British threat to American commerce in 1812. One useful indicator is the number of American ships captured. From 1795 to the Spring of 1798, France seized about 1,000 American commercial vessels (DeConde, 1966: 9; Palmer, 1987: 6; and Knox, 1948: 35).²⁶ Between 1803 and 1812, the British captured 917 US ships (Perkins, 1963: 72). The British also searched American commercial ships for deserters from the Royal Navy and often forcibly removed American citizens to serve in the British Navy. From 1801 to 1812, the British impressed approximately 6,000 American sailors into the Royal Navy (Zimmerman, 1925: 259-75).

To some extent, France and Britain posed different commercial threats. In three years, the French seized about ten percent more ships than did the British over a nine-year period, while the British impressed thousands of American citizens into the Royal Navy. Although it is difficult to compare the significance of the 6,000 impressed Americans versus the higher annual rate of French ship seizures and the hundred or so extra ships that France captured, it is fair to contend that the commercial threat that France posed in 1798 and the commercial threat that Great Britain posed in 1812 were qualitatively the same: infringement on American commerce and American rights to engage in free trade.

The Military Threat

Although in 1798 the Republicans did not base their opposition on fears of French retaliation, in 1812 the Federalists claimed that they opposed war because they feared British retribution. In a June 1812 antiwar manifesto, thirty-four House Federalists listed their objections to the war of 1812. Among these was the claim that "A war of invasion may invite a retort of invasion" (quoted in Hickey, 1989: 54-5).

It is probably true that the British military threat to the United States was greater in 1812 than was the French threat to the United States in 1798. In 1812, the British Navy was substantially larger than France's (Knox, 1948: 82), and Britain had free reign of the seas after routing Napoleon's navy at Trafalgar in 1805. Whereas the French had not stationed military forces in North America, the British had a garrison of several thousand troops in Canada (Stagg, 1983: 230), not enough to inflict significant damage on the United States in an attack but sufficient to serve as a tripwire and promise of future retaliation. The key similarity between 1798 and 1812 was that because France and Great Britain were engaged in wars for their national survival, neither could really afford to divert military resources to a peripheral theater. As it turned out, Britain did not fully prosecute the War of 1812 until after it had defeated Napoleon (Hickey, 1989: 182-83).

Although our controlled comparison does not allow us to rule out the Federalist fear of a British invasion as the motivator for Federalist opposition to war, evidence from the time suggests that most Federalists did not oppose the War of 1812 on those grounds. The author of the Federalist manifesto against the war, Josiah Quincy, the Federalist House speaker, had previously favored war because he thought that the United States would lose and the Republicans

would be humiliated but that Great Britain would inflict only limited damage on the United States (Brown, 1964: 163; McCaughy, 1974: 71-76). Brown (1964: 173-76) contends that the majority of Federalists did not think that a war with Great Britain would be destructive. Federalists just wanted to voice their opposition so that they could receive credit for having opposed what they expected would be a military fiasco.²⁷

Republicans in 1798, and then Federalists in 1812, argued that the United States was militarily unprepared for war. If these arguments represented the genuine reasons each party opposed war, then we would expect that in the other crisis, when each party favored war, the United States was prepared militarily, or at least not unprepared. But this was not the case; in both crises the United States was about equally unprepared for war.

US military forces were weak at the time of the Quasi-War. In 1794, the American army consisted of about 3,600 men, and it remained roughly the same size through the end of 1799 (Gadon, 1942: 100-2; Godfrey, 1914: 4). In 1798, the US Navy consisted of only three or four ships (Bauer and Roberts, 1991: 1-38).

Likewise, the United States was not ready to go to war in 1812. Although the regular army was 6,700 strong when the war began, most of these forces were scattered throughout the United States and were not intended to be used in the invasion of Canada (Stagg, 1983 and Skelton, 1994: 257). Stagg concludes, "At the end of 1812 there was no army to speak of, only the remnants of one; and the efforts that had been made in the first year of the war had to be repeated in subsequent years in order to put a force in the field" (Stagg, 1983: 176). The US Navy was only slightly larger in 1812 than in 1798, consisting of seventeen fighting ships (Bauer and Roberts, 1991: 1-38). The fact that each party wanted war when the US military was weak

suggests that some variable other than the level of preparedness probably explains why each party opposed war.²⁸

During the Senate debate over the declaration of war in 1812 Federalists proposed that rather than launch a full-scale war against Great Britain, the United States should fight a limited naval war against both Britain and France. Hickey (1979: 71) maintains that because the Federalists fought a naval war against France in 1798, their advocacy of a naval war in 1812 was motivated by concerns for the national interest and not by politics.

Although Hickey is correct that the Federalist proposal to fight a limited war at sea was consistent with the policies that the United States adopted during the Quasi-War, it is not fully consistent with Federalist preferences in 1798. In fact, much of the Federalist Party, including Adams' cabinet and party members in Congress, believed that a naval war alone would be inadequate, and they wanted a full-scale war with France (DeConde, 1966: 106). In a test vote on a declaration of war in July 1798, 31 of 83 House Federalists voted for expanding the war against France. DeConde (1966) argues that although a majority of congressional Federalists voted against the resolution, much of this majority did so not because they opposed a full-scale war with France, but because they thought that the Republican opposition to war was strong enough to prevent the government from effectively waging such an all-out war. After the vote, a moderate Federalist, in explaining why he voted against the measure, expressed the opinion of other moderates: "we should have war; but we did not wish to go on faster to this state of things than the people of this country, and the opinion of the world should justify" (quoted in DeConde, 1966: 106). The fact that many Federalists favored full-scale war in 1798 and a limited naval war in 1812 under comparable external circumstances indicates that their preference for the latter

was driven by something other than a genuine conviction that such a limited war was optimal in terms of the national interest.

Ideational Explanations

Rather than objecting to war for political or national security reasons, the Republicans and the Federalists may have been motivated to oppose war by particular beliefs that they held about how war would affect domestic liberty; about the morality of violence; or about the foreign adversary.

Domestic Liberty

In opposing war, the Republicans in 1798 and then the Federalists in 1812 stated that they thought that war would centralize power in the hands of the national government and that this would destroy individual liberty (Schouler, 1880: 384; DeConde, 1966: 91; Cress, 1987: 143-4; Broussard, 1978: 156-57). Many historians have accepted each party's fear of the other's encroachment upon liberty as a cause of each party's opposition to war (Cress, 1987; Broussard, 1978). It is not clear, however, whether the opposition to war derived from a genuine fear that war might result in a restriction of the political rights of all Americans or from each party's self-interested fears of the restriction of its own political influence. While the former is a principled reason for opposing war, the latter is self-interested. Only by comparing the behavior of each party when it was out of power with its behavior when it held power can we determine whether their respective concerns for liberty were motivated by principle or by self-interest.

Although the Republicans castigated the Federalists for using the war scare of 1798 to exclude them from politics, during the War of 1812 they tried to limit the Federalists' rights to

oppose the war. Historians applaud Madison for his tolerance of minority rights and civil liberties during the War of 1812 (Hickey, 1989: 301), but much of the rest of the Republican Party did not evince such moderation. In the Baltimore Riots in July 1812, a Republican mob burned the building that housed a strident, anti-war Federalist newspaper and then beat and killed some of the Federalists who tried to defend the building. US Attorney General Pinkney and other Republican lawmakers tried, but failed, get the country to adopt a sedition law to legally target outspoken opponents of the war (Hickey, 1989, 70). Even Thomas Jefferson, perhaps the most dogged critic of Federalist attempts to stifle dissent in 1798, favored limiting the Federalists' rights once his party was in power. To handle Federalist opposition to the War of 1812, he recommended to Madison:

A barrel of tar to each state South of the Potomac will keep [the Federalists] in order To the North they will give you more trouble. You may there have to apply the rougher drastic of Gov.. Wright, hemp [for hanging] and confiscation [of property] (Jefferson to Madison in Smith, 1995: 1698).

Such statements prompted one historian to conclude that "In Jefferson's case power produced a myopia that permitted bills of rights to be seen only dimly" (L. Levy, 1973: viii). It appears that Republican views of the necessity of permitting open political dissent were a function of who was in power; freedom to oppose the government was only paramount if the Republicans were the opposition party.

The same can be said of the Federalists. Although the Federalists widely decried the War of 1812 as a Republican excuse to curtail domestic liberty, in 1798 the Federalists passed the Alien and Sedition Acts which limited the Republican opposition's ability to challenge Federalist

policies (Smith, 1956). As argued above with regard to the Republicans, the fact that the Federalists supported protecting liberty only when it served their political interest suggests that their motivation for decrying restrictions on freedom in 1812 was self-interested rather than principled.

Unjust War

In 1798, Republican objections to Federalist war designs were not based on the argument that war would be immoral or unjust. In 1812, on the other hand, Federalists maintained that it was immoral for the United States to initiate a war against the Canadian people, who had done nothing to harm American maritime rights (Hickey, 1989: 73). Yet in 1798 many Federalists had wanted to invade Spain's colonies of Louisiana and Florida, which like Canada had done nothing to harm the United States (DeConde, 1966: 113-123). The fact that fourteen years earlier, in a comparable situation, many Federalists had championed the policies that they decried as immoral in 1812 indicates that their moral fervor was not their true motivation.

Ideological Affinities

The final set of ideational explanations of Republican and Federalist opposition to war is based on the affinities that members of the Republican and Federalist parties held toward France and Britain, respectively. For essentially ideological reasons the Republicans favored France while the Federalists favored England, and these biases may have shaped each party's perceptions of threats and of how the United States should conduct its foreign policy toward both states. In its strongest form, this argument maintains that Republicans opposed war with France because of their affinity for France and their hatred of Great Britain, and, conversely, the Federalists opposed war with Britain because they liked Britain and detested France.

Owen (1996; 1997) argues that Republicans thought that France was democratic and therefore would not threaten American interests. Although this claim may have been valid in the years immediately following the French Revolution, the XYZ Affair dampened Republican affinity for France. Of France's treatment of the American negotiators, Jefferson, perhaps France's most ardent champion, wrote,

There were, interwoven in these overtures some base propositions on the part of Talleyrand through one of his agents ... and the arguments to which his agent resorted to induce compliance with this demand, were very unworthy of a great nation (could they be imputed to them) and calculated to excite disgust and indignation in Americans generally, and alienation in the republicans particularly (Jefferson to Madison, in Smith, 1995: 1034).²⁹

Some, such as House Republican leader Albert Gallatin, distrusted France and thought it was not a democracy, "What has become of the Cortes of Spain? Of the States-General of France? Of the Diets of Denmark? Everywhere we find the executive in possession of legislative, of absolute powers. The glimmerings of liberty which for a moment shone in Europe were owing to the decay of the feudal system" (Gallatin, quoted in Adams, 1986: 196).

Moreover, the Republicans had become willing to go to war, if necessary, against France. According to Jefferson, the French had wrongly assumed that Republicans had "an attachment to France and hatred of the Federal Party, and not the love of their country, to be their first passion" (Jefferson to Madison, April 6, 1798, in Smith, 1995: 1034-5). In another letter, Jefferson suggested his willingness to support war with France, "If our house be on fire, without inquiring

whether it was fired from within or without, we must try to extinguish it. In that, I have no doubt, we shall act as one man" (Jefferson quoted in Smith, 1995: 1001).³⁰

Yet, even if Republicans did not oppose war because they liked France, they may have opposed it because they detested Great Britain. Evidence from Jefferson's presidency, however, suggests that Republicans were neither irrationally fearful of Great Britain nor blind to the threat from France. One year before the Louisiana Purchase, Jefferson considered an alliance with Great Britain to gain leverage in negotiations with France over Louisiana (Peterson, 1970: 752-55, 810-11).

In 1805, fearing a French threat, Jefferson revived the possibility of a British alliance. He suggested to Madison that the United States "should take into consideration whether we ought not immediately to propose to England an eventual treaty of alliance, to come into force whenever (within ___ years) a war shall take place with Spain or France" (Jefferson to Madison, in Smith, 1995: 1375).³¹ Madison responded that "the portion of the papers now enclosed to you, confirm me in the opinion of the expediency of a treaty with England" (Madison to Jefferson, in Smith, 1995: 1376).

British ship seizures escalated soon after this communication, and talk of a British alliance ended (Bemis, 1955: 184). However, if blind hatred of Great Britain governed Republican foreign policy, then the idea of an alliance with England should have been anathema to Republicans, but instead they pursued it as a viable option. Likewise, it seems reasonable to argue that if Republicans under-perceived the French threat in 1798 when the French were seizing US ships by the hundreds, then they should have also downplayed the French threat in 1805, when the French seized many fewer ships.

Neither ideational explanation appears to explain Republican opposition to war in 1798 very well. Smith (1956: 12) contends that country loyalties were the product of domestic politics, not their cause: "The use of European designations, however, should not obscure the fact that American issues, not British or French sympathies, were always uppermost in the thinking of both parties. 'Each party,' a French observer pointed out, simply 'used foreign influence as it needs, to dominate.'" (Smith, 1956: 12).

Turning to the War of 1812, one might argue that the Federalist affinity for Great Britain, not political self-interest, motivated opposition to the War of 1812. Although the Federalists were clearly fond of Great Britain, they were also cognizant of the political ramifications of opposing war. Federalists had learned from recent state elections that opposition to war could bring political benefits. In the Rhode Island gubernatorial campaign, for example, just two months before the war, the Federalist and Republican candidates made the election essentially a referendum on whether to go to war, and the Federalists won by a wide margin (Strum, 1992: 24-5). They expected that the war would be unpopular in the Northeast and throughout the country, and they expected that such opposition would return them to power in 1812 (Perkins, 1963: 395).

Although both their political interests and their affinity for Great Britain inspired Federalist opposition to the War of 1812, the political incentives appear to have played the greater role. The 1798 case gives us some leverage here. In 1798, the Federalists had an opportunity to choose between their allegiance to Great Britain and political popularity. Fearing that the end of the European war would leave the United States diplomatically isolated, Federalists considered allying with Great Britain. They chose not to, however, because they thought that a British alliance would be politically unpopular (DeConde, 1966: 117-18). In this

instance, the Federalists political concerns trumped their Anglophilia.

A related explanation of Federalist opposition to war is that the Federalists opposed the War of 1812 because they thought that in fighting against Britain, the United States would be effectively aligning with Napoleon in his war against the British (Hickey, 1972: 207; Owen, 1997: 96). Benjamin Tallmedge, a Federalist congressman from Connecticut, wrote: "Heaven only knows what our Destiny is to be; but my fears forbode every Evil-As the Cap to this Climax, I dread that above all, which shall link us to the fortunes and & chain us to the Carr of the French Emperor" (Tallmedge to James McHenry, in Steiner, 1907: 579).

Federalist behavior at the time undercuts this explanation. It seems reasonable to expect that if the Federalists opposed the War of 1812 because it would indirectly help Napoleon in his war with the English, that the Federalists would also have opposed other measures that aided France. But they did not. Perkins (1963: 30-31) notes that American trade with France provided "supplies Napoleon dreadfully needed." Leading up to the War of 1812, the Republicans restricted trade with both Britain and France. If the Federalists were genuinely motivated to oppose war by a fear of helping France, then it seems reasonable to expect that they would have opposed the restrictions on trade with Great Britain, but not the similar limitations placed on commerce with France. The fact that they opposed curtailing trade with France suggests that fear of assisting France did not motivate Federalist opposition to war.

Finally, it could be argued (e.g., Bukovansky, 1997) that the Federalists favored war in 1798 and that the Republicans led the United States into war in 1812 not because these parties were trying to advance their political interests, but because each party honestly endeavored to uphold American rights as a neutral state to trade freely with belligerents in wartime. The

problem with such an interpretation is that neither party was willing to stand up for so-called neutral rights when they were out of power. Bukovansky (1997) misses this point because she looks only at the preferences of the party in power. Republicans sought to block Federalist attempts to defend American maritime rights in 1798, and Federalists tried to do the same to Republican efforts in 1812. That neither party defended these rights unless it was in their political interest to do so suggests that political interests, rather than ideas about national honor, motivated Republican and Federalist behavior in the cases of the Quasi-War and the War of 1812.

The Sectional Explanation

It could be argued that Republican opposition to war in 1798 and Federalist opposition to the War of 1812 reflected sectional divisions, which were highly correlated with economic interests. A sectional explanation (Trubowitz, 1998) of Republican opposition to war in 1798 would contend that those who opposed war came from the South and West, where the Republican party was most strongly concentrated. We cannot test this directly for the 1798 case because Congress never voted on a declaration of war, but we can examine voting patterns on other military measures short of war.

A breakdown of votes by region on several different bills in 1798 suggests that votes reflected party lines more than they did sectional divisions for Republicans consistently, though not unanimously, voted against the most militant Federalist war measures. Only one and then two Republicans voted in favor of the Federalists' two most belligerent war bills, while the rest of the party opposed them. Southern representatives also voted consistently against these war bills,

though not as consistently as did the Republicans. Although most Southerners opposed these measures, six and then four southern representatives voted with the Federalists in favor of them (Dauer, 1953: 305-309). Thus a greater percentage of Southerners than Republicans voted in favor of war measures. This leads us to conclude that membership in the Republican Party explains Republican opposition to war somewhat better than does regional affiliation.

In the case of the War of 1812, some scholars have contended that the Northeast opposed a war that the rest of the country favored (Perkins, 1983: 58-85), so that the Federalists' regional affiliation rather than their political interests explain why they voted against war. It is true that the most strident Federalist opposition to war came from Federalist regions in the Northeast, and much of the political incentive for opposing war was based on sectional interest. The Federalist Party initially developed in the Northeast, but by 1812, the party had grown beyond its original regional and economic roots to encompass a broader range of interests.

An examination of congressional behavior during the War of 1812, however, reveals that party affiliation provides a better explanation of Federalist opposition to war both at the national level and within New England than does sectionalism. All Federalists in Congress voted against war, but members of Congress from New England split roughly evenly on the question of war or peace and nine of the forty antiwar Federalists represented the Middle Atlantic and the southern states (Brown, 1964: 44-47). Party affiliation also explains variance in support for the war effort within New England. When Henry Dearborn, the commander of the Additional Army that was to invade Canada, requested that the states turn control of their respective militias over to the federal government, the states with Republican governors (Vermont and New Hampshire) complied, while the states with Federalist governors (Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode

Island) refused (Hickey, 1989: 259). Among historians, it has become the accepted wisdom that party affiliation better explains opposition to war than does regional loyalty (Brown, 1964: 45; Bell, 1979: 373).

The Effect of Opposition on Crisis Bargaining

As we have discussed, the Schultz model predicts that opposition to war arises only when the opposition expects an unpopular war, while the diversionary/opposition hypothesis posits that opposition can arise when the opposition expects either a popular or an unpopular war. The two models also offer different explanations for how opposition to war affects the credibility of the government's threat to use force. Whereas the Schultz model implies that opposition to war should invariably undermine the credibility of a democratic government's threat to use force, the diversionary/opposition model posits that when the opposition opposes war in order to deny the government a political gain, active opposition to war should reinforce the credibility of such a threat.

The cases provide some support for each of the models. With respect to the opposition's motivation for actively opposing war, the Quasi-War case supports only the diversionary/opposition hypothesis, while the War of 1812 is consistent with both. In the Quasi-War crisis, the Republicans opposed war, but not because they expected an unpopular war and wanted to exploit popular resentment and make domestic political gains at the expense of the governing Federalist party. Rather, they expected a popular and successful war, feared that the Federalists would exploit their popular victory to diminish the political power of the Republican party, and consequently threatened to veto a declaration of war in Congress. In 1812, the

Federalists had a variety of political incentives for opposing war. Like the Republicans in 1798, they thought that war would result in constraints on their ability to oppose the government, limiting their strength as a political party. The Federalists also feared that the conquest of Canada would diminish their political power within the United States because the new territories would vote Republican. At the same time, Federalists saw the war as an opportunity to make political gains because they expected it to be unpopular. Although the Federalists had several different political incentives for opposing the War of 1812, historians (e.g., Brown, 1964; Perkins, 1963) suggest, consistent with both the Schultz model and the diversionary/opposition hypothesis, that most Federalists opposed the war hoping to exploit public resentment toward an unpopular war and make a political gain.

On the question of how opposition affects the credibility of a government's threats to use force, both the Schultz model and the diversionary/opposition hypothesis offer the same prediction for the 1812 case—that opposition would undermine the credibility of the government's threat. They make opposite predictions, however, for the Quasi-War case. Because the Republican opposition was driven to oppose war in order to prevent the Federalist government from reaping the political gains that would likely have followed from a successful war, the diversionary/opposition model expects that the Republican opposition would have reinforced, rather than hurt, the credibility of American threats to use force. In both crises, however, opposition to war undermined the credibility of US threats to declare war. Thus the 1812 case is consistent with both models, while the Quasi-War case supports the only Schultz model. During 1797 and the first half of 1798, Republican opposition to war convinced French leaders that Adams threats were bluffs. Their perception derived in part from Talleyrand's belief

that the Federalists' belligerence would undermine their popularity and allow the Republicans to win the presidency (DeConde, 1966: 59). This belief also stemmed from France's perception that the Republican Party would prevent the Adams administration from implementing its threats (Stinchcombe, 1980: 40). During this period, France made no concessions to the United States, continuously seized American commercial vessels, and stalled negotiations that might have resolved the conflict, all of which made the United States increasingly belligerent.

In July 1798, Talleyrand received a report on Franco-American relations from his emissary Victor Dupont. DuPont reported that the leaders of the Republican Party, including Jefferson, had told him that if France did not abstain from its attacks on American shipping, the Republican Party, which had strongly opposed Federalist calls for a full-scale war and had traditionally been sympathetic to the French, would be "lost." This implied that the Republicans would no longer be able to sustain their opposition to Federalist policies, increasing the probability that the United States would make good on its threat to declare war on France. Soon after reading DuPont's dispatches, Talleyrand and the Directory reversed many of their most belligerent policies, though some unauthorized piracy attacks continued (Jolly, 1977: 227). Thus in 1797 and 1798, opposition to war in the United States undermined the threats that the United States made against France and encouraged the French to continue their belligerent policies. As this opposition receded in the second half of 1798, American threats became more credible and induced a conciliatory change in French behavior, averting war.

In the 1812 case, opposition also appears to have undermined the credibility of American threats to declare war on Great Britain if it did not lift the Orders in Council. Perkins (1963) argues that British hesitancy to believe American threats derived both from the fact that the

United States was militarily weak and from their belief that the Federalist opposition would stridently oppose a war with Great Britain. An American envoy to London at the time summarized British sentiment: “there existed among the people two opinions ... the one, that we never intended to go to war, and the other, that our Government, if so inclined, would not hazard it on account of the opposition it would meet from the Eastern States” (quoted in Perkins, 1963: 320). Although the British did ultimately repeal the Orders in Council a few days before the United States declared war, it did so only after years of delay.

The diversionary/opposition hypothesis and Schultz model also differ on how opposition to war hurts the credibility of a government’s threats. Although Republican opposition to war in 1798 did diminish the credibility of the government’s threat, historians are split over whether this was because it led the French to believe that the Federalists would not follow through with their threat in the face of substantial domestic opposition (as Schultz argues), or because the French expected that the Republicans would have the power to block a decision for a potentially popular war in the Congress (as the diversionary/opposition hypothesis suggests). The War of 1812 supports only the Schultz (1998, 1999) model, however, for most of the evidence suggests that opposition to war diminished the credibility of the government’s threat because British leaders interpreted the opposition’s behavior as a signal that the government would not have domestic support for its war effort.

Finally, the 1812 case is somewhat problematic for Schultz’s model in that the Republicans and the Federalists made such divergent assessments about the popularity of war. The fact that the Federalist opposition anticipated an unpopular war while the Republican

government anticipated a popular war means that Great Britain could not properly infer the U.S. government's beliefs about the popularity of war from the behavior of the opposition.³²

Conclusion

We began with the argument that partisan political interest can be a primary motivation for organized opposition to war in democratic states. We have focused on the United States and have used a controlled comparison and process tracing to help us adjudicate between alternative explanations for Republican opposition to war in 1798 and Federalist opposition to war in 1812.

Our analysis has shown that political self-interest was the primary motivation in both cases. Although we do not argue that Republican and Federalist motives for opposing war were purely political, we can confidently rule out some explanations because their key variables did not covary with the parties' respective stances on war and peace. Explanations based on the parties' concerns for domestic liberty, the morality of war, the severity of the threats to US commercial interests, and the level of preparedness all fail to vary with the dependent variable, and thus cannot explain why either party opposed war.

There are other variables, however, that do covary with the opposition party's stance toward war or peace and that cannot be eliminated using the method of difference. These include, in addition to partisan politics, the parties' ideological views of the adversaries, Federalist fears of British retaliation, and regional loyalties. A look at the historical record, however, indicates that while these factors may have played some role in the parties' decision to oppose war, they took a backseat to partisan politics. Although Republicans and Federalists had strong affinities for France and Britain, respectively, a comparison of cases in which each party

was in power and out of power suggests that each party was generally more willing to subordinate their country loyalties to politics than they were to sacrifice political success for their beliefs about the adversary.

Likewise, because the British were stronger militarily in 1812 than the French were in 1798, one can argue that the Federalists could have reasonably favored war in 1798 when there was little threat of retribution, but opposed in 1812 when the chances of retaliation were higher.³³ We have noted that the likelihood of retaliation may have been more comparable in the two cases than a measure of national military capabilities would suggest, however, as in both cases the United States' adversary was tied down in an all out war on the Continent and could not afford to divert resources to a comparatively minor conflict. Moreover, historians (e.g., Brown, 1964) have concluded that the Federalists did not really fear British retaliation, but that they claimed that the British would retaliate so that they would be on record as having opposed what they expected would be a military failure. Although opposition to war in 1798 was stronger in the South, opposition in 1812 was most vocal in the Northeast. In both cases, however, opposition extended beyond these regions, and in both cases, members of the opposition party were unanimous or nearly unanimous in opposing war.

Of all the competing explanations, the one that is most consistent with the historical record for both parties and both cases is the partisan politics one. Unlike the other explanations, the political explanation is consistent with the behavior of the Republicans and Federalists both while in power and out of power. In 1798, Federalist popularity increased throughout the war scare, and then receded when Adams pressed for peace and the French threat diminished (DeConde, 1966). In 1812, war helped unify the Republican Party behind Madison (Stagg,

1983).

During the Quasi-War, the Republicans opposed war to prevent a political loss. They expected a popular war and feared that it would provide the Federalists the opportunity to curtail public dissent and impair their ability to return to political power. In 1812, Federalists opposed war in anticipation of capitalizing on popular opposition to war and bolstering their political strength.

Although the historical evidence fits Schultz's model in several significant respects, it is inconsistent with his model in important ways. In the Quasi-War crisis, the combination of Republican expectations of a popular war and their decision to openly oppose war is problematic for Schultz, who argues that such opposition should occur only in conjunction with expectations of an unpopular war. This behavior is more consistent with the diversionary-opposition hypothesis, which predicts that expectations of a popular war may, under some conditions, lead the opposition to attempt to block war in an attempt to deny the government the political gains that would follow from a popular and successful war.

The 1812 case provides some evidence that opposition to war undermined the credibility of the US government's threats because it led the target state to believe that the government was bluffing and would not follow through on its threat because of anticipated domestic costs (the Schultz model). Although the evidence supports the Schultz model in the 1812 case, historians are divided on the proper explanation in the Quasi-War case. Whereas some attribute France's perception to a belief that the Federalists lacked domestic support for war and therefore would not carry out their threats, others suggest that French leaders thought that Republicans would be able to veto a Federalist attempt to fight a full-scale war.

Finally, the fact that both crises occurred in spite of opposition to war is potentially troubling for Schultz's model. Although in his model the government sometimes bluffs in equilibrium, making a threat it does not intend to implement in spite of domestic opposition to war (as in the Quasi-War), and the opposition sometimes opposes war even when the government intends to fulfill its threat (as in the 1812 case), the signaling dynamic in the model suggests that the anticipation of opposition should significantly reduce the likelihood that democratic political leaders will initiate a crisis in the face of such opposition. Since Schultz makes no claim about the frequency with which democratic governments make threats despite domestic opposition, other than to say that they do so less frequently than non-democracies, our finding that the United States did so in two cases does not in any way disconfirm his theory. It does, however, suggest a future research question: With what relative frequency do democratic governments make threats in the face of significant domestic opposition?³⁴ Confirmation of the pattern observed in the two cases examined here would undercut the causal mechanism upon which Schultz's model rests.

The foregoing discussion suggests an additional research design for testing the diversionary/opposition hypothesis and the Schultz model. We need to examine the relative frequency of cases where opposition to war occurs at all, where opposition occurs despite expectations of a popular war, where governments and oppositions have different expectations regarding the popularity of a possible war, and where opposition to war diminishes the credibility of the government's threat because it leads the target state to infer that the opposition has a good chance of blocking war. Each of these patterns is inconsistent with Schultz's model but consistent with the diversionary/opposition hypothesis, the outlines of which we have sketched in

this study. The more we observe these patterns of behavior, the less confidence we would have in the validity of Schultz's model and the more confidence we would have that the diversionary/opposition model, once fully developed, might provide a viable alternative model of political oppositions and crisis bargaining.

We suspect that further research would replicate the some of the patterns observed here, such as opposition emerging both under expectations of an unpopular war and under expectations of a popular war. If this turns out to be true, it would suggest that Schultz's model needs to be modified to deal with the observed anomalies. First, the assumption that the opposition cannot veto war needs to be relaxed, in order to allow for the possibility that the opposition might attempt to block a war that it expects to be popular, in order to deny the government the political gains that would follow from such a war. Schultz's assumption that there are no "rally effects," which has similar consequences, might also be relaxed. Other assumptions--including the symmetry of information between governments and oppositions regarding the popularity of a potential war and the relative balance of military power--would be more difficult to relax without changing the fundamental character of the model.

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NOTES

¹ The term “opposition” can refer either to a group out of power that aims to replace the government, or to the activity of challenging a state’s policies, its governmental leadership, or its political system. Which of these meanings we ascribe to this term should be clear from the context.

² There may be several distinct domestic opposition groups with divergent interests, but they usually have an opportunity to block war only if they coordinate their efforts and act as one, and for simplicity we often speak of a single opposition.

³ Schultz explicitly assumes that the government and the opposition have the same information about a prospective conflict and, implicitly, that they draw similar conclusions from it.

⁴ Note that Schultz (1998) assumes that opposition to war is politically motivated but does not directly test this assumption.

⁵ As we discuss below, these cases provide a good controlled comparison because the role reversal of the Republicans and the Federalists in the two crises facilitates the elimination of alternative interpretations.

⁶ Fearon (1994) incorporates domestic audience costs into his model but not a formal opposition that behaves strategically.

⁷ Technically, Schultz's model is not limited to democratic states but applies to any state that permits political competition that is public and hence observable by foreign states (Schultz, 1998: 832).

⁸ This is somewhat of an oversimplification. Schultz argues that the opposition will oppose war when the expected value of war for the state is low. The expected value of war consists of three

elements: (1) the probability of winning, (2) the value of winning, and (3) the costs of war.

Schultz implies that the opposition provides information about the cost term. Opposition to war signals that the costs of war are likely to be high because the government would suffer politically from going to war. When the opposition supports war, on the other hand, it signals that the costs of war are low and that the government would reap political benefits by standing firm. To the extent that the cost term and the probability of winning are correlated, then opposition or support for war may also signal the target state about the initiating state's probability of winning the war.

⁹ This parallels the argument that foreign policy commitments by democratic states are more credible than those of other states because democratic leaders face greater domestic audience costs (Fearon, 1994), though Schultz's (1998) model does not rely on audience costs. Moreover, whereas Fearon (1994) implies that high domestic audience costs can lock the government into a war that it would prefer to avoid, Schultz (1998) suggests that the opposition's credible signals of the government's intentions reduce the likelihood of inadvertent war.

¹⁰ Schultz (1998: 833) concedes that the opposition party may have some veto power over government decisions in presidential systems with divided governments.

¹¹ Strom (1990) notes that about one third of all parliamentary governments are minority governments.

¹² Jones (1995) distinguishes between executives whose party controls 55 percent or more of the seats in the legislature and those control less than that because the former are more likely to be unaffected by crossover votes than the latter.

¹³ Defining as democratic those states that had held "at least two democratic elections without breakdown, as of 1991," Shugart and Carey (1992: 41) list 48 democracies: 27 (56 percent)

parliamentary, 12 (25 percent) presidential, and 9 (19 percent) in the category "other." Writing a few years after Shugart and Carey (1992), Jones(1995) states that there are more than 30 presidential democracies. In their survey of the world's political systems, Derbyshire and Derbyshire (1996) define 49 states as liberal democracies. Of these, 20 are presidential, 25 parliamentary, and the remaining four are dual executive political systems. The concentration of presidential regimes among what Derbyshire and Derbyshire (1996) label as emerging democracies is quite a bit higher. Of 70 emerging democracies, 49 have presidential systems. Thus by any count presidential democracies, though not the majority of democratic systems, constitute a sizable minority.

In any of these presidential democracies, it is theoretically possible that the political party of the executive may fail to win a legislative majority. Jones (1995: 44-45) found that in fourteen Latin American presidential democracies, the executive's political party won less than 45 percent of the seats in the legislature in 41 percent of 99 country years analyzed from 1984 to 1991. The failure to win legislative majorities is generally regarded as more likely to happen in multiparty than in two-party systems (Jones 1995), though the American experience of divided government in 26 of 44 years between 1950 and 1994 (Jones 1995) makes it clear that two-party systems may also experience divided government. According to Derbyshire and Derbyshire, of the twenty presidential systems, eleven have three or more parties that hold ten percent or more of the seats in the legislature. The proportion of multiparty democracies among the emerging democracies with presidential systems is even higher: 45 of 49 emergent presidential democracies are classified by Derbyshire and Derbyshire (1996) as multiparty systems.

¹⁴ For example, American support for a war against Iraq increased significantly after the Persian Gulf War began.

¹⁵ Such incentives would be reinforced by the tendency toward risk acceptance in the domain of losses.

¹⁶ Although there are some intra-party differences, the fact that the Republicans were virtually unanimous in their opposition to the Quasi-War and that the Federalists unanimously opposed the War of 1812 means that we can treat each party as a unitary actor purposes of this study. In one instance below, however, we do focus on factions within the Federalist Party.

¹⁷ Although we do not analyze in great detail the political parties' motivations for supporting war when they were in power, their behavior in those situations does not contradict our conclusions about politically motivated opposition to war. In fact, there is some evidence that the Federalists' decision for war in 1798 and the Republicans' decision for war in 1812 were motivated in part by the expectation of reaping domestic political gains from an external war, as diversionary theory implies. In 1798, the war scare increased the Federalists' popularity among the voters. In 1812, Madison's declaration of war helped unify the Republican Party and ensured he would win the party's nomination for president, despite recent Republican in fighting (DeConde, 1966; Stagg, 1983).

¹⁸ The Vice-President was the runner-up in the presidential election, regardless of party affiliation.

¹⁹ Although he was a private citizen during much of Adams' presidency, Hamilton held great sway over the opinions of many of Adams' cabinet members (DeConde, 1966: 7).

²⁰ Welch (1965: 174-75n.) contends that the split between moderate and High Federalists emerged over how to respond to French naval depredations. Dauer (1957:6-7) attributes the division to the commercial (High Federalist) versus agricultural (moderate Federalist) wings of the party.

²¹ Republicans controlled 75 percent of the seats in the House and 82 percent in the Senate (Hickey, 1989: 29).

²² The causes of the war have been extensively debated, and historians have offered a variety of reasons for why the United States declared war in 1812, including realist, economic, sectional, and partisan (scapegoat) explanations, among many others. For good overviews of alternative explanations of the causes of the War of 1812, see Perkins (1983), Goodman (1941), Stagg (1983), and Hickey (1989).

²³ As we will discuss in detail below, Republican fears of the loss of their liberty were genuine, but they were not the reason why the Republicans opposed war. Republican eagerness for war in 1812 and their willingness to use that opportunity for partisan advantage strongly suggests that Republicans were less concerned about the denial of liberty *per se* than with their own loss of political influence.

²⁴ Adams' action to check the influence of military officials who might become political rivals was not unique. During the Mexican War, in December 1846, President Polk submitted a proposal to Congress that was to be known as the Lieutenant General Bill. This measure proposed to allow Polk to appoint a lieutenant general to take command of all US troops in the field. Polk's motivations were almost entirely political, as he "was aroused by the open hostility

of Generals Scott and Taylor, their ever growing popularity, and their apparent political ambitions" (Schroeder, 1973: 65).

²⁵After several months, however, the war became what Hickey (1989: 255) calls "the most unpopular war in American history." Ironically, Federalist opposition to this war actually contributed to their demise as a political party. When the war ended the Federalists were branded as self-interested traitors. By 1824, there were no Federalists in Congress.

²⁶We are interested in the number of ships that France seized by the Spring of 1798 because that is when the Federalists first considered declaring war on France and when the Republicans first considered opposition to a full-scale war.

²⁷Brown suggests that the Federalists thought that the difficulty of leading a military campaign would expose the incompetence of the Republican Party; the United States would lose the war, but Great Britain would not try to destroy the United States.

²⁸Elman (1995) notes that the balance of military capabilities grossly favored France in 1798 and then Britain in 1812, though she does not weigh in on the issue of whether the United States was equally unprepared for both crises.

²⁹The phrase "could they be imputed to them" implies that Jefferson retained a touch of Francophilia at this point, though the thrust of the quote clearly indicates dissatisfaction with France's behavior.

³⁰If many Republicans did not consider France a democracy and were willing to go to war with it, then the normative variant of the democratic peace proposition, which gives greater weight to perceptions, cannot explain why the United States and France avoided war in 1798. The institutional model of the democratic peace is more consistent with the evidence, in that the

Republican majority in Congress could have vetoed a declaration of war in 1798. Indeed, this was the primary reason why Adams did not submit his prepared declaration to Congress (DeConde, 1966). This is consistent with and extends Elman's (1995) finding that the institutional features of American democracy were crucial in determining US foreign policy during the Quasi-War.

³¹ Jefferson included the blank space intentionally. He thought that the United States would likely have to go to war with France, but he was not sure precisely when.

³² Instead of interpreting this point as an illustration of behavior that is inconsistent with Schultz's model, one might argue that it reflects an assumption of the model that is not satisfied in this particular historical case. If this pattern of an informational asymmetry between the government and the opposition were confirmed in other cases, it would suggest that the empirical domain in which Schultz's theory applies is limited.

³³ As we discussed earlier, this would not explain Republican opposition to war in 1798.

³⁴ This research would face a potentially serious problem of selection bias because it would be difficult to examine the number of cases where the government declined to make a threat because it anticipated domestic opposition to war.