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Foreign policy anarchy in multi-party coalitions: When junior parties take rogue decisions

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Abstract

How do disagreements within multi-party coalitions affect foreign policy, and how can junior parties exert their influence? These questions are of growing importance as new media increases domestic pressure on politicians to interject in international events, and as foreign affairs become more salient in domestic political contestation. Whereas prior research on foreign policy in multi-party coalitions focusses on the influence of junior parties over cabinet decisions, this paper proposes a new theoretical concept of "rogue decisions" to describe a distinct outcome of partisan disagreements. Rogue decisions are autonomous decisions by junior parties impacting foreign affairs, taken without cabinet coordination, that undermine their senior partners' foreign policies. This resembles the "anarchy model" of foreign policy previously attributed to less institutionalized systems. Having identified the necessary conditions which make rogue decisions possible, and the factors which increase their likelihood, the analysis is applied to cases in Britain and Israel. These represent polar opposite parliamentary systems, with Israel among the most proportional, where rogue decisions may be most expected, and Britain the most majoritarian, where they would be least expected. The identification of rogue decisions in contrasting parliamentary democracies, challenges the assumption that cabinet is where foreign policy disagreements are managed, according to established decision making rules. The paper therefore prompts new thinking about the potential for junior parties to disrupt the foreign policy agendas of their senior partners, and challenges in new ways the assumption that states act as coherent units.

Keywords

foreign policy, political parties, cabinets, multi-party coalitions, Britain, Israel

INTRODUCTION

How do differences of world view and political interests in multi-party coalitions affect foreign policy in parliamentary democracies, and what tools do junior parties use to

advance their own agendas? Research has highlighted that divergent positions within a coalition can lead to sub-optimal foreign policy decisions or deadlock, and junior parties having the potential to hijack policy (Kaarbo, 2012). The literature is nonetheless dominated by the assumption that coalition cabinets are the “ultimate authority” where differences play out and outcomes are determined (Kaarbo, 2012: 4). Foreign Policy Analysis more broadly is dominated by an assumption that policy processes lead ultimately to a moment when members of an authoritative decision making unit, “select a particular course of action, that is, make a choice” (Hermann, 2001: 48).

Yet in a recent study, Mintz and Wayne theorize that in multi-party coalitions, divergences of norms or interests – which they call ‘polythink’ – may lead to chaos, as different parties make autonomous decisions in interrelated areas (Mintz and Wayne, 2015: 33). Prior research on foreign policy decision making units has established that an “anarchy model” can develop in less-institutionalized systems where “decision making rules are largely absent and the overall political process is extremely fluid,” with separate actors taking uncoordinated, “fragmented symbolic action” (Hagan et al. 2001: 180-1). But can this also occur in parliamentary democracies? This seems at odds with the assumption that the cabinet is key to foreign policy outcomes, and calls into question the notion of collective government, which “underlies the constitutional or customary rule of collective *responsibility*” (Andeweg, 1993: 25). If junior parties may take autonomous decisions without cabinet coordination, under what conditions does this occur? This paper addresses this question with two contributions towards theory of junior party influence on foreign policy decisions.

First, the paper builds on existing theories of foreign policy decision making units, junior party influence, and Mintz and Wayne’s polythink framework, to identify factors which may lead a junior party to take what I term “rogue decisions”. These are autonomous decisions impacting foreign affairs, taken by junior parties, contrary to the foreign policy agendas of their senior coalition partners, using devolved ministerial powers to act without cabinet coordination. Rogue decisions are distinct from the concept of hijacking addressed by Kaarbo (2012) and others in previous work on foreign policy in multi-party coalitions. Whereas hijacking typically refers to junior parties using the threat of defection to secure cabinet positions in line with their preferences, a rogue decision involves a junior party using devolved ministerial authorities to take unilateral decisions without collective cabinet agreement.

Second, the paper analyses and illustrates these factors at work, by examining causal processes within two case studies of multi-party coalitions in parliamentary democracies at polar ends of the scale with respect to proportionality. The first case is from Israel, which has a directly proportional electoral system resulting in complex and highly fractured multi-party coalitions, where rogue decisions may be more expected. The second case is from Britain, which has the most majoritarian of parliamentary systems, with a very strong culture of collective cabinet responsibility, where rogue decisions would be least expected.

Identifying how domestic political contestation can lead to rogue decisions is increasingly significant for international relations for two reasons. First, changes in

communications technologies have increased domestic pressure on political actors to intervene publicly in the fast flowing stream of international affairs (Kissinger, 2014: 356). Rolling 24-hour news, internet news and social media, have increased real time public awareness of foreign affairs, whilst increasing elite exposure to public opinion (Gilboa, 2005; Shirky, 2011). Those same technologies are part of a process of media fragmentation, augmenting social rifts over national agendas, and increasing the capacity and incentive of political actors to focus on communicating to, and serving the agendas of, their own narrow constituencies, rather than the population as a whole (Balčytienė and Juraite, 2015; Mancini, 2013).

Second, foreign affairs have become more salient in domestic political contestation, as transnational issues have become central to new social and party political cleavages. This is particularly apparent in European and other Western democracies, where populist parties with nationalist, Eurosceptic, anti-globalization, and anti-immigration agendas have surged (Verbeek and Zaslove, 2015). Amid these new cleavages, foreign policy plays an important role in party political contestation over the national identity and the national interest (Hill, 2013).

These two observations – that politicians are under greater pressure to interject into international affairs, and that transnational issues are more domestically salient – suggest junior parties may increasingly seek ways to disrupt, or signal their dissent from, foreign policy agendas led by their senior partners with which they disapprove.

MULTI-PARTY COALITIONS AND FOREIGN POLICY

When complex bureaucracies engage in foreign policy, various agencies may advance their own missions and interests and resist alternatives, making agreement and coordinated action difficult (Allison, 1971; George, 1980). Even within a single group, such as the US National Security Council, divergences may make it difficult to cohere around clear, consistent policy decisions. Yet within presidential systems, even with political, organizational and even ideological differences between agencies and individuals, there is still in theory a single source of executive authority.

What happens when authority is shared within a group, as in multi-party parliamentary coalitions? As Hermann (2001) has described, decision processes are shaped by different variables depending on whether the decision is being made by a predominant leader, a single group (a set of individuals who decide collectively), or a coalition of autonomous actors. According to Hagan et al. (2001: 170–171) the latter has two defining traits: that “No single actor or group has the authority to commit on its own the resources of the state,”; and that each actor is “significantly restricted by the views of constituents”. They further identify that the “key contingency variable” which determines how the coalition operates are the “decision making rules.” Where well-established rules are in place they shape the decision making process; where they are absent, the result is “essentially one of ‘political anarchy’” (2001: 180–181).

Hagan et al. illustrate this “anarchy model” with the US embassy hostage crisis in Iran following the 1979 revolution. No Iranian element had authority over the student

groups holding the hostages, no single leader was willing and able to take control, and there were no clear decision making rules in Iran's provisional government. Decisions took the form of "fragmented symbolic action", in which "verbal pronouncements were often made by actors in order to openly undercut opponents." These verbal pronouncements were significant in undermining initiatives to resolve the crisis and inflaming tensions with the US. Hagan et al. consider the absence of accepted decision making rules to be typical of "less-institutionalized political systems", which contrast with "conventional cabinet coalitions" of Western democracies (Hagan et al., 2001: 196–7).

Whilst a democratic parliamentary system can produce a single group decision unit, as in the single party cabinets typical of post-war Britain, parliamentary systems more typically bring together parties with competing agendas (Budge and Laver, 1986; Hagan, 1993: 72; Rathbun, 2004), and often fit the category of groups of autonomous actors. However, Hagan et al (2001) presumed that what stops them collapsing into the anarchy model is agreed rules for resolving disputes and reaching decisions (Hagan et al., 2001: 180, 197). Whilst these rules can vary, the assumption is that foreign policy decision processes result in choices – however imperfect – taken by the coalition cabinet. According to Kaarbo, "The cabinet is ... the funnel through which other conditions are interpreted and evaluated (or not) and acted on (or not)" (Kaarbo, 2012: 6).

Junior parties play a significant role in the coalitions FPA literature due to their disproportionate influence. Where no single party has a parliamentary majority, parties must form coalitions. This may be two or more parties of roughly equal size, such as the 1996-1997 'Refayhol' coalition in Turkey, or the consociational coalitions often seen in Austria. Often, however, a large party co-opts one or more junior parties. A party is junior, "in terms of the structural distribution of power and resources in the political context of the parliamentary system" (Kaarbo, 1996b: 504). It controls fewer legislative seats and ministries than its senior partner, which usually forms the coalition and holds the premiership.

Junior parties choose when to participate in a government, can negotiate terms including ministerial portfolios and vetoes, and decide when to quit. Usually each coalition party is elected on its own platform, has its own internal political dynamics and stakeholders, and will be judged on their own account by the electorate (Blondel and Muller-Rommel, 1993: 9–11). Though sometimes junior parties form electoral coalitions with larger parties – such as the MHP's electoral alliance with AKP for the 2018 Turkish election, or Yisrael Beitenu with Likud for Israel's 2013 election – they retain independent leadership and decision making over the terms of their participation in government, and retain the capacity to defect.

Research into junior party influence generally focusses on the cabinet as the decision making unit where they exert outsized leverage. Three features of cabinet coalitions can augment junior party influence. First, coalition agreements may give junior parties portfolios within the foreign policy executive (FPE) such as foreign affairs or defence, affording them capacity to set agendas and frame issues (Maoz, 1990). Second, junior coalition partners can threaten to defect and collapse the government, enabling them to "hijack" foreign policy (Beasley and Kaarbo, 2014; Clare, 2010). Third, coalition

agreements may allow significant discretion to individual ministers, or secure veto powers over a particular policy area. Oppermann et al. (2017) theorize that a government with high ministerial discretion, with the junior party holding the foreign ministry, creates maximum opportunity for hijacking.¹

Several attributes typical of junior parties can make them particularly assertive. They may be more ideologically committed and therefore influence undecided colleagues through their resolve (Kaarbo, 2012: 29). In addition, the more ideologically committed a junior partner is, the greater the credibility of their threat to bolt, and therefore their influence (Clare, 2010). Other factors affect the extent of junior party influence, including the public popularity of their position, their use of decision making rules, and the character of the prime minister (Kaarbo, 1996b). Also significant is the electoral cycle. Parties may mute differences to make partnership work early in a coalition, but sharpen differences towards elections, especially small parties catering to niches (Kaarbo, 2012: 80).

Yet the literature does not adequately address the potential for junior parties to influence policy by taking decisions unilaterally outside of collective decision making procedures. As Hermann emphasises, the character of a decision making unit, and its behaviour, is contingent on the specific situation or issue. The strategy for scholars focussing on decision making units is to “to identify the theoretical conditions under which each set of decision making dynamics is more likely to occur” (Hermann, 2001: 49). Under what specific conditions might dynamics akin to the anarchy model, with junior parties taking rogue decisions, emerge in multi-party coalitions?

It is here that the theorizing of Mintz and Wayne in their recent study on “polythink” can be usefully applied to coalition cabinets. Polythink is a decision making syndrome “whereby different members in a decision-making unit espouse a plurality of opinions and offer divergent policy prescriptions, and even dissent, which can result in intragroup conflict and a fragmented, disjointed decision-making process” (Mintz and Wayne, 2015: 3). This concept is presented as the opposite of “groupthink”, where an in-group’s desire for unanimity means alternative courses of action are not considered (Janis, 1972). Mintz and Wayne identify five explanations for polythink in decision making groups: institutional “turf war” battles; political considerations; normative differences; expert-novice divides; and leader-follower relationships. These factors can lead to extreme divergences of perspectives, which prevent group members conforming around a policy, thereby hampering, and potentially paralysing, decision making. Whilst Mintz and Wayne’s study focuses primarily on US national security decisions, the “political considerations” and “normative differences” explanations seem all the more likely to appear in parliamentary coalitions.

According to the political explanation, “lack of strong group cohesion, for example, because group members come from different political constituencies, can increase the likelihood of polythink.” In a US National Security Council comprising presidential appointees, political interests are more typically aligned. By contrast, in multi-party coalitions, “governments typically consist of representatives of different parties with different platforms, agendas, constituencies, and interests.” (Mintz and Wayne, 2015: 15). In this situation, each coalition party is playing a distinct “two-level game.” This means,

as described in Putnam's seminal paper on two level games, they are simultaneously sitting at international and domestic game boards and striving to reconcile demands of international interlocutors with demands of domestic political constituencies (Putnam, 1988: 460). But whereas Putnam depicts a single leader negotiating a two-level game, Mintz and Wayne's description of polythink in multi-party coalitions highlights the possibility of each party playing their own two-level game, with distinct domestic audiences and agendas at cross-purposes to one another. Clear coalition rules that control executive action can contain such differences within the cabinet. If however, a model of "distributed decision making" applies, the decision makers "organizational roles ... give them full or partial authority and responsibility for certain areas of the decision domain." Without strong hierarchical leadership this can "easily devolve into chaos or paralysis as each decision maker inserts his or her own opinion, values, and worldview into each of the interrelated decisions" (Mintz and Wayne, 2015: 33).

The nature of multi-party coalitions also makes likely that "normative explanations" will come into play, whereby discordance in approaching a problem can be caused by variations in operational codes or world views (Mintz and Wayne, 2015: 15). Hintz (2016) has, using Turkey as an example, argued persuasively that foreign policy can be used to advance a contested vision of national identity domestically. Tsygankov (2014) has shown in the Russian context how foreign policy contestation can reflect divisions within a society over its national identity. In a multi-party democracy, the closer a foreign policy is to an ideological or normative wedge within an electorate, represented by the different positions of coalition parties, the more likely these differences will inhibit the adoption of shared positions. Where the normative and political agenda of the junior party diverges from the senior party, especially on issues of high salience to their narrower constituency, that party will have increased incentive to seek ways to display its dissent.

Blarel and Van Willigen, examining "transitional and less consolidated polities" in the Global South, point out that foreign policy is more unpredictable where "the ultimate decision units which identify, decide and implement foreign policies are not yet fixed" (Blarel and Van Willigen, 2017). They suggest similarity between the "less institutionalized nature of coalition formation and politics in Global South cases" and the "UK instance (2010–2015), in which parties had only limited experience of coalition governance" (Blarel and Van Willigen, 2017: 505). This insight, though not developed in their paper, highlights that clear rules governing foreign policy decisions cannot be assumed, even in Western democracies.

A THEORY OF ROGUE DECISIONS

Based on this discussion we can identify four factors that would influence when a foreign policy disagreement may lead a junior party to take a rogue decision – using devolved authority to take decisions that serve their agenda without cabinet agreement – rather than attempt to secure a collective cabinet decision in line with their agenda.

The first two factors are necessary conditions, without which such an outcome would not be possible. The first is that the *junior party or minister enjoys autonomy in a*

relevant policy area. The second is that decision making rules to prevent the autonomous use of the relevant authority are weak or absent.

The next two are factors whose presence make such an outcome more likely. The first is that the *issue is of high political salience to the junior party*. We would expect that the more politically sensitive an issue is to the junior party, the more likely they are to distance themselves from their senior partner's policy by using their ministerial powers to take autonomous and uncoordinated decisions. Domestic salience may be raised by factors such as intense media coverage, as occurs with sudden international crises, and proximity to elections.

The second factor which makes rogue decisions more likely is that *the junior party's ability to influence collective cabinet policy is constrained*. Presumably where a junior party can secure a cabinet decision in line with their preferences – using a veto, threats to defect or other means – they would, therefore we could expect the junior party to resort to a rogue decision where the option to veto or hijack is not available or relevant.

The possibility of two coalition partners pursuing contradictory foreign policies has been noted in literature on coalitions, but the emphasis on the centrality of the cabinet in existing theories shows that the implications have not been fully explored. One example is the 1996-7 coalition in Turkey between the Welfare Party, which was suspicious of the EU and sought to orientate towards the Islamic world, and the True Path party which sought closer relations with the EU and NATO. Kaarbo cites William Hales description that this government, “looked like a car with two drivers” (Hale, 2000: 239) leading her to note that “When conflict between political parties is extreme, the decision makers pursue alternative paths, producing contradictory policy” (Kaarbo, 2008: 72). In this case, prime minister and foreign minister were split between two roughly equal parties, and policy divergence stemmed from differences between them.

Here, by contrast, we are considering junior parties, with less scope to pursue a broad, independent foreign policy, especially if they do not hold foreign affairs portfolios. Nonetheless, just as Hagan et al. considered the verbal pronouncements of various Iranian actors in 1979 to be significant in undermining the ability of others to resolve the hostage crisis, we should consider the potential for junior parties in parliamentary coalitions to take steps, which though lacking power to determine a broad foreign policy of their own, are capable of undermining or sabotaging their senior partner's policy. The increasing intermingling of domestic and international affairs may provide even those cabinet ministers not formally empowered in foreign policy areas, expanded scope to take decisions with foreign policy significance. A symbolically significant decision by a junior party intended to signal dissent from the senior partner's policy, may become an act of sabotage when it causes actual significant harm to the senior partner's ability to carry through their policy.

The phenomenon we are concerned with here, therefore, is not one of “fragmented” or “disjointed” foreign policy decisions, in the sense of a decision making group making inconsistent or weak choices, or deferring decisions due lack of consensus or hijacking, but nonetheless doing so as a group (Kaarbo, 2012: 81). Rather, rogue decisions involve parts

of the group making autonomous choices without collective approval. In such situations, in areas where there is no clear, binding group decision, or no clear and enforceable decision rules, junior parties may function as autonomous actors and take decisions on behalf of the government, which contradict the preferences or agenda of their senior partner. It is under these conditions that the decision rules in established systems can cease to be governed by the principles of collective government, and rogue decisions may occur.

To sum up, parliamentary coalitions are frequently venues for foreign policy contestation. The existing literature acknowledges the influence of junior partners, but assumes that cabinet is where decisions are reached, or not. Mintz and Wayne have theorized that multiple coalition parties each playing their own two level game may take autonomous decisions on interrelated issues according to competing agendas, creating a chaotic situation. This resembles the anarchy model previously associated with post-revolutionary or newly founded polities. The factors that may contribute to junior parties taking autonomous, or “rogue” decisions can be articulated in two hypotheses as follows. The first specifies necessary conditions.

H1: Foreign policy disagreement may lead to a junior party taking rogue decisions in conditions where a. they have relevant devolved bureaucratic powers at their disposal and b. they are acting in areas where decision making rules are absent, inadequately defined, or otherwise unenforceable.

The second hypothesis suggests conditions which make such an outcome more likely.

H2: Foreign policy disagreements are more likely to lead to a junior party taking rogue decisions where the issue is of high domestic political salience to that party – where salience may be heightened due to a. significance of the issue to the world view of the party and its constituency; b. intense media coverage; c. proximity to elections – yet the option to veto or hijack the policy is not available or relevant.

RESEARCH DESIGN

I now apply the analysis to two specific cases: Israeli announcements of new settlements during US-brokered 2013-2014 peace talks with the Palestinians; and the British decision to conditionally suspend certain arms export licenses to Israel during the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict.

Case studies are indispensable for understanding complex causal processes by which coalition politics shape foreign policy (Oktay and Beasley, 2016). Britain and Israel are polar opposite parliamentary democracies (Elman, 2000). Israel is among the most proportional and coalitions consist typically of four or more parties. The prime minister has very limited powers over the cabinet, is heavily constrained by coalition partners, and conventions of collective cabinet responsibility are weak. Such conditions would seem to favour rogue decisions, making Israel an easy test for the theory. Conversely, the British prime minister usually leads a single party government. The occurrence of a two party coalition from 2010 to 2015 was extremely unusual, and the relationship between the parties was heavily influenced by Britain’s strong traditions of collective ministerial

responsibility. These conditions would seem to be unfavourable for rogue decisions, making Britain a hard test.

The scope of cases to which the theory applies is multi-party coalitions in parliamentary democracies. The two governments studied sit at opposite ends of the proportional-majoritarian scale within that range of cases. Though British foreign policy was influenced by commitments to a coordinated EU policy, foreign policy remained a member state competence, and on the Israeli-Palestinian arena, member states remain firmly independent. Israel, whilst sometimes considered to have unique features as a democracy, is nonetheless still considered a relevant comparator for Western European parliamentary democracies in literature on party politics (Nikolenyi, 2013). Drawing out common features from multi-party coalitions in parliamentary democracies with otherwise contrasting political cultures, creates the basis for broad based claims about when rogue decisions may emerge in such coalitions.

Each case study includes brief background on the political system, coalition makeup, and party agendas, and then traces processes leading to rogue decisions. The accounts are based on contemporaneous media coverage and statements, as well as subsequent reportage, memoirs, and scholarship. This evidence is supplemented in each case by an in-depth, open-ended interview with a senior official directly involved at the time, and now out of government. The interviews are used to enrich understanding of the processes and motivations of actors. After presenting the cases, common conditions and processes are discussed, before the conclusion briefly considers broader implications.

CASE STUDY 1: ISRAEL AND THE 2013-2014 PEACE TALKS

In this case, announcements relating to new settlement construction were the most significant of several decisions by elements within the Israeli government which contributed to undermining Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. These decisions appeared to sabotage the attempts by the prime minister, working under US pressure, to sustain the negotiations, drawing public blame from the US onto Israel for collapsing the talks.

Foreign policy in Israeli coalitions

Henry Kissinger observed that Israel has no foreign policy, only domestic policy. The forgoing discussion illustrates Israel's muddling of domestic and foreign policies is hardly unique. That said, Israel is unusual in that since the 1967 war, its primary political rifts have been diplomatic and security focused, relating to dilemmas over captured territories.

East Jerusalem and the West Bank are particularly sensitive. The right has been committed to holding these territories, since they constitute part of "Eretz Yisrael", the Jewish biblical homeland, and afford Israel more defensible borders. The left has been open to territorial compromise that would secure peace agreements from Arab states and ensure Israel's Jewish majority and democratic legitimacy. Since the late 1990s this has meant acceptance of a Palestinian state. It has been commonplace for parties with contrasting

world views to share power. Lack of consensus, and ad hoc and disjointed decision making, have been the hallmark of Israeli policy in these territories (Ranta, 2015).

This dynamic is coupled with Israel's proportional parliamentary democracy producing fractured coalitions and significant junior party influence on foreign policy (Kaarbo, 1996a; Stinnett, 2007). Indeed, on these highly sensitive issues, leaders frequently contend with determined factions within their own parties trying to determine policy (Waxman and Rynhold, 2008).

In addition to deep ideological divides and fragmented coalitions, Israeli national security cabinet decisions are highly politicised (Ben-Meir, 1986), with the prime minister enjoying limited prerogative powers. Freilich incisively describes the Israeli cabinet as “a conglomerate of semiautonomous ministerial fiefdoms, with the founding principle of ‘collective responsibility’ no more than a vague memory” (Freilich, 2012: 47). Portfolio distribution is tied to coalition agreements, which often also give parties vetoes over sensitive issues. Political indecision, and Israel's permanent security threats, contribute to the pre-eminence of the Defence Ministry and not the Foreign Ministry as the most influential and best resourced government branch in the diplomatic-security realm (Ben-Meir, 1995; Peri, 2006).

The 2013–2014 government consisted of five parties. Likud – the leading right wing party of Prime Minister Netanyahu – ran jointly in the election with the hawkish, nationalist Yisrael Beitenu party of Avigdor Lieberman. They began the term with 20 seats and eight ministers, and eleven seats and five ministers respectively. Next was Yesh Atid – a secular, middle-class, centrist party led by Yair Lapid, with 19 seats and five ministers. The right wing Jewish Home party – with core support among West Bank settlements and the national religious – had twelve seats and three ministers, and the left wing, Hatnua party led by Tzipi Livni, had six seats and two ministers.

On the Palestinian issue, this coalition encompassed the full range of Israeli-Zionist views. Parts of Likud and Yisrael Beitenu favoured conflict management, or status quo policies – meaning no proactive moves towards a two-state solution but no moves to irreversibly entrench Israeli presence through annexation. Hatnua and Yesh Atid favoured proactive moves towards a negotiated two-state outcome. Jewish Home and parts of Likud advocated settlement expansion and annexation to prevent a Palestinian state. It is also important to note there was support for a two-state solution in the opposition, with left-leaning Labour potentially ready to replace Jewish Home in the coalition, if Jewish Home were to quit over this issue. The Palestinian issue was clearly the topic over which the coalition was most polarized, and for Jewish Home in particular, the issue most sensitive to its constituency. It was on this issue, therefore, that the decision making process had the potential to become fluid, and adopt the anarchy model.

Netanyahu initially held the foreign affairs portfolio in addition to being prime minister, before handing it to Lieberman after the latter was acquitted of criminal charges. The defence minister was Likud MK, Moshe Yaalon, a former IDF chief of staff with hawkish views, broadly favouring the status quo. However, the coalition agreement with Livni assigned her the role of negotiator with the Palestinians (Levush, 2013). Yet her

formal office was justice minister, thereby separating her from the ministries theoretically equipped to resource negotiations. Foreign Minister Lieberman played little part in talks with the Palestinians or Americans.

Netanyahu's own position was ambiguous. He dropped his opposition to a Palestinian state in June 2009 and called for negotiations without preconditions. In 2012 he began to speak of a two-state solution being necessary to prevent a binational state – a shift towards the centre-left position (Netanyahu, 2012). However, he also continued to warn of the security risks of giving up control of the West Bank (Netanyahu, 2014).

The emergence of the anarchy model

Soon after government formation in March 2013, Netanyahu came under pressure from Secretary of State Kerry to renew public attempts to reach a conflict ending agreement with the Palestinians. Kerry pressed Israel to provide confidence building gestures to give Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas political cover to reopen negotiations. Given the option of either releasing Palestinian prisoners serving long sentences for terror offences, freezing settlement construction, or committing to a territorial agreement based on 1967 borders, Netanyahu opted for prisoner releases, conscious that the settlement freeze would be least palatable to Jewish Home and much of his own party (Goldberg, 2014a).

Netanyahu agreed with Jewish Home that each of four tranches of prisoner releases would be accompanied by approvals for 1200-1500 new housing units in West Bank settlements, and long term planning for a further unspecified number. Michael Herzog, a retired IDF Brigadier General and member of the small Israeli negotiating team, who was present in the Israeli Prime Minister's office throughout the process, recalled: "My feeling at the time was that the prime minister was simultaneously negotiating with the US on the one hand on the deal itself and at the same time he was negotiating with some of his coalition partners over settlement activates, so he does not lose them ... I have a vivid memory of one instance in the PM's office when the US team was walking out and the settlers team was walking in and they met each other in the lobby" (Herzog, 2017, personal communication). Generally, settlement announcements were coordinated within the Israeli government and the US was forewarned (Herzog, 2017). However, at key sensitive moments, Jewish Home housing minister Uri Ariel used his bureaucratic authority to announce construction tenders that surprised the prime minister, with significant diplomatic consequences.

Formal negotiations began in August 2013, led by Livni. Meanwhile elements on the right of the coalition used two principle tactics to distance themselves. The first was settlement announcements. In November 2013, the Housing Ministry led by Ariel published plans for some 20,000 new homes in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, including the hypersensitive 'E1' area east of Jerusalem. Though most were early stage planning notices, and Ariel lacked the authority to issue final tenders (which in the West Bank is under Ministry of Defence authority), the announcement drew rebukes from UN and US officials (AP, 2013), apparently being far beyond US expectations. Facing international criticism, Netanyahu issued an unusual public reprimand to Ariel for acting,

“without any advance coordination.” The statement declared that Netanyahu had told Ariel that “As a member of the Government, action must be coordinated and have the benefit of forethought”, and added that the housing minister had agreed to reconsider the plans (Israeli Prime Minister’s Office, 2013).

Michael Herzog recalled: “Historically the housing minister would talk to the PM’s office, tell them of his plans and not surprise him. In this case the minister, for his own domestic political reasons, decided not to play along with the rules. The PM’s office usually knew what they were doing but in some cases Uri Ariel just took a decision on his own and surprised everybody ... it was clearly a political game” (Herzog, 2017, personal communication).

The symbolic damage of this rogue decision was significant. According to US envoy Martin Indyk, successive settlement announcements “humiliated” Abbas (Goldberg, 2014b). The scale of this announcement was particularly problematic for the Palestinian negotiators, highly sensitive about domestic credibility, and chief negotiator Saeb Erekat offered his resignation.

Another method used by opponents of the talks to signal their opposition was promoting legislation to inhibit territorial concessions. For example, a backbench Likud MK tabled a bill to annex the Jordan Valley – the eastern part of West Bank bordering Jordan. This was approved by a ministerial committee on legislation by ministers from Likud, Yisrael Beiteinu and Jewish Home. Livni declared: “It is a proposal that harms the State of Israel and isolates it ... It is also designed to harm the government, because this is a matter of government policy and not [the subject] for a private bill.” Netanyahu eventually blocked the legislation (Harkov et al., 2013).

The most remarkable intervention came towards the end of the nine months negotiating period. The first four months were characterized by fruitless Israeli-Palestinian talks, after which the US switched to mediating a framework agreement separately with each party. This led to intensive discussions between US and Israeli teams (Herzog, 2017). Contrary to expectations, Netanyahu showed flexibility in this stage and expressed willingness to accept with reservations a US framework document (Horowitz, 2014). However, he remained personally dubious about Palestinian intentions and avoided publicly acknowledging specific concessions.

A critical moment arrived at the end of March 2014 with the nine-month negotiation period brokered by Kerry expiring at the end of April. Israeli and US negotiators sought a basis to extend the talks and defer threats by Abbas for Palestine to join various international organizations as a state. This involved releasing a fourth tranche of Palestinian prisoners, and further gestures including restrictions on settlements. In return the PA would agree to extend negotiations, and the US would release Jonathan Pollard, a US citizen convicted of spying for Israel (Cohen, 2014). On 1 April, with the fourth prisoner release overdue, and Netanyahu seeking a cabinet majority for the deal, Israel’s Housing Ministry reissued already existing tenders for 708 homes in a Jewish neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. Whilst regarded internationally as occupied, in Israeli law East Jerusalem is

sovereign Israel, with no special authority from the defence minister required for new housing, and the Housing Ministry has bureaucratic capacity to issue tenders.

The same day Abu Mazen signed Palestinian applications to 15 international conventions, a breach of understandings according to Israel, scuppering Netanyahu's attempts to steer the extension through cabinet. A Palestinian press release declared the applications were in response to the delayed prisoner release (PLO Negotiations Affairs Department, 2014). Subsequently, however, Kerry told a US Congressional hearing that "700 units were approved in Jerusalem and then poof — that was sort of the moment" (Wilner, 2014). Livni subsequently told a TV interviewer: "Ariel tried to torpedo what I'm doing together with the prime minister; the result was mainly that the whole world claims we are guilty even when we acted appropriately – that's the cost of Jewish Home's presence in the government." Ariel for his part claimed that Livni's "wailing and crying about building in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria are crocodile tears from someone who knew about the plans beforehand, like the Palestinians and the Americans" (Asher and Yashar, 2015).

Michael Herzog recalled "The prime minister did not know about it. He was surprised, he was upset. I think after that he took measures to make sure that he would not be surprised again by Uri Ariel, but it was very late in the day" (Herzog, 2017, personal communication). Herzog felt that Kerry blew the Jerusalem tender out of proportion, and that it was subsequently used as an excuse by the Palestinians. Yet he also recalled, despite Ariel's denials, that "most of those involved in the talks on the Israeli side suspected Ariel of doing it intentionally to disrupt the negotiations" (Herzog, 2017, personal communication). Senior US officials interviewed by Israeli journalist Nahum Barnea echoed the charge, that "continuing construction allowed ministers in [Netanyahu's] government to very effectively sabotage the success of the talks" (Barnea, 2014).

Ongoing attempts through April to agree a negotiations extension were complicated by tit for tat provocations, and later in April Abbas signed a reconciliation agreement with Hamas, after which the Israeli cabinet formally suspended involvement in the talks.

In sum, whilst it cannot be shown that any one decision definitively sabotaged the talks, the pattern of symbolically significant rogue decisions by coalition members demonstrating their opposition to two-state negotiations – and especially settlement announcements from the Jewish Home controlled Housing Ministry – did contribute to sabotaging any slim chance of success and brought US blame on Israel. In conclusion, this case exemplifies the anarchy model and rogue decisions emerging in Israel's parliamentary system.

CASE STUDY 2: BRITAIN'S RESPONSE TO THE ISRAEL-GAZA CONFLICT

In the context of the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict, the UK announced a conditional suspension of export licenses for items of military equipment supplied to Israel, despite repeated

assertions by the prime minister and foreign minister, both from the senior coalition party, that Israel had the right to defend itself.

Foreign policy in the Con-Lib coalition

In comparative studies of cabinet government, Britain is an example of relatively limited ministerial autonomy (Thiebault, 1993: 89). Britain's electoral system usually generates a majority for Labour or the Conservatives. The prime minister has the power to hire and fire ministers (Hennessy, 2001: 68) and there is a strong tradition of collective cabinet responsibility.

Literature on British foreign policy during the Blair premiership emphasized the "presidentialization" of the Prime Minister (Foley, 2000), and the Iraq War led to major criticisms of Blair's downgrading of cabinet. During the 2010 election the Conservatives led by David Cameron proposed a national security council, where relevant ministers would collectively determine policy. They had not reckoned on a hung parliament, necessitating a coalition with the centrist Liberal Democrats, led by Nick Clegg.

The Conservatives were the senior partner, with 306 MPs, and 16 cabinet posts, including all the most prestigious roles (Heppell, 2014). The Liberal Democrats had 57 MPs and five cabinet seats in addition to twenty non-cabinet ministerial positions (17% of the total). None of the Liberal Democrat cabinet posts were primarily foreign policy focused, but significantly, Lib Dem cabinet minister Vince Cable's portfolio as Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) covered trade, including signing arms export licences.

Overall, as Oppermann and Brummer (2014) point out, the Liberal Democrats "could rely on multiple mechanisms to 'coalitionise' foreign policy-making". These included Clegg's membership of the National Security Council. Moreover, the key coalition coordinating body, "the quad", comprised Cameron and Clegg – who became deputy prime minister – with Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne and Liberal Democrat Chief Secretary to the Treasury Danny Alexander. This group generally sought consensus and avoided public clashes (Bennister and Heffernan, 2015).

There were significant policy and ideological differences. The Liberal Democrats sought constitutional reform, which Conservatives opposed, and were committed to the EU, in contrast to the more Eurosceptic Conservatives. However, on key economic questions there was a consensus on deficit reduction through spending cuts (Hayton, 2014). Europe aside, foreign policy was not a major issue in coalition negotiations (Daddow, 2015; Gilmore, 2014). The Conservative party is centre-right, with a realist foreign policy heritage, a commitment to Britain's Atlanticist tradition, and a confrontationalist approach to Islamist extremism. That said, David Cameron and William Hague – Conservative foreign secretary from 2010 to 2014 – articulated a foreign policy of "Liberal Conservatism", framed as a pragmatic fusion of interests and values (Honeyman, 2017). The Liberal Democrats placed much greater emphasis on international law and human rights.

There were significant gaps on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Whilst there was a consensus on a two state solution, the Conservatives tended to be more Israel sympathetic, and the Liberal Democrats more sympathetic to the Palestinians. Monica Allen, special advisor on foreign affairs for the Liberal Democrat ministers, recalled that the issue was politically sensitive for both parties, noting: “There was such passionate opinion among backbenchers ... It was just one of those issues where we knew both parties had serious party handling issues to do, whatever was coming up.” (Allen, 2017, personal communication). The gap became significant in 2012 over the vote to admit Palestine as a non-member state in the UN. The Conservatives wanted to abstain, and the Liberal Democrats to support. Ultimately Clegg muted his objections in public.

Arms sales have long placed British economic and strategic interests in tension with human rights commitments (Gilmore, 2014). In its 2010 manifesto the Liberal Democrats criticised “unscrupulous arms deals with dictators” (Liberal Democrat Manifesto, 2010). In government this issue put the Liberal Democrats under scrutiny. Because it was Lib Dem cabinet minister Vince Cable who signed arms export licenses, he had to defend controversial sales. For controversial licenses, BIS acted on the advice of the (Conservative) foreign secretary, based on FCO assessments about whether the arms were likely to be used for internal repression or external aggression, or in breach of international law. Nonetheless, Cable came under public pressure from backbench Liberal Democrat MPs concerned about sales to unsavoury regimes (Horwood, 2014). Cable sought to address concerns by tightening licensing regulations.

The emergence of the anarchy model

When the Israel-Gaza conflict erupted in July 2014, the coalition was in its final year. Monica Allen recalled that, “It was a very heightened political time because we were less than a year away from the election, and everyone was starting to think about manifesto policies, and how do we divorce for the short campaign” (Allen, 2017, personal communication). The Liberal Democrats faced a potentially catastrophic election. They had abandoned manifesto pledges on VAT increases and university fees, alienating centre-left voters (Cutts and Russell, 2015). They were actively looking to differentiate from the Conservatives and recover credibility, signified by Nick Clegg launching his own weekly radio show. The looming election, along with intense media coverage of the conflict, heightened sensitivity to target voter sensibilities and contributed to the fluidity of the decision making rules and the emergence of the anarchy model. Also significant in this case was the relative lack of experience of the parties in national coalition government.

The conflict itself was characterized by Hamas and other armed groups in the Gaza Strip firing upwards of one hundred rockets daily at Israeli towns, and launching raids through tunnels. The Israeli military countered initially using intensive air power, then with a two week ground operation aimed primarily at destroying tunnels. Hamas’s military infrastructure was embedded in civilian areas, and Palestinian civilian fatalities mounted rapidly. When the fighting ended, after seven weeks, more than 2000 Palestinians were dead, with estimates of the civilian toll ranging from half to two thirds. Some 67 soldiers and six civilians were killed on the Israeli side.

At the outset, Cameron assured Netanyahu of Britain's "staunch support for Israel in the face of such attacks, and underlined Israel's right to defend itself" (*Jewish News* 2014). Meanwhile Philip Hammond, who replaced William Hague as Foreign Secretary in an unrelated cabinet reshuffle during the first week of conflict, dismissed a UN Human Rights Council 23 July resolution condemning Israel, as "fundamentally unbalanced". Visiting Israel in the last week of July Hammond expressed grave concern for Gazan casualties but repeated that Hamas was to blame for the violence (Withnall, 2014).

But with mounting UK public concern amidst intensive media coverage of Palestinian suffering, the Conservative position became strained. Polling showed public support across the board swing away from Israel, but especially among left leaning voters (Jordan, 2014). This was expressed through letter writing to MPs and the FCO, and demonstrations in London and other cities. With public salience rising, there was increased motivation for opposition Labour, and Liberal Democrat politicians, to escalate criticism of both Israel and Cameron. Clegg, on his radio show a week into the conflict, differentiated himself from the Conservatives by accusing Israel of "a deliberately disproportionate form of collective punishment" (Watt, 2014).

Yet whilst Cameron and Hammond's support for Israel became increasingly qualified by expressions of concern for Gazan civilians (Ross, 2014), they continued endorsing Israel's right to defend itself, and resisted growing calls to suspend arms export licenses. On August 4 a spokesman in the Prime Minister's office would only say that the government was "reviewing all export licenses to Israel to confirm that we think they are appropriate" (Mason, 2014). Several junior Conservative ministers were privately unhappy, and party unity ultimately broke when Conservative Foreign Office Minister Baroness Warsi resigned on 5 August, branding UK policy as "morally indefensible". Though she appeared isolated in her party she got a wide media hearing, and fuelled the arms exports debate by demanding that "arms exports to Israel must stop" (Wintour and Mason, 2014).

Referring directly to Warsi's demand, the Liberal Democrats then issued a statement in which Clegg declared: "However much Israel has every right to defend itself ... the Israeli military operation overstepped the mark ... That's why I believe that the export licenses should now be suspended." He added: "It's taken a little bit longer than I'd like to have this agreed across government." Cable added: "We have been making this case inside Government but have not yet been able to get agreement for this position. I hope and expect that to change shortly" (Archer, 2014).

The Liberal Democrat cabinet ministers faced resistance from Cameron and Hammond (Laws, 2016), creating one of the most difficult periods of the coalition (Clarke, 2015). Liberal Democrat ministers discussed between themselves how to change the policy. On 10 August a ceasefire was announced lasting several days. But despite the pause, on 12 August, Vince Cable and his BIS department announced in the name of the government that following a review, twelve licenses had been identified for British components that could be used in Israel's operations in Gaza. It declared: "in the event of a resumption of significant hostilities, the government is concerned that it would not be able to clarify if the export license criteria are being met. It would therefore suspend these

licenses as a precautionary step” (*Department for Business, Innovation and Skills*, 2014). This act sabotaged the policy of the Conservatives, which was to maintain that Israel has the right to defend itself and to avoid punitive diplomatic action, by sending a symbolic diplomatic message contrary to that articulated by Conservative ministers.

When later questioned on the decision by a House of Commons committee, Cable claimed that the conditional phrasing, that licenses would be suspended “in the event of a resumption of significant hostilities,” came from Foreign Secretary Hammond. Cable added that, “There were full and frank discussions, and that was the outcome.” Perhaps mindful of collective responsibility, he added: “I do not run my own foreign or defence policy.” This suggests that the Liberal Democrats softened the blow under Conservative pressure. When interviewed by the same committee, Hammond stood behind Cable’s announcement (*Committees on Arms Exports Controls*, 2015).

However, the fact that there was any announcement was due to a unilateral Liberal Democrat decision to act (Dysch, 2014). Having failed to get the Conservatives to agree, the Liberal Democrat ministers set aside usual procedures of awaiting guidance from the Foreign Office. According to Monica Allen, they justified their assessment instead on what they saw from media coverage, and an assessment of the International Committee of the Red Cross, to conclude that there was at least a risk of breaches of humanitarian law. Allen’s recollection of the announcement was that, “Vince Cable did it because he had that power. He did it because he could. The only way to stop him would have been to sack him.” This was not an option for Cameron, who did not have power of patronage over the Liberal Democrat ministers.

According to Allen, Hammond was annoyed, but there was some understanding between the parties of each other’s political agendas. More alarmed by the development were the civil service. According to Allen, the politicization of the interdepartmental process, with ministers pulling in contradictory directions, “really ruffled a lot of feathers, more so in the civil service than between Lib Dems and Tories” (Allen, 2017, personal communication).

In a noteworthy epilogue, a comparable crisis arose the following year, shortly before the general election, when Cable considered blocking arms exports to Saudi Arabia over feared breaches of humanitarian law in Yemen. The Conservatives, under considerable Saudi pressure, opposed this. According to Allen, having seen Cable use his power in 2014, the Conservatives “got smart”, and acted to prevent Cable unilaterally announcing a suspension of licenses. Cable said subsequently he was assured that the Ministry of Defence would review use of the equipment including specific targeting – an assurance that he claimed was given deceitfully (Hopkins, 2016). Had Cable used the same approach as with Israel the potential consequences were far greater, since Saudi Arabia is a major market for British defence equipment alongside other Gulf states.

In sum, the Liberal Democrats took a rogue decision that sabotaged the policy of their senior coalition partner through the largely symbolic, conditional suspension of arms exports to Israel. Though ministers subsequently closed ranks, the evidence supports the conclusion that the decision outcome was a result of the Lib Dems using the relevant

bureaucratic power to enforce on their senior partner a *fait accompli*. It can be concluded that this represents the anarchy model and rogue decisions emerging in Britain's established parliamentary system.

CASE DISCUSSION

Both cases exemplify a junior party using a devolved power to take a unilateral decision without cabinet coordination that in some measure undermined or sabotaged the foreign policy of their senior partner. These cases illustrate how in multi-party coalitions even in an established parliamentary democracy, conflicting agendas can result in a shift towards the anarchy model, and the occurrence of rogue decisions.

This finding challenges the assumption that the cabinet is always the authoritative foreign policy decision making unit where coalition disagreements are addressed. The junior parties involved did not ultimately influence policy by hijacking, blackmailing or using veto powers. Nor did they win the cabinet over using framing effects or other psychological or bureaucratic tactics. Rather, the junior party took autonomous decisions, using bureaucratic tools at their disposal, knowing they undermined the policy of their senior partner. These cases do not refute existing theories of junior party influence, but supplement them by highlighting how a junior party can influence policy with autonomous action. Moreover, comparing the two cases sheds additional light on the four factors identified earlier as enabling rogue decisions:

Junior party or minister enjoys autonomy in a relevant policy area

The ability of the junior parties to take rogue decisions was possible only because they controlled certain relevant bureaucratic tools. It is noteworthy that impacting foreign policy does not depend on controlling ministries with formal foreign policy responsibility. In the British case it was the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, which included responsibility for trade. In the Israeli case it was the Housing Ministry. In most countries housing would be far removed from foreign policy but in Israel, construction in disputed areas is a diplomatic issue. Each case illustrates that the tactical use of subordinate or only tangentially related bureaucratic powers can be leveraged to shape the response to a bigger question.

Though in each case the junior party's actions were largely symbolic, they had the potential for significant impact on the state's international relations. In the Israeli case, though it may not have been Ariel's Jerusalem housing announcement that pushed Abbas to apply for Palestinian accession to 15 international treaties, it could have had that effect. Indeed, John Kerry believed it had, causing him to put the weight of blame for the collapse of the talks on Israel. In the British case, the conditional suspension of 12 export licenses was largely inconsequential. Britain is not a major arms supplier to Israel, and its diplomatic positioning was of marginal significance in the conflict. The conflict ended shortly after, and the conditional suspensions subsequently rescinded. However, had Cable used that same power to suspend licenses to Saudi Arabia, this could have caused a major crisis for UK-Saudi relations and British arms exports more widely.

The globalization of many policy challenges, from environment, to criminal justice, to disease prevention, means more portfolios involve decisions with foreign relations implications (Slaughter 2004). Justice and home affairs ministers may have power over border controls, visas, extradition, or extra-territorial designations. Finance ministers may have powers to enforce financial sanctions, approve debt relief, or regulate international markets. Education ministers may have the power to approve syllabuses with international sensitivities – on disputed genocides for instance – whilst culture ministers may engage in sensitive negotiations over venues for international sporting or arts events. It is possible to conceive, therefore, of an increasing number of ostensibly domestic policy domains, where the responsible minister has the potential to take autonomous decisions with foreign policy ramifications.

Decision making rules are weak or absent

The rogue decision was only made possible by a lack of clear and enforceable decision rules in that domain, and the senior partner not maneuvering effectively to prevent their junior partner's action. Jewish Home acted where there were inadequate safeguards to prevent uncoordinated settlement announcements. The Liberal Democrats exploited the legal responsibility of Vince Cable for export licenses. With single party government typical in the UK, there was no need for safeguards to prevent the trade minister blocking particular exports, since ministerial disputes would be settled quietly, with the prime minister adjudicating if necessary. The political significance of this formal authority only became apparent in a coalition. Leadership skill and experience plays a role in anticipating and managing potential dissent. In both cases the senior party learned from the experience and tried to avoid being surprised again.

Whilst prime ministers may learn from experience how to avoid rogue decisions in specific areas, the need to delegate authority to ensure efficient functioning of increasingly complex state bureaucracy is a recognized challenge for multi-party government (Thies 2001). The increasing complexity of bureaucracy, combined with the increased intermingling of domestic and foreign policy, militate against the ability of a prime minister to police all potential decisions relevant to foreign relations.

Issue is of high political salience to the junior party

In both cases the policy divergence was shaped by combinations of differences in world view, and associated domestic political interests. The senior partner's policy was contrary to the principles of the junior partner, but perhaps more importantly, association with that policy was politically costly for the junior partner. Jewish Home wanted to disassociate from two state negotiations. The Liberal Democrats wanted to disassociate from diplomatic support for an Israeli military campaign considered by left-liberal voters especially to be morally unconscionable. In both cases the junior party wanted to intervene in the policy, but even where their capacity to do so was limited, they sought symbolic means to be seen to do so.

In each case the issue was salient for the junior partner. Opposition to territorial compromise is core to Jewish Home's politics. For the Liberal Democrats, the desire to

differentiate from the Conservatives was increased by the coalition entering its final year, meaning the consideration of how to win votes was rising relative to the need for functional collective government.

In each case the junior and senior parties were playing different two level games, with different international and domestic priorities. In the Israeli case it is particularly apparent that the junior partner was more sensitive to their specific constituency, and less to the country's international interlocutors. It was ultimately Prime Minister Netanyahu who had to answer to the Americans for his government's actions, and potentially pay a domestic political cost for isolating Israel internationally.

As highlighted earlier, in general, foreign policy issues increasingly reflect deep social and party political divisions over national identity and the national interest. Moreover, these examples point to a general dynamic whereby a junior party can take a decision in line with the narrower agenda of its constituents, knowing that the senior party will primarily face any negative consequences for the state's foreign relations.

Junior party's ability to influence collective cabinet policy is constrained

In neither case was the junior party able to secure agreed cabinet policy in line with its overall preferences. The option to veto the policy of the senior coalition partner was not relevant or available. For comparison, when in 2013 Cameron wanted the UK to join military action against Syria following Assad's use of chemical weapons, the Liberal Democrats could have vetoed, since this was a cabinet decision, and required parliamentary support. As it happened Clegg supported the action and it was prevented by a backbench Conservative rebellion (Kaarbo and Kenealey, 2017). In the case discussed here, by contrast, the Conservative's diplomatic support for Israel was largely rhetorical, without an actual resource commitment requiring cabinet approval, so veto power was not applicable. Nor was it for Jewish Home, since the party had a side agreement with Netanyahu to allow talks to continue, in return for continued settlement construction. In each case therefore the junior partner used instead symbolic but nonetheless significant unilateral decisions to distance itself from positions it disliked.

Furthermore, the threat to quit the government, assumed to be the ultimate source of junior party leverage, was not relevant or realistic. The Liberal Democrats had campaigned for fixed-term parliaments and secured that in the coalition agreement, so could not easily threaten a premature election. For Jewish Home, leaving the coalition presented a risk, since Labour could have replaced them without elections.

It could also be argued that in each case, the issue was not of the magnitude to make leaving the government in protest electorally worthwhile. For Britain, the Middle East crisis was temporarily salient because of intense news coverage, but not of lasting strategic significance. In the Israeli case, few expected peace talks to succeed anyway. One could imagine conditions which would have led Jewish Home to threaten defection, for example if Netanyahu had committed to a settlement freeze, or the establishment of a Palestinian

state. As it was, in each case the junior party primarily wanted to signal to voters its distinct position though symbolically significant action, not go to elections.

These cases highlight that whilst the threat of defection provides leverage, carrying it out may carry significant risks. The party will lose the executive and policy rewards of government. They may fail to collapse the government and be replaced, or they may be punished by voters for causing instability or an election. The junior partner must make a cost benefit analysis of whether the potential electoral rewards of quitting justify the risks. In each of these case studies, the junior party operated in a grey zone, with decisions aimed to send the required signal of dissent to the electorate, without triggering a full coalition crisis. This clearly reflects a delicate calculation on the part of the junior partner that the senior partner will not be interested to turn their act of dissent into an existential coalition crisis.

CONCLUSION

In sum, observing rogue decisions in two very different parliamentary democracies, suggests it is a possible outcome of foreign policy contestation in a wide range of parliamentary systems.

It may seem that the incidents described here are relatively minor, and that the big decisions of war and peace, necessarily involve a collective decision. This may be so. Clearly, decisions such as committing forces, signing treaties, or UN votes are typically determined under clearer rules, and less susceptible to rogue decisions.

However, much of foreign policy and international relations consists of countless lower order decisions, which can have major consequences. The implications are considerable for every aspect of international relations. Consider for example how in circumstances of tense military stand offs, every act can be read as a signal, and can lead to miscalculation and escalation.

The implication is that in multi-party coalitions we should relax the assumption of the centrality of the cabinet as the locus of foreign policy authority and give greater consideration to the possibility for coalition members acting unilaterally. When analysing coalition foreign policy, we should consider the interests of individual parties, and how well entrenched are decision making rules. We must be open to the possibility that a government does not have a singular foreign policy, but may have multiple and contradictory foreign policies, pursued simultaneously by rivals using the levers at their disposal.

A more recent example underlines these broader implications. In June 2018, German interior Minister Horst Seehofer of the CSU, threatened to unilaterally order border police to turn away refugees, in defiance of Chancellor Angela Merkel, if she did not find a solution to illegal migration in the EU. The same month, CSU's Bavarian Minister President Marcus Söder met publically with Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz to promote a shared EU-wide anti-immigration agenda (*DW* 2018).

The changing international and domestic political context has thinned boundaries between politicians and electorates on foreign policy, made foreign affairs more salient in domestic politics, and fragmented and polarized party systems. This may increase the potential for rogue decisions. The changing ways in which domestic and international politics interact, both in multi-party coalitions and other democratic system, therefore warrant greater research. Uncovering the complex causal processes involved requires detailed knowledge of individual political systems, pointing to further case study research in a wide range of democratic systems.

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Notes

¹ Note also Snyder's (1991) related concept of 'hijacking', referring to coalitions of interest groups promoting expansionist policies that serve their interests, but not ultimately those of the state. His study of 1930s Japan shows military elites using autonomy from civilian power to drive institutionally self-serving expansionism, in a manner comparable to junior party autonomy explored here.

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