

Examine the impact of the foreign policy of two authoritarian states on the maintenance of power in those states.

Foreign policy may have been used as a means of maintaining power in both Nazi Germany and the PRC. In Nazi Germany Hitler pursued an expansionist and aggressive foreign policy which was populist as it aimed to revise the treaty of Versailles and to acquire living space, lebensraum, for Germans in the east. Mao also used foreign policy as a means to consolidate power. Both states used foreign policy as an effective tool of propaganda and as a justification for internal purges of opposition.

Hitler pursued populist foreign policy objectives to foster and maintain control. The use of apparent 'diplomatic' means garnered support for the regime. From his inception in power in January 1933, Hitler used the notion of an 'unjust' peace to challenge the Treaty of Versailles. He, and his entourage, dramatically left the Geneva disarmament conference in 1933 claiming the conference was pointless as France had rejected Nazi calls for it to reduce its armed forces in line with post-settlement German limitations. This was a hugely popular move in Germany, citizens particularly haunted by the French 'aggression' in 1923 in the Ruhr and desirous of revenge on the victors. In 1935 Hitler announced conscription and revealed the existence of the Luftwaffe - directly flouting the treaty. Indeed, Hitler's victory in the Saar plebiscite, winning 90.1% of the vote in 1935, suggests that Hitler's foreign policy had fostered popular support. This again was a popular move as it challenged the 'victors' that had tried to crush Germany. Hitler then negotiated the Anglo-German naval agreement in March 1935 which seemed to confirm Britain condoning Hitler's rearmament and its respect for the regime. He presented his policies as 'diplomatic' signing a non-aggression pact with Poland in 1935 and an agreement with Italy in 1936. Hitler even negotiated, albeit unwillingly, over the Sudetenland in September 1938. Here, the mood in Germany was against armed conflict and the Munich Agreement was hailed as a triumph for the 'peacemakers'. The use of apparent 'diplomacy' undermined opposition to Hitler at home and rendered the planned coup against his regime - should there have been a move to war over the Czech crisis - redundant. His final act of diplomatic audacity was the Nazi-Soviet pact in August 1939 which secured Germany from the threat of a two front war in the case of a conflict over Poland. Each diplomatic victory strengthened his position domestically and secured the maintenance of Nazi control.

Hitler also presented his aims and actions in foreign policy as ideologically motivated which strengthened support for his regime and underpinned the maintenance of control. Nazi Germany signed the anti-Comintern pact with Japan in 1936 and Hitler raged against the threat posed by Soviet communism in his speeches. His revision of the treaty of Versailles was perhaps tolerated and appeased by the British due to Hitler's espoused commitment to the destruction of communism. Nazi Germany's potential as a buffer state to Soviet expansion meant that the western democracies were less inclined to resist. It was the international response to Hitler's anti-communist rhetoric which facilitated the persecution of political opposition within Germany. The notion that the communists, socialists, trade unionists, liberals and so forth represented the 'enemy within' enabled the purge of German society of Nazi opponents and assisted with the party's maintenance of control.

Nevertheless, it could be argued that it was Hitler's willingness to use aggression and the threat of military force to reverse the settlement which assisted in his maintenance of power as it demonstrated the strength and might of his regime. It was not only the fact that the regime used force against its domestic opposition to maintain control, the willingness to use intimidation and violence to make gains was reinforced by Hitler's approach to foreign policy. The remilitarization of the Rhineland in 1936 was hugely popular in Germany and showed that Hitler had commanded the respect of the French – through force of action. Hitler's intervention in the Spanish Civil War gave his forces valuable military experience, helped to install a pro-fascist regime flanking France and cemented Germany's new relationship with Mussolini's Italy. Indeed, when, in March 1938, Hitler achieved Anschluss, which had been the long-standing aim of Italy to prevent, the Nazi's demonstrated to the German population that its regime was now the dominant power in Europe. Some Austrians even commented that seeing Hitler was a 'profoundly religious experience' and that he was considered to be 'the Messiah'. This move consolidated millions more into the state and ensured Hitler's maintenance of control. With the threat of the use of force Hitler then achieved the reversal of terms of the treaty of St Germain and gained 3 million more Germans in the Sudetenland in September 1939.

Mao also used military force in foreign policy to facilitate the maintenance of control of the CCP in China. In June 1950 the Korean war broke out between North and South Korea. The invasion of the south triggered US entry, albeit under a UN flag. This conflict was used by Mao effectively to promote his leadership in China and strengthen CCP control. Mao was alarmed as the US pushed north Korean forces back across the 38th parallel. The Chinese feared that General Macarthur would continue to advance and cross the border into China. Containment might turn into the 'roll back' of communism in Asia. Although some CCP members cautioned against intervention, Mao sent in the PLA, and his forces successfully routed the south Korean and US forces. Ultimately, 1 million Chinese troops were sent over the border, and despite incurring heavy losses, the CCP were able to hold line at the 38th parallel. Mao manipulated this success into a personal victory. Chinese propaganda claimed that the CCP had fought and defeated the might of the US military and emphasised the US use of biological and chemical weapons. This facilitated Mao's domestic purge of the CCP and of non-communist opponents of his regime in China. The regime claimed that it had protected the PRC from a US invasion and the threat of capitalist counter-revolution. The intervention in the Korean war was key propaganda and facilitated the growth of Mao's personality cult. The CCP was hailed as the 'defender of Marxism'. The ceasefire in 1953 had also demonstrated the military strength of the PLA. Mao could use the reluctance of those that had advised against intervention to elevate his own position, as he had proved them wrong.

In addition, Mao capably used the notion of ideological enemies, as had Hitler, in foreign policy to maintain control. The ideological slogans regarding the war in Korea had been standard 'anti-imperialist', 'anti-capitalist' and 'anti-US' and had proclaimed the PLA as defenders of the workers and of the Marxist revolution. Mao had claimed that China had 'stood up' after a century of humiliation in October 1949, and now the CCP had set out to establish the PRC as a world power. The Korean conflict had provided key evidence for its propaganda machine which claimed the superiority of CCP ideology.

However, the pursuit of an ideology in foreign policy also proved beneficial to the maintenance of control when a schism was forged with the USSR which would be manipulated by CCP propaganda. The fact that the CCP were held accountable for the debts incurred by its forces in Korea by the Soviets, a conflict in which Mao's own son had died, sowed the seeds for the Sino-Soviet split. Initially, the CCP had desperately needed Soviet support as China was crushed by years of civil war and war with Japan. This led to the signing of the Sino-Soviet treaty of friendship and considerable trade and technical assistance from the USSR. But, the PRC was plunged into huge debt after the Korean war as the Soviets had demanded repayment for all military kit and materials supplied by the USSR in the conflict. It is estimated that it took a decade for the Chinese economy to recover, and although it led to resentment it was only after Stalin's death in 1953, and the emergence of Khrushchev as leader, that Mao and the CCP began to challenge the role of Soviet leadership of the communist international. To gain 'global power status' would be a boon to the CCP's maintenance of power. Khrushchev's 'destalinization' speech of 1956 appalled the Chinese leadership and its attack on the cult of personality was interpreted as an attack on Mao's own style of leadership. Khrushchev also criticised Mao's precipitation of the Taiwan crisis in 1953 and 1958 and had refused to offer support. The existence of Taiwan was deemed a threat to the maintenance of CCP control. In 1959 Khrushchev had attempted to heal the growing rift in relations via a visit to Beijing, but Mao had seized the opportunity to humiliate the Soviet leader and to attack his ideological stance in the Cold War. The Sino-Soviet split, and the emerging role of the PRC internationally, was cemented at the 1961 Moscow conference where Deng Xiaoping challenged and according to CCP propaganda, won the 'ideological argument' with Shuslov. Zhou Enlai and the Chinese delegation walked out of the conference and Albania declared itself aligned with the PRC. Mao condemned Khrushchev and the Soviet regime as 'revisionist' for promoting 'peaceful coexistence' in its superpower relations with the US. The Sino-Soviet split was manipulated in Chinese propaganda to promote the CCP and Mao as the true successors of Lenin and Stalin, and as the ideologically rightful leaders of the communist international. The split in the international communist movement was in turn used to launch a domestic purge of those that deviated from 'Mao's thought', which culminated in the Cultural Revolution in 1966. The internal chaos that ensued facilitated the maintenance of Mao's control.

The withdrawal of Soviet technicians and advisors in 1959 due to this ideological confrontation pursued by the CCP, and the refusal of the USSR to back CCP ambitions for Taiwan with its nuclear capability, led the Chinese to pursue its own atomic program. This program was successful, and the PRC became a nuclear power in 1964. This meant that the regime could challenge internationally as a third 'superpower' and was significant as it demonstrated the regime's indisputable power, which in turn strengthened CCP control in China.

Nevertheless, Mao used diplomacy as well as confrontation in foreign policy to maintain control. As previously stated, at the end of the civil war, and despite the fact that Stalin had not offered significant assistance to the CCP between 1946 and 1949, Mao sought Soviet economic and technical assistance to rebuild post-war China. The Soviets made a considerable contribution to getting the economy back on its feet and prevented the forces of counter-revolution taking hold. Mao subsequently engaged in a rapprochement with the US after the Sino-Soviet split, and by so doing he

fostered China's economic development, further isolated the USSR, and gained international recognition of the PRC regime. By 1968 the PRC, had endured the period of great domestic upheaval, the Cultural revolution, and it had fought a limited border war with the USSR in 1969. It was in this context that Mao decided to promote the idea of the 'enemy of my enemy is my friend' and in part justified this dramatic shift in ideological approach to foreign policy by drawing parallels with the period of the Second United Front against Japan. In 1971, US president Nixon visited China, after a period of 'ping-pong' diplomacy. Mao's pursuit of diplomacy paid significant political dividends as the US finally recognized the PRC as the legitimate government and accepted the PRC should hold China's seat in the security council at the UN. This was key to the legitimacy of the state and of the regime itself, and this facilitated the maintenance of CCP control for the ensuing decades.

Both Nazi Germany and Mao's China used the pursuit of an assertive foreign policy to gain popular support. Both states also used diplomacy to foster credibility within their societies and both used the idea of ideological enemies in foreign policy to maintain control. In contrast, ultimately, Hitler's use of force to achieve territorial ambitions would lead to the defeat of Nazi Germany, Hitler's suicide in 1945 and the collapse of the regime. Mao's use of foreign policy enabled the maintenance of control of the CCP in China until this day.