Stoics and Hotheads:
Leaders' Temperament, Anger, and the Expression of Resolve in Face-to-face Diplomacy

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Abstract

When leaders negotiate face-to-face, why would an expression of anger make an interlocutor yield to one's demand in some instances but cause him to become more intransigent in others? In this article, I consult recent findings in social and experimental psychology and provide an explanation for when anger is more likely to be considered a credible expression of resolve. Anger elicits concessions if a leader has projected an image for being composed most of the time. On the contrary, expressing anger makes an interlocutor more unyielding if a leader is known for becoming angry easily and frequently. I demonstrate such contrasting preconceptions of a leader's temperament – a "stoic" vs. a "hothead" – and their impact on the larger trajectory of international politics with two in-depth case studies on the face-to-face interactions between Khrushchev, Macmillan and Eisenhower from the onset of the Berlin Crisis in November 1958 to the aborted four-power summit in Paris two years later.

"[B]efore our second meeting with [Slobodan] Milosevic, I met with [other members of the American team]… I said that I 'planned to throw a controlled fit' to make clear… that what he was doing was unacceptable."

- Richard Holbrooke (1998) on negotiating with the Serbian President to end the Bosnian War (5).

In March 1997, US President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin met in Helsinki. They had a number of issues to discuss, the touchiest of which concerned NATO's eastward expansion. At one point, Yeltsin asked for a "private assurance" that the organization would not bring in the former Soviet republics of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. Clinton refused, but Yeltsin pressed on. According to Madeleine Albright (2003), the US Secretary of State, Clinton "got irritated", "raised his voice" and again rejected Yeltsin. After conferring with his own team, Yeltsin turned to Clinton and shrugged, "Okay, Bill, but I tried" (255). Clinton's change of tone made an impression. Yeltsin (2000) recalled in his memoir: "From my many meetings with Clinton, I knew he was a lively, open person, though he can turn on the chill and be stern when necessary" (348).

Contrast Clinton's angry retort and its effect on Yeltsin with the negotiation between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat three years later. For two weeks in July 2000, they met at Camp David. They bargained hard, and in the end, the summit broke up without any agreement or even a statement (Albright 2003, 484-93). Their refusal to compromise, however, had as much to do with the intractability of their conflict as with their perception that the other party was being emotionally insincere. At one point, Albright (2003)

observed, Barak "became morose" and "barely left his cabin... I suspected he was putting on an act, since he had often accused Arafat of manipulating us with his moods" (491).

According to the "cheap talk" paradigm of rationalism and neorealism that has dominated IR's understanding of diplomacy (Trager 2016, 205-228), any claim of resolve *in private* could be serious or a bluff. As such, leaders might as well ignore what others say and how they behave. That they not only pay attention to each other's emotional expressions but also revise their positions accordingly – backing down in some instances but becoming more intransigent in others – is therefore doubly puzzling. Perhaps not surprisingly, the "cheap talk" paradigm has been subject to much criticism lately. Leveraging insights from psychology and neuroscience, a number of scholars have sought to illuminate the interpersonal dynamics that make the communication of intentions possible in face-to-face diplomacy (Hall and Yarhi-Milo 2012; Holmes 2013; 2016; 2018; Yarhi-Milo 2014; Wong 2016; Forthcoming; Holmes and Yarhi-Milo 2016; Wheeler 2018).

Building on these works, I provide an explanation for when leaders are more or less likely to back down in response to an expression of anger. By expressions of anger, I am referring to a repertoire of cues expressed on an actor's face and through his voice and body in interpersonal interactions that, in the abstract, signifies blame and demand for the target to adjust his course of action – or in the context of a negotiation – to back down on the issue under dispute. However, not all expressions of anger induce a concession. Leaders, like the rest of us, have different temperaments. Moreover, they often have certain preconceptions – or in Jervis' (1970) word, "images" – about where a counterpart stands temperamentally, developed through a combination of firsthand acquaintance, as relayed by others who have dealt with the counterpart, and his past public behavior. Different preconceptions predispose others to interpret his

expressions differently. A leader would be more inclined to consider an expression a credible claim of resolve if the counterpart is not known for becoming angry often and easily. That is, he is normally a "stoic". On the contrary, a "hothead" who loses his cool yet again would find it more difficult to express resolve through anger. This is because others would be more inclined to attribute an expression to his personality (rather than his appraisal of the ongoing interaction) and – if the expression does not appear authentic – to think that he is prone to manipulating others emotionally. Moreover, a reputation for hotheadedness weakens anger as a signal; it "debases" it and creates more "noise" in interpersonal communication. Emotions are also "contagious"; a leader whose counterpart always and easily flares up is unlikely to be "immune" from becoming angry himself. For these reasons, chronic anger could cause a leader to dig in his heels, and worse, set off an emotional spiral that dooms the relationship. As Albright (2003) wrote in reference to the Barak-Arafat episode, "[s]ometimes… a show of anger… is useful. I believe it's unacceptable, however, for leaders to let tantrums obstruct important initiatives" (490).

Going beyond the general argument that leaders express and read intentions through personal contact – put forth in both "older" works on the subject (e.g. Groth 1964; Jervis 1970) and the more recent works cited above – I theorize how the exchange of one particular emotion, anger, could lead to cooperative versus conflictive outcomes.[1] I cast the temperaments of leaders and their relationships as independent and dependent variables, respectively, thus contributing to a growing literature that investigates the impact of leaders' disposition on international politics (e.g. Saunders 2011; Rathbun 2014; Kertzer 2016). Anatoly Dobrynin (1995), the Soviet ambassador to the US during six American presidencies, recalled: "All these leaders were quite

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[1] For a recent study that similarly examines how empathy, or lack thereof, could result in divergent outcomes, see Holmes and Yarhi-Milo 2016.

different in their temperament". One lesson he learned from decades of witnessing exchange at the highest level of government was "how profoundly human nature and indeed human relations affect the outcome of events; diplomacy, after all, is… a very private and individual [skill]" (4-5). In her memoir as the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton (2014) wrote: "Relations between nations are based on shared interests and values" – perhaps an allusion to IR's bias towards structural explanations – "but also on personalities. The personal element matters more… than many would expect, for good or ill" (207). Relationships among leaders are not just "noise" in an international system otherwise driven by structural, impersonal factors. As Wheeler (2018) puts it, "The Interpersonal is the International" (1).

Though IR scholars have made great strides in the study of emotions,[2] as Hall and Ross (2015) note, much of what interests them "occur[s] at the level of the state and other corporate actors" (856). Their overarching goal has been to theorize "the processes through which individual emotions become collective and political" (Hutchison and Bleiker 2014, 492). For instance, Hall's (2015) work on emotional diplomacy is primarily concerned with the "coordinated state-level behavior that explicitly and officially projects the image of a particular emotional response towards other states." Such behavior, he contends, "is a completely different animal from personal emotion" because it involves not only individual but also institutional actors (newspaper editorials, official spokesmen at news conferences, etc.) "synchronizing their behavior to project a specific emotion." It is thus "by its nature intentional and collaborative" (2-3). In contrast, the exchange of emotions at the "micro" level of interpersonal contact is often spontaneous, subtle, transient, intimate, and subjective in meaning. A focus on the collective is therefore ill-equipped to shed light on such "inner workings" of diplomacy. I detail the

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[2] For an overview, see Hutchison and Bleiker 2014.

psychological processes at work when leaders interact up close to provide an important complement to the more collective-oriented literature.

Many recent works on face-to-face diplomacy also concern the assessment of long-term intentions, such as whether a counterpart is trustworthy, sincere about rapprochement, or has revisionist aims. Take, for instance, Yarhi-Milo (2014), whose research "clearly delineate[s] between assessments in the short run (e.g. what Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev was looking to do in the next round of negotiations)… and how his long term political plans are perceived (e.g. was Gorbachev seeking to 'buy time' in order to get stronger and pursue more aggressive policies down the line)." The former, she explains, is "not the focus" of her work (H-Diplo 2015). By contrast, I theorize communication in the immediate time frame of a face-to-face interaction, in which leaders are often more concerned with gauging intentions over particular issues than their more diffuse inclination towards conflict and cooperation. To continue with Yarhi-Milo's example, Gorbachev might have wanted to improve relations with the US, and to that end, developed warm personal relationships with Ronald Reagan through a series of meetings in the late-1980s (Yarhi-Milo 2014, 192-223). However, he still had to register his discontent with, say, the US' development of the Strategic Defense Initiative missile defense system. He did so with expressions of anger when the issue came up during the Geneva Summit in 1985 (Reynolds 2007, 372-383).

My investigation adds further empirical substantiation to the usefulness of IR's recent "turn" to face-to-face diplomacy. I present two in-depth case studies from a relatively neglected period in the scholarship on the Cold War: the Berlin Crisis of 1958-1960 (Trachtenberg 1991, 169). I argue that it was British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's expression of anger as a "stoic" that convinced Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev to back down on his ultimatum on Berlin

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when the two met in Moscow in February 1959. I illustrate the opposite scenario of a "hothead", again with Khrushchev as one of our protagonists. I contend that it was his outbursts targeted at US President Dwight Eisenhower – made worse by Eisenhower's preconception of him as a manipulative "hothead" – that contributed to the failure of the Paris summit in May 1960. As petty as it sounds, the behavior of these leaders had larger consequences than "just" the failure of their personal relationships; the Cold War took an unanticipated turn for the worse.

This article proceeds in five sections. First, I consult some of the latest research in social and experimental psychology to theorize why chronic anger weakens one's ability to express resolve. Second, I argue that leaders often have certain preconceptions about each other's temperament. I provide a number of examples and anecdotes to support my argument. I then present the two case studies. I discuss why extant explanations for their outcome fall short, and at the same time, foreground the evidentiary limits of the current research. To conclude, I explain the implications of this article for both scholars and practitioners of diplomacy (including current world leaders), and discuss its shortcomings – theoretical and methodological – to highlight avenues for future research.

When expressing anger pays and when it backfires

Spanning across decades if not centuries of work in philosophy, biology, anthropology, sociology and psychology, disagreements abound on the theory and ontology of emotions. I do not intend to engage in these debates directly.[3] Instead, I adopt as my analytical starting point an approach to the study of emotions that psychologists Michael Morris and Dacher Keltner have put forth to underscore their *inter*personal (i.e. how one's expressions influence the behavior of

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[3] For a multidisciplinary overview, see de Sousa 2014.

others) rather than *intra*personal (how subjective experience of emotions influence one's

behavior) functions. Emotional expressions, they explain, are "other-directed, intentional

(although not always consciously controlled) communicative acts that organize social

interactions… Within these interactions, emotional expression communicates social intention,

desired course of actions, and role-related expectations and behaviors" (Morris and Keltner 2000,

13).

As social interactions, negotiations can become emotional. In particular, a claim of

resolve is often expressed in anger (Olekalns and Druckman 2014). By anger, I refer to a

repertoire of behavioral cues expressed on an actor's face (furrowed eyebrows, pressed lips,

flared nostrils, flushed face, glaring eyes, etc.), and through his voice (raised and rising pitches,

growling, etc.) and body (clenched fists, foot-stomping, intense trembling, etc.)[4] that, in the

abstract, signifies blame and demand for the target to adjust his course of action – or in the

context of a negotiation – to back down on the issue under dispute.

Generally speaking, an emotion is considered more authentic, and thus its concomitant

claim of intention more credible, if it appears spontaneous and natural (Ekman 2009, 123). On

the other hand, even the subtlest discrepancies in behavior – a hesitation, stutter or lapse in time

between one's words and body language, an averted gaze, a slightly asymmetric expression on

the face, eyebrows that are raised or drooped too much or in the "wrong" direction, etc. – could

give away a halfhearted or even falsified claim. As Ekman (2003) notes, "it is the discrepancy

between the verbal line and what is revealed by the voice, body, and face that often betrays a lie"

(85). Most of us cannot suppress such "leakages and deception clues" (Ekman 2009, 85)

voluntarily, at least not in full. Equally important, in face-to-face contact, we are constantly on

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[4] For an overview of these cues, see Burgoon, Guerrero and Floyd 2010, 305-310; and Ekman 2003, Ch. 6.
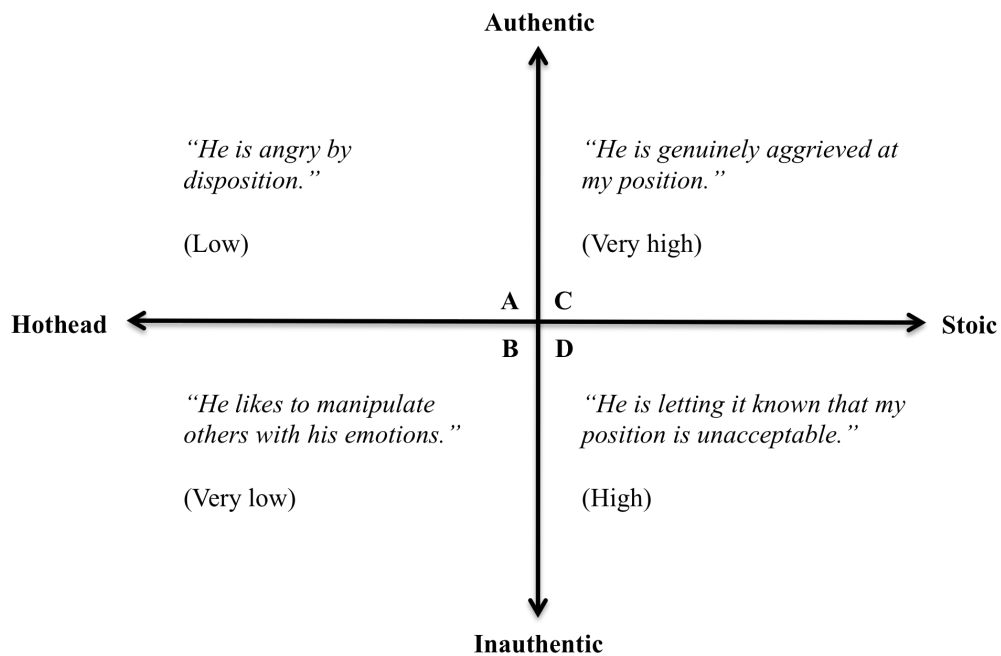
the lookout for and are to a certain extent endowed with the ability to detect them. Recognition of emotions and their authenticity is a subconscious process that does not require much in the way of cognitive resources and deliberation (Burgoon, Geurrero and Floyd 2010; Tracy and Robins 2008).

Emotions, however, are not foolproof as evidence of intentions. Two factors prevent any direct inference from the authenticity of an expression to the credibility of a verbal claim. First, however convincing (or unconvincing) one's behavioral cues may be, there is always room for doubt. An outburst with all the outward signs of authenticity could still be feigned after all. Consider the extreme example of Hitler. The German leader was a "natural performer". He "could turn on charm or fury and could with great mastery impress or intimidate, inhibit, or falsify feelings and plans" (Ekman 2009, 19, 263). On the other hand, a heartfelt expression could still be mistaken as feigned. Second, even if a leader is certain that an expression is authentic, what is he to make of it? Is it a reaction to what just happened in the interaction – such as a demand he made – or is it simply a reflection of the counterpart's personality?

The leader consults his impression of the counterpart, I argue, and in particular his temperament. In fact, to infer anything from an expression *in isolation* would be susceptible to what Ekman calls the "Brokaw Hazard" – named after the American television anchor, Tom Brokaw, who claimed that he could tell apart truths from lies just by reading an interviewee's behavioral cues (i.e. without regard to his underlying temperament). The fundamental problem, Ekman (2009) explains, is that "[i]ndividuals differ in their emotional expressiveness". An observer would be "vulnerable to errors unless he knows what the suspect's usual emotional behavior is like." As such, "[t]he only way to reduce mistakes… is to base judgments on a change in… behavior" (96, 166-168).

In the case of anger, a leader would be less likely to yield to an expression if the counterpart is known for becoming angry easily and frequently. A number of psychological processes are at work. First, in the language of attribution theory, chronic anger makes a leader more likely to attribute an expression to the counterpart's disposition rather than the situation. Filipowicz, Barsade, and Melwani (2001) have demonstrated through a series of negotiation experiments that subjects yield more to a counterpart who becomes angry over successive rounds of bargaining than one who remains angry from beginning to end. Subjects in the former condition are more likely to attribute the angry turnabout to their own behavior, such as that their position has been unreasonable (541-556). In contrast, a counterpart who is chronically angry reflects ill temper, or what psychologists call "trait anger" (Carroll 2013, 1987-1989). An expression from him – even if it appears authentic – would be attributed more to his temperament than the interaction. A leader would not feel the urge to back down if in his mind the expression has limited bearing on the issue under dispute (Figure 1, Quadrant A). He might even conclude that the counterpart is simply difficult to deal with. As Hillary Clinton (2014) complained after four years of interactions with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, "[h]e regularly frustrated his American partners with intemperate outbursts in person and in the press" (142). Worse, a leader might construe a counterpart's "trait anger" as a tendency to insult others. Person-directed anger, in turn, makes a leader become angry himself and less compromising (Steinel, van Kleef and Harinck 2008).

Figure 1. Attribution of anger
Image of a counterpart's temperament vs. perceived authenticity of an expression
In bracket: credibility of resolve

Authentic

"He is angry by disposition."

(Low)

"He is genuinely aggrieved at my position."

(Very high)

A | C

Hothead ←————————————————→ **Stoic**

B | D

"He likes to manipulate others with his emotions."

(Very low)

"He is letting it known that my position is unacceptable."

(High)

Inauthentic

Moreover, if an expression does not appear authentic, the counterpart may just be seen as prone to manipulating others emotionally – again, a dispositional attribution – making the leader even less inclined to budge (Quadrant B). Research has shown that negotiators who perceive an angry expression as inauthentic are less likely to yield (Tng and Au 2014). A leader might even become angry himself and dig in his heels, as the suspicion that a counterpart is feigning anger often causes one to become less cooperative (Côté, Hideg, and van Kleef 2013). Psychologists have labeled this the "blowback" effect, in which feigned anger "creates an action-reaction cycle that results in genuine anger and diminishes trust". As such, it yields "little tactical benefit but… considerable and persistent strategic disadvantage" (Campagna et al. 2016, 605). The opening example of Barak's reaction to what he saw was Arafat's attempt to manipulate others with his "moods" is a case in point.

Second, from a signaling perspective, a counterpart burdened with a "track record" of outbursts would find a current expression much "debased", *independent of its perceived authenticity and the attribution its target makes*. As Jervis (1970) explains, "debasing" of a signal occurs "when [it] is given to a large number of actors" and "also when [it] has been repeatedly given to one actor" (107). A hothead who flares up yet again is less likely to be taken seriously. On the contrary, a counterpart who does not normally show signs of anger but – to borrow Yeltin's description of Clinton in the opening episode – "can turn on the chill and be stern when necessary" sends a stronger signal. And if his expression appears authentic, chances are that he is genuinely aggrieved (Quadrant C).

Interestingly, however, a leader could still register resolve even if his expression appears feigned. As Jervis (1970) argues, the meaning of a signal is established "by tacit or explicit understanding among the actors", *not* by its "inherent credibility" (18). Recalling an ambassador "for consultation", for instance, constitutes a signal of protest not because it is invariably "indexed" to a country's underlying intentions – a country that is feigning grievances is as free to recall an ambassador as one that is not – but because under the norms of diplomatic conduct, such actions are rare and serious. By the same token, diplomatic etiquette requires that leaders remain poised and be courteous to each other in face-to-face interactions, even between adversaries (Wong 2016, 155-156). If a stoic loses his cool, he is probably trying to make a point, even if, in the most extreme scenario, his anger comes across as contrived (Quadrant D).

Third, a leader can become unyielding simply because he has been in extended contact with an angry counterpart, again independent of whether an expression appears authentic *per se*, of the attribution he makes, and of whether it has been "debased" as a signal. Emotions are "contagious". An angry counterpart could make a leader angry, even if the latter has no concern

over the issue that angered the counterpart in the first place (Hatfield et al. 1993). Being angry, in turn, causes one to become more risk-taking and demanding, even if the original cause of anger is what psychologists call "incidental", i.e. it has nothing to do with the issue under dispute (Lerner and Keltner 2001; Lerner and Tiedens 2006). Similarly, a leader could become angry, and therefore less willing to compromise, simply because he has "caught" the emotion from the counterpart. Moreover, repeated expressions of anger erode trust (Dunn and Schweitzer 2005; Liu and Wang 2010). Not surprisingly, a leader would be less willing to cooperate with someone he considers untrustworthy, in part because a lack of trust makes him less likely to construe an angry expression as authentic (Pruitt and Carnevale 1993; Van Kleef, De Dreu and Manstead 2006). He would in turn be more inclined to see the counterpart as manipulative, which as discussed, can make him even angrier and become less trusting of the latter. A vicious cycle thus ensues.

Finally, emotional expressions are often subtle in face-to-face interactions. A counterpart who is emotionally volatile would find a current expression overwhelmed by "noise", even if it were genuine and heartfelt. By contrast, an expression stands out if that counterpart is normally composed. Whenever anger is expressed, it would be difficult to miss or misread. Warren Christopher, the US Secretary of State during Bill Clinton's first term as President, exemplifies such a leader. According to Madeleine Albright (2003), "[b]oth his body and his statements were spare. Observing him, I came to identify a raised eyebrow as evidence of high emotion" (165). Holbrooke (1998) observed that "[b]ecause he was normally so soft-spoken, Christopher was especially effective when he raised his voice or showed emotion" (145). His unexpected show of anger at some of the most critical junctions during the Dayton Accord negotiations in 1995 was in part what caused the different parties to relent and sign onto the final agreement. As one of his

aides recalled, "the talks would not have succeeded without Christopher's tireless patience – and occasional, strategic bursts of anger".[5]

The stoics and hotheads among world leaders

Yeltsin's impression of Bill Clinton as normally keeping his temper in check, Barak's accusation of Arafat for being prone to manipulate others emotionally, Hillary Clinton's frustration with Karzai's regular "intemperate outbursts", and Christopher's image as a stoic – these are only some examples showing how leaders see one another. IR has tended to speak of reputation as an attribute of the state. In accordance with recent research (e.g. McManus 2018; Renshon, Dafoe, and Huth 2018; Yarhi-Milo 2018), however, I argue that in the case of temperament, reputation is attached as much to individual leaders as it is the state. Save for the most obscure figure from an opaque political system (e.g. Kim Jong-un during his initial days as the leader of North Korea in 2011), a counterpart is rarely a completely unknown figure. Often times, other leaders have certain preconceptions about his temperament, developed through a combination of firsthand acquaintance (e.g. meetings and encounters in the past), information relayed by others who have gotten to know him personally (the exchange of correspondence among leaders, diplomatic reports and briefing papers prepared by the resident ambassador, etc.), and his past public behavior.

Such preconceptions abound in world politics. On the "stoic" side, Hillary Clinton (2014) has also described Sergei Lavrov, Russia's Foreign Minister, as "normally cool and restrained" after dealing with him repeatedly during her four-year tenure as US Secretary of State (478). During the Cold War, Secretary of State George Shultz was nicknamed "Buddha" among those

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[5] James Gibney, "Warren Christopher, Mr. Diplomat," *The Atlantic*, March 19, 2011.

who worked for him and his foreign counterparts for "the sense of calm and stoicism he projected" (O'Sullivan 2009, 61). The media dubbed Andrei Gromyko, the long-time Soviet Foreign Minister, the "Great Stone Face" because, as Secretary of State Dean Rusk (1991) explained from firsthand experience, he "didn't give away much with facial expression in our negotiation" (358). The Americans who negotiated with the Chinese over the normalization of US-China relations throughout the 1970s developed a similar impression of Zhou Enlai. Zhou was "internationally famous for his patience, at least when negotiating face-to-face"; he had the "countenance of a stoic" (Wilhelm Jr. 1994, 46, 52). Stalin was known for his use of what William Taubman calls the "one-two-three treatment". He always appeared nonplussed but cordial in the opening and conclusion of a meeting. During the wartime conferences, he was known for his unperturbed demeanor, often doodling on his papers and puffing his pipes as others spoke (Reynolds 2007, 113). When an important issue was at stake, however, he could lose his cool. US Secretary of State Edward Stettinius Jr. (1949) recalled that during the Yalta conference, Stalin, "on the question of German reparations, spoke with great emotion, which was in sharp contrast to his usual calm, even manner. On several occasions he arose, stepped behind his chair, and spoke from that position, gesturing to emphasize his point" (263-264).

Other leaders belong more to the opposite category. Dobrynin (1995) remembered Robert F. Kennedy, with whom he developed a critical back channel for communications during the Kennedy presidency, as someone "who often lost his temper… impulsive and excitable" (61, 81-83). Former US Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger was similarly known for his "legendary temper" (Hill 2014, 33). Khrushchev's reputation as a "hothead" was firmly established by the time of the Paris summit in May 1960, as I explain below; it only became more ingrained thereafter. In preparation for the Vienna summit in June 1961, Kennedy,

according to his press secretary, "read scores of intelligence reports on the Russian leader and every available word he had ever spoken or written for the public record. JFK, then and later, was never misled by the Premier's foot-stamping tantrums" (Salinger 1966, 227-228). The briefing papers he reviewed included ones prepared by the CIA and the Department of State, with titles such as "Khrushchev – A Personality Sketch" (Reynolds 2007, 482).

It has in fact become standard for leaders to review the "psychological profiles" of their counterpart ahead of summit meetings (Reynolds 2007, 97). To prepare for the Camp David negotiations in 1978, US President Jimmy Carter pored over "psychological analyses of two of the protagonists", Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. A "team of experts" in the US intelligence community prepared these analyses after "detailed scrutiny" of, among other sources, the leaders' past statements and behavior, and through "interviews with [their] personal acquaintances" (Carter 1995, 244). Similarly, before Reagan met Gorbachev at Geneva in 1985, he was given a set of briefing papers, including ones on Gorbachev's "character", prepared by John Matlock, a Soviet specialist in the National Security Council who had come to know the Soviet leadership well after years of negotiations (Matlock Jr. 2004, 132-134). Over time, the "different personalities and temperaments" between the two leaders became apparent. When they met at Reykjavik again a year later, Gorbachev was "always pushing, impatient, often chiding [Reagan] and even snappy," while Reagan was "tranquil, confident in views, calmly pushing Gorbachev" to see eye to eye with him (Adelman 2014, 93-4).

In short, diplomatic relationships are rarely a *tabula rasa*. As I demonstrate below with the two cases, the preconceptions that leaders have about each other's temperament often color their subsequent reading of their behavior. The "cheap talk" paradigm is – at the bottom of it –

predicated on the assumption that leaders do not place much faith in any claim of intentions that is uncertain because the stakes are high (Rathbun 2007). Given the "high" politics involved – military-security crisis over Berlin, nuclear deterrence, superpower rivalry, etc. – the protagonists of these cases should be the least inclined to make much of their personal interactions. These cases are thus difficult for my argument to stand. However, if it is proven useful even in such "least likely" of cases, we should be more confident of its broader relevance (George and Bennett 2005, 121-122).

Macmillan to Khrushchev: when expressing anger pays

For the Soviet leadership in the late-1950s, the occupation of Berlin among the four Allied powers within the Soviet-controlled German Democratic Republic (GDR) was increasingly unacceptable. So on November 10, 1958, Khrushchev publically demanded the withdrawal of all Western troops, and announced his plan to sign a peace treaty with the GDR and hand over Soviet administrative responsibilities in Berlin to the East Germans. Such actions would in effect force the West to either vacate the city and conclude a peace treaty with the GDR (and thereby conferring it *de jure* recognition), or risk provoking a blockade limiting their access to West Berlin. If the West resisted militarily, the Soviet Union would "rise in defense" of its ally under the Warsaw Pact, Khrushchev proclaimed.[6]

Khrushchev's ultimatum worried Macmillan. Two weeks later, he wrote to the Soviet leader: "The British Government have every intention of upholding their rights in Berlin… That also I believe to be the position of our allies" (Macmillan 1971, 572). However, the Soviets declared in a note delivered to the Western powers several days later that the existing

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[6] US Government Printing Office, *Documents on Germany, 1944-1959,* May 8, 1959: 308-12.

arrangements in Berlin had become "null and void". The occupation of Berlin had to end within six month.[7] One week later, Khrushchev replied to Macmillan in writing. He reiterated the Soviet position, and – in Macmillan's (1971) words – "as a warning or a threat" reaffirmed his commitment to the deadline (574-576).

As the crisis loomed, Macmillan visited the Soviet Union in late-February, 1959. "The primary purpose of my visit", Macmillan (1971) wrote to West German leader Konrad Adenauer, "will… be to try to discover something of what is in the minds of the Soviet leaders" (585). Khrushchev was well aware of Macmillan's motives. According to a brief the Soviet government produced ahead of Macmillan's arrival, the prime minister's objective was "to clarify the position of the Soviet leadership… and above all to test [its] firmness… on Berlin." As such, "if Macmillan were to issue threats on Berlin… the Soviet side would warn him that such pressure would not exert any influence on Soviet policy and would lead to serious consequences" (Newman 2007, 36-7).

The visit concluded with two major concessions from Khrushchev. Instead of a summit meeting, he accepted a foreign minister's conference to discuss the German question. More significantly, he suspended the deadline of his ultimatum indefinitely, which in substance was not so different from withdrawing it altogether.

The "unflappable Mac" lost his cool

To understand Khrushchev's change of heart, I examine up close the emotional dynamics that transpired between him and Macmillan. In the initial days of Macmillan's visit, the relationship between the two leaders was amiable. They had the opportunity for some "real

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[7] "Soviet Note of November 27," US Department of State, *Department of State Bulletin* 40(1021), 86.

discussions" on the second day, especially on East Germany and Berlin. Both stood firmly by their known positions but in Macmillan's (1971) view, the exchange was "at least helpful in that it was quiet and without emotion" (598). One of his aids similarly described the atmosphere as "extremely relaxed and informal".[8] The two parties had their first formal meeting the following day. The talks, Macmillan (1971) recalled, "covered much the same ground" as the day before, but proceeded "in a rather less relaxed mood." Overall, though, the talks "ended on a very friendly note" (599-604).

However, "the honeymoon began to disintegrate" on the fourth day, Macmillan later told his biographer (Horne 1989, 124). "The warm reception" of the first three days, Khrushchev's son, Sergei, explained, "had no effect on the negotiations" (S. Khrushchev 2000, 308). So while Macmillan was on an excursion in the vicinity of Moscow, Khrushchev delivered a public speech denouncing Western policies towards Berlin and reiterating the demands of his ultimatum. The speech came like a bombshell for the West. "[F]rom… Macmillan to the lowest stenographer," the British delegation "was surprised and stunned", the *New York Times* reported the following day. More importantly, and in line with rationalist reasoning, the British had come to see the much-publicized speech as a credible signal of resolve. "[T]he calculated rudeness of its delivery in the midst of a friendly visit", they reasoned, "reveals the Soviet Union as far less amenable to discussion than the British had been led to think".[9] The Americans came to a similar conclusion. Eisenhower wrote to Macmillan upon learning about the speech: it was "even more belligerent and unyielding than those he has made in the past" (Geelhoed and Edmonds 2004, 217).

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[8] "Macmillan Talks with Khrushchev on Major Issues," *New York Times*, February 12, 1959.

[9] "British Visitors Stunned by Talk," *New York Times*, February 25, 1959.

On the following day, Day 5, the two leaders met over lunch. Macmillan restated Britain's position on Berlin, and told the Soviets that they should not expect him to cave in. He had, as he wrote in his diary, "a straight talk" with Khrushchev (Macmillan 2011, 200). But thus far, as one historian put it, his tone had been "careful, courteous and measured" (Newman 2007, 69). "Khrushchev was obviously put out," according to Macmillan, "but in the early stages of his reply he kept his temper." Not long after, however, he went on the offensive, and "progressively… worked himself up into a rage over Germany." Soon, "the argument began to degenerate". Khrushchev, Macmillan (1971) recalled, "somewhat angrily" complained that the Western powers had ignored his proposal to turn Berlin into a "free city" and reasserted his intention to sign a peace treaty with the GDR (611-613).

It was "somewhere at this point" that Macmillan also "bridled and retorted": "[I]f you try to threaten us in any way you will create the Third World War. Because we shall not give in, nor will the Americans" (Horne 1989, 125). Macmillan, as one historian puts it, had "lost his legendary composure" (Gearson 1998, 78). In response, Khrushchev "leapt to his feet and shouted: 'You have insulted me'" (Horne 1989, 125). Before they adjourned, "Khrushchev was clearly disturbed and angry, and did not respond to the attempts of [First Deputy Premier Anastas] Mikoyan and [Foreign Minister Andrei] Gromyko to restrain him" (Macmillan 1971, 614).

As the historian Michael Beschloss (1986) notes, Macmillan's change of tone was "shocking" for Khrushchev (175). With a personal motto reputed to be "Quiet, calm deliberation disentangles every knot" (Williams 2009, 293), Macmillan was widely known for his composure. He maintained a "public posture of unflappability", one observer noted in his

obituary in 1986.[10] Peter Jenkins, a veteran journalist and columnist of British politics, noted that Macmillan possessed an "ability… to suppress all display of true emotion." He was "a veritable master … He cultivated the reputation for it [unflappability] assiduously, as he did with all his poses".[11] "I always felt", Macmillan once explained, "that one must maintain great control, but it is very exhausting keeping it to yourself. I wasn't really 'unflappable', I just had to keep it down" (Horne 1989, 14). That he lost his cool at Khrushchev was surprising, perhaps even for him. As if finding it necessary to justify his behavior, he confided in his diary: "In order to keep straight with the Western allies, I <u>had</u> – at some point – to take a '<u>tough</u>' line on Berlin… This was <u>not</u> easy to do, altho' [sic] necessary. K's [sic] public speech … enabled me to do this, but in <u>reply</u>" (emphasis original; Macmillan 2011, 201-202). In Macmillan's mind, it was unclear at that point if his behavior had caused Khrushchev to retreat. He thought, however, that he had successfully demonstrated resolve. In a letter sent to Eisenhower that day, he wrote: "I think that I had a pretty useful conversation… and that it left him [Khrushchev] disappointed" (Geelhoed and Edmonds 2004, 219-20).

The two parties had another formal meeting the following morning. When Berlin came up again, Khrushchev "worked himself up into a state of considerable emotion", to which Macmillan responded: "What I had said yesterday I thought it my duty to say" and that "[m]y purpose was to bring about the opening of negotiations and ensure their success". Khrushchev, however, continued on with his rant on Western policies. After some discussions on their plan for a communiqué when the two parties were to meet again four days later, Khrushchev "in a

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[10] Vernon Bogdanor, "Harold Macmillan: Unflappable Master of the Middle Way," *The Guardian*, December 30, 1986.

[11] Peter Jenkins, "The Unflappable Old Magician," *New York Times*, March 5, 1989.

short but offensive intervention" resumed his tirade (Macmillan 1971, 617). His remarks, Macmillan (2011) wrote in his diary, were "rude and provocative" (200). As the meeting came to a close, Khrushchev stood up and announced that he had decided not to accompany his guest on a trip to Kiev and Leningrad – as he originally intended – allegedly because he had been "insulted". He then, Macmillan recalled, "altered his line and said 'and moreover I've got the most terrible toothache'" (Horne 1989, 126). The meeting then ended as the British began their tour around the country.

Three days later, the British were handed an advanced copy of a note the Soviets had planned to deliver the following day. In it, they restated their proposal for a summit meeting. Significantly, however, they agreed that if the West was not prepared for it, there should be a conference at the foreign ministers' level to begin at the end of April, with a time limit of two to three months. Such a proposal would have effectively superseded the deadline of Khrushchev's ultimatum, since the conference would still be in session then.[12] Macmillan (1971) thought that the note "represented a real concession" (624) and upon learning about it, so did Eisenhower. Khrushchev's change of heart was "[s]omewhat flabbergasting, in view of his earlier bombast", the President wrote in his memoir (D. Eisenhower 1965, 353). Upon Macmillan's return to Moscow the next day, Khrushchev confirmed his concessions verbally, noting that "the date of 27 May [the ultimatum's deadline] had no particular significance. It could be 27 June or 27 August or any date [the West] liked to name" (Macmillan 1971, 625).

Macmillan's emotional turnabout and its effect on Khrushchev

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[12] "Soviet Note of March 2," US Department of State, *Department of State Bulletin* 40(1033): 508-11.

In Macmillan's (1971) view, the "chief practical result" of the visit "was the postponement, if not the solution, of the Berlin crisis" (631). Patrick Reilly, the British ambassador in Moscow, saw Khrushchev's concessions as "almost certainly a consequence of the visit" (Newman 2007, 75). According to a member of the British delegation, upon witnessing Macmillan's turnabout on Day 5, Khrushchev's face "went the colour of rather too old leather; he was furious, rocking to and fro, obviously thinking that if he acted it would mean war". Macmillan "had made Khrushchev realise that what he was considering was dangerous… [and] done a great deal to make Khrushchev think very seriously about the risk of war" (Gearson 1992, 138).

Skeptics might counter my argument along three lines. First, would the same outcome have occurred if Macmillan just stood firm? Press (2005), for instance, has suggested from a neorealist perspective that Khrushchev's threat was not *fully* credible until the Soviet Union had a reasonable chance of surviving a nuclear first strike from the US a year or two later (85-112). Perhaps Khrushchev was destined to back down because the balance of power was not in his favor, and as such, he knew that the West would not take him seriously. That, I argue, was unlikely. Khrushchev had both the interest and indeed the power to follow through with his ultimatum. West Berlin was of great geopolitical interest to the Soviets. For the West, Khrushchev did become more credible as Soviet power grew over time, but they never considered him bluffing. Citing archival evidence from *before* Macmillan's visit, Press (2005) concluded that "American and British leaders believed Khrushchev when he said he was going to sign a peace treaty with the East Germans and give them control of the access routes. This faith was never shaken" (96).

Moreover, it might be tempting to conclude in hindsight that Khrushchev could not have won because the US enjoyed a first-strike advantage (although that was also more a matter of probability than certainty). However, what counted as power and in whose favor it was were murkier to the protagonists at the time (Wohlforth 1993). Strategically sound or not, who could prevail militarily in Europe mattered most to Khrushchev. The balance of conventional power favored the Soviet Union (Press 2005, 84). More importantly, it was a temporary leap in Soviet nuclear capabilities *on the ground* that motivated Khrushchev to challenge the status quo. As part of the highly secret Operation Atom, the Soviet army was building special bases to the north of Berlin in the summer of 1958, in preparation for the deployment of medium-range ballistic missiles. The warheads reached the bases later that year, and by the ultimatum's announcement in November, Khrushchev "could confidently expect… that the Soviet Union was about to acquire a real nuclear threat to London and Paris" (Fursenko and Naftali 2006, 194). It was also with this timeframe in mind that he decided "to limit the ultimatum to six months, rather than a year or longer". Khrushchev was hoping that "the general unease created by the ultimatum, eventually strengthened by the missiles in East Germany, would force the West" to leave Berlin (Fursenko and Naftali 2006, 213). Until Macmillan convinced him otherwise – in person – Khrushchev did not think the West would risk starting a nuclear war over the distant and vulnerable enclave. Tension would ensue, he thought, but it would be more along the lines of the Berlin Blockade of 1948-49 (Fursenko and Naftali 2006, 199). He thought he had a reasonable chance of success. Otherwise, if the implication of American nuclear deterrence was plain for all to see and he was destined to fail, why would he even try?

Let us assume, however, that he had a rather clear-eyed understanding of the limit of what he was able to achieve should the crisis escalated beyond Europe. Perhaps, from a

rationalist perspective, Khrushchev was simply bluffing, and when he realized the West was not budging, backing down would be the right thing to do. That is possible. The more fundamental question, however, is how he came to such a realization?[13] Macmillan's position had been unequivocally clear all along, as early as in the aforementioned letter he wrote to Khrushchev in late-November 1958, and until the exchanges between the two leaders on the second and third days of Macmillan's visit. His insistence that the West would remain in Berlin had apparently made Khrushchev raise the stakes further – with his provocative speech on Day 4 – instead of backing down. To retreat after such a move would subject him to even greater "audience costs", and that was what happened; he lost much of his credibility in the eyes of the GDR leaders afterwards (Fursenko and Naftali 2006, 341).

In short, Khrushchev would be highly disinclined to retreat according to neorealism and rationalism – with their emphasis on power, interests, and costly signals – and yet he did. As structural theories, they are unable to explain how a leader could bluff about his resolve, or conversely, to call a counterpart's bluff, through face-to-face interactions. As my tracing of events demonstrates, Khrushchev had essentially attempted the former but Macmillan succeeded in the latter.

Second, skeptics might argue that the recollections of Macmillan and other members of his delegation and the accounts of historians and biographers, which I have cited extensively (including the description of Macmillan's behavior), should be taken with a grain of salt. Biases can be a serious issue for research based on archival materials (Kramer 1990), and I discuss ways to deal with it in the conclusion. But in this case, Soviet witnesses to the meetings were no less

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[13] Press (2005), for instance, notes that Khrushchev's change of mind came around Days 5 and 6 of Macmillan's visit (82, fn. 4), but does not explain why.

impressed by Macmillan's about-face. Macmillan's "conversations with Father", Sergei

Khrushchev (2000) recalls, "had made an impression" (310). On the seventh day of the visit,

Mikoyan remarked that "the British Prime Minister had at first given the impression of seeking

solutions acceptable to both sides… [B]ut later in the course of talks… the British Prime

Minister… chose a tough line".[14] Gromyko (1989) recalled in his memoir: "[T]he British

position presented by Macmillan excluded the least possibility of any understanding or the

slightest movement" (157). A report produced by the Soviet foreign ministry soon after,

presumably under his direction, noted that Macmillan had in the initial days demonstrated his

"well known flexibility", but the meetings on the fifth and sixth days had been the most

"unfortunate" (Newman 2007, 81).

Curiously enough, Khrushchev never supplied his side of the story. His dictated memoirs

run over 3,000 pages; the third volume on foreign policy is over 1,100 pages and contains vivid

and detailed descriptions of his interactions with many world leaders (N. Khrushchev 2007).

They contain, however, not a single word on Macmillan's visit, the first by any major Western

statesmen since World War II. One possible explanation is the sense of defeat he must have felt

emerging from the experience. Sergei Khrushchev has provided a glimpse into his thoughts: "Of

course he retreated. The whole world saw him retreat… Did Father lose? Yes, he bluffed, he

miscalculated… Did Father think he'd won? I think that deep in his heart he did not" (S.

Khrushchev 2000, 308). In short, it was not only the British who thought that Khrushchev

blinked; so did the Soviets.

Finally, Khrushchev might have backed down after witnessing Macmillan's behavior.

But how can we know it was Macmillan's emotional rather than discursive turnabout that

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[14] "British took tough line," *The Manchester Guardian*, February 28, 1959.

mattered? Macmillan, after all, was also speaking in a rather blunt language ("[I]f you try to threaten us in any way you will create the Third World War"). Macmillan's language would be at best an important, but not sufficient, cause of the outcome. As my earlier discussion on the interaction between verbal and nonverbal communications suggests, the credibility of a claim *in interpersonal contact* is largely indeterminate without references to its concomitant behavioral cues and what such cues signify given one's impression of the speaker. Counterfactually, Macmillan's threat, with the same verbal content, could have been less impactful – or perhaps even seen as a bluff (as my next case study demonstrates) – had he been known as a "hothead" and that the manner in which it was delivered appeared halfhearted, hesitant or contrived (or in Ekman's language, replete with "leakages" and "deception clues"). Khrushchev, sitting face-to-face just meters away from Macmillan, would not have been able to ascertain the credibility of his threat by taking in its words alone.

That said, I acknowledge that the available record does not allow us to disentangle conclusively the effects of language versus emotions. To do so would require not only Khrushchev's account, but also that he specified what he found about Macmillan's threat – its words, its behavioral manifestations, or both – compelling. As Reynolds (2004) reflects regarding difficulties in conducting research on summit meetings, it is commonplace for leaders to leave for posterity the words exchanged and proposals and counterproposals made in their personal encounters (in a memoir, memo, interview, etc.); less likely, however, would such accounts be supplemented with descriptions of each other's facial expressions, intonations, and bodily movements, much less what they make of such nonverbal behavior and direct evidence on how beliefs are revised as a result (9). But as forensic scientists are wont to say, the absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence. The interpersonal dynamics that transpire when leaders

meet behind closed doors may well be critical to international relations, even though they are by definition largely inaccessible to outsiders. Hence, the appropriate strategy would be to bear in mind that findings in a case study might be tentative, and as a next step, make up for its shortcomings with complementary research methods. This is especially true given the relative neglect of face-to-face diplomacy in the literature – theoretically but also empirically. I develop this point further in the conclusion.

Khrushchev to Eisenhower: when expressing anger backfires

Before Macmillan's visit, the West did not know much about Khrushchev at the personal level. The visit was Khrushchev's "debut performance" on the diplomatic stage since he rose to the apex of power in the Kremlin a year earlier. Macmillan's firsthand interactions with him had therefore, as the *Daily Telegraph* put it at the time, "provided a unique opportunity for getting to know how… [his] mind worked" (quoted in Newman 2007, 78). In the words of Geelhoed and Edmonds (2004), the trip had enabled Macmillan "to interpret Khrushchev's behavior to Ike [i.e. Eisenhower] and the other Western heads of state" (196).

Khrushchev's "bad manners"

What, then, did the Western leaders think of Khrushchev? His peevish behavior throughout the visit gave him the reputation of a "hothead", I argue. Immediately after he returned to London, Macmillan (2011) wrote in his diary: "Mr. K [sic] is… [i]mpulsive; sensitive of his own dignity and insensitive of anyone else's feelings" (199). Patrick Reilly described him as "remarkably emotional". The other Western leaders were observing the visit closely. Charles de Gaulle thought that his speech on the fourth day was "outrageous" (Macmillan 1971, 621) and his behavior "caddish" (Newman 2007, 71). In his memoir, the French President described him

as "quirkish", which made "communication rather painful" (de Gaulle 1971, 217). Across the Atlantic, Eisenhower was displeased. He wrote in his memoir: "While Harold was still in Moscow, Khrushchev took time out from their talks to deliver a hard, even insulting speech, an act of incredibly bad manners" (D. Eisenhower 1965, 345). The State Department's report on the visit, which Eisenhower had presumably read, opined that Khrushchev's "mood swings" were "deliberate tactics".[15]

Eisenhower's subsequent impression of Khrushchev

Thereafter, Khrushchev's interactions with others had only strengthened Eisenhower's belief that the Soviet leader was prone to manipulate others emotionally.

For instance, Richard Nixon, then Vice President, visited the Soviet Union five months after Macmillan. Having dealt with Khrushchev personally, Macmillan sent Eisenhower a letter before Nixon's departure, warning the Americans of the Soviet leader's tendency to bluster (Geelhoed and Edmonds 2004, 270). Khrushchev's temper was already on display in his first meeting with Nixon. According to Nixon (1982), he protested "in a high-pitched voice" at a recent resolution of the US Congress that condemned the Soviet Union, "frequently pounding his fist on the table." He was "flushed with anger" and "hovered on the borderline of rage, the veins at his temples seemingly ready to burst" (174-175). Their famous "Kitchen Debate" on the relative merits of the Soviet and American political systems came the following day. Khrushchev spoke "furiously, seeming at times to lose control of his emotions". In his memoir, Nixon (1982) described him as "highly emotional", having "a repertoire of gestures that a conductor of a brass band would envy". But he did not always find his outbursts sincere. Khrushchev "never loses his

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[15] "Macmillan's Visit to the Soviet Union," US Department of State, *Intelligence Report No. 7669* (March 13, 1959).

temper – he uses it", Nixon wrote; the "clown" in him "could use his histrionics expertly" (185-9). Ironically though, because of his "uninhibited behavior, indiscreet statements, and bombastic pronouncements," Nixon (1982) opined, "many did not take him seriously" (171).

The opportunity for Eisenhower to get to know Khrushchev personally came two months later in September, when Khrushchev, along with his family, visited the US. Macmillan again considered it necessary to forewarn Eisenhower. Ten days before Khrushchev's arrival, Macmillan sent Eisenhower a memorandum, titled "Mr. Khrushchev's Character and Motives", to offer the President a "short character sketch" of his subject. "Khrushchev's personal touchiness", he admonished, "may… so lead to tiresome scenes" (Geelhoed and Edmonds 2004, 292-293).

Khrushchev toured around the country in the initial days of his visit. Throughout, he repeatedly took offense at what he thought was insulting behavior from members of the public and the press (Taubman 2003, 425, 428-429). But the more serious "provocations" came in Los Angeles. He grew angry upon hearing that he was denied a visit to Disneyland, when he found a performance at a Hollywood studio offensive, and most dramatically, when he deemed a speech given by the city's mayor insulting. Khrushchev, according to the State Department's official report, made "a threatening display of… anger". He interrupted the mayor and threatened to cut his visit short (Fursenko and Naftali 2006, 429-432). According to his wife, Nina, he "completely lost his temper".[16]

Upon returning to his hotel, Khrushchev lambasted the way he had been treated. "At times his voice rose to a scream; his fury seemed to have no limits", recalled his son (S.

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[16] "Report on the Khrushchev Visit," US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1958-1960* Vol. X, Part 1, Doc. 136.

Khrushchev 1990, 358). His behavior, however, was to a certain extent staged. Khrushchev (1974) recounted in his memoir: "I was in full control of my nerves: I was giving vent to my indignation for the ears of the Americans accompanying us" (389). Sergei Khrushchev (1990) also asserted what appeared to be "the explosion of a very emotional man" was actually "calm calculation" (358). Rada Adzhubei, Khrushchev's daughter, similarly claimed that his behavior was "entirely deliberate" (Taubman 2003, 754).

The Americans thought so too. "The Soviet leader was… a good actor", according to Taubman (2003), who interviewed the officials responsible for Khrushchev's travel arrangements. "At least one American diplomat… came away convinced that his outbursts were designed to put Eisenhower on the defensive" (426). Chalmers Roberts (1973), a journalist who witnessed Khrushchev's outbursts in Los Angeles, opined that the Soviet leader was "a master of feigned anger" (159). When Khrushchev returned to Camp David to meet with Eisenhower several days later, the President received a report from Cabot Lodge, Khrushchev's escort, describing him as "a remarkable, although very difficult, man."[17] Eisenhower (1965) wrote in his memoir that Lodge, "who had undergone an ordeal in keeping up with our energetic and unpredictable visitor, told me in detail of Khrushchev's activities… This much could be said: Khrushchev responded vigorously to every incident" (441).

At Camp David, the Soviet leader was again petulant (Taubman 2003, 435-8). On the final day of negotiations, George Kistiakowsky (1976), Eisenhower's science advisor, wrote: "I could see by the expression on his [the interpreter's] face that he was rather shocked at the way in which Khrushchev spoke during his outbursts… I could see by the President's expression that

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[17] "Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower," *FRUS,* 1958-1960, Vol. X, Part 1, Doc. 128.

he was intensely angry and just managed to control himself" (91). Macmillan wrote to Eisenhower afterwards: "If I may say so, you handled him [Khrushchev] splendidly and I do hope that his occasional outbursts did not give you too much trouble" (Geelhoed and Edmonds 2004, 299).

Overall, the visit was successful. Khrushchev withdrew his ultimatum. He and Eisenhower also consented to a summit meeting sometime the following year, and Eisenhower would reciprocate with a trip to the Soviet Union soon after. However, his opinion of Khrushchev hardly improved. He wrote in his memoir: Khrushchev "implied that the personal acquaintanceship between us should prove helpful in approaching some of our common problems… He himself later talked much about 'the Spirit of Camp David,' but it was a term that I never used or deemed valid" (D. Eisenhower 1965, 448). Sergei Khrushchev perhaps best summarized how others, including Eisenhower, had come to see his father: "He had this image that he was very emotional. Sometimes he used it, and he liked to use it, to threaten people".[18]

The U-2 spy plane incident and Eisenhower's position before the summit

All eyes were on the four-power summit scheduled for the following spring in Paris. However, on May Day, 1960, just two weeks before the summit, the Soviet Union shot down an American U-2 reconnaissance aircraft over its territory. The US government attempted to cover it up initially, but it failed when the Soviets revealed more evidence on the transgression.

Eisenhower had always doubted whether the gains justified the risks in authorizing such flights, and as such had already suspended the program three times previously (Perret 1999, 581). So when a U-2 was eventually brought down, he was regretful. A week later, he grumbled

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[18] Interview in *The Most* (episode no. 9), The History Channel. First aired on December 8, 2000.

to his secretary, "I would like to resign!"[19] He, however, was still looking forward to meeting Khrushchev again. He considered the summit the culmination of a more conciliatory approach towards the Soviet Union he had adopted over the past year. As Geelhoed and Edmonds (2004) note, the summit was seen as a "report card on the effectiveness of their [the Western leaders'] diplomacy" (200). Now, the "stupid U-2 mess" – in Eisenhower's words – was derailing his efforts (Kistiakowsky 1976, 375). In a meeting with a group of Republican senators four days before leaving for Paris, he commented that "he was… hopeful that some useful progress could be made".[20] He even suggested to Christian Herter, his Secretary of State, that he meet with Khrushchev in private. Herter, however, objected because he considered it a sign of weakness (S. Khrushchev 2000, 386). As one scholar puts it, Eisenhower was "brimming with conciliation, and hoping against hope that Khrushchev would follow suit" (Haapanen 1994, 256).

He arrived in Paris a day before the summit. As it turned out, Khrushchev had already paid de Gaulle, the host, a visit and handed him a démarche. In essence, it declared that the Soviets would withdraw from the conference unless Eisenhower issued an apology, announced that he would discontinue the reconnaissance program, and pledged to punish those responsible in the US government for the flights. According to de Gaulle (1971), upon learning about the démarche, Eisenhower was "very upset" and "announced his intention to make a conciliatory statement" when the four powers met the following day (429). Eisenhower was still dwelling on the ill-fated mission. He complained to his colleagues that "the intelligence people [i.e. the CIA,

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[19] Ann Whitman Diary Series, *Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower as President of the United States*, Eisenhower Presidential Library (*Papers*), Box 11 (May 9, 1960).

[20] "Memorandum for Ann Whitman," *Papers*, Box 50 (May 11, 1960).

who oversaw the flights]… had failed to recognize the emotional, even pathological, reaction of the Russian regarding their frontiers".[21]

Macmillan checked in with Eisenhower the following morning, May 16, just three hours before the summit, and found the President "depressed and uncertain" (Macmillan 1972, 204). "[O]ne thing was very clear in his mind… we will not do this kind of overflying anymore", Eisenhower remarked.[22] As the two leaders finished their breakfast, Herter distributed the latest version of the "conciliatory" text Eisenhower had planned to deliver. But according to Macmillan (1972), Eisenhower thought that the text was "*not* very good and much too truculent" (204; emphasis original).

Khrushchev's outbursts and Eisenhower's intransigence

However, whatever desire for reconciliation Eisenhower had that morning quickly dissipated. The Soviet delegation was already in the summit room when Eisenhower entered. Khrushchev, according to Gromyko (1989), gave him an "icy stare" (171). When de Gaulle announced that the floor was open, Khrushchev, according to Eisenhower, "was on his feet, red-faced, loudly demanding the right to speak". Khrushchev's speech – or in Eisenhower's words, his "long diatribe" – lasted forty-five minutes. In essence, he repeated the three demands he issued the day before (D. Eisenhower 1965, 555). Khrushchev was in an "angry mood" and spoke "loudly", recalled Dobrynin (1995), who was present as the Soviet delegation's counselor (40). According to Vernon Walters (1978), Eisenhower's aid and interpreter, Khrushchev "lashed himself into an even greater frenzy" that de Gaulle interrupted and said: "The acoustics

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[21] "Memorandum of Conference with the President, 4:30 pm, May 15, 1960," *Papers*, Box 50 (May 16, 1960).

[22] "Memorandum of Conference," *Papers*, Box 50 (May 16, 1960).

in this room are excellent. We can all hear the chairman. This is no need for him to raise his voice" (344). Khrushchev (1974) wrote in his memoir, "I was all worked up, feeling combative and exhilarated" (455).

Khrushchev was indeed very angry. His behavior could have been seen as a heartfelt protest against American transgression. Eisenhower, however, did not perceive it as such. His outbursts were not just about "manners", i.e. his disposition. They were, Eisenhower claimed, "largely spurious." At one point during his speech, Eisenhower wrote, the Soviet leader "became so vehement that I could not help grinning. He happened to notice this, and thereafter kept his eyes glued to the text of his speech". The other leaders concurred. "Both President de Gaulle and Prime Minister Macmillan", he wrote, "suggested that Khrushchev was acting more like a student reciting a difficult lesson than as a person who was speaking his own convictions and beliefs". If anything, the interaction only solidified his view of Khrushchev that had been brewing since Macmillan's visit the previous year. He wrote in his memoir, Khrushchev was "shrewd, tough, and coldly deliberate, even when he was pretending to be consumed with anger" (D. Eisenhower 1965, 555-8).

Eisenhower grew angry in turn. "The President could scarcely contain himself", Macmillan (1972) remembered (205). According to Charles Bohlen (1973), the American note-taker, "[a]s Khrushchev talked, Eisenhower's bald head turned various shades of pink, a sure sign that he was using every bit of will to hold his temper" (468). Walters (1978) similarly recalled: "[Eisenhower's] face and neck were flushed and I could tell from experience that he was extremely angry" (345). John Eisenhower (1974), who was also part of the American delegation, recalled that his father had difficulty "keeping his temper" (274-5).

Eisenhower was next to speak, reciting the "conciliatory" speech he prepared. He declared the end of the reconnaissance flights, proposed that the responsibility of aerial surveillance be taken up by the UN, and most significantly, suggested that "bilateral conversations" between the US and the Soviet Union be undertaken "while the main conference proceeds". However, the meeting degenerated further as Khrushchev remained belligerent. When Eisenhower clarified that the flights would not continue under his watch, but that he could not speak for his successor, Khrushchev, "jumped to his feet" (Walters 1978, 346). Macmillan eventually concluded the meeting by proposing that they meet again the next day. Khrushchev responded: "I would not participate… until the United States has publically removed the threat it has imposed."[23] He then, according to Walters (1978), "stalked out" of the room (340). As he left, he slapped his driver on the back and remarked, "Mine is the only ruddy face. Eisenhower's is white, and Macmillan's has no color" (quoted in Beschloss 1986, 289).

One could imagine, however, that Eisenhower's face was just as red. He was livid. "I'm just fed up! I'm just fed up!", he shouted after returning to the American embassy. Khrushchev was "a son of a bitch" by trying to put on a show to impress Moscow. He "had been completely intransigent and insulting".[24] When Macmillan met with Eisenhower that evening, the President "talked very strongly against Khrushchev". Macmillan (1972) thought to himself perhaps the President could "'say he was sorry' – or, preferably, [make] a formal diplomatic apology." But given Eisenhower's state of mind, he did not broach the subject (208). Clearly, Khrushchev's

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[23] For the full transcript of the meeting, see "Memorandum of Conversation," *FRUS*, 1958-1960, Vol. IX, Doc. 168.

[24] "Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower," *FRUS*, 1958-1960, Vol. IX, Doc. 169.

behavior did not draw anyone closer to his cause. According to Walters (1978), "neither de Gaulle… nor Macmillan… ever suggested, even indirectly, that Eisenhower should apologize" (347-8).[25]

On the following day, the three Western leaders attempted to schedule another meeting. Meanwhile, according to John Eisenhower (1974), "the Russians were… peddling the idea around town" that a telephone call from the President "to express regret" over the U-2 flights "would keep the Summit going". Khrushchev was willing to drop his demand that those responsible in the US government be punished if Eisenhower would "personally apologize" (275-6). But instead of giving in, the Western leaders issued a communiqué, announcing that the summit could not continue without Khrushchev. The summit had thus ended before it began.

Khrushchev's motive

Why did Khrushchev unleash his wrath? The dominant view among his contemporaries and historians is that perhaps he was less interested in striking any agreement than scoring propaganda points against Eisenhower. Worse, he was sabotaging the summit to placate the more hawkish voices in the Soviet leadership and among his international allies. He actually did not want the summit to proceed. Macmillan (1965), for instance, thought that Khrushchev "had gotten into something of a spot at the Kremlin" (554). Paul-Henri Spaak, NATO's Secretary General at the time, thought that "a combination of Chinese, Stalinists, and Soviet army pressures forced Khrushchev to change his policy" (Sulzberger 1970, 670).

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[25] The idea that Eisenhower should apologize was not as far-fetched at the time as it seems in hindsight. For example, Senator John F. Kennedy, Eisenhower's eventual successor, suggested him to do so (Schick 1971, 122).

Such understanding, however, is more a *post hoc* rationalization of the summit's failure than an informed reading of Khrushchev's motive at the time. As Newman (2007) concludes after a review of declassified sources from the Soviet and East German archives, "in May 1960, Khrushchev was so keen to achieve disarmament and détente that he was prepared to make key concessions on Berlin … [H]ad the summit gone ahead, both sides might well have reached a compromise" (1). The view that Khrushchev had deliberately sabotaged the summit is also contradicted by those who knew him best. "Some Western authors", Sergei Khrushchev (2000) wrote, "argue that… pressure on Father from the right [in the Soviet leadership] led to the breakup of the conference. This viewpoint strikes me as profoundly mistaken… He was in complete command of the situation and made the decisions" (383). Dobrynin (1995) similarly remembered: "Some American historians have argued that Khrushchev came to Paris with the intention of wrecking the summit… That was not so, and I can testify to it… [W]e left Moscow with the expectation of lengthy if uneasy discussions in Paris." Instead, Khrushchev undertook an "emotional attempt to bluff an apology out of Eisenhower" (42).

What, then, was Khrushchev hoping to achieve? He wrote in his memoir: "During the flight [to Paris]… I felt a keener sense of my responsibility… They present us with this pill just before the conference, but we pretend that we don't understand anything… I thought that we had to set conditions, an ultimatum [i.e. the three demands he raised]… Thus, we departed with documents containing one position and when we landed in Paris their content was quite different" (N. Khrushchev 2007, 243-4). Khrushchev was genuinely aggrieved. "Father's struggle", according to Sergei, "was not against the opposition [i.e. the hawks in the Kremlin] but within himself" (S. Khrushchev 2000, 386). His bottom line was that negotiations could not begin without at least an apology.

Moreover, after the ill-fated meeting on May 16, he stayed in Paris for two more days, hoping that Eisenhower would relent (Taubman 2003, 465; Dobrynin 1995, 42). That would not have been a logical move had he indeed hoped to sabotage the summit. His confidence that an apology was forthcoming was also strengthened by his belief that the Americans had much stake in the summit's success. "To better understand Khrushchev's behavior", Dobrynin (1995) opined, "it should be said that from the very beginning he was convinced that Eisenhower would not allow the conference to collapse" (41). Most importantly, he actually believed that Eisenhower would apologize. At one point during the meeting, he thought he heard the President saying to Herter: "Well, why not? Why don't we go ahead and make a statement of apology?" (N. Khrushchev 1974, 454). He also hoped that Macmillan and de Gaulle would "lobby" on his behalf (Beschloss 1986, 296). But as mentioned, both leaders considered it a lost cause given Eisenhower's unyielding attitude after the meeting. Hence, when Eisenhower stood firm, Khrushchev was surprised. As Walters (1978) observed: "It seemed to me that the Soviets had gambled on a capitulation by Eisenhower and were disoriented when it was not forthcoming" (348). "Father burned the last bridge", Sergei Khrushchev (2000) wrote. "The leaders of both superpowers dug in their heels: one demanded an apology, the other refused to make it" (389).

The incident would be petty if not for the fact the protagonists involved were the two most powerful individuals in the world. Most historians agree that the summit was an important turning point in the Cold War because its failure had put an abrupt end to nearly two years of effort to achieve détente. More immediately, the hope that the four powers could work out of their impasse on Berlin was dashed. The best opportunity until then to work towards disarmament was also lost (Wicker 2002, 129). Khrushchev, Mikoyan later opined, "was guilty of delaying the onset of détente for fifteen years" (Taubman 2003, 466).

Implications, limitations, and next steps

When leaders negotiate face-to-face, anger is often expressed to bolster one's claim of resolve, and as such, to compel an interlocutor to back down. However, assuming that leaders always prefer receiving a larger share of the pie in any negotiated outcome, would they not be tempted to be angry all the time? That, I argue, is ill-advised, since whether a target softens or stiffens his position depends not only on how convincing he considers an expression *per se*, but also on what he makes of it in light of his preconception of the counterpart. He would be less inclined to yield if the counterpart is known for becoming angry easily and frequently, but more likely to back down if becoming angry is more the exception than the norm.

There are some obvious lessons to be learned from this research. In IR, face-to-face diplomacy is often dismissed as inconsequential or epiphenomenal to structural factors. But a closer reading of how leaders actually behave and what they make of each other's behavior suggests otherwise. The perception of intentions can be intensely personal, influenced heavily by the temperament of leaders and the preconceptions they have of each other. As such, individual agency matters a lot more than extant theories of IR generally allow.

The implication of this research should also be apparent for practitioners. Chronic anger can jeopardize a relationship. It is therefore not surprising that composure is both a behavior normally expected in diplomacy and a trait common to all of its "good" practitioners (Wong 2016, 155-156). But expressing anger can also compel a counterpart to back down. The "trick", as Adler, Rosen and Silverstein (1998) note, is to behave "in a manner that makes the point, but does not undermine the negotiation." This requires, among other factors, "a measured approach

to expressing our feelings" (169-170). As the opening quote by Richard Holbrooke suggests, throwing a fit can communicate resolve, but only if one does so in a "controlled" manner.

That said, I have only theorized one aspect of anger. Future research may seek to investigate how its expression interacts with other factors that extant theories of IR consider important to the communication of resolve. For instance, the norms that leaders often hold with regard to what constitutes a legitimate claim in a particular relationship may influence the outcome of a negotiation (Gelpi 2003). Would an expression render a claim more credible if the claim is seen as legitimate (for instance, threatening to retaliate against the clear violation of an international agreement), but backfires if the claim is illegitimate (threatening to renege on an agreement if a counterpart refuses to capitulate to an unreasonable demand)? What inferences would a leader draw if – contrary to the above case studies – a "hothead" becomes emotionally restrained? Would that be taken as an intention to yield and cooperate? As discussed in the Macmillan-Khrushchev case study, how do emotions interact with language in face-to-face diplomacy?

More generally, when are leaders more or less likely to rely on their preconceptions of each other and what they experience in their personal interactions – including the exchange of emotions – as information about intentions? My case studies have shown that even when stakes are high – and hence the incentive to discredit uncertain sources of information is the greatest – leaders still read intentions off each other's behavior. But there are other factors that could make such interpersonal contact more or less relevant. For instance, perhaps a leader's larger reputation and behavior in person are less indicative of a country's overall intentions if he is democratically elected – because he is relatively constrained domestically in the formulation of foreign policy – than if he is a dictator (Renshon, Dafoe, and Huth 2018)? IR has until recently

ignored the need to make sense of face-to-face diplomacy, but it would be remiss to "overcorrect" and assume that it is evenly important across cases and time. A critical way forward would be to better delineate its scope conditions (George and Bennett 2005, 25-27).

Moreover, as discussed, the recollections of leaders can be self-serving and biased. There are remedies. For instance, the veracity of an account can be triangulated with those provided by other witnesses (e.g. the note-taker or interpreter involved), particularly those who would have the incentive to misrepresent or gloss over what happened, but did not (Reynolds 2007, 9-10). This is what I have done in the case studies. Moreover, versions of the same document from different sources – for instance, the minutes of a meeting released by different government agencies or by the different countries involved – can be compared to unearth potential biases or attempts to influence subsequent interpretations (Trachtenberg 2006, 159-162).

Finally, as mentioned, the protagonists involved in a historical event might not have recorded all that had happened in their personal encounters, especially for factors as subtle and intangible as emotions. Instead of discrediting case studies as a method, the best strategy would be to exhaust all the primary materials available, infer from them tentative conclusions, and for the sake of developing generalizable insights, follow up with the use of other complementary research methods. For instance, controlled experiments in the form of simulated negotiations and participant observations would allow a researcher direct access to his subjects. For the latter, a researcher may observe firsthand how leaders behave towards each other, though perhaps not at the very top level of government (because it is doubtful that such an opportunity would ever be granted!). Negotiations conducted by officials at lower levels of government, such as those over trade, climate change and arms control, or those that occur more regularly at international

organizations, might be viable opportunities. The bottom line is that methodological difficulty

should not deter efforts to better understand the "inner workings" of diplomacy.

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