Wallender, C. <u>Mortal Friends, Best Enemies</u>, Chapters 1&2

This book examines the relationship between Germany and Russia in the post-Cold War era, using an institutionalist framework to look at security issues. Relations between the two countries are "defined not only by their power and interests…but also by the large number of international institutions inherited from the Cold War" (p.4). These institutions help states cooperate by overcoming 4 types of obstacles: problems of collaboration, coordination, assurance, and linkage. The institutionalist view of IR compicates the realist view by adding uncertainty as well as the high cost of us of force to the policymaking calculus. International institutions "can enable states to choose cooperative strategies in security relations by reducing uncertainty about the power and intentions of other states and about the consequences of their stratey choices" (p.5). Thus, this approach will expect more stability and cooperation in the post-Cold War relationship than realism would predict, since while the international environment has changed, the institutions remain. Wallender calls this a crucial case study (Eckstein, 1975) for both theories, an argues that security studies is a least likely case for institutional theory, because of the close relationship between power and security. The focus is on security strategies of the two countries, which are the dependent variable, varying between unilateral action and cooperative strategies. The book asks 3 questions:
- Under what conditions do institutions affect state's security strategies?
- How do institutions affect these strategies?
- When are instituions effective in facilitating cooperation?

In Chapter 2, Wallender contrasts the realist and institutionalist theories of IR. Realist theory, based on a focus on the distribution of power, would predict that the demise of bipolarity in Europe would create a more dangerous security environment, compounded by the increase in uncertainty between Germany and Russia about their intentions and ambitions. She dismisses the "optimistic realist" school, arguing that it is not yet a successful way of theorizing cooperation within a realist framework (pp. 13-15), and suggests that realism will predict that "combined with the effects of uncertainty, concern for relative gains and the ability to use force make cooperation virtually impossible and conflict ever-present" (p.15).

The institutionalist theory of security relations is based on two predictions which institutionalism in general makes about the international system: varying levels of institutionalism exist across the system, and under certain conditions, these institutions will affect the strategies of self-interested states. Thus, in terms of security relations in post-Cold War Europe, it predicts that Cold War institutions can serve to reduce uncertainty in German – Russian relations, and that these institutions will be maintained despite the fact that the conditions which defined them at the time of their creation are no longer extant. Security strategies are the dependent variable of this book, and Wallender defines them as "policies states choose in order to pursue their security interests and preferences…in light of constraints" (p.17) States choose these strategies based on the costliness and effectiveness of military force, the role of strategic interaction, and avoiding worst-case strategies which achieve a minimum form of security.

When can instituions play a role? When relative gains concerns are reduced, and force is relatively costly or ineffective, institutions can help solve problems of strategic interaction. The first issue Wallender takes up is that of common and competing interests. As common interests increase relative to competing interests, the gains to mutual cooperation increase. The obstacles to cooperation depend on the distribution of gains, and the time horizon which states have. The gains to cooperation also increase as the cost of force options increase. Institutions can reduce uncertainty by providing credible information and signals about the interests, preferences, and strategies of other states. They serve to create agreement about basic values and assumptions, provide a schema for interpreting the behavior of other states, and increase the capacity of a state to detect defections from cooperation by other states in the long term.

The role of institutions varies with the type of obstacle to cooperation faced:

- In problems of collaboration (deterrence is an example), institutions serve to identify states which free-ride, which collaboration creates incentives for. Thus, they will be used by states if they have capabilities to monitor behavior and allow for sanctioning.
- In situations where mutual gains to cooperation exist, problems may arise over the distribution of gains (bargaining or coordination problems). Here, institutions can provide bargaining structures and a focal point.
- Defensive actions taken by states in an uncertain environment can cause security problems. This can be alleviated by institutions which provide information and assurance about other states' underlying preferences. Thus, institutions with strong capacities to provide transparency and information will help resolve these problems. Transparency can cause vulnerabilities for states, so these institutions will be linked to ones which provide for retaliation and protection.
- Institutions can help states use linkage between issue areas to achieve cooperation. This requires institutions with substantial resources for side payments and strong rules to establish credible commitments to these exchanges.

When WILL institutions play a role? In order to sustain multilateral security strategies, institutions must have the proper form and function for the problem at hand. Since different security problems require different institutional capacities, for effective and efficient strategies, states must depend on the proper institutional designs. Institutions are linked despite their discrete use for resolving different security problems. The formal and informal connections created by the network of institutions has two goods in itself: it maximizes information about the intentions and strategic situations which states encounter, and it "reinforces the availability of defensive strategies in the face of shifting intentions" (p.38) as a result of insitutions acting in situations beyond their original purposes.

Wallender concludes with a series of hypotheses about about the role of instituions which she will test in the case of German-Russian security relations. Realists expect states to be indifferent to institutional form and function, and focus on balancing power through unilateral strategy, unaffected in strategy or outcome by insitutions. Against this null hypothesis, Wallender predicts that institutions will increase in value in the uncertain post-Cold War environment, and will take different forms depending on the problem at hand. They will be effective when they have the proper form, and when formal and informal connections among them exist.