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Patterns of Bilateral Military Alliances Formation and Political Regimes in Central Europe, 1962–2003

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Abstract: This study examines the dynamics of political regimes as pivotal factors shaping bilateral military alliances (BMAs) in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) from the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) to 2003. Using data from the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) and the Polity IV databases, the research investigates statistical correlations between the formation of military alliances, their typologies, and political regime-type dynamics. Research questions include exploring the key characteristics of BMAs, the political regime nature of dyads, correlations between alliance durability and democracy levels, and the impact of regime changes on alliance phases. A sample of 88 BMAs is analysed, exploring hypotheses on relationships such as alliance duration, political regime congruity, member asymmetry, treaty provisions, and changes pre- and post-Cuban crisis. Key findings indicate that less democratic dyads tended to sustain longer alliances, while the hypothesis on political regime congruity in military alliances received partial support. The study contributes to understanding how political regime dynamics influence alliance formation and longevity in a region historically shaped by the Cold War geopolitical dynamics.

Keywords: military alliances, bilateral military allyships, bilateral agreements, Central and Eastern Europe, political regime.

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Introduction

War prevention through the democratisation of political regimes is an area of significant interest among predominantly liberal theorists of international relations. Arguments regarding democratic peace can be traced back to the Enlightenment era and the classical thinkers who promoted ideas of "perpetual" peace as an essential goal for the international system amidst ongoing conflicts and interstate instabilities. The organisation of the international relations system features as a central component of security studies, with various ideas on how its structure could achieve the desired stability. The stability of the bipolarity era, spanning from the end of World War II to the late 20th century, remains a prominent research topic even three decades after its formal conclusion. Today, this debate regains prominence in contemporary scholarly discussions, particularly sparked by discussions of a potential new bipolarity where China could emerge as a dominant pole alongside the political West (Maher 2018).

The fact that bipolarity has been extensively debated in security studies is unsurprising given the several decades of stable bipolarity that characterised the world from the end of World War II until the fall of the Berlin Wall. Early analyses described bipolarity as predominantly stable. Kenneth Waltz defined it as a structural creation sustained by three important factors. He claimed that in a bipolar world, there was no periphery; any security event directly involved engagement by one or both superpowers (Waltz 1964). Waltz focused on another "guarantor" of bipolar stability, emphasising the increased factors influencing competition between superpowers. As gains for one superpower imply losses for the other in a "two-pole" system, Waltz (1964, 64) argued that global agendas always indicate clear sources of threat. Hence, alongside clear sources of threats in bipolarity, Waltz (1964, 64) compared the obscure origins of threats in multipolarity, where stability is disrupted by the ambiguity of threats. Thirdly, a "distinctive factor", as Waltz (1964) terms it, ensuring the stable functioning of the bipolar system, is constant pressure in terms of potential crisis resurgence. Kenneth Waltz (1967, 218) advanced his argument in an article published several years later, claiming that the substance of balance-of-power politics in the bipolar era "was found in the diplomacy by which alliances are made, maintained, or disrupted".

During the era of bipolarity, the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) region witnessed the establishment of numerous bilateral alliances involving pairs of countries.[2] Ashley

[2] The term "military alliances" in this paper encompasses all forms of formalised military cooperation between two states. Consequently, the terms "bilateral military alliances" and "military allyships" are used interchangeably throughout the text.

Leeds and associates (2002) compiled a list of over 80 such defence agreements and offered their operational definition of a military alliance as

> "written agreements, signed by official representatives of at least two independent states, that include promises to aid a partner in the event of military conflict, to remain neutral in the event of conflict, to refrain from military conflict with one another, or to consult/cooperate in the event of international crises that create a potential for military conflict" (Leeds *et al*. 2002, 238).

These authors compiled data on bilateral defence agreements into the Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions dataset (ATOP), adopting a "soft" view of military alliances.[3] They view military alliances not solely as agreements containing a clause for mutual defence in case of a joint threat but also encompassing softer forms of military cooperation such as remaining neutral in conflicts or collaborating on military issues in potential armed conflicts (Leeds *et al*. 2002). This paper adopts Leeds and her colleagues' definition of bilateral military alliances or allyships (BMAs).

During the Cold War, global blocs were sharply divided into Western liberal democracies, potentially non-aligned nations, and communist real socialist states. This ideological division narrowed the discourse, focusing heavily on promoting concepts of peace. During the academic "neo-neo debate", Michael Doyle (1983) published his seminal article "Kant, Liberal Heritage, and Foreign Affairs", which paved the way for empirical examinations of peace within the context of political integration among states in the international system. Doyle put forth a liberal argument suggesting that a more democratic international system would lead to less war-prone behaviour among countries.

Doyle's Democratic Peace Theory was further developed by Rummel (1983), who introduced the monadic variant of the theory, asserting that democracies are "inherently more peaceful than other types of political regimes" due to various factors. In contrast, the dyadic variant of the theory argued that pairs of democratic states are less likely to engage in war and, therefore, tend to coexist peacefully or even form alliances.

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[3] The Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) dataset, developed by researchers at Rice University, systematically compiles information on military alliances formed between states from 1815. It includes detailed data on alliance characteristics, such as member states, commitments, obligations, and provisions, allowing for a nuanced analysis of alliance behaviour and its impact on international relations (ATOP 2005). Researchers deploy ATOP to study the formation, duration, and evolution of alliances, as well as their effects on conflict and cooperation among states. The dataset is an essential resource for scholars examining the role of alliances in shaping the understanding of contemporary global security dynamics and international politics (ATOP 2005).

In addition to Doyle, several auxiliary hypotheses in the democratic peace studies have evolved. According to these hypotheses, "pairs of democratic states are unlikely to engage in serious military conflicts in their mutual relations" (Bremer 1992; Maoz and Russett 1992, 1993). In contrast, the majority of authors propose hypotheses with a positive outlook, suggesting that "two democratic states are more likely to form alliances" (Siverson and Emmons 1991; Simon and Gartzke 1996; Weart 1998) and that "alliances between democratic states tend to endure longer" (Bennett 1997; Reed 1997). Modern studies on democracy and peace generally move away from the rigid definitions of the democratic peace theory, which posits that democracies do not wage war against each other. Instead, this condition is considered in a more nuanced manner, suggesting that war has largely become an outdated subject of study, alongside the devastating conflicts it entails on both sides (Dixon 1994; Weart 1998).

This paper aims to examine the main characteristics of BMAs' formation in the CEE region and explore the potential of the dyadic democratic peace theory applied to the establishment of BMAs. Beginning with the theory's fundamental premise that democratic states establish a "separate (mutual) peace", which argues that the likelihood of two democratic states waging war against each other is "highly unlikely" (Doyle 1983), the question arises whether this theory holds universally or varies across different historical periods. There are also perspectives suggesting that this theory serves as a justification for Western interventions in "non-democratic regimes" (Denton 2003; Goldsmith 2008).

A significant amount of statistical studies on democratic peace examine various correlations between types of political regimes and aspects of a country's behaviour in international relations. Upon recognising threats to its national security, a country decides to form alliances with others for various reasons. Robert Jervis (2001) argued that the entire Cold War was a security dilemma in itself. He acknowledged that while the Cold War "contained elements of the security dilemma and included episodes in which tensions and arms increased as each side defensively reacted to the other, the root of the conflict was at best a clash of social systems" (Jervis 2001, 58). Jervis (2001) believed that the security dilemma serves as a catalyst for establishing alliances (security regimes). In his earlier works, Jervis (1982, 362) listed four conditions for establishing a security regime: great powers must accept it, there must be shared values among regime members, expansion should not threaten security rules, and war should only be pursued if feasible.

According to the Democratic Peace theory, peace would be compromised if violent methods were used in bilateral relations between two (or more) entities (Doyle 1986). While various arguments could be made about the significance of the Central and Eastern Europe region, it is particularly intriguing in this research

context due to its role as a buffer zone between the two blocs during the Cold War. This unique region significantly influenced global dynamics during that period, experiencing frequent regime changes and political turmoil within short periods. Therefore, the primary aim of this paper is to investigate the explanatory power of the democratic peace theory when applied to bilateral military alliances (BMAs) within the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) region following the Cuban crisis.

The results of this paper will seek to fill in the scientific void of understanding the nature of CEE countries' behaviour after the Cuban crisis as it was re-shaped with a new security dilemma. The paper also highlights the quality and characteristics of the BMAs in the context of global bipolarity and the onset of (uni)multipolarity. It follows the classic IMRAD structure as it commences with an introduction outlining crucial methodological decisions made for the purpose of this research, followed by the development of the hypothetical framework. After presenting the results, the author discusses the potential generalisability and internal validity of the findings. Additionally, the author compares findings with those of similar studies, aiming to provide directions for the further potential advances of BMAs research.

Method

Despite the substantial body of knowledge of military alliances and research on democratic peace, there are unexplored quantitative aspects of the typology and main characteristics of BMAs in the CEE region. Numerous studies investigate the fundamental postulates of the democratic peace theory (Dixon 1994; Risse-Kappen 1995; Lemke and Reed 1996; Maoz 1998; Sambanis 2001), along with those focusing on economic aspects and spill-over effects among democratic states (Powers 2004; Long and Leeds 2006; Li and Vashchilko 2010). Many other specific studies on alliances also analyse these issues (Russett 1971; Acharya 1990; Morrow 1991; Leeds 2003; Tertrais 2004; Bearce, Flanagan and Floros 2006; Fang, Johnson and Leeds 2014). Building on the basic tenets of democratic peace theory, which suggest that homogeneous dyads are less likely to engage in war, this research explores correlations between scores of political regime levels and the principal characteristics of bilateral military alliances in the CEE region.

For the empirical scope of this research, a dyadic variant of the democratic peace theory is employed to investigate whether the level of political regime correlates with the likelihood and quality of the BMAs' formation. This study aims to explore the relationship between political regime changes within the CEE region and the key characteristics of the BMAs, introducing the following set of research questions:

1. What were the key characteristics of the BMAs during the temporal domain?
2. What was the nature of the dyads in terms of the political regime of each member of the pair?
3. Was the durability of a BMA correlated with the level of democracy in each dyad, and was the aggregated dyadic democracy score taken into consideration?
4. Was regime change in dyad members correlated with the BMAs' phases?

The temporal domain of this study is limited to the period between the occurrence of the Cuban nuclear crisis in 1962 and 2003 as an ending point. In a wider sense, for comparison, the period from the end of World War II and the Cuban crisis will also be included.[4] These methodological decisions are dictated by the fact that the ATOP database indexes data on the existing (and past) military alliances until 2003. On the other hand, modern military alliances within the United Nations system exist in a legal regime in accordance with the Charter, more precisely in the right of individual and collective defence. Hence, all the establishing treaties and agreements must have been deposited at the UN Secretariat. Thus, the unit of analysis was only BMAs formed based on a public treaty registered at the UN.[5]

The period before 1962 will be included to determine whether there were any significant differences before and after the Cuban crisis in the BMAs' existence. The framework includes countries that gained independence from the SFR Yugoslavia and the USSR (hereinafter "the newborn countries"), as well as the Czech Republic and Slovakia as the successors of the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. The first observed year per every country within the ATOP dataset (whether it was bilateral or multilateral) is included in the analysis as the starting point for the respective country.

Consistent with the paper's topic and objectives, this research focuses on independent countries within Central and Eastern Europe. While opinions vary regarding which countries constitute this region, according to widely accepted geographical divisions, the CEE region currently comprises 19 sovereign states. However, as detailed in Table 1, the number of individual entities varied over time, thus lacking consistency. The author included the SFR Yugoslavia (and its republics), Bulgaria, and Romania in the sample, as these states were part of a "buffer zone" between East and West during the Cold War, making their BMA policies worthy of investigation.

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[4] The initial research of the ATOP dataset has demonstrated that there were not any multiphase BMAs before the Cuban crisis in the CEE space.

[5] However, there are instances where certain provisions of BMA treaties are declared to be secret. According to ATOP, none of the BMAs in the CEE region (even before 1962) included any secret articles (Leeds *et al.* 2002).

Table 1. Central and Eastern European countries (1963–2003) involved in analysis

Continuous existence	**Discontinuous existence***	**Continuum *de facto* recognized****
ALBANIA BULGARIA HUNGARY POLAND ROMANIA	CZECHOSLOVAKIA 1963 – 1992 (INCL.) CZECH REPUBLIC (1993 – 2003) SLOVAK REPUBLIC (IBID.) USSR (1963 – 1991 INCL.)*** SFR YUGOSLAVIA (1963 – 1991 incl.) UKRAINE (1992 – 2003) BELARUS (ibid.) LITHUANIA (ibid.) LATVIA (ibid.) ESTONIA (ibid.) MOLDOVA (1992 – 2003) FR YUGOSLAVIA (1992 – 2002) BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA (1995 – 2003) SLOVENIA (1992 – 2003) CROATIA (1992 – 2003) NORTH MACEDONIA (1996 – 2003)	FR YUGOSLAVIA > SERBIA & MONTENEGRO (2003)

*All the "newborn" countries or the ones that experienced dissolution (but were involved in this research), in accordance with the Correlates of War (CoW) system, 1962–2003.

** All countries that changed their statehood type or name (e.g., Yugoslavia to Serbia & Montenegro) while remaining within the same territory and under the same central governing authorities, continuing their existence as a single state within the international system.

*** Scores for the USSR are included up to 1991 (inclusive). The Russian Federation from 1992 onwards is excluded from the sample.

Source: Author

Although Russian military alliance policies during and after the Cold War have been extensively studied (Christensen and Snyder 1990; Huntington 1999; Williams and Neumann 2000; Weitz 2003; Donaldson and Nogee 2014; Vysotskaya Guedes 2014), they were excluded from this research as Russia became independent in 1992. This decision was influenced by Russia's participation as a member state in 74 BMAs during the same period, which could significantly impact the overall findings. A critical reason for omitting Russia is its status as a former superpower, particularly during the Cold War, with specific relationships with most CEE states. Therefore, studying Russian involvement in alliance affairs warrants separate

research. This differentiated spatial domain, representing essentially the same geographical area, necessitates presenting case trends accordingly. Given the unpredictability of current political regimes and their influence on alliance decisions, each newly independent country is examined individually, with some serving as legal and scientific successors to previous states.[6]

Table 2. Number of BMAs as units of analysis

	Year/period					
	1963–1991	1992	1993	1995	1996–2003	**Total**
N	8	15	16	17	48	**88**

Source: Author; Extracted from: Leeds *et al.* 2002

The number of units per year varied between eight and eighteen during the observed period. For the precise temporal determination in this analysis, the author adopts the approach proposed by the ATOP dataset, which considers the first consecutive calendar year after independence was declared as the starting point for each respective country (Leeds *et al*. 2002). In alignment with the research objectives, the author leverages data from the ATOP and the Polity IV datasets. The ATOP project serves as the foundational dataset for identifying military alliances, particularly post-World War II.

Over 40 years, there were 58 ineffective BMAs, where provisions of treaties for 30 alliances remained in force as of 2003. Despite their legal status, all are included in the study's overall sample. The primary dependent variable is the political regime's level within specific societies at given times. Political regime is assessed through various, sometimes conflicting, variables and indicators indexed in extensive datasets compiled by academic and governmental bodies.[7] Political regimes are subject to slight up to tremendous change caused by numerous internal and external factors, simultaneously producing their dynamics.

Many authors (Morgan and Campbell 1991; Morgan and Schwebach 1992; Rummel 1983; Small and Singer 1976) deployed some categories of political regimes

[6] In the case of the SFR Yugoslavia, it was the Republic of Serbia, while in the case of Czechoslovakia, the successor was the Czech Republic. As the Russian Federation does not enter the analytical framework, the USSR's successor state is irrelevant.

[7] Some of the most notable available democracy/autocracy tools are the Index of Electoral Democracy (IED), the Vanhanen political participation measure, the Freedom House Democracy Index, the Polity IV dataset, and many others.

in examining democratic peace, but Maoz and Russett (1993) were among the first to use continuous data. According to the definition of the Polity IV Manual (2016), regime change occurs "whenever there has been a change in coded regime authority characteristics on any the six component variables,[8] whether or not that change accounts for a change in the overall POLITY score". In terms of this research, the political regime dynamics is registered if at least one crucial change of the political regime type occurs in a single calendar year. The types of political regimes are classified by Polity IV into four categories: autocracy, closed anocracy, open anocracy, and democracy.[9] Many scholars claim that the political regime dynamics influences the national leaders to act within the international arena. Military alliances, especially bilateral ones, were among the most dominant ways of securing national interests and establishing allied relations during the abovementioned temporal domain. To inspect correlations among the BMAs' characteristics, the author deploys several variables from the ATOP dataset. The first group of variables comprises BMAs' nature in terms of their classification.[10] The second one comprises several key characteristics subject to hypothetical testing.[11] As indicated earlier, the author deployed the Alliance phase level dataset (*atop3_0a*), as one of the six basic formats of the ATOP to create a research sample. To identify the most adequate cases, the author selected only alliances whose variables indicated they were bilateral. To make the sample more narrow, the alliances that had the starting point in 1963 as the first referent year of the analysis were extracted.

As this research focuses on the BMAs established before the Cuban crisis and lasting thereafter, all individual cases were manually added, excluding those ending

[8] Those variables are the competitiveness of participation, regulation of participation, executive constraints, the openness of executive recruitment, the competitiveness of executive recruitment, and regulation of chief executive recruitment (Polity IV Manual 2016, 20–26). For more methodological details, consult the integral text of the Polity IV Manual.

[9] This distinction has been quantitatively done by the 21-point threshold (from -10 to +10), indicating autocracy (-10 to -6), closed anocracy (-5 to -1), open anocracy (0 to 5), and democracy (6 to 10).

[10] According to the ATOP dataset, those are defence alliances, offence alliances, nonaggressive alliances, neutral alliances, and consultative alliances (ATOP Codebook 2003).

[11] Variables to be deployed in this research are: 1) *pubsec*–this variable records whether or not the alliance agreement required secrecy and not whether the agreement remained secret in practice; 2) *secart*–the variable describes the content of the secret portion of an alliance; 3) *length*–this variable indicates the number of months in the initial term of the agreement; 4) *asymm*–if obligations vary for members of the alliance (i.e., the promises are not symmetrical); and 5) *terrres*–if the alliance member promises to make some aspect of its territory or resources available to an alliance partner in the event of conflict or under other specified conditions relevant to the alliance.

by 1962 inclusive.[12] The second group of cases was formed on a manual basis, involving all the cases that had 1962 or earlier as the starting point and ending after 1963. The last step before the final sample was to exclude all non-CEE BMAs, with both signatories being outside the CEE space.[13] In total, 88 BMAs with assigned criteria were included in the final sample.

Table 3. Alliances in ATOP dataset and other macro descriptives

SAMPLE	**N (%)**	
	Before 1962	**After 1962**
Total military alliances	648 (100 %)	
Multilateral alliances	103 (15,9 %)	
Total BMAs	545 (84,1 %)	
	235 (43,19 %)	310 (56,88 %)
CEE BMAs	16 (18,18%)	72 (81,82%)
Total CEE BMAs	88 (100 %)	

Source: Author; Extractions from the ATOP dataset (Leeds *et al*. 2002)

The ATOP dataset offers a unique variable (*phase*) that indexes changes in the alliance's existence. Whenever the written documents establishing the alliance are changed in a way that affects the coding of any variables included in the ATOP dataset, other than a change in membership caused by accessions or renunciations, it is measured under the *phase* (ATOP 2005, 11). For this specific variable, the author uses the Alliance phase level dataset (*atop3_0aph*), which includes a separate entry for each alliance phase, providing the most adequate research outcome. According to a preliminary review of empirical studies, the author presumed that there was a strong correlation between the political regime changes and the key characteristics of BMA existence.

Thus, the main hypothesis this paper will test is formulated as follows:

H: *The post-Cuban crisis political regime dynamics had significantly influenced and changed the key characteristics of the CEE BMAs.*

Initially, observable differences in key characteristics of bilateral defence agreements suggest testing several auxiliary hypotheses. Central to this research

[12] However, after the examination of the cases, none of these fulfilled the criteria, so basically, there were no multiple-phase BMAs at CEE before the Cuban crisis.

[13] A BMA having at least one member situated outside the spatial domain enlisted within Table 1 is also disqualified from the research sample.

is determining the political regime congruity among BMA members. Empirical studies have consistently shown that heterogeneous dyads are less likely to form alliances (Simon and Gartzke 1996), whereas homogeneous pairs of states have a higher likelihood of entering interstate war (Rummel 1983; Doyle 1986). While dyads consisting of one democratic and one autocratic state were rare, they were possible. Democratic states are more inclined to legally bind themselves in terms of mutual defence, as are autocratic pairs of states. Based on these empirical findings, the first auxiliary hypothesis is formulated from the perspective of the dyadic democratic peace theory as follows:

H1: *It is more likely that the CEE BMAs` signatories formed homogeneous rather than heterogeneous dyads in the post-Cuban crisis period at the moment of the BMA agreement conclusion*.

Even though many comprehensive empirical studies demonstrate that H1 could not be rebutted, there are no similar statistical studies for the CEE space. From 1816 until the present, the majority of studies concentrated on the global world polity and the broader temporal domain. In the context of this research, this hypothesis is significant as it will demonstrate the likelihood of the CEE states` proneness to cooperate with a congruent-political regime partner.

The moment when the founding agreement is concluded will be considered relevant. However, due to the high number of individual cases and associated changes, any regime changes occurring during the lifespan of a specific BMA will not be introduced. More significantly, the focus is on the level of democracy or autocracy within the specific polity. While various classifications of political regimes exist (such as anocracy), they are less commonly used in empirical research. Instead, there are datasets that quantitatively measure the level of democracy. In this regard, the Aggregated Political Regime (APR) score is established. The APR is manually calculated as the median of the political regime levels within each dyad. This approach is akin to the "joinreg" measure developed by Zeev Maoz and Bruce Russett in 1993, which assesses whether democracies are prone to war (Maoz and Russett 1993, 628).

One of the research questions implied inspecting the correlation between the APR score and the BMAs' durability. Gaubatz (1996, 109) was positive that "democracy by itself does not appear to either increase or decrease the ability of a state to make commitments to nondemocracies". To provide an evident response to this research goal/s for the CEE BMAs, the author presumed that:

H2: *...the higher the APR score within the concrete CEE BMA, the more durable the BMA.*

This statistical assumption is derived from an emerging corpus of academic papers claiming that democratic states create more durable alliances or noting

significance between these two (Siverson and Emmons 1991; Maoz and Russett 1992; Simon and Gartzke 1996). The first part of H2 observes the state as an empirical analysis unit, while the second assumption observes a dyad. Some crucial characteristics stemming directly from the BMAs' variables vary due to external factors occurring independently of their willingness. This could be testable by hypothesis number 3:

H3: *The correlations among the key characteristics of the CEE BMAs significantly varied before and after the Cuban crisis era.*

To adequately investigate the correlation changes, the author separated the CEE BMAs sample into two periods, split by the Cuban crisis. The same separation was applied to the total BMAs indexed within the ATOP database. This paper assumes that the massive wave of democratisation has led to measurable changes within the same sample. Under the key characteristics of the alliances besides their nature, some others will also be deployed.[14] The durability of the BMAs is not a highly discussed issue among scholars. This is why the paper tests the fourth auxiliary hypothesis involving phases within the BMAs' changes. As none of the available empirical studies determines whether there is any correlation between the regime changes and the BMA establishment, the fourth hypothesis is structured as follows:

H4: *The more political regime changes occurred in the countries of the CEE space after the Cuban crisis, the more phases of the BMAs, in which they were members, happened.*

According to the ATOP (2005, 15) Codebook, 35 out of 648 alliances have had multiple phases in their existence, as well as 25 CEE BMAs. However, these results should be taken with some reserves, bearing in mind that the ATOP variable *phase* indexes "newborn" countries' reinstatements of agreements as a new phase, as well.[15]

Results

Following the aims and research questions of the paper in obtaining results, the author processed and adapted the ATOP dataset for sampling purposes. Observing the initial filtering of the research sample showed that no single BMA

[14] Here, the classification of the alliances as offensive, defensive, nonaggressive, neutral, and consultative is accepted (ATOP Codebook 2003).

[15] For instance, the exception to this rule has to do with the state succession covered by the Vienna Convention on Succession of States in Respect of Treaties (VCSST 1978).

was created during the war or open conflict. Although none of the founding agreements contain secret clauses, they also do not forecast prospective future membership, which stabilises the bilateral nature of the agreements. The hypothetical framework commences with the main assumption that *the post-Cuban crisis political regime dynamics had significantly influenced and changed the key characteristics of the CEE BMAs.*

To get the most accurate outcomes, the author split this hypothesis into several auxiliaries, with the first claiming it was more likely that the dyads were rather homogeneous than heterogeneous in terms of political regime congruency in both BMA signatories. The first result of this research appeared during the sampling process, after which no single BMA with multiple-phase evidence was found. The first starting year for a single BMA establishment after the Cuban crisis was 1968, during which a BMA between Czechoslovakia and Romania was formed (Leeds *et al.* 2002). Hypotheses H1 (partially), H2, and H3 were tested in separate temporal domains before and after 1962 to provide more comprehensive results. Within the hypothetical framework, the author started with an assumption that the structure of congruent dyads in terms of the level of their political regimes is significant for the BMAs' research. Thus, the assumption of the likelihood that dyads were *homogeneous rather than heterogeneous in the post-Cuban crisis period at the moment of the BMA agreement conclusion* was tested by simple manual calculation from the sample.[16]

Table 4: Dyadic nature of the BMAs

(N=88)	**HOMOGENOUS**	**HETEROGENEOUS**
BMA CEE sample	63 (71,59%)	25 (28,41%)
Anocracy modified CEE sample	62 (70,45%)	26 (29,54%)

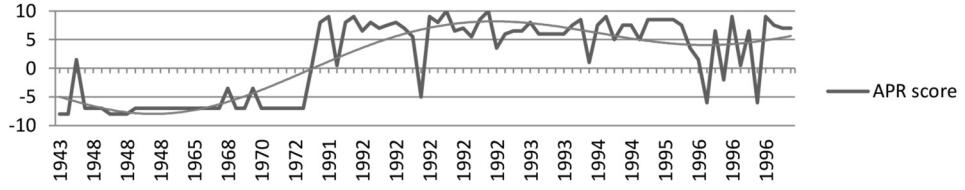
Source: Author, based on the Polity IV data series

Table 4 illustrates a high level of homogeneity (71.59%) among the BMAs' dyads in the CEE region. Based on these findings, adjustments were made to the sampling analysis rules. Given that the Polity IV's classification of anocracy ranges from -5 to 5, a decision to differentiate between open anocracy (scores from 1 to 5) and closed

[16] Dyads are counted based on the following principle: the homogeneous are formed by two consolidated democracies, two anocracies, or two autocracies. On the other hand, dyads consisting of one democracy and autocracy, or democracy and anocracy, or autocracy and anocracy, form a heterogeneous pair.

autocracy (scores from 0 to -5) was made. However, even with this distinction, the results remained nearly unchanged—only one dyad met the conditions for heterogeneity, reducing the homogeneity percentage to 70.45%. Conversely, this hypothesis is conditionally challenged as the proportion of heterogeneous dyads was notably higher than expected based on the democratic peace theory. Nearly a third of the cases contradicted the principles of the Democratic Peace theory. The next figure explores the APR score trends over time in order to determine whether any statistical patterns existed within the temporal scope of this research.

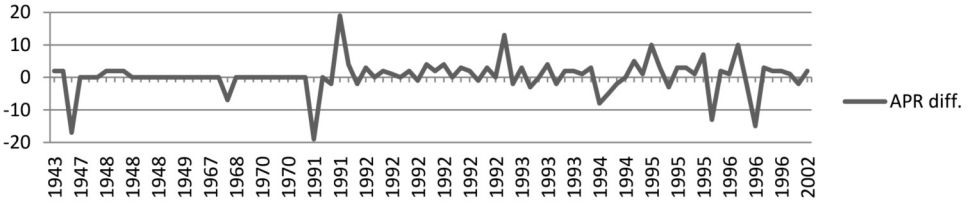
Graph 1: Polynomial trend line for all the APR scores in concrete year



Source: Author's calculations

Graph 1 supports the widely accepted notion of the "democratisation of the post-Cold War world", showing a significant increase in the APR score during the early 1990s. However, despite this upward trend, there was considerable variation in the APR scores at the start of the decade. Notably, six BMAs comprised states with either autocratic or anocratic APR scores, indicating the absence of consistent patterns. To illustrate this more clearly, the author decided to graphically present the differences in the APR scores, reflecting the varying levels of political regimes among the member states within the BMAs.

Graph 2: APR score differences among the members within the dyads



Source: Author`s calculation

Graph 2 shows an unexpected fluctuation in differences in political regime scores among dyad members starting in 1990. In most cases, the BMAs exhibit discrepancies of up to 15 points within the 21-point ladder score. After the initial research, only two of all the CEE BMAs consisted of both consolidated democracies.[17] However, significant statistical regularity was noticed regarding democratic scores before and after the Cuban crisis.

For this reason, it was assumed that *the higher the APR score within the concrete CEE BMA, the more durable the BMA.* The aggregated dyadic score derives a simple median value of two political regime scores at a given year. The author calculated the median score of the two parties within the BMA in the given year and presented it in Graph 3. The durability was expressed in months, and data were taken from the ATOP. In total, most of the alliances registered a "-7" median score in the Polity IV dataset, while a significant number of cases have had positive (democratic) regime marks (from 6-9). The durability of the CEE BMAs is the next finding. The author deployed a bivariate correlation method between the newly established APR variable and the ATOP durability variable to determine the correlations between these two. In order to improve the robustness of the results, the full sample (N = 88) and the bare sample (N = 72) were correlated.[18]

Table 5: Durability and APR score correlations (before and after 1962)

		Durability	
		BMA CEE 88	*BMA CEE 72*
Durability in months *(median)*		*166*	*149,56*
APR Score	*Pearson Correlation*	*-.564***	*-.402***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	*.000*	*.000*
	N	*88*	*72*

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author

Table 5 testifies to strong negative correlations between the durability and the APR score of the BMAs. When extended to the full sample (BMAs before the Cuban crises included), the correlation becomes even stronger.[19] The CEE BMAs' durability

[17] Hungary & Lithuania and Hungary & Slovenia, both concluded in 1992 (Leeds *et al.* 2002).

[18] Bare sample presents the BMAs after the Cuban crisis occurred (N = 72).

[19] Before the Cuban crisis (1962), all 16 alliances had stipulations according to which they lasted for 20 years. Thus, due to the constant *LENGTH* variable, it was not possible to correlate it separately with the APR score.

lasted on average for 166 months (N = 88), while after the Cuban crisis, median durability was slightly shorter (149 months). Based on the correlated findings, alliances with less democratic political regimes tended to last longer and vice versa. This negative correlation persisted after the Cuban crisis, albeit slightly weaker but still statistically significant ($r = -.40, p < 0.01$). That indicates that, overall, alliances with more autocratic political regimes had longer durations compared to those with democratic regimes.

The third part of the auxiliary hypothesis examined the phases of the BMA survival in terms of their *de facto* existence. An alliance undergoes phase changes when it manages to survive interruptions influenced by various factors. These findings refute hypothesis H2, revealing a robust negative correlation between the two variables under scrutiny. They underscore the significant influence of political regime quality on the longevity of the BMAs within the observed context.

Even though it assumes similar issues, hypothesis H3, in a way, provides a synthesis of the previous ones. Several key characteristics of the CEE BMAs have been identified, and a correlation has been examined to determine whether there is a connection among them. As it was assumed that the *correlations among the key characteristics of the CEE BMAs significantly varied before and after the Cuban crisis era*, the logic followed a deduction principle and calculated first the main characteristics' correlation for all the BMAs indexed in the ATOP (N = 545).[20]

In all the BMAs indexed in the ATOP dataset, there are several strong statistical correlations between some key characteristics. A strong positive correlation is observed between defence and offence BMAs ($r = .37, p < 0.01$), while there is a very strong negative correlation between defence and nonaggressive BMAs ($r = -.51, p < 0.01$). In general, defence BMAs were likely to have asymmetrical commitments between their members, and they also promised to make some aspect of their territory or resources available to an alliance partner in the event of conflict or under other specified conditions relevant to the alliance ($r = .38, p < 0.01$). The correlation between the BMAs with asymmetric commitments and the ones with promising some aspects of their territory is very strong ($r = .60, p < 0.01$), while the strongest correlation is among the ones promising territory and those who predicted mutual military base establishment by their treaties ($r = .79, p < 0.01$). To inspect whether there are any similarities in these correlations, the author repeated the correlation procedure for the CEE BMAs for the period before and after the Cuban crisis.

[20] Due to the large amount of data, the correlations are presented in Appendix 1 at the end of this paper.

*Table 6: Observable key characteristics of the CEE BMA (before and after 1962)**

		offense	nonagg	neutral	consul
defense	Pearson Correlation	.[a]	-.799**	-.351**	-.362**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.002	.002
offense	Pearson Correlation	.[a]	.[a]	.[a]	.[a]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.	.
nonagg	Pearson Correlation	**-.333**		.440**	.178
	Sig. (2-tailed)	**.207**		.000	.136
neutral	Pearson Correlation	.[a]	.[a]		.119
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.		.320
consul	Pearson Correlation	**-.832****	**.277**	.[a]	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	**.000**	**.298**	.	
seppeace	Pearson Correlation	**.218**	**-.655****	.[a]	**-.182**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	**.417**	**.006**	.	**.501**

* Correlations before the Cuban Crisis are bolded.

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Author

Table 6 indicates that not many variables could be correlated as most were constant (such as asymmetrical commitments, diplomatic aid, base establishment, territory concession, etc.). Similarly to all the ATOP BMAs, for the period after the Cuban crisis, there are even stronger negative correlations between defence and nonaggressive CEE BMAs ($r = -.79, p < 0.01$). There are also strong negative correlations between defence and neutral and consultative BMAs. It is observable that the rise of nonaggressive CEE BMAs correlates positively with the rise of neutral ones ($r = .44, p < 0.01$). Before the Cuban crisis, correlations among the CEE BMAs were quite different. The key difference relates to a very strong negative correlation between the consultative and offensive alliances ($r = -.83, p < 0.01$), as well as between nonaggressive and those whose treaties have been concluded as a part of a separate peace ($r = -.65, p < 0.01$). In examining the political regime changes, the author assumed that *the more political regime changes occurred in the countries of the CEE space after the Cuban crisis, the more phases of BMAs, in which they were members, happened.* This hypothesis is difficult to categorise traditionally, as it necessitates correlating changes in political regimes in the CEE region with the phases experienced by the BMAs throughout their existence. Due to the challenges in conducting a quantitative analysis, the author employed a qualitative approach to illustrate the relationship between these two variables. In

the observed period, there were 170 political regime changes: 89 before 1962 and 89 afterwards.

However, only 30 significant political regime changes occurred after, and 72 before 1962, if the Polity IV classification is taken into account.[21] However, the regime change does not include a simple change of the democracy quality. Polity IV also indexes the interruption, interregnum, and transition periods as notable regime changes. If this is included in the analysis, then 31 such cases occurred before and only five after 1962.[22] The author also observed no bigger deviations in terms of temporal dispatching of the changes. Also, no (or at least minimal) overlap between the regime change year and the BMA conclusion year is noticed. The direct link between the fact that political regime change has occurred and the decision to establish a BMA could not be adequately proven without a more comprehensive dataset, which would present correlative variables. Thus, this hypothesis could not be accepted.

Discussion and future research directions

The behaviour of sovereign countries within the international system has been conceptualised ever since international relations studies have been established between the two world wars. Whether the regime is democratic or autocratic, it consists of political (f)actors that highly influence the strategic politics of the concrete country. Some authors claim that, in democratic regimes, politicians want to get into office and remain there, and the best strategy for doing so is to give constituents what they want (Geddes 1999; De Mesquita 2002). In this paper, the author appraised the theoretical assumptions of the dyadic variant of the Democratic Peace theory as a potential explanatory argumentation of the behaviour of Central and Eastern European countries after the Cuban crisis. The behaviour within the international system was operationalised through the BMAs' establishment. The quantitative research on the BMAs, combined with the qualitative analysis of the BMAs' treaties, could be of the utmost significance for the analysis of wider bilateral relations between the two sovereign countries. This

[21] If 1962 belongs to the transition period (i.e., the regime change occurred in 1956 and ended in 1974), the regime change that will be counted is the next following that occurred within the concrete polity.

[22] Albania, Hungary, Ukraine, and Yugoslavia experienced the most political regime changes in the research sample.

research compounded one major and three auxiliary hypotheses. The Democratic Peace theory postulates have been largely confirmed in terms of hypothesis H1.

The results corroborated findings of Maoz and Russett (1993, 632) in terms of "joint regime" (as they named it), as their study has proved that dyadic political regime congruity ($r = .51$, $p < 0.01$) was a valid assumption.[23] Having tested the "alliances homogeneity" hypothesis, Duncan and Siverson (1982) confirmed regime congruity among the alliance partners.[24] On the other hand, some similar research (though not coinciding in the temporal domain with this one) exposed findings opposite to democratic peace theory assumptions. In the period between 1920 and 1939, Siverson and Emmons (1991, 295) noted that out of the 97 alliances formed by democracies, only 10 were solely between democratic governments, while the overall rate of democratic with democratic alliance formation was 10.3%. Between 1946 and 1965, more than 35% of total alliances were purely democratic. In general, some authors tend to show that after 1945, it was more likely for democracies to get allied (Simon and Gartzke 1996; Farber and Gowa 1997). This is the case with Lai and Reiter (2000), who empirically proved that political regime congruity was not important before 1945 in the allying process.

However, the results of this research remained robust even with the anocracy-adjusted sample. But does a 70% congruence in political regimes suffice to validate the democratic peace theory? The answer hinges on how one interprets the results related to democratic peace. One possible interpretation, an extensive view, suggests that the 30% incongruity can be seen as supporting the theory, given that it is significantly less than 70%. Conversely, from a restrictive perspective, any incongruity above 5% is deemed unacceptable. This divergence in interpretation underpins the ongoing debate among theorists in this field. It appears that this issue will continue to challenge peace research. Another pertinent question is what the outcome would have been if the sample had included dyads where only one member was from outside the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) region. The research sample (N=88) consisted exclusively of CEE dyads. However, future

[23] However, their sample consisted of 19.020 units, while the sample used for this research was only 88 CEE BMAs. Also, their research compounded all the alliances (not only bilateral ones), as well as all possible states' interactions. This claim is supported by Maoz and Russett's (1993, 636) results suggesting that "newly created democracies in Eastern Europe and elsewhere may still experience some significant amount of interstate conflict while their political systems are in the process of transition to democracy."

[24] These authors, however, tested both formal alliances (Small & Singer list) as well as informal ones (Rood 1973).

research could consider expanding the sample to include dyads with at least one member from the CEE region, potentially providing further insights.

Following these arguments, directions for further research should also move towards the examination of Russian (and any other) external influence on national decisions to enter an alliance. The most pressing issue within democratic peace research is whether the dyads (in conflict, militarised dispute, or alliance partners) are formed based on political regime congruity. In this context, dyads from hypothesis H2 in terms of the APR difference score should be taken carefully, as some countries were indexed as anocracies or even autocracies when entering into an alliance. Such was the case of Serbia and Croatia in the early nineties, when they were constituting themselves towards democratic political regimes. Hypothesis H3 was rejected as the correlation between the APR score and durability was negative and even stronger when the analysis involved the BMAs formed before the Cuban crisis. Unlike the results obtained by Gaubatz (1996), this research demonstrated that CEE BMAs' durability was longer if they were formed by a smaller number of democratic dyads.

However, little research has been done on regime changes or the essential features of the CEE BMAs. Hypothesis H4 was confirmed as many regime changes (170) occurred within the temporal-spatial domain, and the correlations significantly varied before and after the Cuban crisis. What limited further examination of hypothesis H4 was that some dummy variables in the ATOP dataset were constant, so the correlations between some key variables could not have been performed. Still, this research provided an evident argumentation on the clear influence of interregnums, interruptions, and transitions as important factors in the BMAs' conclusion. Ultimately, based on the strong academic evidence supported by empirical analysis, it could be concluded that political regime dynamics, despite the methodological limitations of its research, is strongly correlated and has a huge influence on the CEE BMAs' existence and their key characteristics.

Concluding remarks

This paper has quantitatively investigated correlations between the types of political regimes and the nature of bilateral military alliances in Central and Eastern Europe after the Cuban crisis. Even though some of the auxiliary hypotheses were not accepted, they paved the way for similar research on these phenomena in the future. The central idea of this paper was to demonstrate the link between the political regime quality (democracy/autocracy) and the possibility of entering into

a BMA and to present correlations between the political regime levels and some variables (key characteristics) of the BMAs.

These results have shown that some initial assumptions are validated, while, for others, there should be further improvements. Besides, this paper has shown that available datasets such as Polity IV and the ATOP are tremendously fruitful in conducting research like this one. Easily accessible data, combined with the vast variables compounding most countries for a long timeframe, is valuable for researchers. On the other hand, one must not forget that these datasets were often objects of academic debates, which suggested completely expelling them from academic research. In fact, several datasets offer completely different information than others in the same field, and their data availability is also very constrained. Lastly, the ATOP dataset presents a very fruitful tool in examining military alliances from the primarily institutional perspective, as it offers various variables on the institutionalisation of alliances, such as permanent secretariat, military base, creation of an international organisation, etc. In a theoretical sense, this article slightly presents a step up in terms of partially upgrading democratic peace postulates.

In the case of the first one, this paper offered a unique approach towards widening the research area of alliances from exclusively multilateral to bilateral ones. The study contributes to the alliance theory by extending the analysis from multilateral alliances to bilateral ones, revealing that the BMAs constitute over 84% of all recorded alliances. Additionally, it highlights the importance of geographical context, suggesting that future research could benefit from comparing regional differences, such as those between Central and Eastern Europe and other global regions. By demonstrating that the frequency of the BMAs is declining over time, the article positions these alliances as a unique phenomenon whose significance remains evident in contemporary international relations.

Despite the decreasing ratio of the BMAs' conclusions, they continue to play a crucial role in influencing interstate policies and shaping the landscape of global diplomacy. They represent an inevitable construct and constituent of modern international relations, as the consequences of their existence keep influencing a realm of interstate policy analyses.

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Nenad STEKIĆ

OBRASCI FORMIRANJA BILATERALNIH VOJNIH SAVEZA I DINAMIKA POLITIČKIH REŽIMA U CENTRALNOJ EVROPI, 1962–2003

Apstrakt: Ovo istraživanje proučava dinamiku političkih režima kao ključne faktore koji oblikuju bilateralne vojne saveze u Centralnoj i Istočnoj Evropi od posledica Kubanske raketne krize (1962) do 2003. godine. Koristeći podatke iz baza podataka *Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions* (ATOP) i *Polity IV*, istraživanje istražuje statističke korelacije između tipologija vojnih saveza i političkih režima. Istraživačka pitanja uključuju istraživanje ključnih karakteristika savezništava u domenu odbrane, prirodu političkih režima u dijadama, korelacije između trajnosti saveza i nivoa demokratije, kao i uticaj promena režima na faze saveza. Analiziran je uzorak od 88 savezništava, istražujući hipoteze o odnosima kao što su trajanje saveza, kongruentnost političkih režima, asimetrija članova, odredbe ugovora i promene pre i posle Kubanske krize. Ključni nalazi ukazuju da su manje demokratske dijade imale tendenciju da održe dugotrajnije saveze, dok je hipoteza o sličnosti političkih režima u vojnim savezima dobila delimičnu statističku potvrdu. Ovaj članak doprinosi razumevanju kako dinamika političkih režima utiče na formiranje i dugovečnost saveza u regionu koji je istorijski oblikovan hladnoratovskim geopolitičkim dinamikama.

Ključne reči: vojni savezi, bilateralni sporazumi, Centralna i Istočna Evropa, politički režim.

Appendix 1: Key characteristics of all the ATOP BMAs (1815–2003 inclusive)

		offense	nonagg	neutral	consul	asymm	dipaid	terrres	seppeace	base
	Pearson Correlation	.372**	-.519**	-.234**	-.126**	.381**	.019	.381**	.286**	.364**
defense	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.003	.000	.661	.000	.000	.000
	N	545	545	545	545	545	530	532	533	534
	Pearson Correlation		-.253**	-.094*	-.116**	.083	.107*	.069	.333**	.070
offense	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.028	.006	.053	.013	.114	.000	.105
	N		545	545	545	545	530	532	533	534
	Pearson Correlation			.134**	-.073	-.334**	-.108*	-.280**	-.245**	-.267**
nonagg	Sig. (2-tailed)			.002	.088	.000	.013	.000	.000	.000
	N			545	545	545	530	532	533	534
	Pearson Correlation				-.013	.014	.084	-.127**	-.028	-.123**
neutral	Sig. (2-tailed)				.763	.736	.052	.003	.514	.005
	N				545	545	530	532	533	534
	Pearson Correlation					-.084*	.014	-.073	-.058	-.084
consul	Sig. (2-tailed)					.050	.749	.091	.185	.052
	N					545	530	532	533	534
	Pearson Correlation						.095*	.607**	-.006	.594**
asymm	Sig. (2-tailed)						.029	.000	.896	.000
	N						530	532	533	534
	Pearson Correlation							.029	.196**	-.008
dipaid	Sig. (2-tailed)							.505	.000	.860
	N							530	530	530
	Pearson Correlation								-.014	.799**
terrres	Sig. (2-tailed)								.740	.000
	N								531	532
	Pearson Correlation									.016
seppeace	Sig. (2-tailed)									.713
	N									533

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Appendix 2: Key characteristics of the BMAs before and after the Cuban crisis

		defense	offense	nonagg	neutral	consul	asymm	notaiden	dipaid	terrres	seppe	base
	Pearson		.155**	-.594**	-.139*	-.171**	.323**	-.088	.[a]	.395**	.[a]	.342**
defense	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006	.000	.014	.003	.000	.132	.	.000	.	.000
	N		310	310	310	310	310	297	296	298	299	300
	Pearson	.351**		-.113*	-.035	.066	-.018	-.041	.[a]	-.020	.[a]	.100
offense	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.048	.540	.248	.750	.477	.	.728	.	.083
	N	235		310	310	310	310	297	296	298	299	300
	Pearson	-.300**	-.200**		.254**	-.083	-.252**	.279**	.[a]	-.231**	.[a]	-.278**
nonagg	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.002		.000	.143	.000	.000	.	.000	.	.000
	N	235	235		310	310	310	297	296	298	299	300
	Pearson	-.434**	-.196**	.091		.137*	.026	.373**	.[a]	-.070	.[a]	-.044
neutral	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.003	.167		.016	.649	.000	.	.228	.	.445
	N	235	235	235		310	310	297	296	298	299	300
	Pearson	.044	-.101	-.221**	-.146*		-.092	-.076	.[a]	-.048	.[a]	-.016
consul	Sig. (2-tailed)	.498	.123	.001	.025		.106	.191	.	.408	.	.777
	N	235	235	235	235		310	297	296	298	299	300
	Pearson	.325**	-.020	-.308**	-.034	-.007		-.095	.[a]	.605**	.[a]	.618**
asymm	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.757	.000	.607	.918		.102	.	.000	.	.000
	N	235	235	235	235	235		297	296	298	299	300
	Pearson	-.259**	-.142*	.200**	.395**	-.023	-.098		.[a]	-.007	.[a]	.140*
notaiden	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.030	.002	.000	.732	.136		.	.900	.	.016
	N	234	234	234	234	234	234		296	296	296	296
	Pearson	-.071	.049	-.079	.100	.075	.059	-.022		.[a]	.[a]	.[a]
dipaid	Sig. (2-tailed)	.278	.459	.232	.129	.251	.366	.739		.	.	.
	N	234	234	234	234	234	234	234		296	296	296
	Pearson	.311**	.000	-.248**	-.202**	-.031	.583**	-.095	-.005		.[a]	.767**
terrres	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.996	.000	.002	.641	.000	.148	.937		.	.000
	N	234	234	234	234	234	234	234	234		297	298
	Pearson	.275**	.268**	-.253**	-.076	-.008	-.095	-.133*	.159*	-.084		.[a]
seppeace	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.248	.899	.148	.043	.015	.203		.
	N	234	234	234	234	234	234	234	234	234		299

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

a. Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.