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## Apologies in International Politics

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## Apologies in International Politics

JENNIFER LIND

*This article examines the growing conventional wisdom that apologies and other acts of contrition are necessary for international reconciliation. I create and test a theory that connects a country's remembrance with that country's image—threatening or benign—in the eyes of former adversaries. I evaluate the theory in two post-World War II case studies: South Korean relations with Japan and French relations with Germany.*

*This article offers three major findings. First, it substantiates the claim that denials inhibit reconciliation. Japanese denials and history textbook omissions have elevated distrust and fear among Koreans (as well as Chinese and Australians). Second, although whitewashing and denials are indeed pernicious, the conventional wisdom about the healing power of contrition must be seriously reconsidered. Evidence from the Japanese and other cases suggests that contrition risks triggering a domestic backlash, which alarms former adversaries. Finally, there is good news for the prospects of international reconciliation: countries have reconciled quite successfully without any contrition at all. West Germany actually offered very little contrition at the time of its dramatic reconciliation with France; many other countries have restored close and productive relations without contrition. The best course for reconciliation is to remember the past in ways that are unifying, rather than divisive, and minimize the risk of backlash.*

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Since World War II, calls for justice, truth-telling, and contrition for past human rights abuses have grown increasingly common. Governments, religious institutions, and private companies have apologized and paid reparations. A chorus of voices—from victims, activists, commentators, and the international media—increasingly demands apologies and compensation.<sup>1</sup> National governments lobby one another to acknowledge past violence. The French National Assembly passed a bill criminalizing denial of the Turkish genocide of Armenians; the U.S. Congress has debated resolutions urging Japan and Turkey to admit their atrocities. The European Union and the United Nations have pressured members for admission and atonement.<sup>2</sup>

As demands for contrition mount, commentators increasingly assert the importance of apologies in post-conflict reconciliation. Within the voluminous literature on transitional justice, many scholars argue that within states, truth-telling, contrition, and justice promote democracy and stability after internal strife.<sup>3</sup> International relations analysts have begun to investigate the role of memory and contrition between states.<sup>4</sup> Observers contend that Tokyo's failure to apologize for actions in the first half of the twentieth century—colonization, aggression, and atrocities in Asia—elevates fears of Japan among neighboring countries.<sup>5</sup> Comparing Japan to Germany, many

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Posen, Daryl Press, Robert Ross, Richard Samuels, Jack Snyder, Benjamin Valentino, William Wohlforth, and Stephen Van Evera.

<sup>1</sup> "Japan's Burden," *Financial Times*, 8 April 2005; "So Hard to Be Friends," *The Economist*, 23 March 2005; Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998); "Iran's Holocaust Denial Advances Another Agenda," *USA Today*, 13 December 2006; Nicholas D. Kristof, "The Problem of Memory," *Foreign Affairs* 77, no. 6 (November/December 1998).

<sup>2</sup> On U.S. and French legislation, see Norimitsu Onishi, "A Congressman Faces Foes in Japan as He Seeks an Apology," *New York Times*, 12 May 2007; Steven Lee Meyers and Carl Hulse, "House Panel Raises Furor on Armenian Genocide," *New York Times*, 11 October 2007; Thomas Crampton, "France Acts to Outlaw Denial of Genocide," *International Herald Tribune*, 13 October 2006. On the EU see, Colin Nickerson, "EU Official Issues Warning on Turkey's Prosecution of Author," *Boston Globe*, 16 December 2005.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, James L. Gibson, "Does Truth Lead to Reconciliation? Testing the Causal Assumptions of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Process," *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 2 (2004): 201–17; M. Cherif Bassiouni, "Searching for Peace and Achieving Justice: The Need for Accountability," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 59, no. 4 (1996); Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> William J. Long and Peter Brecke, *War and Reconciliation: Reason and Emotion in Conflict Resolution* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003); Barry O'Neill, *Honor, Symbols, and War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

<sup>5</sup> Norimitsu Onishi, "Denial Reopens Wounds of Japan's Ex-Sex Slaves," *New York Times*, 8 March 2007; Kristof, "The Problem of Memory"; Thomas J. Christensen, "China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia," *International Security* 23, no. 4 (Spring 1999): 49–80; Andrew Kydd, "Sheep in Sheep's Clothing: Why Security Seekers Do Not Fight Each Other," *Security Studies* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 1997): 114–54; Aaron L. Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia," *International Security* 18 (Winter 1993/94): 5–33; Thomas U. Berger, "The Construction of Antagonism: The History Problem in Japan's Foreign Relations," in *Reinventing the Alliance: US-Japan Security Partnership in an Era of Change*, ed. G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 63–90.

scholars argue that Germany's contrition for World War II crimes was vital for reconciliation and threat reduction in Europe.<sup>6</sup>

But is it true that apologies and other acts of contrition reduce fear and promote international reconciliation? In this article, I (1) create a theory that connects a country's remembrance with that country's image—threatening or benign—in the eyes of former adversaries; (2) create coding rules for measuring apologies and, more broadly, “remembrance”; (3) identify the mechanisms through which remembrance might affect perceptions of a country's intentions and threat; and (4) empirically evaluate the theory using two post-World War II case studies: South Korean relations with Japan and French relations with Germany. This analysis also draws upon data from other cases, including postwar Australian and Chinese perceptions of Japan.

This article supports some of the claims made by advocates of international contrition, but raises serious doubts about others. First, as many scholars have argued, denials of past aggression and atrocities fuel distrust and elevate fears among former adversaries. Japan's denials alarm Koreans and others. By contrast, Bonn's acceptance of responsibility for the crimes of the Nazi era—the absence of denials or glorifications among mainstream West Germans—reassured and facilitated rapprochement with France. To this day, neighbors monitor Germany's remembrance for signs of revisionism and are reassured by the absence of such signs. Thus, these cases suggest that reconciliation requires countries to acknowledge past misdeeds.

Second, although denials of past violence are indeed detrimental to international reconciliation, countries can reconcile without much in the way of contrition. Many bitter adversaries—including West Germany and France—have successfully repaired their relations without “coming to terms with the past.” In the early years after the war, Bonn expressed modest contrition, offering a lukewarm apology and paying reparations to Israel. However, West German commemoration, education, and public discourse ignored Nazi Germany's atrocities and instead mourned only German suffering during and after the war. Nevertheless, during this era of minimal contrition, Bonn and Paris transformed their relations. By the early 1960s, the French viewed the West Germans as their closest friend and security partner. Bonn's remarkable expressions of atonement—soul-searching apologies, candid history textbooks, and memorials to Germany's victims—were yet to occur.

Beyond the Franco-German case, Britain and Germany achieved peaceful and productive relations, despite an absence of British contrition for brutal fire bombings, such as in Dresden, which killed hundreds of thousands of

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<sup>6</sup> Kristof, “The Problem of Memory”; Kydd, “Sheep in Sheep's Clothing”; Richard Ned Lebow, “Memory, Democracy, and Reconciliation,” in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, ED. Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004); Stephen Van Evera, “Primed for Peace: Europe After the Cold War,” *International Security* 15, no. 3 (Winter 1990/91): 7–57.

Germans. Japan and the United States have not only managed to move on, they have achieved a warm friendship and sturdy security alliance without either one of them expressing contrition for egregious wartime atrocities. Postwar partners allowed Italy and Austria to dodge responsibility and tell tales of victimhood.

Third, this article highlights an issue that has been neglected in debates about international reconciliation: the potential dangers of contrition. As evident in Japan and elsewhere, expressions of contrition typically prompt a backlash. Conservatives offer a competing narrative that celebrates, rather than condemns, a country for its past and justifies or even denies its atrocities. Thus contrition can be counterproductive. Observers will be angered and alarmed by what the backlash suggests about the country's intentions. Such anger can mobilize nationalistic sentiment in the victim country, creating a spiral of acrimony that makes reconciliation even more elusive. Ironically, well-meaning efforts to soothe relations between former enemies can actually inflame them.

## REMEMBRANCE AND RECONCILIATION

Arguments about the pernicious effects of Japanese impenitence, and the healing effects of German contrition, rely on an implicit hypothesis that a country's remembrance of past violence affects an ability to reconcile with former adversaries. Countries might experience different stages of reconciliation, ranging from a tense cease-fire to a deeper reconciliation reflecting warmth and trust.<sup>7</sup> I argue that an essential first step toward the latter outcome is an absence of threat perception: countries must cease seeing each other as enemies before they can begin to see each other as friends.

Theorists have previously claimed that threat assessment is driven by a state's capabilities and intentions.<sup>8</sup> Scholars argue that several factors convey information about a country's intentions: regime type, membership in international institutions, and territorial disputes the country may have with other states.<sup>9</sup> I hypothesize that states (both leaders and the public) evaluate an additional factor to assess another country's intentions: remembrance of past

<sup>7</sup> For discussions on levels of reconciliation, see Arie M. Kacowicz, Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, Ole Elgstrom, and Magnus Jerneck, eds., *Stable Peace Among Nations* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000); Kenneth Boulding, *Stable Peace* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978); Yinan He, *The Search for Reconciliation Sino-Japanese and German-Polish Relations since World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>8</sup> Charles L. Glaser, *Theory of Rational International Politics* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, forthcoming); Glaser, "The Security Dilemma Revisited," *World Politics* 50 (October 1997); Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); David M. Edelstein, "Managing Uncertainty: Beliefs about Intentions and the Rise of Great Powers," *Security Studies* 12, no. 2 (Autumn 2002): 1-40.

<sup>9</sup> On regime type, see Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Michael E. Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign

violence. States that deny past violence appear to have hostile intentions and thus appear more threatening; those that admit and atone for past violence appear benign.

Why might remembrance affect perceptions of a country's intentions? One possibility is that apologetic remembrance (contrition) is a costly signal of benign intentions because contrition makes it harder for leaders to mobilize their populations for war.<sup>10</sup> To prepare a society to fight, leaders rally patriotic sentiment, typically vilifying the adversary and glorifying their own state's history.<sup>11</sup> Teaching a population about its past crimes complicates such efforts; therefore, contrition signals that a country is not planning aggression. Alternatively, contrition may soothe relations by affecting states' identities. Countries learn through repeated interactions which states they can trust and which they must fear: remembrance may be a critical factor in this process.<sup>12</sup> In failing to atone for past violence, a country conveys disdain for its victims' suffering and implies that it believes that the violence was justified, or even laudable, and thus may again engage in similar behavior.<sup>13</sup> Contrition, on the other hand, demonstrates recognition that past behavior was wrong; it connotes respect and a desire to repair relations. Contrition may thus help transform the images countries have of each other—and the nature of relations—from adversarial to friendly.

Alternatively, remembrance could influence perception of intentions through an emotional and cognitive process. Emotions can create cognitive biases that influence observers' perceptions of other states. People who have positive feelings toward a state, writes Neta Crawford, are more likely to frame the country's ambiguous behavior as "neutral, positive, or motivated by circumstances other than hostile intentions." Conversely, emotional

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Affairs," in *Debating the Democratic Peace*, ed. Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 3–57; John M. Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace," in *Debating the Democratic Peace*, 116–54. Institutional membership is said to increase transparency and reduce uncertainty. See Robert O. Keohane, "International Institutions: Two Approaches," in *International Institutions and State Power: Essays in International Relations Theory*, ed. Robert O. Keohane (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), 158–79; Robert O. Keohane and Lisa M. Martin, "The Promise of Institutional Theory," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (1995): 39–51. On territorial disputes, see John Vasquez and Marie T. Henahan, "Territorial Disputes and the Probability of War, 1816–1992," *Journal of Peace Research* 38, no. 2. (2001): 123–38; Stephen A. Kocs, "Territorial Disputes and Interstate War, 1945–1987," *Journal of Politics* 57, no. 1. (1995): 159–75.

<sup>10</sup> On costly signals, see James Fearon, "Signaling Foreign Policy Interests: Tying Hands Versus Sinking Costs," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41, no. 1 (February 1997): 68–90; Glaser, "The Security Dilemma Revisited."

<sup>11</sup> Barry R. Posen, "Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power," *International Security* 18, no. 2 (Fall 1993): 80–124; Stephen Van Evera, "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War," *International Security* 18, no. 4 (Spring 1994).

<sup>12</sup> Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1999); John G. Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (October 1998): 883.

<sup>13</sup> Berger, "The Construction of Antagonism"; Lebow, "Memory, Democracy, and Reconciliation."

antipathy toward a state may lead to negative evaluations of ambiguous behavior.<sup>14</sup>

According to this mechanism, unapologetic remembrance influences perception of a country's intentions because of its powerful emotional effects.<sup>15</sup> Whereas contrition is a gesture of respect for a people and a country, denials or glorification of suffering signal contempt. This affront triggers emotions of anger and wounded pride among victims, creating hostility that will influence assessments of the unapologetic state's policies or military capabilities.

### Conceptualizing Remembrance and Apologies

Evaluating the effects of remembrance on perceptions of intentions and threat requires a framework for defining the amorphous concept of a country's remembrance. Countries reveal how they remember the past in both official and unofficial ways. Leaders issue official statements (apologies, denials) that shape the official historical record, influence scholarly research, impact textbook coverage, and affect litigation. Governments might offer reparations to former victims and hold perpetrators of past violence accountable in legal trials, both of which promote public education by unearthing and disseminating evidence about past violence. Countries institutionalize remembrance of past violence through education. Textbooks traditionally have been key vehicles through which governments transmit national identity to younger generations. Additionally, governments educate their societies through commemoration: monuments, museums, ceremonies, and holidays reflect a country's historical interpretations and national priorities.<sup>16</sup>

Beyond official remembrance, countries will also assess each other's intentions by examining the views of wider society. National governments legislate policies, but countries that protect free speech "exercise at best only imperfect control" over societal opinion and debates.<sup>17</sup> In particular, a society's response to official acts of commemoration is a key indicator of national sentiment. As Robert Jervis notes, an indicator is most credibly linked to a country's true intentions when a government "is not able to control that

<sup>14</sup> Neta C. Crawford, "The Passion of World Politics: Propositions on Emotion and Emotional Relationships," *International Security* 24, no. 4 (Spring 2000): 134–35. See also Jervis, "Perceiving and Coping with Threat," 13–34; Jonathan Mercer, "Rationality and Psychology in International Politics," *International Organization* 59 (Winter 2005): 77–106.

<sup>15</sup> This mechanism should not be expected to work in the other direction. That is, contrition should not create such powerful positive feelings that it leads observers to discount other threatening signs.

<sup>16</sup> On education, see Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 26–35; Boyd Shafer, *Faces of Nationalism: New Realities and Old Myths* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1972), 198. On commemoration, see John Bodnar, "Public Memory in an American City," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 74–89.

<sup>17</sup> Lebow, "Memory, Democracy, and Reconciliation."

aspect of [its] behavior to give a desired, but misleading, impression."<sup>18</sup> To assess societal views, I examine the statements and writings of mainstream opinion leaders: members of the political opposition and public intellectuals.

Understanding the effect of contrition on international reconciliation also requires conceptualizing what sort of remembrance is apologetic. Social psychologists have identified core components of apologies that transcend cultural differences; at a minimum, an apology requires admitting past misdeeds and expressing regret for them.<sup>19</sup> "Apologetic remembrance" thus conveys both admission and remorse.<sup>20</sup> Remembrance that offers some remorse but only vague or incomplete admission is somewhat apologetic. At the other end of the spectrum is unapologetic remembrance, which either fails to admit past violence or fails to express remorse for it. Unapologetic remembrance comes in many flavors; a country may justify, deny, glorify—or simply fail to remember—past violence.

If remembrance affects relations between former adversaries, it should have the strongest positive effect on relations when a country engages in a broad range of official apologetic policies—statements, reparations, trials, commemoration, and education—and when wider society endorses these policies. Remembrance will be less reassuring in cases in which official efforts to offer contrition are contested by wider society as inappropriate or too costly. Remembrance should not be reassuring at all if a government pursues contrition, but wider society reacts with denials and glorifications. At the negative extreme, a country's intentions will appear hostile if that country pursues a broad range of policies that deny or glorify past violence—and if society endorses such policies.

### Avoiding Coding Pitfalls

I code a country's remembrance by assessing both government policies and societal support for contrition. Critics may argue that my coding omits another critical dimension: the victim's evaluation of contrition (or willingness to accept an apology). However, using a victim's response to an apology to measure whether or not an apology was offered invites serious errors of inference. Evidence that disconfirms the connection between apologies and

<sup>18</sup> Jervis, *The Logic of Images*, 27.

<sup>19</sup> Aaron Lazare, "Go Ahead, Say You're Sorry," *Psychology Today* 28, no. 1 (1995): 40; Michael E. McCullough, Everett Worthington, and Kenneth C. Rachal, "Interpersonal Forgiving in Close Relationships," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 73 (1997); Nicholas Tavuchis, *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

<sup>20</sup> For a statement to be apologetic it must admit perpetrating the crime and convey remorse. Reparations must specify an act for which the victims are being compensated. I treat the existence of war crimes trials as apologetic because the state typically asserts that individuals were complicit in heinous acts (admission) and that these acts should be punished (remorse). If, in a given case, the trials produce widespread acquittals, then perhaps they should not qualify as apologetic (this did not occur in the cases examined here).

reconciliation would be systematically overlooked. For example, imagine that victims typically reject apologies; apologies therefore have little effect on threat perception. Should this be true, then apologies do not generally facilitate reconciliation. If, however, scholars only consider remembrance to be apologetic when the victim accepts apologies, they would overlook disconfirming evidence by treating most cases—those in which the apology is rejected—as if no apologies had been offered in the first place. In other words, allowing victims to determine when an apology has been issued would conflate acceptance of an apology with the issuance of an apology, biasing findings in favor of the theory that apologies facilitate reconciliation.

Second, critics of this research design might contend that underlying motivations determine the quality of an apology. For example, one might argue that Japanese reparations to Southeast Asia in the 1950s do not constitute contrition because Tokyo's motive was to build markets for Japanese exports. It is difficult, however, to reliably ascertain the intentions behind a given policy at the time it is issued, let alone decades later. Nevertheless, the criteria described here for evaluating remembrance—especially the use of societal responses to government policy—are likely to distinguish cynical from sincere contrition.

Finally, one might criticize the narrowness of my definition of remembrance. After all, countries remember past violence through citizen groups' activities, as well as through art, literature, and film; such activities are not represented in my coding. Including such factors does indeed paint a richer picture of memory within a country, but there are also downsides to inclusion. More nuanced coding is difficult to replicate and aggregate. My approach has the advantage of capturing a broad segment of remembrance within a country by including both official and societal remembrance; however, by relying on memory's most observable indicators, my approach lends itself better to replication.

"Remembrance" as I define it is only a subset of the phenomena categorized as "national" or "collective" memory. This article focuses on official statements and policies and the statements of opinion leaders in wider society. My coding of remembrance does not attempt to capture the full complexity of a country's collective memory; rather, it seeks to determine whether the most observable expressions of remembrance affect perceptions of intentions.

## Dependent Variables and Methods

An essential step toward reconciliation between former enemies is a substantial reduction in the level of threat they perceive from each other. To explore the link between remembrance and threat perception, I evaluate the extent to which remembrance affects perceptions of a country's intentions and the

extent to which remembrance—relative to other signals of intentions and to capabilities—drives overall threat assessment.

To evaluate how one country perceives another country's intentions, I examine the statements made by the general public and elites and look for indications of trust or suspicion. For public statements, I rely on public opinion polls and media coverage.<sup>21</sup> For elite statements, I consult archival documents, secondary sources, memoirs, and elite-authored scholarly articles and op-eds. To assess contemporary perceptions, I conducted interviews with government officials, academics, journalists, and think-tank analysts. In the written documents and interviews, I look for evidence that the authors or interviewees believe the other state has benign, uncertain, or hostile intentions toward their country. When these individuals feel there is affinity, trust, or a general sense of community with a state, they perceive benign intentions. At the opposite extreme, observers perceive hostile intentions when they say they dislike and distrust a state.

Because observers incorporate many different signals about intentions into their threat assessments—and because they also assess capabilities—I also examine how strongly remembrance affects overall threat perception. I look at public and elite statements (using sources similar to those above) to determine whether or not the other country is considered a security threat. I also assess state policy (defense policy, diplomacy, and so forth) for what it conveys about threat perception. For example, against whom is the state configuring its military forces? Against whom, and with whom, does it seek alliances? I evaluate whether a state's diplomacy tries to punish, isolate, or support the other country and whether state policies reflect concerns about relative gains.

In countries with low threat perception, the public and elites express no concern about a military conflict between the two states; no one expects disputes to escalate to the military level. People do not fear the other country's military or economic gains. State policy reflects similar equanimity; the state does not configure military forces, or cultivate allies, to defend itself against the other country. At the other extreme, high threat perception is evident in statements expressing the fear that the other country is an imminent threat. People worry that bilateral disputes will be resolved through force. State policy is adversarial. The state configures military forces against the other country; it finds allies to protect itself; through diplomacy it attempts to weaken and alienate the other country. In between these two extremes are countries with moderate threat perception. Public and elite statements express uncertainty about whether or not the other state is a security threat;

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<sup>21</sup> Media coverage slants in the direction of its audience's beliefs. Matthew Aaron Gentzkow and Jesse M. Shapiro, "What Drives Media Slant? Evidence from U.S. Daily Newspapers" (working paper 12707, National Bureau of Economic Research, 13 November 2006).

**TABLE 1** Theories of Remembrance and Threat Perception

	Mechanism	Perceptions of Intentions	Perceptions of Threat
Null		Remembrance does not affect	Remembrance does not affect
Strong Version	Emotions/ cognition	Denials have powerful effects; they swamp other signals of intentions	Denials have powerful effects; they swamp capabilities and other signals of intentions
Weak Version	Domestic mobilization or Identity	Remembrance affects perceptions of intentions Other factors also affect perceptions of intentions (territorial disputes, regime type)	Remembrance affects perceptions of threat (sends signals about intentions) Other factors also affect perception of threat (capabilities and other signals of intentions)

state policy reflects hedging, with perhaps some sensitivity to relative gains. Diplomacy may be cooperative in some areas and competitive in others.

I test the theory that remembrance affects perceptions of intentions and threat using congruence procedure and process-tracing.<sup>22</sup> Using the definitions described above, I evaluate remembrance in one country over time and then evaluate another state's perceptions of that country over time, in order to determine whether these variables co-vary as expected. In addition, to establish causality, I perform two other tests. First, I evaluate the reasoning of observers. Leaders and citizens should specifically discuss issues such as a neighbor's apologies, denials, or glorification as they debate how friendly or hostile the country appears. Second, I monitor alternate variables that may be driving perception of intentions (regime type, institutional membership, and territorial claims) and perception of threat (all the above plus capabilities) to determine whether the relationships I observe between remembrance, intentions, and threat are spurious.<sup>23</sup>

Different versions of the hypothesis that remembrance affects threat perception are possible (see Table 1). One formulation (the "strong" version) expects that unapologetic remembrance will dominate other indicators of threat through an emotional/cognitive process. It predicts that if a country denies or glorifies its past atrocities, the outrage these denials create will overwhelm efforts to coolly assess capabilities, territorial issues, and the like.

<sup>22</sup> See Alexander L. George and Timothy J. McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision Making," in *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations*, vol. 2 (Greenwich: JAI Press, 1985), 21–58; Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

<sup>23</sup> I define capabilities both in terms of power and constraints. "Power" incorporates wealth, population, defense expenditures, and standing military forces. "Constraints" includes factors that prevent a state from bringing its power to bear (an occupier, offshore balancer, or the threat from a third party).

According to this version of the theory, unapologetic remembrance should correlate with distrust and high threat perception. Discussion of remembrance should also be a major theme in observers' reasoning.

A "weak" version of the theory expects observers to evaluate remembrance along with a myriad of other factors as they assess threat. This version might work through the other mechanisms posited (that is, related to domestic mobilization or identity). It predicts that if a country's remembrance is unapologetic, *ceteris paribus*, distrust and threat perception will be elevated. However, if other factors are reassuring, threat perception will not necessarily be high. Conversely, if a former adversary has shown a great deal of contrition but has also amassed powerful offensive military capabilities and pursued hard-line policies in its territorial disputes, it may be perceived as threatening. In other words, contrition will be reassuring but not to the extent of outweighing concerns about other alarming signals.

The strong version of the theory fails if an unapologetic country is not feared. The theory's weak version is not falsifiable using congruence evidence alone. (Given a contrite country, either low or high threat perception would be consistent with the theory.) However, the weak version can be falsified using process tracing: it fails if observers discussing the other state do not link their perceptions to remembrance but instead discuss alternate variables.

### Case Selection Criteria

In order to test the effects of remembrance on reconciliation, scholars should compare cases in which contrition is owed and given to cases in which contrition is owed and withheld. One problem for scholars is to objectively identify the cases in which contrition is owed; leaders have incentives to exaggerate historical grievances and demand contrition even when their claims are not fully justified. If scholars include these dubious cases in studies of contrition, they may exaggerate the risks of backlash (because denial is likely when the alleged violence did not occur or has been overstated) and may understate the effectiveness of contrition. Thus for an initial study such as this, it is best to pick cases in which there is broad historical consensus that the countries committed egregious violence. For this reason, Germany and Japan—which both committed serious human rights violations during colonization, occupation, and World War II—are excellent case studies. They have also given rise to the conventional wisdom about the importance of contrition in international reconciliation.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The selection of these cases, however, may introduce other elements of bias into the study. Because German and Japanese crimes were so egregious, this study may understate the palliative effect of contrition. However, as the case studies demonstrate, Franco-German reconciliation occurred prior to Germany's contrition, suggesting that even terrible violence does not impede reconciliation.

A second issue in case selection is choosing the observer country. Many countries suffered during Japan's period of colonialism and aggression, and Germany terrorized virtually every country in Europe during World War II. Studying Polish or Russian perceptions of Germany has merit, but there are good reasons to begin with countries that were aligned with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) after the war. Because of restrictions on the media throughout the Warsaw Pact, German contrition was not widely reported. Contrition cannot reconcile enemies if people in the observer country are not informed about it. Additionally, efforts to measure the dependent variables—perceptions of intentions and threat—would be difficult in cases involving Cold War enemies. During some phases of the Cold War, Warsaw Pact countries portrayed the FRG as a hotbed of neo-Nazi militarism for strategic reasons; at other times, they reached out to Bonn to separate West Germany from NATO. Both of these motivations complicate efforts at measuring true sentiments about West Germany in the Warsaw Pact. Finally, studies that track the sentiments of Cold War enemies risk conflating the animosities arising from current disputes with the hatreds stemming from the past. Studying the effect of Japanese remembrance on Sino-Japanese relations confronts many of the same problems. Because of these strong reasons to begin the process of theory testing with cases that minimize these problems, this study examines the effects of remembrance on Japan's relations with South Korea and German relations with France, since World War II.

## REMEMBRANCE IN JAPAN-REPUBLIC OF KOREA RELATIONS AFTER WWII

Japan annexed Korea in 1910, beginning an oppressive occupation that lasted thirty-five years. Japan sought to eradicate Korean culture in order to absorb Koreans into the Japanese Empire, forcing them to adopt Japanese names, speak the Japanese language, and worship Japan's national religion (Shintoism). Colonial authorities brutally suppressed Korean independence movements by imprisoning, torturing, and executing independence leaders and their families. Korean men were conscripted into the Japanese Army; others were shipped to Japan to work as slave laborers. Known as "comfort women," some 100,000 Korean women were forced into sexual slavery at the frontlines. I divide Japan's remembrance of these events into three general phases. In the early period (1952–64), Japan glorified many aspects of its past aggression and largely forgot atrocities associated with colonization.<sup>25</sup> In the middle period, Tokyo began offering official apologies as it normalized relations with former victims (1965–89). In the late period, history issues grew far more prominent and controversial (1990s–2000s).

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<sup>25</sup> The early phase begins in 1952 when the U.S. occupation ended, and Japan regained sovereignty.

## Japan's Remembrance of Colonization and War

## EARLY PERIOD (1952–64)

From 1952 through the mid-1960s, Japan's official policies were unapologetic about Japanese violence in Korea, and Japanese society also evinced little interest in contrition. In negotiations about normalizing relations, Japan rejected Korean demands for an apology and glorified the colonization of Korea. "Japan also had the right to demand compensation," said one Japanese negotiator, because the occupation "changed Korea's bare mountains to a flourishing country with flowers and trees."<sup>26</sup> Memorials were erected to honor Japan's war dead, rather than foreign victims.<sup>27</sup> Tokyo did pay compensation to Southeast Asian countries but did not link these funds to Japanese misdeeds. It did not acknowledge the existence of the comfort women; neither these women nor slave laborers received any reparations. Prime minister Kishi Nobosuke (who as wartime Minister of Commerce and Industry had organized the program of forced labor) denied that the laborers' work had been coerced.<sup>28</sup>

Other aspects of Japan's official remembrance were also unapologetic in this era. Newly sovereign Japan pursued no legal prosecutions and released most of the people convicted by the Tokyo Trials. The former prisoners were paid back salaries for the time they were incarcerated and had their pensions restored. Many re-entered Japanese politics; Kishi's return proved the most notorious.<sup>29</sup> Japan's Ministry of Education (MoE) textbook screeners evaluated textbooks not only for accuracy but also for patriotism. Screeners required authors to delete coverage of Japan's wartime atrocities.<sup>30</sup> Government histories dismissed criticisms of Japanese colonialism as "absurd"

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<sup>26</sup> Won-Deog Lee, "Perception of History and Japan-Korea Relations," in *Korea and Japan: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Young-sun Ha (Seoul: Nanam, 1997), 83. These views were echoed by other Japanese officials and by official government histories of the colonial era. Yoshibumi Wakamiya, *The Postwar Conservative View of Asia: How the Political Right Has Delayed Japan's Coming to Terms with Its History of Aggression in Asia* (Tokyo: LTCB International Library Foundation, 1999).

<sup>27</sup> Tokyo established an annual ceremony on the day of the surrender to honor the nation's war dead. Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000), 658. Revealingly, the main national memorials to the war are at Hiroshima, the site of annual commemoration ceremonies every 6 August (*ibid.*).

<sup>28</sup> Japan paid grants to Burma (1955), the Philippines (1956), Indonesia (1958), South Vietnam (1959), and Thailand (1963). James Morley, *Japan and Korea* (New York: Walker, 1965). On forced labor, see William Underwood, "Mitsubishi, Historical Revisionism and Japanese Corporate Resistance to Chinese Forced Labor Redress," *Japan Focus*, 8 February 2006, <http://www.japanfocus.org/-William-Underwood/1823>.

<sup>29</sup> Bix, *Hirohito*, 652.

<sup>30</sup> Toshio Nishi, *Unconditional Democracy: Education and Politics in Occupied Japan 1945–1952* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982); Yoshiko Nozaki and Hiromitsu Inokuchi, "Japanese Education, Nationalism, and Ienaga Saburo's Court Challenges," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 30, no. 2 (1998); James J. Orr, *The Victim as Hero: Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001).

and “defamatory.”<sup>31</sup> Commemoration ignored foreign victims; the Hiroshima Peace Park, its museum and children’s statue mourned Japan’s own suffering.

Wider Japanese society also reflected unapologetic remembrance. The Japanese people eagerly adopted what Steven Benfell calls the “renegade view” that a military cabal had launched Japan into a misguided and devastating war.<sup>32</sup> Exonerating the masses and blaming the disaster of the war on a narrow set of elites, this view resonated with the Japanese Left which, as opponents of the war, might have otherwise pushed for contrition.<sup>33</sup> Leftist advocates of contrition in the early period were, after the onset of the Cold War, discredited by their communist leanings. Japanese intellectuals debated the lessons of imperialism, most notably Maruyama Masao who lambasted a “system of irresponsibility” in which elites dodged culpability for the war.<sup>34</sup> These debates, however, did not lead to a confrontation with Japan’s wartime atrocities. During this period, most Japanese struggled with economic recovery and mourned the three million Japanese war dead; they paid little attention to the suffering Japan inflicted upon Asia.

#### MIDDLE PERIOD (1965–89)

Over time, Japanese leaders began to speak more about the country’s wartime past, but they issued only halfhearted apologies. Upon normalization of relations with the Republic Of Korea (ROK) in 1965, foreign minister Shiina Etsusaburo said that Japan “felt deep regret and deep remorse” for the “unhappy phase” between the two countries. The statement expressed remorse but not much admission: it was vague about what had occurred or who was responsible. None of the Japanese newspapers reported that Japan had apologized to Korea. Tokyo paid compensation to the ROK but refused to use the term “reparations.”<sup>35</sup> Subsequent apologies by Emperor Hirohito and prime minister Nakasone Yasuhiro in 1984 expressed vague remorse but no admission of Japanese misdeeds.<sup>36</sup>

Japan’s education policy became somewhat more contrite during the middle period. Chinese and Korean protests led Tokyo to add the “Asian Neighbors’ Clause” to MoE guidance, mandating that discussions of

<sup>31</sup> Lee, “Perception of History and Japan-Korea Relations,” 87.

<sup>32</sup> Benfell, “Why Can’t Japan Apologize?”; Dower, *Embracing Defeat*; Orr, *The Victim As Hero*.

<sup>33</sup> Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 491.

<sup>34</sup> Maruyama Masao, “Shiso no Kotoba” [Words for Thought], *Shiso* 381 (March 1956): 322–25.

<sup>35</sup> On coverage of the apology, see Jennifer Lind, *Sorry States: Apologies in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), chap. 2. On reparations, see Wakamiya, *The Postwar Conservative View of Asia*, 194. Japan paid us\$300 million in outright grants, us\$200 million in government loans, and us\$300 million in private commercial credits. At the time, us\$800 million represented more than 25 percent of South Korean GDP. The World Bank, World Development Indicators (WDI) 2004.

<sup>36</sup> For these apologies, see *A New Era in Korea-Japan Relations* (Seoul: Korean Overseas Information Service, 1984).

contemporary history in textbooks “show the necessary consideration for international understanding and international harmony.”<sup>37</sup> This conciliation rang hollow, however, when the MoE approved a textbook that downplayed the Nanking Massacre and implied that Japan had seized Korea to protect it.<sup>38</sup> Throughout the period, coverage of war and colonization expanded relative to the previous era, largely as a result of greater scholarly interest and research about the war era; textbook accounts of Japanese atrocities, however, remained vague.<sup>39</sup>

Commemoration continued to honor only Japanese victims. In 1985, Nakasone became the first prime minister to visit the Yasukuni Shrine, which honors Japan’s war dead. Because fourteen Class-A war criminals had been enshrined there in 1978, Nakasone’s visit triggered regional outrage. Consequently, he and several subsequent prime ministers abstained from visiting.

Relative to the previous era, debate about the war intensified within Japanese society. Controversy over the Vietnam War spawned the *Beheiren* movement, in which Japanese intellectuals protested support for U.S. involvement in the war effort and argued for the need to recognize Japan’s past as a victimizer. *Beheiren*’s calls were complemented by an increasing number of memoirs and confessions by Japanese soldiers, who admitted to acts committed during the war—notably the crimes against comfort women.<sup>40</sup> Liberal scholars, buoyed by the growing political power of the Japanese Left in the 1970s, battled with MoE officials over teaching a more candid history.<sup>41</sup> However, conservative politicians and intellectuals countered by writing textbooks that they considered more patriotic. Influential political figures continued to deny the basic facts of Japan’s past violence. Denouncing Nakasone’s apologies in the 1980s, education minister Fujio Masayuki said, “Japan’s annexation of Korea rested on mutual agreement.”<sup>42</sup> Okuno Seisuke, another cabinet member, defended visits to Yasukuni Shrine, arguing that “Caucasians” were the aggressors in the war and that “it is nonsense

<sup>37</sup> Yonhap Wire Service, 3 August 1982, trans. in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS): South Korea*.

<sup>38</sup> The textbook also lauded pre-war education policies that emphasized Emperor-worship (the Imperial Rescript of Education). Wakamiya, *The Postwar Conservative View of Asia*, 177–78.

<sup>39</sup> Orr, *Victim As Hero*; Nozaki and Inokuchi, “Japanese Education,” 42; Allen S. Whiting, *China Eyes Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

<sup>40</sup> On *Beheiren*, see Yuki Tanaka, “Oda Makoto, Beiheiren and 14 August 1945: Humanitarian Wrath Against Indiscriminate Bombing,” *Japan Focus*, 30 September 2007, <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=13923>. For an important discussion of war responsibility, see Maruyama Masao, *Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics*, trans. I. Morris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963). On wartime atrocities, see Yoshida Seiji, *Chosenjin Ianfu to Nihonjin: Moto Shimonoseki Robodoin Bucho no Shuki* [Korean Comfort Women and the Japanese: A Former Shimonoseki Labor Conscription Manager’s Memoir] (Tokyo: Shin Jinbutsu Oraisha, 1977); Yoshida Seiji, *Watashi no Senso Hanzai: Chosenjin Kyosei Renko* [My War Crimes: Taking Koreans by Force] (Tokyo: Sanichi Shobo, 1983).

<sup>41</sup> Saburo Ienaga, “The Glorification of War in Japanese Education,” *International Security* 18, no. 3 (Winter 1993/94); Orr, *Victim as Hero*, 89–105.

<sup>42</sup> Fujio Masayuki, quoted in Lee, “Perception of History and Korea-Japan Relations,” 107.

to call Japan the aggressor or militaristic.”<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, despite Nakasone’s conciliatory decision to refrain from revisiting Yasukuni, numerous cabinet ministers and parliamentarians made regular pilgrimages. In sum, while Japan’s remembrance of the war increased to some extent during this period both officially and in wider society, important opinion leaders condemned even minimally contrite gestures with denials of past violence.

#### LATE PERIOD (1990s–2000s)

Starting in the 1990s, an increasing trend toward greater self-reflection about Japan’s wartime past generated intense controversy, which pushed the country toward greater nationalism in the following decade. Leaders began to offer remarkable apologies.<sup>44</sup> Although some apologies remained vague (such as a 1995 Resolution by the Diet), many leaders offered remarkably candid and contrite statements. For example, prime minister Hosokawa Morihiro said in 1993, “During Japan’s colonial rule over the Korean Peninsula, the Korean people were forced to suffer unbearable pain and sorrow in various ways. They were deprived of the opportunity to learn their mother tongue at school, they were forced to adopt Japanese names, forced to provide sex as ‘comfort women’ for Japanese troops, forced to provide labor. I hereby express genuine contrition and offer my deepest apologies for my country, the aggressor’s, acts.”<sup>45</sup>

Tokyo issued its first written apology to South Korea in 1998 and in 2001 prime minister Koizumi Junichiro visited a former prison in Seoul that the Japanese had used to torture and execute Korean independence activists.<sup>46</sup> Koizumi laid a wreath and issued a candid apology. “When I looked at things put on display [in the museum], I strongly felt . . . regret for the pains Korean people suffered during Japanese colonial rule. As a politician and a man, I believe we must not forget the pain of [Korean] people.”<sup>47</sup>

Japanese contrition also went beyond statements. The 1995 Murayama Tomiichi apology to the sex slaves of the Imperial Army paid compensation to survivors and established an educational foundation.<sup>48</sup> Japanese textbooks

<sup>43</sup> Wakamiya, *The Postwar Conservative View of Asia*, 11. See also “Outspoken Tokyo Minister Resigns,” *The Guardian*, 14 May 1988.

<sup>44</sup> Japanese apologies—of varying levels of admission and remorse—during this period include statements by Emperor Akihito and prime minister Kaifu Toshiki in 1989, prime minister Miyazawa Kiichi in 1992, and prime minister Murayama Tomiichi in 1994 and 1995.

<sup>45</sup> Wakamiya, *The Postwar Conservative View of Asia*, 247–48.

<sup>46</sup> The 1998 Joint Communique included a Japanese apology, South Korean acceptance of Japan’s apology, and a pledge by both states to move forward. Wakamiya, *The Postwar Conservative View of Asia*, 256–58.

<sup>47</sup> “PM Koizumi Visit ROK President Kim Dae-jung; Protesters Rage,” *Mainichi Shimbun*, 15 October 2001. Koizumi apologized again in April 2005.

<sup>48</sup> The “Asian Women’s Fund” uses a combination of private and public funds to give each survivor approximately US\$17,000. C. Sarah Soh, “Japan’s Responsibility toward Comfort Women Survivors”

grew more candid, with more discussion about the sex slaves, the Nanjing Massacre, the colonization of Korea, and slave labor. A court ruling permitted coverage of Unit 731, a Japanese Army unit that performed grotesque medical experiments on Chinese civilians and POWs. Although discussion of these issues varies substantially by textbook, and indeed varied across the period, coverage increased relative to the previous era.<sup>49</sup>

Many Japanese conservatives protested increased official contrition. Prime Minister Murayama's 1994 and 1995 apologies triggered denials from within his own cabinet. Justice minister Nagano Shigeto called the Nanjing Massacre a "fabrication"; Eto Takami rejected Murayama's apology with the claim that Japan had done many good things for Korea. The 1995 Diet Resolution—itself an unremarkable apology—triggered a storm of acrimony featuring denials, justifications, and glorifications of Japanese imperialism. Diet member Okuno Seisuke protested in 1996 that the comfort women were willing volunteers and thus deserved no special reparations.<sup>50</sup>

The battle over Japanese remembrance was also fought within Japan's legal system. In addition to ruling on textbook content, the courts heard cases brought by the formerly silent victims of Japanese atrocities (forced labor, sexual slavery, POWs, and Unit 731). Survivors have been largely unsuccessful in obtaining compensation or apologies; most verdicts ruled against the plaintiff or the cases were tossed out of court. Such lawsuits, however, have enabled Japanese courts to contribute to the historical record. A 2004 ruling by the Fukuoka High Court decried forced labor as "an outrageous transgression of human dignity." The court explicitly stated that men were seized through violence or deception. In 2007, the Supreme Court rejected compensation claims for forced laborers and the sex slaves, but in both verdicts explicitly stated and condemned the facts of the atrocities.<sup>51</sup>

Japan's commemoration remains unapologetic. Memorials still emphasize Japanese victimhood and gloss over atrocities and colonization.<sup>52</sup> Prominent Japanese politicians (cabinet members and Diet members) continue to visit the Yasukuni Shrine. Prime ministerial visits resumed under Hashimoto and continued regularly under Koizumi. In most other areas, however, Japan's official policies of remembrance became significantly more contrite in this period.

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(working paper, Japan Policy Research Institute, 2001). For criticism, see Norma Field, "The Stakes of Apology," *Japan Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (October-December 1995).

<sup>49</sup> See the series *Japan in Modern History* (Tokyo: International Society for Educational Information, 1996); Norimitsu Onishi, "In Japan's New Textbooks, Rising Nationalism," *New York Times*, 17 April 2005.

<sup>50</sup> Russell Skelton, "Comfort Women 'Did it for money,'" *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 June 1996.

<sup>51</sup> Underwood, "Mitsubishi, Historical Revisionism," 15.

<sup>52</sup> Paul Murphy, "Yasukuni Museum Tugs at Heartstrings to Keep Military Memories Alive," *International Herald Tribune/Asahi Shinbun*, 15 August 2002; Howard W. French, "At a Military Museum, the Losers Write History," *New York Times*, 30 October 2002.

Outside the Japanese government, debates about Japan's past also intensified within wider society during this period. Whereas liberals supported contrition and pressed Tokyo to go even further than it had, conservatives argued against focusing on war and atrocities. As fiftieth anniversaries of wartime events came and went, the media extensively covered wartime issues. Liberal media and elites lambasted Yasukuni Shrine visits and called for greater admission of war guilt and contrition toward victims.<sup>53</sup>

Wider Japanese society was particularly active in the realm of education. As coverage of the war grew—the result of liberal activists' dogged efforts within the court system—conservatives protested increased textbook coverage of Japanese atrocities. They mobilized to write their own history textbooks that they felt inculcated a stronger and more positive sense of national identity. The Fuso-sha textbook focused chiefly on positive episodes of Japanese history and omitted atrocities such as the sex slaves. The MoE approved the book in 2001 and again in 2005, each time triggering international disputes.<sup>54</sup>

In sum, Japanese remembrance evolved substantially over the post-war period. Official denials and glorifications gave way to tepid apologies and later to contrition in the form of statements, some compensation, and increased textbook coverage. Growing contrition in the 1990s triggered a conservative counter-reaction and pushed the country toward a more nationalistic stance in the following decade.

### South Korean Perceptions of Japan

Japan's official remembrance has evolved significantly over time, but Koreans should not be reassured because of persistent and powerful voices of denial in Japanese society. The theory therefore predicts that Koreans, since World War II, should distrust Japanese intentions and link this distrust to Japan's unapologetic remembrance of past violence. Another factor expected to fuel Korean distrust is a lingering territorial dispute between the two countries over the Tokdo/Takeshima islands. Neither regime type nor international membership should be particularly influential in shaping Korean perceptions; the two countries were not mature democracies until the late 1990s, and they were not members of institutions that should be expected to significantly constrain their behavior or signal their benign intentions.

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<sup>53</sup> "Partners Give Final Pitch on Yasukuni," *Asahi News Service*, 11 August 2001. See also discussion in Tessa Morris-Suzuki, "Who is Responsible? The Yomiuri Project and the Enduring Legacy of the Asia-Pacific War," *Japan Focus*, 19 June 2007.

<sup>54</sup> Don Kirk, "History Texts Divide Japan and South Korea Again," *International Herald Tribune*, 10 July 2001; "Japan's Sins of Omission," *The Economist*, 14 April 2001; "Backlash Erupts Over Textbook Contents," *Daily Yomiuri*, 7 April 2005; "Japanese Schoolbooks Anger S. Korea, China," *Washington Post*, 6 April 2005.

## PERCEPTION OF INTENTIONS

Koreans have perceived the Japanese as having hostile intentions since the Second World War. In the early and middle periods, South Korean leaders frequently expressed their suspicions of Japan to the United States. ROK president Rhee Syngman warned U.S. officials, "We all have learned by harsh experience the ruthlessness of Japan's ambitions."<sup>55</sup> Rhee said he feared a "renewal of Japanese dominion over our nation" because Japan wanted to "revive its colonial policies" in Korea.<sup>56</sup> Foreign minister Pyun Yong-tae echoed these views, saying "that the Japanese government was intent, in the long range, upon reasserting its influence in Korea."<sup>57</sup> These statements, expressed frequently by the South Korean leadership, capture the intense distrust of Japan. There is no public opinion data from (authoritarian) South Korea during the early years after the war, but in the next period, South Korean public opinion polls reveal that distrust of Japan extended far beyond government officials; Koreans continued to associate Japan with militarism and colonial abuse.<sup>58</sup> According to a 1982 poll conducted by the newspaper *Kyonghyang Shinmun*, only 10 percent of respondents viewed Japan as "a friendly country."<sup>59</sup> As one scholar wrote, "There is no genuine friendship between the two peoples," and "the only interest Japan has in Korea is to aggrandize itself by exploiting whatever opportunity Korea provides."<sup>60</sup>

Even in the later period (1990s–2000s), the Korean public and elites frequently express suspicion of Japan. South Korea's UN ambassador Kim Sam-hoon noted that his government would not back Japan's bid for a UN Security Council seat because "there are limits for a country to play the role of a world leader if it doesn't have the trust of its neighboring countries."<sup>61</sup> Wrote one scholar, "Japan has failed to win the trust of Asians."<sup>62</sup> A newspaper noted that Japan is suspected "of edging toward resurrecting

<sup>55</sup> President Rhee to President Eisenhower, 29 December 1954, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Korea*, vol. 15, 1952–1954, part 2 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1984), 1937–41 (hereafter cited as *FRUS Korea*).

<sup>56</sup> President Rhee, quoted in Chae-Jin Lee and Hideo Sato, *U.S. Policy Toward Japan and Korea: A Changing Influence Relationship* (New York, Praeger, 1982), 26. Rhee argued that Japan was "a great menace than the communists." President Rhee, quoted in "The Recent and Prospective Foreign Relations of Japan (1956–61)," Declassified Documents Collection, Office of Intelligence Research, Intelligence Report no. 7331, Department of State, 12 September 1956, 10.

<sup>57</sup> Memorandum of Conversation, 17 October 1952, in *FRUS Korea*, vol. 15, 1952–1954, part 1 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1984).

<sup>58</sup> Kong Dan Oh, "Japan-Korea Rapprochement: A Study in Political, Cultural, and Economic Cooperation" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1986), 131–33.

<sup>59</sup> For poll data, see Hong N. Kim, "Japanese-South Korean Relations After the Park Assassination," *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies* 1 (December 1982): 86.

<sup>60</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *Japan and Korea: The Political Dimension* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 1–2.

<sup>61</sup> Lee Joo-hee, "Japan Textbook Changed For Worse," *Korea Herald*, 2 April 2005.

<sup>62</sup> Nam Si-uk, "Future of Korea-Japan Relations," *Korea Focus* 3, no. 6 (1995): 28.

militarism.”<sup>63</sup> In poll data, Koreans consistently rank Japan near or at the bottom of the list of nations they like and trust.<sup>64</sup>

*Reasoning of Observers.* South Koreans explain their distrust of Japan by citing two prominent factors: the Tokdo/Takeshima territorial dispute and Japan’s unapologetic remembrance. Soon after the war, South Korean political organizations and newspapers focused public attention on the island dispute and argued that Japan’s claims were proof of continued “sinister designs.”<sup>65</sup> The issue was not prominent during the middle period—South Korean president Park Chung-hee had “agreed to disagree” with Japan about the islands in order to normalize relations in 1965—but it later re-emerged. Koreans routinely protest the issue in Seoul; one protest linked the dispute to “Japan’s militaristic ambitions to invade other territories.”<sup>66</sup> An editorial in *Dong-a Ilbo* dismissed “Japan’s absurd claim” to the islands and said that Tokyo’s refusal to renounce ownership would “only serve to heighten suspicion among [Japan’s] neighbors.”<sup>67</sup>

Koreans also explicitly linked their distrust to Japan’s unapologetic remembrance. In a private memorandum to Korean diplomats, Rhee argued, “What we most need from Japan is concrete and constructive evidence of repentance for past misdeeds and of a new determination to deal fairly with us now and in the future.”<sup>68</sup> Rhee also wrote, “In the absence of [apologies], one could understand why we Koreans have believed that the Japanese intent is not to be friendly toward the ROK but to redominate Korea. . . .”<sup>69</sup> While distrust of Japan by the anti-Japanese Rhee is unsurprising, president Park Chung-hee later expressed similar views. Park said, “It is the consensus of our national sentiment that Japan’s normal reflection on and legal expression of its regret for its past aggression should precede any cooperation with Japan on our part.”<sup>70</sup> The Korean National Assembly adopted a

<sup>63</sup> “Japan’s View of History,” *Korea Herald*, 7 May 1994.

<sup>64</sup> In a 1996 survey, Korean respondents described their feelings toward seventeen countries on a scale from zero (dislike) to 100 (like). Japan was ranked second to last (41), above North Korea (27), in the company of Libya and Iran. For poll data, see Sook-jong Lee, “Korea and Japan: Engaged but Distant,” in *The Future of Korea-Japan Relations*, ed. Robert Dujarric (Washington, DC: Hudson Institute, 2002), 102. In 2001, Koreans reported that the countries they disliked the most were Japan (63 percent), followed by North Korea (11 percent), the United States (7 percent), and China (3 percent). *Chun-ang Ilbo* newspaper poll, 21 September 2001, <http://bric.postech.ac.kr/bbs/daily/krnews> (accessed October 2001).

<sup>65</sup> Sung-hwa Cheong, *The Politics of Anti-Japanese Sentiment in Korea: Japanese-South Korean Relations under American Occupation, 1945–1952* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 40–45.

<sup>66</sup> “Civic Group Calls for Mori’s Apology for His Remarks on Tokdo,” Yonhap Wire Service, 6 October 2000, trans. in *FBIS Daily Report: South Korea*.

<sup>67</sup> “Japan’s Absurd Claim on Tokdo Island,” *Dong-a Ilbo*, 11 February 1996, trans. in *Korea Focus* 4, no. 1 (1996): 97–98.

<sup>68</sup> President Rhee, quoted in Lee, *Japan and Korea*, 37.

<sup>69</sup> President Rhee, letter published in *Mainichi Shinbun*, 21 December 1955, quoted in Kwan Bong Kim, *The Korea-Japan Treaty Crisis and the Instability of the Korean Political System* (New York: Praeger, 1971), 44.

<sup>70</sup> President Park, quoted in Kim, *The Korea-Japan Treaty Crisis*, 45.

resolution demanding such a gesture in 1961. Koreans did express cautious praise of the tepid apologies issued in 1965 and then 1984.<sup>71</sup> Denials by Japanese officials, however, attracted more attention.<sup>72</sup> ROK foreign minister Choi Kwang-soo lamented Japanese Education Minister Fujio's "outrageous remarks," saying they would destabilize bilateral relations.<sup>73</sup> Fujio's statements, noted the *Korea Times*, showed that Japan remained a nation interested in militarism and colonialism.<sup>74</sup> Another editorial characterized Fujio's remarks as "a shrewd 'venture' by Japanese conservatives to restore Japan's pre-war 'glory.'"<sup>75</sup> In addition, Koreans expressed alarm about perceived whitewashing of Japanese textbooks. Newspapers ran outraged editorials on Japanese textbooks, and rallies erupted across the country in protest.<sup>76</sup> One scholar wrote that Koreans should be wary of "Japan's basic stance toward its Asian neighbors as well as Tokyo's ulterior motives in revising the textbooks."<sup>77</sup>

In the late period, Koreans acknowledged and praised Japanese apologies but said the Japanese cannot be trusted because Japan's contrition is contradicted by denials and justifications. Japan's conservative history textbooks and leaders' visits to the Yasukuni shrine, argued President Roh Moo-hyun, "nullify all the reflection and apologies Japan has so far made."<sup>78</sup> After Koizumi visited Yasukuni, a *Chungang Ilbo* editorial lamented, "How can Japan be trusted. . . ?"<sup>79</sup> After a Japanese cabinet official called the Rape of Nanking a "fabrication," one Korean editorial commented, "Japan has made, retracted and apologized for such outrageous statements so often that we

<sup>71</sup> See articles in *A New Era in Korea-Japan Relations*.

<sup>72</sup> Kim, *The Korea-Japan Treaty Crisis*.

<sup>73</sup> "Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Japan Postponed," Yonhap Wire Service, 8 September 1986, trans. in *FBIS Daily Report: South Korea*. Prime Minister Roh Shin-yong emphasized that the problem was not Fujio, specifically, but Japanese attitudes more broadly. "No Sing-yong, NKDP Discuss Fujio Remarks," Yonhap Wire Service, 11 September 1986, trans. in *FBIS Daily Report: South Korea*.

<sup>74</sup> "Japanese Absurdity," *Korea Times*, 9 September 1986, trans. in *FBIS Daily Report: South Korea*.

<sup>75</sup> "Firm Diplomatic Stance," *Korea Times*, 10 September 1986, trans. in *FBIS Daily Report: South Korea*.

<sup>76</sup> "What is Required Is to Immediately Take Corrective Action," *Hanguk Ilbo*, 5 August 1982; "'Stronger' Reaction Urged," Yonhap Wire Service, 3 August 1982, trans. in *FBIS Daily Report: South Korea*; "Rallies Protest Textbooks," Yonhap Wire Service, 5 August 1982, trans. in *FBIS Daily Report: South Korea*; "Rallies Protest Textbooks," *Korea Herald*, 11 August 1982.

<sup>77</sup> Kim, "Japanese-South Korean Relations After the Park Assassination," 83, 85.

<sup>78</sup> Roh Moo-hyun, "Letter to the Korean People," *Korea.net*, 25 March 2005.

<sup>79</sup> "Editorial," *Chungang Ilbo*, 22 April 2002, trans. in *FBIS Daily Report: South Korea*, 23 April 2002. Koreans were so embittered by Koizumi's visit to the shrine and by the textbook crisis, they ignored his remarkable apology in October after his shrine visit. See "Diplomacy with Japan," *Choson Ilbo*, 15 October 2001. For other coverage of the Yasukuni issue, see "S. Korea's ruling party holds rally to protest Yasukuni visit," Kyodo News Service, 17 August 2001, trans. in *FBIS Daily Report: Japan*; "Civic Groups Voice Opposition to Koizumi Visit," Yonhap Wire Service, 24 February 2003; Jonathan Watts, "Japan's Asian Neighbors Outraged by Junichiro Koizumi's Custom-Breaking Tribute," *The Guardian*, 14 August 2001.

can hardly distinguish what reflects Japan's true intentions."<sup>80</sup> Scholar Kim Kyong-min similarly opined, "Japan has tried to distort the history of its aggressive war and deny culpability in the issue of its sex slaves. Under these circumstances, who would trust Japan?"<sup>81</sup> In 1995, the vague Diet Resolution and its contentious debate dismayed Koreans and, according to Korean scholar Hahnkyu Park, "reinforced Asian suspicions that Japanese attitudes about its militarist past had not really changed."<sup>82</sup>

Koreans were also alarmed by Japanese education policies.<sup>83</sup> "We can no longer stand by," argued President Roh, saying that the *Fuso-sha* textbook showed Tokyo's "intention to achieve hegemony again."<sup>84</sup> According to an editorial, approval of the text demonstrated by the MoE revealed "the lingering influence of militarist sentiment in Japan";<sup>85</sup> another newspaper commented that the nationalism evident in Japanese textbooks was designed to "place Japan on a more militarist footing."<sup>86</sup> In sum, throughout the post-World War II period, Japanese denials and glorification are not merely coincident with Korean distrust; Koreans explained their suspicions with frequent references to Tokyo's unapologetic remembrance.

#### PERCEPTION OF THREAT

Did Korean distrust translate to fears of Japan as a security threat? Since World War II, Korean assessments of the threat from Japan have been driven largely by an assessment of Japanese capabilities—especially the constraining effect of the U.S.-Japan alliance—rather than by concerns over Japanese remembrance. In short, when Japan appeared unconstrained, Koreans feared Japan; when Japan appeared constrained, Korean fears abated.

Prior to 1960, Korean leaders doubted the staying power of the U.S.-Japan alliance, and they feared Japan as a result. In 1954, President Rhee argued that Koreans were "caught between our fears of Japan on one side,

<sup>80</sup> "Japanese Diet Should Clarify Responsibility for Past Atrocities," *Dong-a Ilbo*, 7 May 1994, trans. in *Korea Focus* 2, no. 3 (1994): 142–43.

<sup>81</sup> Kim Kyong-min, "Why is Japan Distrusted?" *Dong-a Ilbo*, 8 May 1995.

<sup>82</sup> Hahnkyu Park, "Between Caution and Cooperation: The ROK-Japan Security Relationship in the Post-Cold War Period," Korea Institute of Defense Analysis, <http://www.kida.re.kr/english/journal/park.htm>. Koreans were particularly incensed about Watanabe Michio's statements. See 6 June 1995 editorials cited in "Watanabe Remarks on Japan Colonial Rule Decried," trans. in *FBIS Daily Report: South Korea*, 7 June 1995.

<sup>83</sup> "Japan Attempts to Whitewash its Past," *Korea Herald*, 15 September 2000; "Teaching Sadistic History?" *Korea Herald*, 22 February 2001; Shin Il-Chul, "Counting on Japan's Sense of Right and Wrong," *Dong-a Ilbo*, 8 June 2001, trans. in *Korea Focus* 9, no. 4 (2001): 15–16; "Rocky Relations with Japan," *Chungang Ilbo*, 9 July 2001, trans. in *FBIS Daily Report: South Korea*, 10 July 2001.

<sup>84</sup> Roh, "Letter to the Korean People." See also "Japanese Foreign Minister Scolded for History Comments," *Yonhap Wire Service*, 25 April 2005.

<sup>85</sup> "Japan Attempts to Whitewash its Past"; "Teaching Sadistic History?"

<sup>86</sup> President Rhee, quoted in Shin, "Counting on Japan's Sense of Right and Wrong."

and of the Communists on the other.”<sup>87</sup> Korean officials lobbied the United States for weapons that would give them military parity with Japan, and they urged Washington not to rearm the Japanese.<sup>88</sup> Two events in the 1960s, however, reassured Koreans that the United States intended to remain in the region: the renewal of the U.S.-Japan security treaty in 1960 and the continued U.S. presence after Japan-ROK normalization in 1965. Although Korean leaders continued to distrust Japanese intentions, they grew confident that the United States would prevent Japanese recidivism. Strikingly, Seoul began to support an increased Japanese military role in the U.S.-Japan alliance, abandoned efforts to maintain military parity, and agreed to diplomatic normalization and expanded military contacts.<sup>89</sup> This trend continues throughout the late period; the U.S.-Japan alliance remains strong, and Korean threat perception remains low.<sup>90</sup> South Korean policy confirms these views about Japan: the ROK military is not configured to meet maritime threats, and Seoul is seeking greater security cooperation with Japan.<sup>91</sup>

*Reasoning of Observers.* Koreans explicitly link their threat perception of Japan to the alliance constraint. In the 1950s, Rhee worried that the United States might not remain militarily committed to East Asia and constantly pressed American diplomats for security guarantees against Japan.<sup>92</sup> Rhee and many other Koreans opposed ROK-Japan diplomatic normalization because they feared it might permit Washington to “hand-off” South Korea to the Japanese.<sup>93</sup> When the United States and Japan renewed their alliance in 1960, Korean leaders began to support any policies aimed at prolonging and strengthening the alliance, including Japan’s military buildup and new

<sup>87</sup> President Rhee to President Eisenhower, 29 December 1954, in *FRUS Korea*, vol. 15, 1952–1954, part 2 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1984), 1937–41.

<sup>88</sup> Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs (Robertson), memorandum to the Secretary of State, no. 665, *FRUS China/Japan*, vol. 15, 1952–1954, part 2 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1985), 1465–69.

<sup>89</sup> For example, Japan’s move to patrol the sea lanes out to 1,000 miles was called “a positive response” to burden-sharing pressures from Washington. *Korea Herald*, 10 May 1981. A former Ministry of National Defense (MND) official wrote that in this period “a phenomenal expansion in Korean-Japanese military contacts is noticeable.” Yong-Ok Park, *Korean-Japanese-American Triangle: Problems and Prospects* (RAND Report P-7138, September 1985), 14. For details of Japanese-Korean cooperation in this period, see Victor D. Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism: The US-Korea-Japan Security Triangle* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

<sup>90</sup> Regarding the strength of the U.S.-Japan alliance, in 1997 the United States and Japan signed the Guidelines for Defense Cooperation, and Japan later became a more active participant in U.S. military operations, such as the U.S. occupation in Iraq. Elizabeth Becker, “Bush to Face Asian Fears of New U.S. Unilateralism,” *New York Times*, 17 October 2003. Regarding Korean threat perception, I assessed this in part through interviews conducted in South Korea in 2000 and 2001. A common sentiment was expressed by an MND official, who said, “Certainly I don’t see Japan as a threat today.” Interview with the director of the MND’s study group on military modernization, Ministry of National Defense, Seoul, October 2000.

<sup>91</sup> Ralph Cossa, ed., *U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations: Building toward a ‘Virtual Alliance’* (Washington, DC: CSIS Press, 1999).

<sup>92</sup> President Rhee, quoted in Cheong, *The Politics of Anti-Japanese Sentiment*, 27–28.

<sup>93</sup> Cha, *Alignment Despite Antagonism*, 32.

military roles in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>94</sup> As the Foreign Ministry explained, “The more military commitments the United States makes in Asia, the less possibility of Japan actively operating militarily in Asia.”<sup>95</sup> Scholar Rhee Kyu-ho bluntly explained, “The presence of U.S. forces in Japan at present is not so much to protect Japan as to contribute to the stability of the entire Asian region by restraining Japanese power...”<sup>96</sup> In sum, Korean threat perception of Japan is primarily driven by Japanese capabilities—specifically, the constraint of the U.S.-Japan alliance.

Japanese capabilities, however, are not the only factors affecting Korean threat perception. Distrust of Japanese intentions—rooted in both the remembrance and territorial claims issues—elevates Korean fears. Although most Koreans do not regard Japan as a current threat, they do see it as a threat for the future. In poll data from the early- and mid-2000s, 40 to 60 percent of respondents identify Japan as Korea’s next threat.<sup>97</sup> The Ministry of National Defense identifies principal future threats as Japan and China and emphasizes the need to increase Korean maritime power.<sup>98</sup> Koreans only perceive a current low level of threat from Japan because they view it as contained. Japan, in other words, is viewed as a dangerous animal tied up with a thick chain. Korean distrust—and the widespread view that Japan needs to be contained—is rooted largely in Japan’s denials of past violence, as well as the territorial dispute.

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<sup>94</sup> On Korean support for Japan’s expanded military role in the 1980s, see Sang-il Han, “Japan’s Defense Capability and Defense Policy,” *Korea and World Affairs* 7, no. 4 (Winter 1983): 677–709; Chongwhi Kim, “Korea-Japan Relations and Japan’s Security Role,” *Korea and World Affairs* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1988). For Korea’s support in the 1990s, see “ROK Foreign Ministry Welcomes U.S.-Japan Security Declaration,” Yonhap Wire Service, 18 April 1996, trans. in *FBIS Daily Report: South Korea*; Han Sung-joo, “New U.S.-Japan Security Ties,” *Dong-a Ilbo*, 28 April 1996; Kim Woo-sang, “New U.S.-Japan Defense Guidelines,” *Joong-ang Ilbo*, 12 June 1997, trans. in *Korea Focus* 5, no. 4 (1997).

<sup>95</sup> “ROK Foreign Ministry Welcomes U.S.-Japan Security Declaration.”

<sup>96</sup> Rhee Kyu-ho, “A Review of Korea-Japan Relations,” *Shin Dong-A Monthly*, February 1995, trans. in *Korea Focus* 3, no. 2 (1995): 21.

<sup>97</sup> A minority of Koreans say that Japan is a current threat, with 21 percent expressing this view in 2001 and 37 percent in 2005. Other polls suggest, however, that a larger fraction of Koreans view Japan as the most likely future threat. In 1996, 54 percent of Koreans said Japan posed the “greatest future danger to Korea’s military security,” and another poll that same year found that 60 percent of Koreans identified Japan as their country’s next security threat. For the 2001 poll results, see [http://www.harrisinteractive.com/harris\\_poll/printerfriend/index.asp?PID=218](http://www.harrisinteractive.com/harris_poll/printerfriend/index.asp?PID=218) (accessed July 2006). For the 2005 results, see *Chungang Ilbo*, 17 April 2005. The first 1996 poll is from Norman D. Levin, *The Shape of Korea’s Future: South Korean Attitudes Toward Unification and Long-Term Security Issues* (Santa Monica: RAND, 1999), 18. For the second 1996 poll, see [http://bric.postech.ac.kr/bbs.daily/knews/200109\\_2/20010921\\_4.html](http://bric.postech.ac.kr/bbs.daily/knews/200109_2/20010921_4.html) (accessed October 2000). For additional public opinion data, see Sook-Jong Lee, “Korean Perceptions and National Security,” *Korea Focus* 3 (1995): 13–23.

<sup>98</sup> “National Security and the Defense Budget in the 21st Century,” memorandum, August 2000, Korean Ministry of National Defense. Portions of document were published in *Dong-a Ilbo*, 19–20 August 2000; “New Interests Spur Force Development,” *Jane’s Defence Weekly*, 22 May 1996.

## FINDINGS: REMEMBRANCE AND RECONCILIATION IN JAPAN-ROK RELATIONS

This case study yields three important findings. First, Japanese denials and glorifications have fueled Korean distrust of Japanese intentions. Not only has Japan's unapologetic remembrance coincided with Korean distrust, Koreans explicitly link their distrust to Japanese denials. Second, Korean perceptions of threat are tied closely to fluctuations in Japanese capabilities, but they are also affected by Japan's unapologetic remembrance. Koreans are reassured by the fact that Japan is contained, but they fear a U.S. withdrawal from the region because that would empower Japan to act on its perceived hostile intentions. Thus this case study supports the weak version of the theory: unapologetic remembrance fuels distrust of intentions, but the presence of other reassuring factors (in this case, the constraint of the U.S.-Japan alliance) can mitigate a sense of threat.

Third, the Japan case reveals an important finding about the risks associated with "coming to terms with the past." Many of the Japanese denials that fueled Korean suspicions were triggered by official contrition. Apologies issued by Japanese leaders repeatedly prompted denials from other politicians; increased textbook coverage of war crimes led conservatives to write patriotic textbooks that whitewashed past atrocities. Japanese contrition caused backlash, and this backlash alarmed South Koreans.

## REMEMBRANCE AND FRANCO-GERMAN RECONCILIATION

## West German Remembrance

In the early years after the Second World War's end, West Germany took the important step of acknowledging Germany's past crimes, but its remembrance evinced rampant amnesia and preoccupation with its own wartime suffering.<sup>99</sup> Significantly, as Jeffrey Herf writes, "No major national political figure in East or West Germany publicly raised doubts about whether or not the Nazi regime had actually carried out a genocide of European Jewry and waged a race war on the Eastern front." FRG chancellor Konrad Adenauer spearheaded legislation to pay reparations to Israel. As he said in 1951, "In the name of the German people. . . unspeakable crimes were committed which require moral and material restitution."<sup>100</sup> In the 1952 Luxembourg Agreement, Bonn agreed to pay Israel approximately US\$5 billion and in the years after the war would pay out much more cash and aid.<sup>101</sup> The

<sup>99</sup> After World War II, East Germany offered no contrition for Nazi crimes and was resolutely hostile toward Israel. This article examines only West German remembrance.

<sup>100</sup> Herf, *Divided Memory*, 207, 282.

<sup>101</sup> Otto R. Romberg and Heiner Lichtenstein, *Thirty Years of Diplomatic Relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and Israel* (Frankfurt: Tribune Books, 1995). Calculation is DM 3.5 billion, then US\$800 million. In 1952, US\$1 = DM 4.195. Historical exchange rates from PACIFIC Exchange Rate Service, <http://fx.sauder.ubc.ca>. Deflators from U.S. Office of Management and Budget, 2005.

Bundestag subsequently passed the “BEG” and “BRÜG” laws, which paid out reparations to hundreds of thousands of different claims in several different countries, amounting over the postwar era to upwards of US\$60 billion dollars.<sup>102</sup> Such reparations were an important part of Bonn’s acknowledgment and atonement for German crimes.

At the same time, West German remembrance in these early years reflected amnesia and preoccupation with Germany’s own wartime suffering. For example, in his speech announcing reparations, Adenauer emphasized German resistance efforts and assured the people that “in an overwhelming majority, the German people abhorred the crimes committed against the Jews and did not participate in them.”<sup>103</sup> He and other West German leaders fought denazification, and when the Germans regained sovereign control of the FRG, they initially made no effort to bring Nazi perpetrators to justice.<sup>104</sup> Early commemoration (the National Day of Mourning) “obliterated distinctions between perpetrators, bystanders, and victims.”<sup>105</sup> There were no national ceremonies commemorating the end of the war, and West German education glossed over contemporary political history, “Very little was said about Nazism. Next to nothing was taught in the schools . . . .Critical enquiry into the German past was discouraged.”<sup>106</sup>

Wider German society was divided about the need to atone for the past. Leaders of the minority German Left exhorted their countrymen to remember past crimes.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, it was only with the Left’s support that Adenauer was able to push through the otherwise highly unpopular policy of reparations to Israel.<sup>108</sup> West German historiography in the two decades after the war pinned all responsibility for the war onto Hitler and reflected little interest in German atrocities.<sup>109</sup> In sum, denials or glorifications of the Hitler era were not heard in public debates, and Bonn did acknowledge its past crimes

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<sup>102</sup> “BEG” is an abbreviation for *Bundesentschädigungsgesetz*, or the Supplementary Federal Law for the Compensation of the Victims of National Socialist Persecution, passed 1 October 1953. The law was supplemented later by the “BRÜG” law, or the Federal Restitution Law (*Bundesrückerstattungsgesetz*). See German Information Office website, <http://www.germany-info.org>.

<sup>103</sup> Herf, *Divided Memory*, 282.

<sup>104</sup> Norman Frei, *Adenauer’s Germany and the Nazi Past*, trans. Joel Golb (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

<sup>105</sup> Jeffrey Herf, “Legacies of Divided Memory for German Debates About the Holocaust in the 1990s,” *German Politics and Society* 17, no. 52 (Fall 1999): 15

<sup>106</sup> Richard J. Evans, *In Hitler’s Shadow: West German Historians and the Attempt to Escape from the Nazi Past* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), 11. See also Alfred Grosser, *The Colossus Again: Western Germany from Defeat to Rearmament*, trans. Richard Rees (New York: Praeger, 1955), 166–67.

<sup>107</sup> Herf, *Divided Memory*.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>109</sup> R.J.B. Bosworth, *Explaining Auschwitz and Hiroshima: History Writing and the Second World War 1945–1990* (London: Routledge, 1993); Harold Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933–2001* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 210, 217; Evans, *In Hitler’s Shadow*, 113–14, 73–74.

through key reparations policies. West Germans, however, had yet to begin their remarkable “coming to terms with the past.”<sup>110</sup>

Starting in the mid-1960s—due to the electoral victories of the West German Left, as well as the pursuit of *Ostpolitik*—German remembrance grew much more contrite. In the judicial realm, Bonn began prosecuting perpetrators of World War II human rights abuses. Between 1960 and 1979, the Bundestag held four landmark debates about extending the statute of limitations on crimes of murder; the statute was eventually repealed altogether, permitting continued prosecutions.<sup>111</sup> The Bundestag also continued to expand FRG reparations policy.

Leaders began discussing past atrocities and issuing apologies. The 8 May anniversaries of the German defeat were now observed as occasions to mourn and apologize for German-inflicted suffering.<sup>112</sup> In 1978 chancellor Helmut Schmidt charged Germans to reflect on the past, saying that *Kristallnacht* (the anti-Jewish pogrom of 9-10 November 1938) and the complaisance of ordinary Germans in persecuting Jews was “a cause of bitterness and shame.”<sup>113</sup> In 1985 on the fortieth anniversary of Bergen-Belsen’s liberation, chancellor Helmut Kohl gave a speech in which he enumerated Nazi crimes and exhorted Germans to remember their past.<sup>114</sup> Leaders also offered apologies in their pursuit of *Ostpolitik*. Willy Brandt fell to his knees at Poland’s Warsaw Ghetto memorial in 1970, and Helmut Schmidt would later visit Auschwitz-Birkenau.<sup>115</sup>

In stark contrast to the evasion of the previous era, the FRG began educating the public about Nazi crimes. Educators became alarmed by apparent ignorance about the Nazi era among German youth and as a result implemented education reforms.<sup>116</sup> Bonn participated in multilateral UNESCO textbook commissions, and textbooks began to reflect greater coverage of

<sup>110</sup> David C. Art, *The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Frei, *Adenauer’s Germany*; Robert G. Moeller, “War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany,” *American Historical Review* 101, no. 4 (October 1996).

<sup>111</sup> Herf, *Divided Memory*, 338; Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau*, 214.

<sup>112</sup> The speeches of 8 May were given by Federal president Gustave Heinmann (1970), president Walter Scheel (1975), and Federal president Richard Von Weizsäcker (1985). Jeffrey K. Olick, “Genre Memories and Memory Genres: A Dialogical Analysis of May 8, 1945 Commemorations in the Federal Republic of Germany,” *American Sociological Review* 64, no. 3 (1999).

<sup>113</sup> Schmidt noted that most Germans alive then were “individually free from blame” but that they “can become guilty, too, if they fail to recognize the responsibility for what happens today and tomorrow deriving from what happened then.” Helmut Schmidt, quoted in Herf, *Divided Memory*, 347.

<sup>114</sup> Hartmann, *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective*, 244.

<sup>115</sup> See Herf, *Divided Memory*, 346; Dennis L. Bark and David R. Gress, *A History of West Germany*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 446; Evans, *In Hitler’s Shadow*, 17.

<sup>116</sup> The impetus for this increased attention to West German history education is frequently attributed to the horrified reaction of West Germans to anti-Semitic vandalism that occurred across the country in the late 1950s. Synagogues and Jewish cemeteries were desecrated. See Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau*; Olick, “Genre Memories,” 210.

the Nazi era. Concentration camp sites were memorialized with educational exhibitions.<sup>117</sup>

During this time period, war remembrance was encouraged not only by liberal political leadership but also by broader social forces. Part of the diverse agenda of the 1968 student and social movement were calls for greater understanding of German actions during the Third Reich. Thousands of school children participated in nationwide history essay contests. Many delved into the Nazi era; most famously, Anja Rosmus—celebrated in the film “The Nasty Girl”—uncovered a wealth of information about her town’s treatment of Jews and complicity in the Holocaust. Such local history projects unearthed and disseminated greater detail about the Nazi period. In Berlin, city officials erected memorials commemorating the Holocaust.<sup>118</sup>

West German historiography shifted away from chronicling German suffering and began to focus more on German guilt.<sup>119</sup> Historians began exploring Holocaust scholarship; Fritz Fischer’s studies on the outbreak of the First World War forced Germans to confront their culpability in the Second. Scholars began to disparage research that persisted in the 1950s tradition of emphasizing German victimhood.<sup>120</sup>

Germany’s growing confrontation with the past in the 1960s and 1970s was not without domestic controversy; many conservative politicians and intellectuals argued for “drawing a line under the past.”<sup>121</sup> Chancellor Helmut Schmidt said in 1975 that Germans should focus on FRG achievements since the end of the war. “We Germans,” he said, “do not need to go around in hair shirts in perpetuity.”<sup>122</sup> Chancellor Kohl argued that he and his generation enjoyed a “grace of late birth” (*die Gnade der späten Geburt*), rendering them innocent of Nazi crimes.<sup>123</sup> In 1986, an academic debate among historians (*Historikerstreit*) prompted national controversy when conservative scholars argued that the war and Holocaust had been conducted in self-defense against the Soviet threat. Liberal historians such as Jürgen Habermas deplored what they saw as a revisionist trend in West German historiography.<sup>124</sup> Commemoration with NATO allies (at Verdun and Bitburg) also

<sup>117</sup> Rudy Koshar, *Germany’s Transient Pasts: Preservation and National Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1998), 246. On German education, see Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau*; Walter Stahl, ed., *Education for Democracy in West Germany* (New York: Praeger, 1961), 117.

<sup>118</sup> Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past*, 205–06, 24.

<sup>119</sup> Saul Friedlander, “Some German Struggles With Memory,” in *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective*, ed. Geoffrey Hartman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 26–42; Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau*.

<sup>120</sup> See, for example, the controversy over Helmut Diwald’s work, discussed in Evans, *In Hitler’s Shadow*, 15, 113; Rabinbach, “Beyond Bitburg,” 200.

<sup>121</sup> Olick, “Genre Memories,” 389. Gustave Heinmann, Franz-Josef Strauss, Karl Carstens, and Alfred Dregger made similar statements. Evans, *In Hitler’s Shadow*, 19, 55.

<sup>122</sup> Olick, “Genre Memories,” 392; Siobhan Kattago, “Representing German Victimhood and Guilt: The Neue Wache and Unified German Memory,” *German Politics and Society* 16, no. 3 (Fall 1998): 96.

<sup>123</sup> Kattago, “Representing German Victimhood and Guilt,” 96; Olick, “Genre Memories,” 392.

<sup>124</sup> Bark and Gress, *A History of West Germany*, chap. 5; Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau*, 365.

reflected less emphasis on German crimes. Ultimately, domestic controversy over this trend coalesced in a new, bi-partisan commitment toward greater remembrance.<sup>125</sup>

Remembrance in unified Germany has been highly contrite. Leaders offer frequent apologies, and commemoration (notably the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and numerous other monuments in Berlin) reflects candid admission of atrocities.<sup>126</sup> Teaching of contemporary history is prominent in German education. As Yasemin Soysal writes, textbooks provide “extensive and negative coverage of the Nazi history as a time of violence, persecution, death, and destruction.”<sup>127</sup>

German society also supports remembrance of Nazi crimes. People urging the country to move on are sharply criticized in national debates, as evidenced by the controversies over remarks by novelist Martin Walser, the fiftieth anniversary of the surrender, and the *Neue Wache* monument.<sup>128</sup> Lingering myths about the innocence of the German Army and public were demolished by the “Crimes of the *Wehrmacht*” museum exhibition. The German public’s embrace of American scholar Daniel Jonah Goldhagen (author of *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*) reflected a widespread willingness to remember and atone.<sup>129</sup>

### French Perceptions of Germany

An examination of German remembrance—and French perceptions of Germany since World War II—reveals two key findings.<sup>130</sup> First, this case bolsters the finding from the Japanese-ROK case about the harmful effects of denials. Immediately after the war, the French feared the revival of German nationalism and militarism. In their occupation policies they sought to contain this danger through education reforms that discouraged whitewashing and mythmaking about Germany’s recent violence. Politician Jean Le Bail worried about “nationalistic and chauvinistic” trends in Germany and argued that future generations “could become, if we do not keep watch, equally

<sup>125</sup> Art, *Politics of the Nazi Past*. On NATO commemoration, see Olick, “Genre Memories,” 395.

<sup>126</sup> Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past*; James A. Young, “Berlin’s Holocaust Memorial,” *German Politics and Society* 17, no. 3 (Fall 1999).

<sup>127</sup> Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal, “Identity and Transnationalization in German School Textbooks,” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 30, no. 2 (1998): 57.

<sup>128</sup> Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past*, chap. 7. Walser, in a 1998 speech, famously lamented the “ritualization” of the German past and the “exploitation” of this past for current political goals. On the fiftieth anniversary controversies, see Karl Wilds, “Identity Creation and the Culture of Contrition: Recasting ‘Normality’ in the Berlin Republic,” *German Politics* 9, no.1 (April 2000): 94.

<sup>129</sup> Josef Joffe, “Goldhagen in Germany,” *New York Review of Books* 43, no. 19 (28 November 1996): 18-21. On the museum exhibit, see Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau*, 380.

<sup>130</sup> Space constraints prevent a more complete analysis of French perceptions of West Germany after the war. A longer analysis finds that French perceptions were strongly influenced also by Germany’s participation in European institution-building and by Germany’s handling of territorial claims. See Lind, *Sorry States*, chap. 3.

dangerous. . . .”<sup>131</sup> Thus French educators insisted that “books and syllabus must be fundamentally revised, ‘not only from the angle of de-Nazification but also from all traces of an aggressive spirit.’”<sup>132</sup> As part of this effort, the French and West Germans collaborated on textbook writing through UNESCO. Bonn’s acknowledgment of past crimes—the absence of denials and justifications of German violence within mainstream West German discourse—was thus a key step toward bilateral reconciliation. French scholar Alfred Grosser argued that the Federal Republic had to “accept responsibility for Germany’s appalling heritage in order to be once again respected among nations and recognized as the true successor as the undivided Reich. The mention of Nazi atrocities in schoolbooks and elsewhere was a necessary sign of democratization and moral rehabilitation of postwar Germany.”<sup>133</sup>

In subsequent decades, the French continued to watch West Germany’s national debates and expressed trepidation at signs that Germans were beginning to forget past crimes. The French praised German willingness to come to terms with the past. For example, on the dedication of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, an article in *La Croix* commented that sixty years after the war’s end, Germany showed that “she observes her past squarely and that her democracy rests on the conscience of the Shoah.”<sup>134</sup> *Le Monde* praised “the acceptance within Germany of its historic responsibility vis-à-vis the victims of Nazism.”<sup>135</sup>

The French also expressed concerns about revisionist trends in West German memory and what this signaled for the country’s foreign policy. In the 1980s, commentators wondered “about this impatience [to forget] that manifests itself in contemporary German society.”<sup>136</sup> During the *Historikerstreit*, some French observers expressed fears of West German revisionism. *Le Monde* correspondent Daniel Vernet wrote that some Germans apparently wish “to minimize Germany’s responsibility.”<sup>137</sup> Other observers, however, praised the debate as “the pride of the democracy of Bonn.”<sup>138</sup> After

<sup>131</sup> Jean Le Bail, quoted in Alfred Grosser, “Germany and France: A Confrontation,” in *France Defeats* EDC, ED. Daniel Lerner and Raymond Aron (New York: Praeger, 1957), 70.

<sup>132</sup> Helen Liddell, “Introduction,” in *L’éducation De L’Allemagne Occupée*, ED. Helen Liddell, Edmond Vermeil, and Bogdan Suchodolski (Paris: Librairie Marcel Riviere et Cie, 1949).

<sup>133</sup> Alfred Grosser, *Germany in Our Time*, trans. Paul Stephenson (New York: Praeger, 1970), 212-23. Also arguing for the importance of German acknowledgement of Nazi-era crimes are Jean Solchany, *Comprendre Le Nazisme Dans L’Allemagne Des Années Zero 1945-1949* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997); Edouard Husson, *Une Culpabilité Ordinaire? Hitler, les Allemands, et La Shoab* (Paris: François-Xavier de Guibert, 1997).

<sup>134</sup> Blandine Milcent, “L’Allemagne veut regarder son passé en face et au Coeur de Berlin,” *La Croix*, 10 May 2005.

<sup>135</sup> Henri de Bresson and Georges Marion, “Depuis soixante ans, les difficiles étapes qui ont mené à une commémoration commune,” *Le Monde*, 5 June 2004.

<sup>136</sup> Luc Rosenzweig, *Le Monde*, 22 January 1987.

<sup>137</sup> Daniel Vernet, “Le Scandale Jennings en RFA L’ombre Portée du Nazisme,” *Le Monde*, 14 November 1988.

<sup>138</sup> Irène Kruse, “Le Mémorial de l’Holocauste de Berlin,” *Vingtième Siecle* 67 (2000): 25.

unification, one scholar wrote that Europeans feared “the resurgence of Germany’s old demons,” which pressured “the reunified German state to assume, in visible fashion, its historical culpability to the world.”<sup>139</sup> Concerned over how unification might affect German memory, Vernet lamented, “This seems to be the hour in which Germans rediscover themselves as victims.”<sup>140</sup> Gerhard Schröder’s ascent was accompanied by fears that he was less committed to German contrition than his predecessors.<sup>141</sup> Observers argued that the debate sparked by comments of Martin Walser showed “the fragility” of the German “consensus over the relationship to the Nazi past.”<sup>142</sup>

This case study also reveals a second finding that Franco-German reconciliation did not require much in the way of contrition. France and Germany’s rapprochement, which occurred in the late 1950s, preceded most of Germany’s extraordinary campaign of atonement (and required no German contrition toward France specifically). Grosser noted that whereas in 1944 the French view had been “no enemy but Germany,” by 1960 this had shifted to “no friend but Germany.”<sup>143</sup> Opinion polls show that by 1965 the French public identified Germany as “the best friend of France.”<sup>144</sup> Former French president Charles de Gaulle and former foreign minister Maurice Couve de Murville both agreed that the sea change in Franco-German relations occurred in the late 1950s.<sup>145</sup> As one French diplomat argued, “the late 1950s and early 1960s were the turning point” in Franco-German relations.<sup>146</sup> In sum, though it was important to the French that West Germany admit its wartime violence, the absence of contrition toward France specifically and German whitewashing and amnesia did not stymie a dramatic reconciliation in the late 1950s.

<sup>139</sup> Kruse, “Le Mémorial de l’Holocauste,” 25.

<sup>140</sup> Daniel Vernet, “Analyse De l’autoflagellation a l’autocompassion,” *Le Monde*, 16 January 2003. See also Marcel Tambarin, “L’Avenir du Passé: La Polémique Walser-Bubis,” *Allemagne d’Aujourd’hui*, no. 149 (July-September 1999): 32.

<sup>141</sup> See, for example, Nicholas Weill, “La Culpabilité Allemande, Entre Mythe Et Réalités,” *La Revue Internationale et Stratégique*, no. 33 (Spring 1999): 33.

<sup>142</sup> See, for example, Joseph Mace-Scaron, “L’Allemagne contre son passé,” *Le Figaro*, 18 December 1998; Lucas Delattre, “L’Allemagne décomplexée face au passé,” *Le Monde*, 9 November 1998; Pascale Hugues, “Faut-il oublier le passé?” *Le Point*, no. 1373, 9 January 1999; Alain-Gérard Slama, “Faut-il avoir peur de l’Allemagne?” *Le Figaro*, 14 June 1999; Jean-Marie Rouart, “La nostalgie d’avoir été une conscience,” *Le Figaro*, 15 March 2001.

<sup>143</sup> Alfred Grosser, *French Foreign Policy under De Gaulle* (Boston: Little Brown, 1967), 6. Scholars analyzing French public opinion agree: “The anti-German attitude of the French public and elites immediately after World War II seems to have disappeared almost entirely. Public opinion polls . . . show a reversal of public attitudes. . . .” Karl W. Deutsch, Lewis J. Edinger, Roy C. Macridis, and Richard L. Merritt, *France, Germany, and the Western Alliance: A Study in Elite Attitudes on European Integration and World Politics* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1967), 66.

<sup>144</sup> Poll by Institut Français d’Opinion Publique, *France Soir*, 18 March 1965.

<sup>145</sup> Charles de Gaulle, *Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor*, trans. Terence Kilmartin (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1971), 181; Maurice Couve de Murville, *Une Politique Etrangère, 1958-1969* (Paris: Plon, 1971), 238.

<sup>146</sup> François Bujon de l’Estang, French Ambassador to the United States, address, University of California, Berkeley, California, 26 February 1998.

## CONTRITION AND BACKLASH

The two cases examined in this paper suggest that some degree of acknowledgment of past violence is a necessary step toward international reconciliation. The Franco-German experience suggests that the necessary amount of contrition is probably much less than many commentators assert. Another finding from this study is that contrition can cause backlash, as seen in the case of Japan. Atonement for Nazi-era crimes was controversial within West German politics, but in mainstream political debates, West Germans do not deny or justify past violence, whereas in Japan such things frequently occur.<sup>147</sup> The comparison of these two cases raises the question of how often, and under what circumstances, will contrition trigger backlash? If backlash to contrition is a common occurrence, then contrition is a less promising a tool in international reconciliation than its advocates claim.

Further research on the domestic and international conditions that affect the occurrence of backlash is needed. At this point, however, there are three powerful reasons to believe that the German experience—extensive contrition that did not trigger substantial backlash—will be rare. First, the absence of backlash in the West German case can be explained by Germany's unusual strategic circumstances after the war. Backlash typically comes from conservative groups, but during the Cold War, West German conservatives had powerful reasons to muzzle their objections to contrition. They had two key foreign policy goals—achieving German reunification and protection from the Soviet Union—that required a clear denunciation of the Nazi past.<sup>148</sup> West German leaders understood that their allies were deeply ambivalent about German unification and rearmament and needed to be convinced that West Germany was “not your father's Fatherland.” In sum, although West German conservatives ultimately supported contrition and did not offer a counter-narrative of denials and justification, West Germany was facing constraints that are unlikely to be so severe elsewhere.

Indeed, evidence from around the world shows that backlash to contrition is a common occurrence. In Austria, vocal criticism of apologies and stalwart defense of the wartime generation propelled Joerg Haider into leadership of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) and later catapulted the FPÖ from the political fringe into national coalition governments. In France, Jacques Chirac's historic apology for French complicity in the Holocaust—Vichy's deportation of 75,000 Jews—was denounced by both Rightists and the Socialist opposition. Conservatives in Switzerland, Italy, and Belgium also mobilized

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<sup>147</sup> On German debates about contrition, see Lind, *Sorry States*, chap. 3; Art, *The Politics of the Nazi Past*, chap. 3; Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

<sup>148</sup> Herf, *Divided Memory*, 285–86.

against attempts to confront past collaboration.<sup>149</sup> In Britain, the Archbishop of York's call for a national apology for slavery prompted a national outcry; critics argued that Britain should be proud—not ashamed—because of its leadership in ending the slave trade. Earlier, apologies by Tony Blair to the people of Ireland for the Potato Famine and for the 1972 Bloody Sunday massacre led many British and Northern Irish unionists to denounce the gestures, dismiss British culpability, and criticize the Irish for their “victim mentality.”<sup>150</sup> In the United States, a proposed Smithsonian exhibit that discussed the horrors of Hiroshima and questioned the necessity of the bombing triggered a storm of protest, including statements of justification from Congress, veterans' groups, and the media. The U.S. Senate unanimously passed a resolution that declared the museum script “revisionist, unbalanced, and offensive.”<sup>151</sup> The exhibition text was rewritten. Apologies and reparations proposed for domestic victims are often as divisive. As Melissa Nobles has shown, proposals for reparations to Black Americans for slavery and apologies to indigenous peoples in Australia and New Zealand, provoke intense and often polarizing domestic controversy.<sup>152</sup>

The frequency of backlash should be no surprise from the standpoint of domestic politics. Many conservatives will oppose contrition on ideological grounds, believing that a strong polity requires citizens to have a deep sense of national identity and love of country. Patriotism, according to this view, is undermined by emphasizing past atrocities and other failings: history education should be presented in a “tone of affirmation” that will instill national pride.<sup>153</sup>

Leaders' objections to contrition might also be purely opportunistic. In war, many people suffer terribly on the battlefield and at home. After the war, people want to honor fallen loved ones and to receive government funds for reconstruction. Leaders, bureaucrats, and soldiers who planned or perpetrated atrocities during the war will want to shield themselves from prosecution and to protect their jobs and pensions. In this setting, apologies or reparations to foreigners will be highly unpopular. They impugn wartime leaders (some of whom may still be in power), veterans, and the war dead.

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<sup>149</sup> On Austria, see Art, *The Politics of the Nazi Past*, chap. 6. Other European cases are discussed in David Art, “The Politics of the Past in Western Europe” (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, Chicago, Illinois, 28 February 2007), 13. On France, see “Europe Socialists Reject Chirac Apology,” *Globe and Mail*, 18 July 1995.

<sup>150</sup> On the slavery apology issue, see David Ward, “Archbishop of York Urges PM to Apologise for Slavery,” *The Guardian*, 26 March 2007. On the Irish apologies, see Sarah Lyall, “Past as Prologue: Blair Faults Britain in Irish Potato Blight,” *New York Times*, 3 June 1997; “Blair Walks into Mire of Controversy Over Famine,” *Belfast News Letter*, 9 June 1997; “Blair Urged to Seek Apology from Adams,” *Belfast News Letter*, 11 December 1997.

<sup>151</sup> Ken Ringle, “At Ground Zero; 2 Views of History Collide Over Smithsonian A-Bomb Exhibit,” *Washington Post*, 26 September 1994.

<sup>152</sup> Melissa Nobles, *The Politics of Official Apologies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>153</sup> Lynn E. Cheney, “History Lessons,” *Wall Street Journal*, 20 October 1994.

Reparations to foreign victims compete with domestic demands for government assistance. Apologies are, by definition, admissions of guilt that open the possibility for criminal prosecution. Contrition will not only be generally unpopular, it will be particularly unpopular among politically mobilized and influential groups (war victims and veterans).

Because contrition will be controversial, political leaders have incentives to oppose it and will jump at the opportunity to score gains among dissatisfied constituencies. As they denounce contrition, elites are likely to justify past violence (“that’s how the world was back then” or “we had to do it because of the threat facing our nation”), to deny it, or to glorify it (“what about all the good things we did for the lands we colonized?”). If the demands for contrition come decades later, people will wonder, “Why should we apologize for things we didn’t do?” Backlash is thus a predictable response to contrition from the standpoint of domestic politics.

While testing the effects of remembrance on threat perception, this exercise has uncovered another hypothesis: contrition causes a domestic backlash that undermines its positive international effects. Further research should develop this hypothesis and explore the circumstances that promote or minimize domestic outcry to contrition.<sup>154</sup> Scholars may discover international or domestic political conditions that dampen backlash. Under such circumstances, a country might offer the justice its victims deserve without fears of damaging its foreign relations. At this stage, however, commentators, scholars, and political leaders are urging countries to apologize for past crimes without considering the potential for backlash, which can damage the very relations they seek to repair.

## FINDINGS, COUNTERARGUMENTS, CONCLUSIONS

Findings from this project both support and challenge the conventional wisdom about remembrance and reconciliation. First, denials of past violence inhibit reconciliation between former adversaries. Japan’s denials fuel distrust and elevate threat perception among Koreans and others. By contrast, Bonn’s willingness to accept responsibility for the crimes of the Nazi era—and the absence of denials or glorifications among mainstream West Germans—facilitated German rapprochement with France. These cases suggest that reconciliation requires countries to acknowledge past violence.

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<sup>154</sup> For example, Thomas Berger argues that global economic integration and changes in international norms raise the costs of impenitence and encourage states to be more contrite relative to the past. See Thomas U. Berger, “Sorry States in a Sorry World: Beyond German Exceptionalism,” in “Roundtable Discussion of Jennifer Lind’s *Sorry States: Apologies in International Politics*,” *Journal of East Asian Studies* 9 (2009). (With Charles L. Glaser, Jennifer Lind, and Mike Mochizuki).

Although acknowledging past violence is important, very little contrition appears necessary for even the bitterest of enemies to reconcile. The dramatic rapprochement between Paris and Bonn occurred in the late 1950s, a time when West Germans had accepted responsibility for Nazi violence yet were engaged in rampant whitewashing and self-pity. Germany's candid textbooks, important legal trials, soul-searching museums, and heartfelt apologies (Brandt, Von Weisäcker) had not yet occurred. Elsewhere, Britain and West Germany restored their relations despite an absence of British contrition for brutal fire bombings, such as in Dresden, that killed hundreds of thousands of Germans.<sup>155</sup> Japan and the United States have not only managed to move on, they have achieved a warm friendship and close security alliance without contrition on either side for terrible atrocities. A dodging of responsibility and tales of victimhood did not inhibit Italy and Austria from establishing close relations with former enemies.<sup>156</sup>

This study shows that offering contrition also comes with risks that previously have not been acknowledged in the growing enthusiasm for international justice. Contrition can trigger a domestic backlash. In Japan, efforts by some leaders to atone prompted others to deny or justify past atrocities. Observing such backlash, Japan's neighbors drew the worrying conclusion that an influential segment of Japanese society was unwilling to repudiate mass rape, invasions, and massacres as tools of statecraft. Japan is not an outlier: contrition causes backlash all over the world. Such backlash increases distrust and elevates threat perception.

### Counterarguments

Critics might raise a variety of objections to these findings. First, one might question my causal claim that remembrance affects threat perception by raising the issue of endogeneity. In other words, perhaps the causal arrows are actually reversed and that perceptions of the threat posed by another state affect how a state remembers one's past relations with it.

Concerns about endogeneity should be mitigated for two important reasons. First, had my empirical findings shown a strong correlation between remembrance and threat perception, the possibility that threat perception was driving remembrance would have to be taken very seriously. Indeed, the correlation could mean that apologetic remembrance reduces threat, or it could mean that periods of low threat are conducive to more apologetic remembrance. However, this study does not find a strong positive correlation between remembrance and threat perception. To the contrary, I find that

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<sup>155</sup> The British constructed a monument to the memory of "Bomber Harris," the commander of the Dresden raids. Stephen Kinzer, "Honor to R.A.F. Leader Wakes Dresden's Ghosts," *New York Times*, 6 January 1992.

<sup>156</sup> Art, *The Politics of the Nazi Past*.

although some contrition (an acknowledgement of past misdeeds) reduces threat, offering more contrition has no reliable beneficial effect and in fact can worsen relations if domestic backlash occurs.

I do argue that denials elevate threat perception, and thus some contrition is necessary for reconciliation. On this point, I address the potential problem of endogeneity through process-tracing. I do not draw my conclusions merely on the basis of a correlation between contrition and improved relations (or denials and mistrust). Rather, I draw conclusions from evidence such as interviews, documents, and newspaper accounts that specifically connect threat levels to remembrance.

A second question might also be asked: do denials really damage international relations, or is Korean dismay at Japan's unapologetic remembrance merely domestic political theater? In other words, perhaps Korean leaders, capitalizing on widespread anti-Japanese sentiment, are feigning alarm about Tokyo's intentions.

To guard against the danger that ROK responses to Japanese apologies are crafted for domestic political purposes, I used multiple indicators to assess Korean perceptions. To be sure, some of my evidence is consistent with domestic posturing (canceling a summit or recalling an ambassador), and quotes from state-run media or public speeches by Korean leaders may simply be evidence of grandstanding. However, other evidence that is less susceptible to this criticism also suggests Korean distrust of Japan. For example, private communications of political leaders echo the same sentiments as public statements. In my interviews with South Korean elites, I discovered that government officials expressed a range of policy views, but they were virtually unanimous on these points: they were wary of Japanese intentions, and much of that wariness stemmed from Tokyo's unapologetic remembrance. My conclusion about these sentiments is also supported by Korean academics, whose scholarly writings also express distrust of Japan and connect that distrust to Japanese denials. Overall, I am confident that Korean distrust of Japan is real and that it is driven in large part by Japan's unapologetic remembrance.

Third, one might accept that Koreans are genuinely alarmed by Japanese denials, but one might also protest that perhaps the Korean reaction is idiosyncratic and that, more generally, denials do not damage international relations. The ROK, however, does not appear to be unique in this regard: China and Australia exhibit similar reactions. The Chinese have criticized Japanese textbooks for decades, condemning Tokyo for attempting to "obliterate" history and for "[laying] the basis for reviving militarism in Japan."<sup>157</sup> The Chinese responded to Okuno Seisuke's 1988 statement of

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<sup>157</sup> "Japanese Government Should Be True in Word and Deed," *Beijing Review* 25, no. 38 (20 September 1982). On history issues in Sino-Japanese relations, see Lind, *Sorry States*, chap. 4; He, *The Search for Reconciliation*.

denial by warning about “an extremely dangerous force and trend of thought in Japan” and saying that China must be vigilant “to prevent a repeat of the war.”<sup>158</sup> In the 2005 textbook dispute, Chinese elites argued that Japanese textbooks demonstrate that Japan cannot be trusted.<sup>159</sup> Japan’s unapologetic remembrance also sows bitterness in Australia. Australian leaders do not have the domestic legitimacy problems that China’s Communist Party leaders face—suggesting they have weaker incentives to rally anti-Japanese nationalism—yet they and their constituents express outrage about Japanese denials.<sup>160</sup> Beyond the Asian cases, evidence from countries wary of the Palestinians, Turkey, and Iran—because of denials of past violence—also supports my claim about the pernicious nature of denials.<sup>161</sup>

Critics may also wonder about the extent to which remembrance influences threat perception. After all, most of the variation in Korean threat perception of Japan can be explained by changes in Japan’s capabilities (the constraint of the U.S.-Japan alliance). Thus critics might argue that although disputes over remembrance sometimes create diplomatic noise from time to time, threat perception is driven primarily by a state’s capabilities.

A theory of threat perception that focuses solely on capabilities and ignores remembrance and other indicators of intentions is implausible and cannot explain the most important facts about international relations in East Asia. Had Korean perceptions of threat been driven entirely by perceptions of capabilities, Koreans (and everyone else in the region) would have spent the decades since the end of World War II worrying about the United States—not Japan or the Soviet Union—because American power dwarfs that of any other country in the region. But, of course, no one estimated threat by looking solely at capabilities; observers also assessed intentions. Koreans drew a clear distinction between Japan—which had conquered and colonized them—and the (vastly more powerful) United States, which demonstrated no interest in owning Korea. It is clear that countries assess intentions as they estimate threats. Evidence presented in this article shows that remembrance (particularly denials) affects judgments about intentions.

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<sup>158</sup> Mei Zhenmin, “Background to Okuno’s Defense of Aggression,” *Liowang* no. 21 (23 May 1988), trans. in *FBIS Daily Report: China*, 2 June 1988; Liu Wenyu, “What Can Be Learned From Okuno’s Resignation,” Xinhua News Service, 13 May 1988, trans. in *FBIS Daily Report: China*, 16 May 1988.

<sup>159</sup> “Japan Should Take Germany as Its ‘Mirror,’” *Renmin Ribao*, 21 April 2005; “The Genie Escapes: China and Japan,” *The Economist*, 16 April 2005; Joseph Kahn, “China Pushing and Scripting Japanese Protests,” *New York Times*, 15 April 2005.

<sup>160</sup> “Time to End this Deafening Silence,” *Australian Financial Review*, 1 June 2001; Shane Green, “Japan’s Lack of Remorse Troubling as it Moves to Rearm,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 June 2003; Brian Victoria, “Right Face! The Return of Wartime Ghosts,” *Australian Financial Review*, 9 August 2002. For more detailed analysis of the Australia-Japan case, see Lind, *Sorry States*, chap. 4.

<sup>161</sup> Haviv Rettig, “New 12th Grade PA Textbook: ‘Zionist Gangs Stole Palestine,’” *Jerusalem Post*, 20 March 2007; Itamar Marcus and Barbara Crook, “Supporting Peace Education in the PA?” *Jerusalem Post*, 25 February 2007; Vartan Oskanian, “A Bold Message, Lost on Turkey,” *International Herald Tribune*, 20 October 2006.

## Implications For Policy and Theory

In summer 2007, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill urging Japanese contrition toward the comfort women. Though well-intentioned, the effort backfired as U.S. pressure ultimately prompted Japanese prime minister Abe Shinzo to deny that the women had been coerced.<sup>162</sup> The episode—a significant backtrack from Tokyo's previous position on the sex slaves—caused another wave of tension across East Asia.

This article argues against pressuring governments to atone. It argues that the kind of remembrance that will be the most helpful for international reconciliation is a middle ground between denials and whitewashing on the one hand and contrition on the other.<sup>163</sup> Refusals to acknowledge past violence alarms foreign observers, while contrition risks triggering domestic backlash. Where exactly this middle ground lies will depend on the circumstances of each case. Depending on domestic and international factors, victims will have varying levels of interest in contrition. Perpetrators will have varying ability to offer contrition without inciting backlash. For example, French disinterest in German contrition after World War II may have stemmed partly from the growing Soviet threat. Similarly, West Germany's strategic dilemmas may have allowed Bonn to be unusually contrite without triggering backlash. This study cannot identify the ideal amount of contrition to repair relations. It does, however, draw attention to the need for countries to balance the demands of internal and external audiences and the goals of justice and international reconciliation.

Leaders trying to strike this balance can choose among a few strategies. They can construct a shared and non-accusatory vision of the past. Rather than frame the past as one actor's brutalization of another, countries can structure commemoration to cast events, as much as possible, as shared catastrophes. Countries can remember past suffering as specific examples of the tragic phenomena that afflict all countries, such as war, militarism, or aggression. This kind of remembrance does not blame individual countries but instead focuses attention on the problems of international politics, or of human nature, that vigilance and cooperation can mitigate. Postwar France and West Germany were exemplars of such an approach. Rather than emphasize German brutality, the settings and tone of ceremonies at Reims (1962) and Verdun (1984) highlighted the suffering that militarism and European anarchy had brought to both peoples.

Another option is multilateral. East Asian leaders and activists who want to raise awareness about the World War II sex slaves, for example, might organize a multinational inquiry about violence against women in wartime,

<sup>162</sup> Norimitsu Onishi, "Denial Reopens Wounds of Japan's Ex-Sex Slaves," *New York Times*, 8 March 2007.

<sup>163</sup> For recommendations about the Japanese case, see Jennifer Lind, "The Perils of Apology: What Japan Shouldn't Learn from Germany," *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 3 (May/June 2009): 132–46.

widening the focus beyond Japan's crimes to consider similar atrocities committed by many countries in many wars. Multilateral textbook commissions—recently used productively in East Asia—are another promising alternative.<sup>164</sup> Because such multilateral settings do not wag a finger at one country in particular, nationalists and deniers back home will have less ammunition to use against their political rivals who favor participation.

To be sure, these approaches have significant drawbacks. Privileging international reconciliation over justice, these strategies risk moral equivocation. They downplay the heinous acts that occurred and divert attention from the people and governments who committed them. They are not ambitious enough to satisfy individual victims, yet they will still anger nationalists who deny (or simply want to forget) past atrocities. As John Kenneth Galbraith famously commented, "Politics is the art of choosing between the disastrous and the unpalatable." These strategies are unpalatable in many ways, yet are wise from the standpoint of international reconciliation.

Leaders who seek to implement such strategies will face many challenges. Because this approach requires compromise on both sides, leaders will need to have a strong mandate for bilateral reconciliation if they are to survive politically. On the victim's side, imagine the potential domestic political vulnerability of a leader urging forgiveness of a hated enemy. This approach will be most promising in countries that face a strong imperative to reconcile, as did West Germany and France in 1945. It holds less promise for countries that lack such an imperative, such as contemporary China and Japan. Not only do China and Japan lack a shared threat to bring them together, they may grow increasingly competitive with the rise of Chinese power. Furthermore, the Chinese side captures domestic political gains from anti-Japanese sentiment.<sup>165</sup> Though the resolution of historical disputes will be more difficult between strategic competitors, policies should nonetheless balance the need to acknowledge past violence with the need to prevent counterproductive backlash—that is, the need to balance the demands of domestic and international audiences.

In addition to its policy prescriptions, this article makes important contributions to political science theory. It creates an analytic framework for conceptualizing and measuring remembrance, which can be used to answer a plethora of other research questions in international relations and in the study of civil wars and transitional justice.<sup>166</sup> This research also informs debates among international relations theorists about how states perceive

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<sup>164</sup> Chua Chin Hon, "New History Text Turns a Page in East Asia Ties," *The Straits Times*, 10 June 2005.

<sup>165</sup> Suisheng Zhao, *A Nation-State By Construction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

<sup>166</sup> On memory in intergroup conflict, see Stuart J. Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001). Surveying the voluminous transitional justice literature is Leslie Vinjamuri and Jack Snyder, "Advocacy and Scholarship in the Study of International War Crime Tribunals and Transitional Justice," *Annual Review of Political Science* (2004).

threats. It provides empirical support for the role of intentions in threat perception and demonstrates the importance of a previously under-studied signal of intentions (remembrance). More broadly, it contributes to a growing literature that has begun to empirically test the effects of ideas and identity on world politics.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> See, for example, C. William Walldorf, Jr., *Just Politics: Human Rights and the Foreign Policy of Great Powers* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Mark Haas, *The Ideological Origins of Great Powers Politics, 1789–1989* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs about the Use of Force* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).