

# ΘΕΩΡΙΑ ΠΟΛΕΜΟΥ



**ΘΕΩΡΙΑ ΠΟΛΕΜΟΥ**

**ΧΕΙΜΕΡΙΝΟ ΕΞΑΜΗΝΟ**

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## Γενική Περιγραφή:

Ο πόλεμος, ως φαινόμενο αλλά και διαδικασία πολιτικής εφαρμογής, αποτελεί μια πολυδιάστατη και πολυεπίπεδη αποτύπωση της ανθρωπολογικής, ενδοκρατικής, διακρατικής και συστημικής συνθήκης επηρεασμού της εξέλιξης της Ιστορίας. Μια αποτύπωση που κάποιοι θεωρητικοί των Διεθνών Σχέσεων την παρουσιάζουν ως έκφανση συστημικής δυσλειτουργίας, άλλοι ως εργαλείο επιβολής της ημέτερης βουλής, στα πλαίσια της πολιτικής ώσμωσης, ενώ τέλος άλλοι ως το αυταπόδεικτο της ανθρώπινης φύσης που ρέπει προς το σκοτεινό του ασυνειδήτου.

Από τον Όμηρο έως τις ημέρες μας, η θεωρία των Διεθνών Σχέσεων επικεντρώνει το ενδιαφέρον της στο να κατανοήσει και να αναλύσει σε βάθος το φαινόμενο του Πολέμου.

Ο Πόλεμος, παρά τις αντίθετες «προβλέψεις» δεν έπαψε να απασχολεί το διεθνές σύστημα, δεν σταμάτησε να επηρεάζει σε μεγάλο ποσοστό τις ωσμώσεις ισχύος που λαμβάνουν χώρα στη διεθνή αρένα, δεν εξαλείφθηκε από το ενδοκρατικό και διακρατικό γίγνεσθαι. Κι αυτό γιατί το φαινόμενο αυτό είναι άρρηκτα συνδεδεμένο με την ανθρώπινη παρουσία στη γη, ως αιτιατό καταστροφής αλλά και αίτιο πολιτικού ανταγωνισμού.

Ο Πόλεμος δεν είναι αποσπασματικές ενέργειες που καταγράφονται στο συλλογικό συνειδητό αλλά ένα ολοκληρωμένο φαινόμενο οργανωμένης χρήσης βίας που στην αρχετυπική του ορθολογική αποτύπωση οφείλει να λειτουργεί ως συνέχιση της πολιτικής με άλλα μέσα.

Βασικός σκοπός του μαθήματος είναι ο μεταπτυχιακός φοιτητής να κατανοήσει πλήρως την πολυπλοκότητα των δομών του πολεμικού φαινομένου, να αναλύσει σε βάθος τα δομικά αίτια ανάπτυξης του και τις σύγχρονες εξελικτικές διαδρομές αυτού σε θεωρητικό και εφαρμοστικό επίπεδο με στόχο και σκοπό να συνδράμει στο μέλλον από όποια θέση ευθύνης κι αν βρίσκεται στη χρονική επιμήκυνση της ειρηνικής περιόδου και αντιστρόφως στο χρονικό και εντασιακό περιορισμό του πολέμου.

## Μεθοδολογία & Οργάνωση

Η μέθοδος διδασκαλίας του μαθήματος βασίζεται στη γενικότερη φιλοσοφία της εξελικτικής δομής ενός σύγχρονου μεταπτυχιακού προγράμματος σπουδών, αλλά και στο υψηλό επίπεδο των φοιτητών που μετέχουν σε αυτό. Η παραδοσιακή/συμβατική μέθοδος της διάλεξης από το διδάσκοντα δεν παράγει τα επιθυμητά επιστημονικά αποτελέσματα σε επίπεδο μεταπτυχιακού. Αντιθέτως, η ενεργή συμμετοχή και ο διάλογος που θα αναπτύσσεται σε κάθε συνάντηση είναι η ενδεδειγμένη μεθοδολογία εξέλιξης του μαθήματος αυτού. Η σεμιναριακή προσέγγιση του μαθήματος θα έχει ως στόχο να οξύνει την ορθολογική κρίση του μεταπτυχιακού φοιτητή, την ικανότητα του να υποστηρίζει ένα θεωρητικό επιχείρημα, την εξέλιξη της συνδυαστικής του σκέψης και την ανάπτυξη του συλλογικού επιπέδου συνεργασίας.

Η σε βάθος προετοιμασία του κάθε φοιτητή πριν τη συνάντηση της κάθε ενότητας είναι απαραίτητη αλλά και κρίσιμη ώστε να είναι σε θέση να μετέχει στο διάλογο δημιουργικά.

Ο κάθε φοιτητής, μόνος του ή με τη συνεργασία κι άλλων συμφοιτητών του, θα αναλάβει την παρουσίαση ενός θέματος από τις ενότητες που θα παρουσιαστούν παρακάτω. Η παρουσίαση θα πρέπει να μην υπερβαίνει τα 35 λεπτά αλλά και να μην είναι κάτω από 30 λεπτά αντιστοίχως. Στο τέλος της παρουσίασης θα παραδίδεται στο διδάσκοντα σε γραπτή μορφή, ως μια ολοκληρωμένη επιστημονική εργασία (παραπομπές Chicago style, βιβλιογραφία κ.α.). Κάθε εργασία που θα έχει διαπράξει λογοκλοπή θα μηδενίζεται και ο φοιτητής θα αποτυγχάνει στο μάθημα.

Κάθε ενότητα του μαθήματος εμπεριέχει και ένα ή δυο χαρακτηριστικά επιστημονικά άρθρα κορυφαίων θεωρητικών των Διεθνών Σχέσεων. Ο φοιτητής θα πρέπει πριν την συνάντηση της συγκεκριμένης ενότητας να έχει μελετήσει τα άρθρα αυτά. Ως προς την προετοιμασία της εργασίας είναι δική του ευθύνη να διενεργήσει έρευνα πηγών, μια διαδικασία που από μόνη της αποτελεί σημαντικό κεφάλαιο ως προς τον τρόπο που μια επιστημονική έρευνα διενεργείται.

**Ο τελικός βαθμός** διαμορφώνεται ως εξής:

-Τελικές εξετάσεις 100%

-Παρουσίαση της Εργασίας: Απαραίτητη προϋπόθεση ώστε ο φοιτητής να μπορεί να δώσει εξετάσεις.

Εάν η εργασία δεν ανταποκρίνεται στα υψηλά επιστημονικά επίπεδα που θέτει συνολικά το μεταπτυχιακό πρόγραμμα ο φοιτητής οφείλει να καταθέσει μια νέα εργασία του ίδιου θέματος. Τυχόν αποτυχία ή επανάληψη χαμηλής απόδοσης οδηγεί σε αδυναμία συμμετοχής στις εξετάσεις του μαθήματος.

## **1<sup>η</sup> Συνάντηση**

**Εισαγωγή - Γνωριμία - Παρουσίαση των Σκοπών του  
Μαθήματος - Επιλογή θεμάτων παρουσίασης**

## 2η Συνάντηση

### «Ισχύς και Φόβος στη Θεωρία Πολέμου»

Στη 2<sup>η</sup> συνάντηση θα αναλυθεί η έννοια της ισχύος και η διάσταση του φόβου στη Θεωρία Πολέμου. Κεντρικά ερωτήματα προς ανάλυση:

Τι είναι ισχύς; Ποιες οι κατηγοριοποιήσεις της ισχύος; Τι είναι φόβος; Πως τα κράτη επιδιώκουν να κατανικήσουν το φόβο; Τι ρόλο παίζουν ο φόβος και η ισχύς στη γέννηση του πολεμικού φαινομένου;

#### **ΘΕΜΑ ΠΑΡΟΥΣΙΑΣΗΣ:**

*Η αναζήτηση της Ισχύος και η υπερνίκηση του Φόβου αποτελεί κινητήριο μοχλό εξέλιξης στη Θεωρία Πολέμου. Αναλύστε τις απόψεις σας.*

## Fear in International Politics: Two Positions

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There are two—and only two—fundamental positions on how to cope with the fear that is derived from the uncertainty over others' intentions in international relations (IR) literature. Because these two positions cannot be deduced from other bedrock assumptions within the different IR approaches, the two positions should be taken as an additional bedrock assumption. The first position, held by offensive realism, insists that states should assume the worst over others' intentions, thus essentially eliminating the uncertainty about others' intentions. The second position, held by a more diverse bunch of non-offensive realism theories, insists that states should not always assume the worst over others' intentions and that states can and should take measures to reduce uncertainty about each others intentions and thus fear. These two different assumptions are quintessential for the logic of the different theoretical approaches and underpin some of the fundamental differences between offensive realism on the one side and non-offensive realism theories on the other side. Making the two positions explicit helps us understand IR theories and makes dialogues among non-offensive realism theories possible.

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Fear for one's survival or fear of death (hereafter, fear) is the most fundamental psychological trait that biological evolution has endowed most high vertebrate species, including the *Homo sapiens*.<sup>2</sup> Not surprisingly, fear has occupied a prominent place in the science of international politics since its very beginning.

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<sup>2</sup>I use fear to specifically denote fear for one's survival (or security) that is partly underpinned the uncertainty about others' intentions (see below). This is important because many have used fear to refer things other than fear for survival. I thank Ned Lebow for reminding me to emphasize this point. Emphasizing that fear is the most fundamental psychological trait of *Homo sapiens* does not mean that fear is the dominant motive all the time: Interest and honor can certainly overtake fear to become the more important motive behind an individual or a state's action. Rather, I am arguing that even behind those behaviors with a strong interest- or honor-based motive, fear lurks just beneath. For a popular account about the psychology of fear, see De Becker (1997). For in-depth reviews on the evolutionary psychology of fear, see Öhman and Mineka (2001), Barrett (2005), and Duntley (2005). For an earlier importation of the psychology of fear into international politics, see Jervis (1976:372–378). Finally, although many have treated fear as part of "human nature," I refrain from engaging this literature because this literature remains under-developed. Elsewhere, I argue that human behavior is driven by factors at three different levels and that these factors also interact with other. As such, it is misleading to talk about "human nature" per se without first defining the three levels. The existing literature has yet to recognize this complex picture. For a recent review on "human nature in IR, see Mercer (2006). For a good history of the fear as a political idea in general, see Robin (2004). I do not deal with the manipulation of fear by actors for mobilization one's own population or coercing others. A good historical study of manipulating fear for "domestic mobilization" is Christensen (1996).

Thucydides (1954[~431 BC]:1.23) asserted in a much quoted passage, “What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta.” Moreover, Thucydides (ibid: 1.75) gave fear the leading position among the “three Great Things (fear, honor, and interest)” through the voice of Athenian speakers to the Spartan assembly: “It was the course of events which first compelled us to increase our power to its present extent: fear of Persia was our chief motive, though afterwards we thought, too, of our own honor and our own interest.”<sup>3</sup>

Fear is literally littered in Machiavelli’s *Princes* (1997[1532]), although he talked about fear in both international and domestic politics.

Thomas Hobbes (1982[1651]:xiii, 185–186, 188), re-discovering the “three Great Things” from ancient Greeks, treated appetite/gain/interest, fear/safety/security, and honor/prestige/glory as the three fundamental drivers of human behavior, although he failed to recognize that fear is the more fundamental of the three and our appetite for power is partially driven by our desire to overcome fear.<sup>4</sup>

Reinhold Niebuhr (1960[1932]:18, 41–42) identified “will-to-power” as a means toward the ends of “will-to-survive (or live).” For Niebuhr, seeking power reflects men’s attempt to cope with fear, although he admitted that will-to-power and will-to-survive can be difficult to differentiate from each other.<sup>5</sup>

Herbert Butterfield (1951) and John Herz (1951) concurred with Niebuhr’s insight that our appetite for power is partially driven by our desire to overcome fear: individuals or states resort to the means of accumulating power because they fear each other. Butterfield and Herz further recognized an unfortunate and fundamentally tragic outcome of this dynamics. As two sides accumulate more power—which inevitably includes some power to harm each other, they actually generate more fear between them. This predicament is a security dilemma—the drive toward security ends in more insecurity.<sup>6</sup>

Robert Jervis (1976: chapter 3) underscores that fear, once aroused as a function of uncertainty about others’ intentions, can acquire a life of its own and become a powerful driver of the security dilemma and spiral. Fear, often reinforced by other psychological factors (for example, nationalism), leads a state to discount another state’ conciliatory gestures and adopt unnecessary hard-lined policies. As such, a spiral driven by a security dilemma can drive two states that have no intention to harm to each other into actual conflict, an unintended, self-defeating, and tragic result.

Kenneth Waltz (1979:105–106, 109, 165) attributes the source of fear to the structure of international politics. According to the now standard structural realism logic, because there is no central authority to enforce benign behavior (or cooperation) and intentions can change, states must fear the possibility that others may intend to do harm. For structural realism, one’s fear is a function of one’s uncertainty about others’ intentions and power.

<sup>3</sup>See also ibid, 1.76. Thucydides of course was not alone in emphasizing fear. Others included Socrates (through Plato), Plato, and Aristotle. I do not deal with the interaction between fear and other motives, including reason, which most Greek philosophers identified as an instrument to constrain other motives. For a more recent discussion, see Lebow (2006); and idem, unpublished book manuscript.

<sup>4</sup>Fear of death also drives human’s longing for immortality, although the latter is also partially driven by greed. For fear and immortality in Thucydides and Hobbes, see Ahrens Dorf (2000).

<sup>5</sup>Niebuhr, of course, adopted “will-to-power” from Friedrich Nietzsche. Critically, whereas Nietzsche treated “will to power” as a goal, Niebuhr treated “will to power” as the means toward the goal of survival. In contrast, Morgenthau’s *animus dominandi* was a more faithful adoption of Nietzsche’s “will to power” (Morgenthau 1946:16, 165–184). For a discussion on Nietzsche’s influence on Niebuhr and Morgenthau, see Craig (2003:10–11, 34, 54–58).

<sup>6</sup>Much of the existing literature on the security dilemma has not been rigorous enough. I elaborate on the security dilemma more rigorously and extensively elsewhere.



Because of the centrality of fear, how to cope with fear naturally becomes a central question in international politics.

In this article, I make it explicit that there are two—and only two—fundamental positions on how to cope with fear in international relations (IR) literature. The first position, held by offensive realism, insists that states *should* (and do) assume the worst over others' intentions, thus essentially eliminating the problem of uncertainty about others' intentions. The second position—held by a more diverse bunch that includes defensive realism, neoliberalism, and constructivism—insists that states *should not* (and do not) *always* assume the worst over others' intentions and that states can and should take measures to reduce uncertainty about each others intentions and thus fear.<sup>7</sup>

I further contend that these two positions cannot be deduced from other bedrock assumptions within the different theoretical approaches. As such, the two positions should be taken as an additional bedrock assumption in the different theoretical approaches. Most importantly, these two different assumptions are quintessential for the logic of the different theoretical approaches and underpin some of the fundamental differences between offensive realism on the one side and non-offensive realism theories on the other side. Making the two positions explicit thus helps us understand IR theories and the debate among different theoretical approaches.

The rest of the article is constructed as follows. I begin by revealing the two positions and their variants within the IR literature. I then underscore the critical role of the offensive realism position in driving the logic of offensive realism and the role of non-offensive realism position in driving the logic of non-offensive realism theories, respectively. Finally, I discuss the implications of these two fundamental positions. A brief conclusion follows.

### Coping with Fear: The Two Positions and Its Variants

In IR literature, there are two—and only two—positions on how to cope with the fear derived from the uncertainty over others' intentions: an offensive realism position and a non-offensive realism position.

Offensive realism holds that states should (and do) assume the worst over others' intentions. Offensive realism asserts that this worst-case assumption over others' intentions is absolutely necessary because states are inherently aggressive. Structural offensive realism holds that states become inherently aggressive due to anarchy (for example, Mearsheimer 1994–95:10n24, 2006:120),<sup>8</sup> whereas human nature offensive realism holds that states are inherently aggressive because *Homo sapiens* have an insatiable appetite/lust for power/dominance and/or prestige/glorry (for example, Morgenthau 1946; Machivelli 1997[1532]). These two variants of the offensive realism position differ from each other only superficially (Brooks 1997:449–450).<sup>9</sup>

Despite important differences among them, *all* non-offensive realism theories reject the notion that states are inherently aggressive. As such, all non-offensive realism theories reject assuming the worst over others' intentions when trying to cope with the fear derived from the uncertainty over others' intentions and fear. Non-offensive realism theories argue that assuming the worst over others' intentions is irrational, unsustainable, and counterproductive, although they do admit that states may often assume the worst over each others' intentions due to fear,

<sup>7</sup>While there are other major theoretical strains or schools in international relations, the claim that there are only two positions on fear still holds because one of the two stands (that is, the offensive realism stand) is unconditional and the other (that is, the non-offensive realism stand) is conditional.

<sup>8</sup>For structural offensive realism, anarchy causes fear and demands the worst-case assumption over others' intentions for coping with fear. Here, one can smell logic circularity.

<sup>9</sup>As a matter of fact, Hobbes (1982[1651]) came close to combine these two positions together.

thus ending up in exacerbating fear (that is, fear is self-reinforcing). Non-offensive realism theories further argue that states can deploy a variety of means to reduce the uncertainty over others' intentions, thus alleviating their fear of each other (see below).

Alternatively, the two assumptions can also be framed as two opposite answers to the question whether there are any genuine benign states out there. For non-offensive realism theorists, there are, if not many (Wendt 1992; Glaser 1994:60, 67, 71–72; Jervis 1999). For offensive realists, there are few, if any (Mearsheimer 2001:29, 34).

Finally, the two stands can also be understood as two opposite answers to the problem of common or collective interest. The offensive realism stand holds that there is very little common interest among states except when states face a common enemy (Mearsheimer 2001:51–53; see also Wolfers 1951:40). The non-offensive realism stand holds that there is common interest among states even when they are not facing a common enemy, although different non-offensive realism approaches differ on how much common interest exists among states: defensive realism sees some common interest among states but not sure how much, whereas both neoliberalism and constructivism see quite a bit (see the discussion on cooperation below).

The differences between the two stands can be made more explicitly by writing the two stands a bit formally.

For calculating  $p_T$ , the probability that a state may pose threat against oneself (thus one's fear), non-offensive realism theories deploy the following function:<sup>10</sup>

$$p_T = f(\text{a state's offensive capabilities} \times \text{its resolve to do harm} \\ \times \text{its intentions to do harm})$$

In contrast, offensive realism assumes the worst over others' intentions (to do harm), thus making the probability of a state's intentions to do harm equal to one. Alternatively, offensive realism can argue that a state's intention is a function of its offensive capabilities—that is, a state will do harm when it believes it can prevail in a conflict (Mearsheimer 2001:43–45).<sup>11</sup> Either way, offensive realism writes the function for calculating  $p_T$  as the following:

$$p_T = f(\text{a state's offensive capabilities} \times \text{its resolve to do harm}).$$

With these two equations, it becomes clear that a widely accepted formulation of the differences between these two positions is underspecified thus misleading.

Brooks (1997:447–450) contends that offensive realism urges states to plan and act according to possibility, whereas defensive realism urges states to plan and act according to probability.<sup>12</sup> For Brooks, acting according to the worst-case scenario is equivalent to acting according to possibility, whereas not acting according to the worst-case scenario is equivalent to acting according to probability. Taliaferro essentially concurs: “Offensive realism assumes that the always-present possibility of conflict conditions states' behavior...Defensive realism assumes that the subjective probability of conflict conditions states' behavior.” (Taliaferro 2001:146; see also 152–158, esp. 153, 155) For these two theorists, the critical difference between the two positions is a question of possibility versus probability.

This formulation is under-specified thus misleading for two reasons.

<sup>10</sup>Hence, non-offensive realism theories do admit the possibility that an actor is benign simply because it is not powerful enough to be aggressive (for example, Wolfers 1951:48).

<sup>11</sup>Because one's resolve to do harm is essentially determined by its calculation of its probability of prevailing, one can further argue that one's resolve to do harm is also determined by its capabilities. For the discussion here, resolve can be ignored.

<sup>12</sup>Brooks also (mis-)labeled offensive realism as neorealism.

First, this formulation fails to recognize that offensive realism is also a probabilistic theory when it comes to estimating other states' capabilities and resolve. Offensive realism is a possibilistic theory *only* when it comes to estimating others' intentions.<sup>13</sup> As such, offensive realism is both possibilistic and probabilistic, not just possibilistic.

Second, even for a genuine benign state, the possibility that the other side may be malignant is always in the background of its calculation, and this possibility is something to be guarded against. In other words, even a genuine benign state reacts to possibility. Benign states, however, do not automatically assume the worst over others' intentions. Rather, they take measures to gauge others' intentions and act according to their estimation of others' intentions. Thus, non-offensive realism theories are also both possibilistic and probabilistic, not just probabilistic.

As such, there is no problem of possibility versus probability between offensive realism and non-offensive realism theories unless one specifies that the problem is about how to cope with the uncertainty over others' intentions.

### *The Offensive Realism Stand in Literature*

For offensive realism, states have to assume the worst over others' intentions. As such, when a state surveys its security environment, the probability that other states will pose a threat is a function of their capabilities (and resolve), conditioned by the other factors that can limit the exercise of their offensive capabilities (for example, polarity, geographical factors such as a large body of water, domestic politics). For offensive realism, when a state believes that it can do harm to you, it will—not just may.

All proponents of offensive realism, classic or modern, subscribe to this fundamental position, explicitly or implicitly.

Shang Yang (~390–339 BC), an important advisor to King Hui of the Kingdom of Qin (which eventually unified the heartland of today's China and formed the first Chinese empire in 221 BC), expounded the first explicit statement of the offensive realism position. For Shang Yang, states are inherently aggressive, and their aggressiveness is limited only by their capabilities: "In today's world, the powerful conquers, the weak defends...States with ten thousand chariots inevitably choose to conquer, and only states with only one thousand chariots defend." (Shang Yang ~390–339 BC:vii)<sup>14</sup>

Writing after Shang Yang, Kautilya in ancient India promulgated roughly the same doctrine of offensive realism in his *Arthashastra*. For Kautilya, not assuming the worst over others' intentions is a grave sin (Boesche 2003:18–19).

Applying neoclassical economics, Robert Gilpin (1981: chapter 1, 94–95) explicitly argued that war is purely a problem of cost–benefit calculation, which is largely determined by relative capabilities.

Despite emphasizing that domestic politics often limit states' exercise of their capabilities, Fareed Zakaria (1998:20) nonetheless asserts: "the best solution to the perennial problem of the uncertainty of international life is for a state to increase its control over that environment through the persistent expansion of

<sup>13</sup>Because most realism theories assumes states to be strategic or "rational" actor (for example, Mearsheimer 1994–95:10, 2001:21–22), and many understand "rational" to be acting according to probability, with possibility being an extreme expression of probability, Brooks' formulation seems extreme for many (for example, Copeland 2001:214–215). I thank Andy Kydd for discussion on this issue.

<sup>14</sup>While Thucydides wrote before Shang Yang and conveyed the same message through Athenian's voice (Thucydides:5.89), it is difficult to classify Thucydides. For an interesting discussion on reading Thucydides, see Welch (2003). All translations of the work of Shang Yang (*Shang Jun Shu* or *The Books of Lord Shang*) are mine. An earlier translation of *The Books of Lord Shang* by J. J. L. Duyvendak (London: Probsthain, 1928) is available electronically from: [http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/duyvendak\\_jjl/B25\\_book\\_of\\_lord\\_shang/duyvlord.rtf](http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/duyvendak_jjl/B25_book_of_lord_shang/duyvlord.rtf).

its political interests abroad—but only when the benefits exceed the costs.” Here, Zakaria implicitly assumes the worst over states’ intentions: a state will expand when it feels that it can, with its calculations being conditioned only by international and domestic constraints.<sup>15</sup> And a bit later, Zakaria (1998:32) states it explicitly: “The classical realist contention that a nation’s relative capabilities determine its intention is a simple, powerful hypothesis.”

More recently, Mearsheimer (2001:45; emphasis added) advances the clearest statement of the offensive realism position. He writes, “The level of fear between great powers varies with changes in the distribution of power, not with assessments about each other’s intentions...*When a state surveys its environment to determine which states pose a threat to its survival, it focuses mainly on the offensive capabilities of potential rivals, not their intentions...Intentions are ultimately unknowable, so states worried about their survival must make worst-case assumptions about their rivals’ intentions.*” (See also Mearsheimer 2006:120) For Mearsheimer, while states’ behavior is conditioned by the amount of fear that they have for each other and the amount of fear varies; the amount of fear varies only according to the distribution of power, not according to others’ changing intentions.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, in addition to the more explicit statements mentioned above, some proponents of offensive realism have advanced the assumption implicitly. For instance, Machivelli (1997[1532]:18–19) noted, “There is no secure way to possess them [other states] other than ruin.” In a similar vein, Labs (1997:11) asserts, “states will seek to maximize relative power because they cannot be sure when or where the next threat will arise.” Obviously, a worst-case assumption over others’ intentions lies beneath both statements.

#### *The Non-Offensive Realism Stand in Literature*

Non-offensive realism theories believe that states are not inherently aggressive: there are genuinely benign states out there although the exact number of such states is unknown. Non-offensive realism theories thus warn against assuming the worst over others’ intentions, on either instrumental or moral grounds or both. They further argue that because fear is a function of uncertainty about others’ intentions, states should and can try to alleviate their fear of each other by reducing uncertainty through reassurance or other means (Glaser 1992, 1994–95; Wendt 1999:357–363; Kydd 2005:16–18; Montgomery 2006; Tang 2007).

Jervis (1976:64–65) was perhaps the first to recognize the danger of assuming the worst over others’ intentions, identifying the assumption as a major factor that exacerbates the security dilemma/spiral (see also Wheeler and Booth 1992:40). Along the same line, Charles Glaser (1997:197–198) explicitly warns against thinking according to worst-case analysis: “The core logic of the security dilemma makes clear that worst-case analysis can be self-defeating.” Richard Betts (1978:74) similarly warns, “Operationalizing worst-case analysis requires extraordinary expenses, its risks being counterproductive if it is effective (by provoking enemy countermeasures or preemption) and it is likely to be ineffective because routinization will discredit it.”

From a more moral perspective, Robert Keohane (1993:282) argues that if states do let mere possibilities determine their behavior, “they would behave like paranoids, to their cost.” Without differentiating offensive realism from defensive realism, Alexander Wendt (1992:404) rejects assuming the worst over others’ intentions: “[Offensive] realists would probably argue that each should act on the basis of worst-case assumptions about the other’s intentions, justifying such an attitude as prudent in view of the possibility of death from making a

<sup>15</sup>For a similar interpretation of Zakaria’s logic, see Lynn-Jones 1998:161–162.

<sup>16</sup>For another reading into the variation of the level of fear in Mearsheimer’s theory, see Lee (2002–03:200n14).

mistake...However, society would be impossible if people made decisions purely on the basis of worst-case possibilities. Instead, most decisions are and should be made on the basis of probabilities..." More recently, Wendt (1999:107–109, 281) explicitly deems the worst-case assumption over others' intentions as undesirable because it generates a self-fulfilling prophecy of competitive self-help. Even Jervis (1999:44) now dismisses zero-sum calculation—which is equivalent to the worst-case assumption—as “implausible.”

In addition to explicitly rejecting the worst assumption over states' intentions, non-offensive realism theories' also reject the assumption implicitly. This is most evident in their discussion on cooperation under anarchy.

All non-offensive realism theorists believe that cooperation under anarchy is possible (for example, Jervis 1978, 1988, 1999; Keohane 1984; Wendt 1992; Glaser 1994–95). The optimistic stand on cooperation critically depends on rejecting the worst assumption over states' intentions. This is best illustrated by their embracing of Robert Axelrod's logic of cooperation as part of their argument (Axelrod 1984).

For instance, when Jervis (1988:319) asserts that game theoretical modeling of cooperation with (repeated) prisoner's dilemma game captures the essence of international politics (that is, anarchy, the security dilemma, and the combination of common and conflicting interests), he clearly has Axelrod's work in mind. Likewise, Keohane's discussion of cooperation heavily relies on Axelrod's work (Keohane 1984: chapter 5; see also Axelrod and Keohane 1985). Finally, when contending that states can interact to achieve a cooperative identity and thus (re-)make anarchy, Wendt (1992:416) also relies on Axelrod's work, especially the winning strategy of “tit-for-tat.”

In *Evolution of Cooperation*, Axelrod (1984) explores the strategies for achieving cooperation among egoistic individuals via a computer tournament, and he assumes a world of egoistic individuals without central authority as the environment of the tournament. While Axelrod (1984:3–4) believes that this setting captures some important aspects of international politics,<sup>17</sup> his setting clearly cannot capture the essence of an offensive realism world in which all or most states are malignant. In Axelrod's world, players are just egoistic but not aggressive (and they cannot become aggressive), and they face no danger of death. By suggesting that this picture captures the essence of international politics, Axelrod implicitly assumes that players are not inherently aggressive and rejects the worst-case assumption over others' intentions.

Looking more closely, modeling the problem of cooperation as (repeated) prisoners' dilemma game necessitates rejecting the notion that states are inherently aggressive. The PD game explicitly assumes some common interest between the two players. Yet, between two malignant states, there is no real common interest among players other than when facing a common threat (Mearsheimer 2001:52–53). As such, in an offensive realism world in which all or most states are malignant, there are few, if any PD games, only deadlocks.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, by embracing Axelrod's logic as a critical foundation for building their respective theories of cooperation in international politics, all non-offensive

<sup>17</sup>Axelrod (1984:3–4, 150–154) clearly had international politics in mind when he wrote his book, as indicated clearly in his introduction and his discussion on deterrence.

<sup>18</sup>Indeed, Axelrod's enterprise cannot even capture the essence of a defensive realism world in which most states are benign or defensive realist states. Even in a defensive realism world, states face the problem of life and death. In contrast, in Axelrod's tournament, players do not face the problem of life and death. Axelrod's insights thus cannot be directly applied to international politics. Moreover, Axelrod's enterprise models cooperation and conflict among egoistic individuals, not among egoistic groups such as ethnic groups, nations, or states. Yet, interactions among groups often have very different dynamics from those among individuals (for an earlier review, see Tajfel 1982).

realism theorists implicitly reject the notion that states are inherently aggressive or the worst-case assumption over others' intentions.

### **The Offensive Realism Position in Action**

In this section, I show that the worst-case assumption over others' intentions is essential for the logic of offensive realism. Without it, much of the offensive realism logic cannot operate.

#### *Mearsheimer's (Magic) "Sixth Element"*

Mearsheimer claims that his theory is based on only five bedrock assumptions.<sup>19</sup> After admitting that "none of these [five] assumptions alone dictates that great powers as a general rule should behave aggressively toward each other," Mearsheimer then asserts, "when the five assumptions are married together, they create powerful incentives for great powers to think and act offensively with regard to each other." (Mearsheimer 2001:30–32; see also Mearsheimer 1994–95:10–11)

Yet, logically, it is impossible for Mearsheimer to deduce that states must resort to offensive behaviors from his five bedrock assumptions.

Once the assumption that states are inherently aggressive or the worst-case assumption over others' intentions—dictated by anarchy according to Mearsheimer—is inserted into Mearsheimer's framework, however, offensive behaviors become logically necessary. When other states are assumed to be inherently aggressive, to sit still and wait for others to strike (that is, to adopt a defensive strategy) is equivalent to suicide: even if you are more powerful than other states, they will accumulate their capabilities (through growth and conquest) while you sit and then come back to strike on you. In a world full of inherently aggressive states, you either conquer and expand or be conquered and expended.<sup>20</sup>

This worst-case assumption about others' intentions is vital for Mearsheimer to make the jump from uncertainty about others' intentions/fear to necessary aggression. This is most evident in Mearsheimer's defense of his theory: "[S]tates cannot discern the intentions of other states with a high degree of confidence. Moreover, it is almost impossible to know the future intentions of other states. Therefore, leaders have little choice but to assume the worst case about other great powers' intentions." (Mearsheimer 2006:120; see also 121–123, 231–234) This worst-case assumption over others' intention is Mearsheimer's sixth assumption, his "Sixth Element."

Below, I highlight two cases in which the worst-case assumption over others' intentions does the magic trick for Mearsheimer's theory.

#### *The Security Dilemma*

The worst-case assumption over others' intentions is what allows Mearsheimer to stuff the security dilemma, long believed to be the exclusive privilege of defensive realism, into his offensive realism.<sup>21</sup>

Jeffrey Taliaferro (2000–01):131, 136 argues that whether a theory admits the security dilemma is an important demarcation line between offensive realism and defensive realism: the former denies, whereas the latter admits, the existence of the security dilemma. Yet, Mearsheimer not only admits that the security

<sup>19</sup>Mearsheimer's five bed assumptions are: (1) the international system is anarchic, (2) states inherently possess some offensive military capabilities, (3) state can never be certain about other states' intentions, (4) survival is the primary goal of states, and (5) states are rational actors (Mearsheimer 2001:30–31).

<sup>20</sup>Here, the logic of preventive war becomes all too apparent. See below.

<sup>21</sup>The security dilemma has been dubbed, *inter alia*, "a staple of defensive realist analysis" and "the ace in the hole" of defensive realism (Schweller 1996:116; Kydd 1997:116). Undoubtedly, the security dilemma is central to the logic of defensive realism (Glaser 1994–95:54).

dilemma is an intractable and prevalent feature of international politics, but actually turns the security dilemma to bolster his offensive realism, claiming: "The security dilemma...reflects the basic logic of offensive realism." (Mearsheimer 2001:35–36; see also Mearsheimer 2006:121)

Sensing there must be something wrong in Mearsheimer's usurpation of the security dilemma, Glenn Snyder (2002:155–157) charges that Mearsheimer has bended the security dilemma into his offensive realism without realizing that the security dilemma does not really fit with his offensive realism (see also Stirk 2005:288, 299). Specifically, Snyder charges that because the security dilemma requires both sides to be benign to exist and yet all states are aggressive in Mearsheimer's world, there is no security dilemma in his world, only a lot of security competition.

This criticism is relevant, but it does not get to the heart of the problem.

Facing such a superficial attack, Mearsheimer has an easy defense. Mearsheimer (2006:121–123) claims that since he does not assume states to be hostile against each other *at the very beginning*, but only argues that states are driven to be hostile against each other by the combinations of his five bedrock assumptions (perhaps plus the logic of the security dilemma), his understanding of the security dilemma is fully consistent with Herz's understanding of the concept.

Because a security dilemma ceases to operate as soon as one or both states become aggressive (Schweller 1996),<sup>22</sup> the security dilemma exists extremely briefly in Mearsheimer's world: According to Mearsheimer (2001: chapter 2) all states quickly realize that aggression is the only viable means toward security. Because the security dilemma exists extremely briefly in Mearsheimer's world, Mearsheimer is then free to prescribe behaviors that are diametrically opposite to what non-offensive realism approaches will prescribe for coping with the security dilemma.

Non-offensive realism theories see the primary implication of the security dilemma as that states can alleviate the security dilemma through reassurance and cooperation. Here, their rejection of assuming the worst over states' assumption is also crucial (see below). If states are assumed to be inherently aggressive, there is no rationale to try cooperation because other states are surely to take advantage of your benign behaviors: the worst-case assumption about others' intentions will render the security dilemma un-ameliorable. Only if one believes that other states are not inherently aggressive (that is, the other side may be benign), can one consider the option of alleviating a possible security dilemma via reassurance cooperation.

In contrast, Mearsheimer (2001:34, 40–42) argues that the primary implication of the security dilemma is that aggression is the only rational behavior. When states believe that their security requires aggressive behaviors, they have to intentionally threaten each other. Consequently, conflict of interest among states is inherently irreconcilable, and little can be done to alleviate the vicious relationship—which is not a genuine security dilemma—between them. Under such a situation, the only viable means to achieve security is to try to *escape from* it by eliminating all other states (that is, becoming a world empire), or at least becoming a regional hegemon when the first option is impossible.

Obviously, the key here is that Mearsheimer has smuggled in the worst-case assumption over others' intentions as his sixth assumption (Mearsheimer 2001:45; see also Mearsheimer 2006:120). The worst-case assumption over others' intentions allows Mearsheimer to assert that his employment of the security dilemma does not contradict Butterfield and Herz, and more importantly, that security dilemma actually supports the basic logic of offensive realism.

<sup>22</sup>Herz (1961:234n5) first pointed out that when facing a Hitler, there is no security dilemma.

In summary, Mearsheimer can only claim that the security dilemma actually reflects the basic logic of offensive realism because any genuine security dilemma will be quickly turned into a false security dilemma in his world. As such, the security dilemma has a distinctively superficial value in Mearsheimer's theory. After all, by insisting the worst-case assumption over others' intentions, Mearsheimer also eliminates the uncertainty over others' present and future intentions that is indispensable for a security dilemma to operate (Butterfield 1951; Herz 1951; Jervis 1976: chapter 3).

Indeed, in his earlier works (for example, Mearsheimer 1990:11–12, Mearsheimer 1994–95:9–12), Mearsheimer was “implicitly arguing that the security dilemma does not exist or at least that it should never constrain states,” (Glaser 1997:195–196) and his offensive realism operates just fine then.<sup>23</sup> As long as Mearsheimer admits the worst-case assumption over others' intentions, his logic of offensive realism can flow: his deployment of the security dilemma in his theory is thus an unnecessary rhetorical exercise.

### *The Time Horizon*

The worst-case assumption over others' intentions is also what allows Mearsheimer to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable contradiction over the problem of time horizon in his theory.

According to Mearsheimer (2001: chapter 2), because states believe that conflict can happen any time (that is, conflict is inevitable), they must have a very long time-horizon when preparing for conflict. At the same time, however, states must also have a very short time-horizon when considering whether to forge cooperation: States will forego cooperation with other states in order to prevent any possible loss in relative power that may be used against them in a future conflict. Obviously, there is a contradiction over the problem of time-horizon here (Lee 2002–03).<sup>24</sup>

Yet, once the worst-case assumption over others' intentions is taken into account, this seemingly irreconcilable contradiction disappears. Because states are inherently aggressive, one must constantly prepare for the inevitable conflict by accumulating more and more power. And precisely because one must constantly prepare for the inevitable conflict by accumulating more and more power, one must forsake cooperation if another state is set to gain relative advantage from a possible cooperation. A state thus has the strange mix that it heavily discounts future when planning for the present cooperation but simultaneously acts with a very long time horizon when planning for the future conflict: it is bipolar. But this bipolarity is totally logical when a state assumes the worst over others' intentions: a state's (both short-term and long-term) fear for its survival demands short-term rejection of cooperation whenever it may lose (relative) power. Mearsheimer (1994–95:11, 2001:33) puts it well: “If a state loses in the short run, it might not be around for the long haul.”

Once again, the worst-case assumption over others' intentions is what resolves the seemingly contradiction on the problem of time-horizon in Mearsheimer's theory. “[Offensive realism's view] that states heavily discount the future follows not from the anarchic nature of international system per se, but rather reflects the theory's assumption that states are shaped by the mere possibility of conflict and hence seek to be prepared for all contingencies regarding the short-term use of force by potential rivals.” (Brooks 1997:450)<sup>25</sup> In fact, this problem of time-horizon can be only resolved by the worst-case assumption about others' intentions. The “Sixth Element” did the magic trick again.

<sup>23</sup>Similarly, while Zakaria (1998) cites Jervis' seminal paper on the security dilemma (Jervis 1978), the security dilemma has no role in Zakaria's theory.

<sup>24</sup>Brooks (1997:450–455) came very close to detect this contradiction too.

<sup>25</sup>For shortcomings of Brooks' formulation, see the discussion above.



*Summary*

Mearsheimer's offensive realism thus vitally depends upon the worst-case assumption over others' intentions: the assumption does the magic trick in driving the logic of his offensive realism and allows him to jump from anarchy to rational aggression.<sup>26</sup> The worst-case assumption over others' intentions is his sixth bed-rock assumption, his (magic) "Sixth Element."

*The Logic of Preventive War from Thucydides to Copeland*

Preventive war is war that is mostly propelled by one's fear that it is better to fight now than later because one's capabilities are now in relative decline versus one's potential opponents (Levy 1987).

Thucydides (1954[~431 BC]:1.23) first alluded to the logic of preventive war: "What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta." Since then, various offensive realists have either advocated for preventive war or advanced the logic of preventive war. Again, it can be shown that the worst-case assumption over others' intentions underpins the logic of preventive war, although often implicitly.

Shang Yang expounded the first explicit statement on preventive war. For Shang Yang, because states are inherently aggressive and their aggressiveness is limited only by their capabilities, states have either to expand or be expended. In such a world, only (preventive) war can prevent war. "To prevent war with war is just." (Shang Yang ~390–339 BC:xviii). Likewise, Kautilya argued that states must expand and attack whenever an opportunity arises because all states are inherently aggressive (Boesche 2003).

The logic of preventive war is just beneath the surface of Mearsheimer's theory. Mearsheimer (2001:34–35) writes, "The claim that states maximize relative power is tantamount to arguing that states are disposed to think offensively toward other states, even though their ultimate motive is simply to survive...The best way to ensure security is to achieve hegemony now, thus eliminating any possibilities of a challenge by another great power. Only a misguided state would pass up an opportunity to be the hegemon in the system."<sup>27</sup> Because every opportunity of expansion and conquest is a valuable chance for accumulating relative power and a state can never know how much relative power it will need in the future, a state should seek and grab every possible (real or imagined) opportunity of expansion and conquest to increase its relative power versus other states in the system. Thus, when Mearsheimer's logic is pushed to its logical conclusion, *every war in his offensive realism world is a preventive war*. Because every state can potentially become a formidable opponent, trying to eliminate other potential competitors and becoming a universal empire or at least a regional hegemon is the only secure way toward security.

Dale Copeland advances a sophisticated theory of preventive war. Initially, Copeland (2000:4) identifies the uncertainty about others' present and future intentions as an important driver of his theory, and the uncertainty seems to occupy a central place in his theory. Eventually, however, he concludes that whether a state decides to launch a preventive war is determined by its perception of the nature of the relative decline (the speed of the decline, the depth of decline; the inevitability of decline); and whether the preventive war is winnable as conditioned by the systemic distribution of power (that is, polarity). Once

<sup>26</sup>Mislabeling offensive realism as neorealism, Brooks (1997:449) similarly noted, "Although this worst-case/possibilistic view is only an assumption, it plays a pivotal-although usually unrecognized-role in neorealist theory." Brooks did not elaborate further.

<sup>27</sup>Mearsheimer's logic must also mean that even non-great powers have aggressive intentions: they are not aggressive simply because they lack (offensive) capabilities, not because they are benign.

again, a state's calculus for preventive war is a purely cost-benefit calculation (although a more sophisticated one), and the other state's intentions have no role whatsoever in one's calculation.

As such, Copeland also contends that states' aggressiveness is strictly determined by their estimation of their probabilities of prevailing in the conflict, which is ultimately determined by material factors that constrain their exercise of their offensive capabilities. Copeland thus also implicitly assumes the worst over others' intentions. His position is no different from Mearsheimer's position that one's level of fear is almost exclusively determined by others' offensive capabilities or Zakaria's position that a state's aggressiveness is conditioned only by its leaders' perception of relative power (Zakaria 1998:20-22; Mearsheimer 2001:45).

In contrast, because non-offensive realism theories reject assuming the worst over others' intentions, they essentially reject the logic of preventive war, unless under extreme circumstances.<sup>28</sup> Non-offensive realism theories believe that preventive war is usually irrational and counterproductive for three operational reasons. First, the perceived window of opportunity that underpins the rationale for launching a preventive war may be false. If so, launching a preventive war may prove to be self-defeating. Second, launching preventive war without providing conclusive evidence that another state is going to attack imminently carries heavy diplomatic costs: a state that does so will not be able to gain allies in the future because other states will deem the state as not only fundamentally unreliable as an ally but also inherently threatening (Lebow 1984; Reiter 1995:25-28, 33).<sup>29</sup> Third, because defense usually holds advantage over offense (Snyder 1985:158; Van Evera 1999), it is better for a state to defend than to attack for the sake of its security.

### The Unifier among Non-Offensive Realism Theories

Because non-offensive realism theories are a diverse bunch, they often disagree vehemently without recognizing the commonalities among them. I now show the three major non-offensive realism theories are united on at least one front: all of them reject the worst-case assumption over others' intentions.

Admittedly, some defensive realists might have implied a worst-case assumption over others' intentions carelessly. For instance, although Waltz ultimately came down as a defensive realist (Labs 1997:8),<sup>30</sup> he seems to suggest that *anarchy alone* dictates "a strong sense of peril and doom" (Waltz 1979:109), thus hinting that anarchy dictates the worst-case assumption over others' intentions.<sup>31</sup> Likewise, Snyder and Diesing (1977:188) noted: "The anarchic nature of the international system... induces a conservative tendency to think of the future in the worst possible or worst plausible cause terms." Finally, Barry Posen (1993:46n3)

<sup>28</sup>A benign state may consider preemptive strike when it is almost absolutely sure: (1) it is facing an incorrigibly aggressive state and the latter is close to attack (At this point, it is difficult to tell whether the war is preventive or preemptive, or both), (2) the first strike advantage is potentially enormous, (3) the relative power of the benign state is in rapid decline comparing to the offensive realism state. Because these circumstances will be hard to come by (Britain and France when facing Hitler's Germany before 1939 was perhaps the only case in modern time), a benign state rarely launches preventive war. I address this problem of preemptive war in detail elsewhere.

<sup>29</sup>Hence, resorting to preventive or preemptive war must also mean that a state discounts the (future) utility of alliance (Snyder 1985:160-161). Such a stand is again more consistent with offensive realism (Mearsheimer 2001:29). See also the discussion above.

<sup>30</sup>For instance, Waltz (1979:109n), like Jervis (1988:319), also believed that the Prisoner's Dilemma game captures much of the essence of international politics.

<sup>31</sup>Thus, many noted that Waltz "straddles the defensive-offensive realism fence." (Labs 1997:8) For other criticisms of Waltz's inconsistencies, see Zakaria (1992:194n43, 1998:29-30) and Wendt (1999:104-107, 249). For conflicting interpretations of where Waltz stands between offensive realism and defensive realism, see Snyder (1991:12n36) and Kydd (2005:14n14).

stated that “the emergence of anarchy forces leaders to focus on military potential, rather than on intention. As such, the difficult problem of intention is treated as ‘a capabilities problem’.”

Meanwhile, non-realism theorists generally tend to conflate offensive realism and defensive realism, failing to appreciate the two realisms’ fundamentally different stands on whether states should assume the worst over others’ intentions.

For instance, countering Mearsheimer’s offensive realism thesis against international institutions, Keohane and Martin (1995:43–44) wrote: “Realist security arguments [...] often rely on worst-case analysis. Realists contend that in an uncertain, anarchic world, states must assume the worst, particularly about others’ intentions, when making policy choices.” Similarly, Wendt (1992:404) argued that “realists would probably argue that each should act on the basis of worst-case assumptions about the other’s intentions,” and that “states make worst-case assumptions about each other’s intentions under the security dilemma.” (Wendt 1995:73) Wendt’s mistake was then repeated by Paul Roe. “Neorealist writers claim that the anarchical nature of the international system forces states to assume a worst-case scenario.” (Roe 1999:185) “The logic of the security dilemma assumes a worst-case scenario which provokes an action-reaction dynamic between the parties involved.” (Roe 2004:283) None of these critics of realism bothered to notice that Jervis (1976:64–65) and Glaser (1997:197–198) have explicitly warned against the danger of assuming the worst over others’ intention under a security dilemma.

Once the two positions on how to cope with the fear derived from the uncertainty over others’ intention are made explicit, it becomes clear that the three major non-offensive realism approaches are unified by a fundamental common stand: All three approaches reject assuming the worst over others’ intentions. Moreover, their common stand is also crucial for their logic—it makes their logic possible (although not necessarily coherent and consistent). If states are assumed to be inherently aggressive, the logic of these non-offensive realism theories cannot operate. This is most obvious when it comes to these approaches’ stand on common interest and cooperation.

Let’s begin with defensive realism. For defensive realism, there is real and significant common interest between two benign states, such as avoiding arms race and unnecessary war (Jervis 1999:44–50). As such, when facing a fellow benign state, a defensive realist state can cooperate with it to alleviate the security dilemma, although cooperation under the security dilemma is difficult (Jervis 1978; Glaser 1994–95). Even when facing a state with its intention unknown, a benign state can signal its own benign intention and gauge the other state’s intention through reassurance and cooperation-building (Glaser 1994–95; Kydd 2000, 2005; Tang 2007).

Here, in order for states to initiate some kind of signaling or cooperation, a state must not assume the worst about others’ intentions. Instead, it must believe that the other state *may* be benign and thus it makes sense to find out (whether the other side is really benign) through costly signals (Kydd 2005). If a state assumes the worst over others’ intentions, it will not try cooperation or reassurance. Hence, if defensive realism admits the worst-case assumption over others’ intentions, its logic for reassurance and cooperation cannot operate.

Neoliberalism argues that states can set up international institutions to facilitate and regulate cooperation among them. Yet, if states assume each other to be inherently aggressive, they will not even initiate cooperation. When states assume each other to be inherently aggressive, they are denying of the existence of real common interest among them. Moreover, knowing that the other side will surely take advantage of your cooperative gestures makes any cooperative gesture irrational (and potentially very risky). As such, there will be no repeated

cooperation, and cooperative institutions cannot form. Rejecting assuming the worst over others' intentions is crucial for neoliberalism's core logic.

Constructivism argues that states' identity is malleable (Wendt 1992). Yet, when states assume each other to be inherently aggressive, they are essentially fixing each other with an identity of "predator," and they will not try to—thus cannot—alter each other's "predator" identity. Thus, if constructivism admits the worst-case assumption over others' intentions, its whole logic cannot operate because no (re-)construction of identity among states will be possible. Moreover, like neoliberalism, constructivism sterling also explicitly or implicitly assumes much common interest among states (Sterling-Folker 2000:105–110), and the presence of common interest is prerequisite for any state to try cooperation. Once again, rejecting assuming the worst over others' intentions is crucial for constructivism's core logic.

Fundamentally, non-offensive realism theories are united against the offensive realism position that states are inherently aggressive, and *they merely differ on how best to cope with uncertainty and fear*. Defensive realism stresses cooperation through costly signaling of benign intentions or reassurance (Glaser 1994–95; Kydd 2000, 2005; Tang 2007). Institutionalism emphasizes institutions for facilitating and enforcing cooperation (for example, Keohane 1984; Axelrod and Keohane 1985). Constructivism accentuates changing states' identities and forging a common/cooperative identity (Adler 1991; Wendt 1992). Yet, these different approaches for coping with fear should not and, indeed cannot, be mutually excluding. For one thing, it is simply difficult to see how cooperative institutions can emerge without some reassurance-driven cooperation *beforehand*, and it is even more difficult to image how a common and cooperative identity can emerge without some cooperative institutions *beforehand*.<sup>32</sup> Thus, when properly understood, non-offensive realism approaches are more similar and interconnected than their proponents have been willing to admit. As such, a dialogue among them is not only possible but also potentially profitable.

Indeed, some convergences among non-offensive realism approaches are already apparent. While most defensive realists still do not give much weight to institutions in facilitating and enforcing cooperation (for example, Glaser 1994–95; Kydd 2005; Montgomery 2006), some institutionalists are now emphasizing that in addition to the function of providing information, reducing transaction cost, stabilizing expectations, facilitating commitment, detecting and collectively punishing (thus also deterring) defections, international institutions also facilitate signaling and reading intentions.

Examining the early history of the Cold War, Seth Weinberger (2003) emphasizes that working inside the framework of the United Nations, the United States were able to credibly signal its benign intentions toward Stalin's Soviet Union and to read Stalin's malignant intentions. Examining the attempt to end ethnic conflict in southern Philippines, Hoddie and Hartzell (2005) pointed out that negotiating possible post-conflict institutions is an important venue for former foes to signaling their benign intentions and commitment to a lasting post-conflict settlement. Finally, Ikenberry (2001) argue that international institutions are better means of exercising American power. By channeling power through institutions, the United States after World War II has been exercising strategic restraint, thus making its overwhelming power less threatening and more assuring to other states in the system. As a result, other states are more willing to work with the United States, rather than try to balance against its overwhelming power.

These contributions from institutionalists all point to the same theme that international institution is just another—although a "nicer" kind—instrument

<sup>32</sup>Sterling-Folker (2000:110–113) makes the same point, insisting that neoliberalism has an inherent possibility of identity transformation (for the good, of course).

of statecraft for coping with fear (Jervis 1999:53–58). As such, these “instrumental” institutionalists’ stand on institutions has very little difference from some defensive realism’s stand on institutions: the differences between neoliberalism and defensive realism have been vastly exaggerated (Jervis 1999:45).

Unfortunately, constructivism has not produced that many strong empirical studies to support its core argument that identity can be re-shaped to end and prevent conflict: “anarchy is what states make of it” (Wendt 1992). Most of the existing studies labeled either as culturalist or constructivist merely emphasizes that ideas shape policies, and they are not enough to support constructivism’s core claim that anarchy can be (re-)made through reshaping identity. This lack of strong empirical studies for its core claim should worry constructivists because it may turn out to be constructivism’s Achilles’ heel: a research approach without much empirical support for its core claim eventually degenerates.<sup>33</sup> Here, perhaps examining the process of reconciliation between two former rivals may be a good place for constructivism to get started.<sup>34</sup> Because rivalry is the most intense type of international conflicts that anarchy produces and the two states in the conflict harbor deep antagonism against each other (Goertz and Diehl 1993; Thompson 1995), reconciliation between former rivals should be a hard test for the constructivist claim. If constructivists can demonstrate that states can indeed remake the rivalries into a durable foundation of structural peace and identity-reshaping is an integral part of the process, constructivism would then have built a compelling case for its core claim that anarchy can be (re-)made. At the very least, if two states can transform their relationship from outright hostility to durable peace while the international system remains anarchic; offensive realism’s stand that conflicts inevitably follow from anarchy will be seriously undermined. More likely than not, constructivism may also find out that two former foes can only overcome the fear (and hostility) for each other and finally re-construct a new identity and relationship by a combination of reassurance, tentative cooperation, and institutionalization of (repeated) cooperation.

### Implications

Making the two positions more explicit helps us understand some of the important debates in IR theory.

In the debate on cooperation, offensive realism contends that cooperation, other than temporary alliance when facing a common threat, is extremely difficult, if not impossible because of states’ concern for relative gains, the temptation to cheat, and the high cost of being cheated (Grieco 1988; Mearsheimer 2001:51–53).<sup>35</sup> In order to sustain his argument that cooperation is impossible under anarchy, Mearsheimer further denies that benign intentions can be signaled (Mearsheimer 2006:231–234). Yet, this whole exercise is superficial and redundant for offensive realism.

When states are assumed to be inherently aggressive, there is no rationale to even try cooperation unless facing a common threat. When the other side is

<sup>33</sup>Sadly, many leading proponents of constructivism have been content with the increasingly unproductive debate on purely ontological and epistemological terms.

<sup>34</sup>Reconciliation is the process through which former opponents reshape their hostile relationship into a stable peace (Akerman 1994).

<sup>35</sup>Waltz (1979:105) first stressed that states’ concern for relative gains from cooperation will make cooperation difficult, if not impossible. Waltz’s statement was a bit deceptive. By stating “when faced with the possibility of cooperation for mutual gain, states that *feel insecure* must ask how the gain will be divided” (Waltz 1979:105; emphasis added), he seems to imply that *some* states (those that feel secure) will not be concerned with relative gains. Yet, because states can never feel completely secure under anarchy, his statement *must* mean that *all* states must always be concerned with relative gains (Schweller 1996:102). Schweller (1996:109–110), a self-proclaimed offensive realist, called the debate on relative versus absolute gain “artificial.” A recent survey among IR scholars ranked this debate as the most unproductive debate in the past two decades (Peterson, Tierney, and Maliniak 2005:27–28).

inherently aggressive, it will surely defect and take advantage of your nice gesture. Meanwhile, because you are also aggressive, you will not initiate cooperation in the first place. As such, it is only natural that cooperation is highly unlikely—if not totally impossible—in an offensive realism world. Moreover, when states are assumed to be inherently aggressive, states have no benign intentions to signal to begin with and no states will be so insensible to even try signaling benign intentions. By the same token, no states will be naïve enough to believe in others' signals of benign intentions. As such, in an offensive realism world, there is little rationale and room for signaling benign intentions or reassurance (Montgomery 2006:155; see also Kydd 2005:183)

For offensive realism, therefore, there is really no need for pondering the problem of dividing gains from cooperation or denying that benign intentions can be signaled. The “Sixth Element” of assuming the worst over others' intentions has all these issues covered, plain and simple.

Non-offensive realism theorists try to undermine offensive realism's logic by countering that states can overcome their concern for relative gains when military technology favors defense and by designing institutions to reduce the temptation to cheat (Powell 1991; Keohane 1993; Glaser 1994–95:70–76; Keohane and Martin 1995:44–46). These counterarguments, despite being valid and interesting, are also superficial. More importantly, non-offensive realism theorists are debating on offensive realism's terms. Unless non-offensive realism theorists explicitly reject the offensive realism position that states are inherently aggressive, they cannot really counter offensive realism's argument that cooperation under anarchy is extremely difficult, if not totally impossible. Cooperation can become a viable means for self-help only when states are not inherently aggressive. *All the factors that can facilitate cooperation can come into play only if states are not assumed to be inherently aggressive.*

Making the two positions more explicit also helps us grasp the contribution (or no contribution) by some theorists. For instance, Taliaferro (2001) praises Copeland's theory of dynamic differentiation and war for resolving the problem of possibility versus probability, and he further classifies Copeland's theory as a defensive realism theory (Taliaferro 2000–01:135). Yet, like other offensive realism theories, Copeland's theory too has no place for a probabilistic stand on other states' intentions: other states are assumed to be aggressive when they can and there is no possibility that they may remain benign when they are capable of doing harm. Because Copeland (2000) merely stated that his theory is probabilistic when it comes to estimating states' (relative) capabilities but not their intentions, Copeland never has a problem of possibility versus probability over the problem of intentions. Taliaferro's praise for Copeland's theory thus turns out to be much kudos for nothing (Taliaferro 2001:152–158), and his classification of Copeland's offensive realism theory as a defensive realism theory is based on misunderstandings.

In a recent attempt to sort out the different connotation of uncertainty in different IR approaches, Rathbun (2007) asserts that neorealism (and offensive realism) takes uncertainty about others' intentions as fear whereas other approaches (that is, rationalism, cognitivism, and constructivism) do not. This notion is incorrect. Realism maintains that uncertainty about others' intentions partly underpins fear, but uncertainty about others' intentions is not equivalent to fear (see above). More importantly, Rathbun's formulation implies that other paradigms do not have fear. This is simply untrue: fear features prominently in all the paradigms he examined. Obviously, “mistrust” as defined by Andrew Kydd (2005:5, 12–18), whom Rathbun (2007:541–545) classified as a rationalist even though Kydd himself admitted that his approach is essentially a neoclassical defensive realism approach (Kydd 2005:13n13), is simply fear. Moreover, the first formulation of coping with fear through costly signaling of benign intentions

was advanced by a psychologist named Charles Osgood (1962) and a sociologist named Amitai Etzioni (1962), not by a rationalist named Thomas Schelling (1960, 1966) as Rathbun assumed. Schelling discussed costly signaling of resolve in conflict with the other side's intentions already assumed aggressive but not costly signaling of and reading benign intentions toward cooperation.

Worse, failing to grasp the fundamentally different two positions on how to cope with fear, Rathbun holds that fear must be removed from Glaser's contingent realism—which is defensive realism—in order for signaling to have a chance. As such, Rathbun (2007:536, 540n5) asserts that signaling and screening is unimportant for realism as a whole due to fear about other's intentions. This formulation cannot be more wrong. Without fear—which is partially underpinned by the uncertainty about others' intentions, there is no need for signaling (benign intentions) and screening (that is, learning). Only for offensive realism which assumes the worst over others' intentions, will signaling and screening be unimportant. Mearsheimer 2006:121–123, 231–234; see also Montgomery 2006:155; Kydd 2005:183. For all other non-offensive realism approaches, signaling and learning is crucial for learning about others' intentions and calculating one's own moves (Tang 2007; see also above).

Finally, making the two positions more explicit also sheds some interesting light upon the meaning of anarchy. Many have suggested that anarchy dictates states to assume the worst scenario over each other's intentions, but this is simply an assertion. One cannot logically prove that anarchy per se dictates states to adopt or reject the worst-case assumption over others' intentions: There is *no* inherent link between anarchy and adopting or rejecting the worst assumption over others' intentions (Glaser 1994–95:51; Brooks 1997:449).<sup>36</sup> Anarchy merely makes uncertainty about others' intentions or fear more intractable than under hierarchy.

The two positions on how to cope with fear are differences of assumption rather than differences of logic, and no amount of deductive logic can prove one assumption is more valid than the other. The validity of these two assumptions can only be resolved by an “empirical duel”: does international politics provide more support for the offensive realism's stand or the non-offensive realism stand? (Brooks 1997:448–449, 473).

A potential solution to this difference of assumption is to take the worst-case assumption over others' intentions as a product of social construction with anarchy merely providing the permissible environment for the construction process to take place rather than dictating one assumption over the other (for example, Wendt 1992). For instance, Jervis (1976:64–65) noted that states tend to assume the worst about others' intentions only when (they believe) they are *already* in a conflictual relationship. Similarly, I implied that states are especially prone to assume the worst when they are *already* into actual conflicts (Tang 2005:50, 54).<sup>37</sup> These two authors suggest that the worst-case assumption over others' intention is conditional rather than absolute and that it is not *driving* conflict but actually *driven* by conflict.

Perhaps even more interesting is that taking the worst-case assumption over others' intentions as a product of social construction may eventually lead us to adopt a social evolutionary approach toward the problem of uncertainty over others' intentions and fear in international politics. After all, our fear is a product of our evolutionary past, both biologically and socially.<sup>38</sup> Hence, I advance

<sup>36</sup>As such, the meaning of anarchy, long argued to dictate a lot of things, needs to be more rigorously re-interpreted. For similar calls, see Wendt (1992) and Powell (1994:314).

<sup>37</sup>My earlier formulation covers worst-case assumptions on capability, resolve, and intention, thus is somewhat under-specified. Snyder and Diesing's (1977:185–189) formulation might have a similar undertone.

<sup>38</sup>I thank an anonymous review for remaining me to make this point more explicitly.

a social evolutionary resolution of this problem elsewhere (Tang forthcoming). I show that our world was really an offensive realism world in which the worst-case assumption over others' intentions was justified and necessary, but it had evolved into a defensive realism world in which the worst-case assumption over others' intentions has become unnecessary and counterproductive. Thus, offensive realism's stand was the right stand for a bygone era of offensive realism world, whereas non-offensive realism stand is the right stand for the present defensive realism world, although a more-or-less rule-based future may already be in the making.

### Conclusion

How to cope with fear, which is partly underpinned by the uncertainty about others' present and future intentions, is a central question in international politics. I underscore that there are only two positions on this question. Offensive realism asserts that states have to assume the worst over each other's intentions; whereas non-offensive realism theories reject assuming the worst over each other's intentions. I also show that these two positions reflect differences of assumption, and that they are not inherent to the logic of anarchy (even if there is one).

The exposition here echoes Robert Powell's (1994:314) earlier observation that many differences in arguments in international politics are the result of implicit and unarticulated assumptions. Making the two stands more explicit clarify many areas of confusions and help us understand many important debates in IR. Making the two stands more explicit also help us see the common ground among non-offensive realism approaches. As a result, a more fruitful dialogue among non-offensive realism approaches becomes possible and even desirable, if not urgent.

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# Fear, interest and honour: outlines of a theory of International Relations

RICHARD NED LEBOW

I am developing a new paradigm of politics based on the Greek concept of the spirit and applying it to international politics. It is part of a larger project that incorporates this paradigm into a broader theory of international relations, which in turn is nested in a proto-theory of political orders. In this article, I will describe the importance of the spirit for individuals and their organizations, including states, and lay out an approach for its study.

I go back to the Greeks because of their richer understanding of human motives. In his *Republic*, Socrates identifies three distinct psychic drives: appetite, spirit and reason. Appetite (*to epithumētikon*) includes all primitive biological urges—hunger, thirst, sex and aversion to pain—and their more sophisticated expressions. The spirit (*to thumoeides*) is derived from *thumos*, the organ that is supposed to have roused Homeric heroes to action. Socrates attributes all kinds of vigorous and competitive behaviour to *thumos*. It makes us admire and emulate the skills, character and positions of people considered praiseworthy by our society. By equalling or surpassing their accomplishments, we gain the respect of others and build self-esteem. The spirit loves honour and victory. It responds with anger to any impediment to self-assertion in private or civic life. It desires to avenge all slights of honour or standing to ourselves and our friends. It demands immediate action, which can result in ill-considered behaviour, but can be advantageous in circumstances where rapid responses are necessary.<sup>1</sup> Reason (*to logistikon*) is the third part of the psyche. It has the capability to distinguish good from bad, in contrast to appetite and spirit, which can engage only in instrumental reasoning. For Socrates, reason has desires of its own: it seeks to understand what makes human beings happy, and to constrain and educate the appetite and spirit to collaborate with it towards that end.<sup>2</sup>

Since the Enlightenment, philosophers and social scientists have more or less collapsed human drives into appetite and reduced reason to an instrumentality. All existing paradigms of international relations, if not of politics, are rooted in appetite. Following Thucydides, Plato and Aristotle, I maintain that the spirit is present in all human beings and that the need for self-esteem is universal, although

<sup>1</sup> Plato's conceptions of the *thumos* are developed in books V, VIII and IX of the *Republic*.

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Republic*, 441c1–2, 441e4, 442c5–6, 580d7–8, 8505d11–e1.

manifested differently from society to society. International relations is the hardest domain in which to make the case for the spirit as an important, if not, at times, dominant motive. This is because the spirit can express itself only in society, and existing theories of international relations either deny the existence of international society or describe it as relatively thin. The last 150 years of international relations are arguably the most difficult period in which to document the importance of the spirit. Monarchies and their dynastic rivalries gave way to modern states, an increasing number of them democracies. Concomitant with this change, aristocratic and warrior elites were replaced by bureaucrats, lawyers and business-people. Philosophers as different as Tocqueville and Nietzsche lamented that modern society had become plebeian, focused on satisfying the most immediate of appetites and devoid of grand projects that fire the imagination and require sacrifice. Has the spirit disappeared from public life as it has from political philosophy and social science?

### Honour, standing and security

Even a cursory examination of international relations in this modern period indicates the continuing importance of the spirit. Let us begin with the Cuban missile crisis, one of the key turning points of the Cold War. When President Kennedy was informed that Soviet missile sites had been discovered in Cuba, he exclaimed: 'He [Khrushchev] can't do this to me!'<sup>3</sup> Most analysts of the crisis have interpreted Kennedy's anger as a response to the strategic and political dilemmas he suddenly confronted. The national interest and political survival alike demanded that Soviet missiles be kept out of Cuba, but the missile deployment under way could be stopped only by military action or the threat of military action, and either involved enormous risk. There was also a personal dimension to his anger. The Soviet premier had promised the American president through official and informal channels that he would not send missiles to Cuba. Kennedy felt played for a patsy. He was enraged by this slight to his honour, and his first inclination was to avenge himself by attacking the missile sites, thus humiliating Khrushchev. He gradually overcame his anger, and conspired with Khrushchev to allow the Soviet leader to save face by means of a negotiated withdrawal of the missiles.<sup>4</sup>

Standing and reputation subsequently dominated American calculations. Neither Kennedy nor his Defense Secretary considered Soviet missiles in Cuba as much a military as a political threat. A successful Soviet deployment, they reasoned, would confer tremendous prestige on Moscow and its leader, and do equivalent damage to the standing of the United States and its president. The repercussions of a successful challenge would be felt throughout the world, would give heart and courage to pro-communist guerrilla movements, and would undermine the resolve of America's allies.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and survival: choices about the bomb in the first fifty years* (New York: Random House, 1988), pp. 684–5.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *We all lost the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), ch. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Lebow and Gross Stein, *We all lost the Cold War*, ch. 5.

Concern for standing and reputation was even more apparent on the Soviet side. Khrushchev sent missiles to Cuba to deter an expected American invasion of that island, help redress the overall strategic balance and get even with Kennedy for deploying Jupiter missiles in Turkey. The Jupiters were so vulnerable that they could be used only for a first strike against the Soviet Union or for purposes of intimidation. They infuriated Khrushchev and the Soviet leadership, who interpreted them as the latest in a string of American efforts to humiliate the Soviet Union and deny it the status its military and economic accomplishments warranted. These included repeated drops of weapons and agents into the western provinces of the Soviet Union in the early years of the Cold War, overflights of the Soviet Union by U-2 spy planes ordered by the Eisenhower administration between 1956 and 1962, and the West's unwillingness to recognize East Germany. On the eve of the missile deployment, Khrushchev told his ambassador to Cuba that 'The Americans are going to have to swallow this the same way we have had to swallow the pill of missiles in Turkey.'<sup>6</sup>

Resolution of the missile crisis paved the way for detente. Here too, standing was an important motive. Soviet premier Leonid Brezhnev was willing to make substantive concessions in return for American recognition of the Soviet Union as a coequal superpower.<sup>7</sup> When the Soviet economy stagnated, scarce resources were still directed into strategic weapons and delivery systems, and the military more generally. Western analysts explained this behaviour with reference to security concerns or bureaucratic politics. While I would not dismiss these motives, there is considerable evidence that expenditure on the military was intended above all to maintain the Soviet Union's claim to superpower status. The extent to which this was an important goal in its own right is indicated by the sacrifices Soviet leaders were prepared to make in other areas to maintain a powerful army and state-of-the-art naval and strategic forces. A not insignificant segment of the population of the former Soviet Union laments its passing, in part because it was a great power whose opinions and interests were respected by the global community.<sup>8</sup> Standing is important for individuals and institutions alike, and to the extent that individuals identify with the state—one of the defining characteristics of nationalism—they tend to project many of their emotional needs on their state (as they do with their favoured sports team) and seek vicarious fulfilment through its successes. We tend to associate the goals of honour and standing with dynastic political units, but, as the Cold War indicates, they are at least as important for modern democratic, industrial and post-industrial states.

The origins of the First World War offer more support for this thesis. Numerous explanations have been advanced of how that conflict came about, many of which stress the security dilemmas of the great powers, their offensive military strategies or domestic problems that encouraged aggressive foreign policies.<sup>9</sup> What these

<sup>6</sup> Lebow and Gross Stein, *We all lost the Cold War*, chs 2, 3.

<sup>7</sup> Lebow and Gross Stein, *We all lost the Cold War*, pp. 152–6.

<sup>8</sup> Ted Hopf, *Social construction of international politics: identities and foreign policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> Richard Ned Lebow, 'Contingency, catalysts and international system change', *Political Science Quarterly* 115, 2000–2001, pp. 591–616.

explanations have in common is their emphasis on security—of states, leaders, ruling elites or organizations—as the overriding motive of key actors in this drama. Most ignore concern for standing, or subsume it within security.<sup>10</sup> A few historians and political scientists insist, with reason, that standing was a key goal in its own right, and responsible for many of the policies that escalated interstate tensions in the first two decades of the twentieth century. These include the scramble for colonies, the German naval buildup and challenge to France in Morocco, Italy's war with the Ottoman Empire and de facto move away from the Triple Alliance, and Russian support for south Slav nationalism. None of these initiatives was motivated by security, and indeed arguments could have been made—and in some cases were made at the time—that they were damaging to national security. Some of the key decisions that led to war in the July 1914 crisis, among them Russian support for Serbia and the British decision to intervene once it became clear that Germany would violate Belgian neutrality, were also motivated largely, or in part, by concern for standing and honour. A compelling argument can be made that in the absence of the competitive quest for standing, a war between the great powers in Europe in the early decades of the twentieth century would have been much less likely.

Consider a contemporary case: opposition to the American occupation of Iraq. The Bush administration expected its forces to be hailed as liberators, and they were initially welcomed by at least some Iraqis. The Americans had no plans for a rapid transfer of power to an independent Iraqi or international authority. They assumed a tight hold of the reins of civilian authority, headed by an American puppet exile with little, if any, local support. American forces increasingly came to be regarded as an army of occupation. Violent resistance triggered equally violent reprisals and set in motion an escalatory spiral that further cast the Americans in the role of occupiers. Insensitive to the needs of the spirit, American authorities belatedly attempted to satisfy Iraqi appetites by restoring electricity, providing gasoline and diesel fuel, rebuilding schools and hospitals, and doing their best to provide security. These programmes—which the Bush administration repeatedly cited as evidence of its goodwill and commitment—did nothing to placate the spirit, and were run in a manner that dramatically highlighted Iraqi subordination. The same was true of dilatory American efforts to create an independent Iraqi governing authority and repeated public insistence that Washington would continue to have the last word on all important matters.<sup>11</sup> Interviews with Iraqis from all walks of life indicated fury at their perceived insubordination. One respondent angrily admitted that Saddam may have killed thousands of Iraqi civilians, and the Americans only hundreds; but the American occupation was still intolerable, as he

<sup>10</sup> Avner Offer, 'Going to war in 1914: a matter of honor?', *Politics and Society* 23, June 1995, pp. 213–41, is an important exception.

<sup>11</sup> Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay, *America unbound: the Bush revolution in foreign policy*, rev. edn (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2005); Seymour M. Hersh, *Chain of command: the road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib* (New York: Harper, 2004); James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans: the history of Bush's war cabinet* (New York: Penguin, 2004); David L. Phillips, *Losing Iraq: inside the postwar reconstruction fiasco* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2005); Bob Woodward, *Plan of attack* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004).

put it, because ‘Saddam was one of ours’.<sup>12</sup> Such affronts probably would have aroused anger anywhere, but in a traditional culture where questions of standing and honour for the most part take precedence over satisfaction of appetites they elicited particular fury.

These several examples highlight the importance of standing as a powerful motive for individuals, organizations and states. They indicate that at the inter-state level, standing and security are distinct, albeit often related, motives. In some situations, standing and security are diametrically opposed. Colonies and navies were symbols of great power status in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and pursued by France and Germany at the expense of their security. The French challenge to Britain in Egypt and the Sudan provoked a crisis in 1898 that threatened to embroil France in war with Britain, a country the French should have been wooing—as they later did—to provide a counterweight to Germany. German construction of a blue-water navy precluded an Anglo-German alliance, actively sought by British Foreign Secretary Joseph Chamberlain at the turn of the century, and, by threatening Britain, pushed it towards accommodation and military cooperation with France. On other occasions, standing was valued in its own right by leaders of both superpowers, but was also considered important for their security. This was true for American and Soviet policy-makers throughout much of the Cold War.

The third logical possibility—leaders sacrificing standing for security—is more problematic. As standing in the international community has traditionally been based on military and economic power, and as security policies have the goal of preserving or increasing that power, it is difficult to find situations where leaders believed their standing would suffer from policies designed to enhance their security. One example from the missile crisis is Robert Kennedy’s objection to a pre-emptive air strike against the Soviet missile sites in Cuba on the grounds that it would be a Pearl Harbor in reverse.<sup>13</sup> Eight years earlier, President Eisenhower had ruled out the use of atomic bombs in Vietnam to save the French garrison surrounded at Dien Bien Phu;<sup>14</sup> one of the reasons he gave was that the United States could not afford to use a nuclear weapon against Asians again. For both men, concern to avoid loss of standing and the expected political costs associated with that loss ruled out policies that other officials were advocating in the name of national security.

The Bush administration came down on the other side of the question. The President authorized the Department of Defense to hold people swept up in the invasion of Afghanistan at the American base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, indefinitely, without charging them with any crime and without access to legal counsel.<sup>15</sup> The White House subsequently allowed the CIA to ‘render’ prisoners to

<sup>12</sup> Interviews conducted and quote provided by Prof. Shawn Rosenberg, University of California at Irvine.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Kennedy, *Thirteen days: a memoir of the Cuban missile crisis* (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 31.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983–4), vol. 2, p. 84; Bundy, *Danger and survival*, pp. 260–70, on Eisenhower’s response to Dien Bien Phu.

<sup>15</sup> For detailed information, see Human Rights Watch, [http://www.hrw.org/doc/?t=usa\\_gitmo](http://www.hrw.org/doc/?t=usa_gitmo), last accessed 12 April 2006.



other countries where information might be extracted from them by methods that would be illegal in the United States. Both practices, critics charged, were contrary to international law and practice and to the core values of American democracy. They also doubted that any useful information could be extracted by means of torture. The administration insisted that the security benefits of these practices were real and outweighed any loss of reputation they might incur, though it did try—unsuccessfully, as it turned out—to keep the export of terrorist suspects a dark secret.<sup>16</sup> Administration officials have made similar, and equally disputed, claims with regard to email and telephone surveillance without court warrants.<sup>17</sup> Though it is still too early to tell, it is reasonable to suppose that American initiatives associated with the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq have led to a precipitous loss of standing among allies and third parties and will have important, long-term implications for the ability of the United States to influence these countries on a wide range of issues.

## **The problem of standing**

Standing is a social construction. First in the European political system, and then in the international one, it has been achieved primarily on the basis of military and economic power. Revolutionary regimes (e.g. the United States, the French Republic, the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China) unsuccessfully claimed standing on alternative criteria, and ultimately sought it on the basis of their material capabilities. Multiple challenges to these criteria for claiming standing are now under way, raising the prospect that we are in the early stages of a reformulation of the nature of and criteria for standing. Evidence for this assertion is drawn from the world wide negative reactions to the US–UK invasion of Iraq and the justifications for UN Security Council seats put forward by Japan, India, Brazil and Germany, most of which are based on claims that have nothing to do with military power. Alternative criteria for standing have been most fully articulated by Canada and some of the states of the European Union, and by Iran and Islamic fundamentalists in the Middle East. If any of these conceptions gain support—they already have substantial appeal on a regional basis—the consequences for the goals of actors and the nature of influence will be profound. Historically, goals and influence are closely related. To the extent their resources permit, political units tend to adapt to their environment, and gravitate towards those levers of influence they consider most effective. Over time, such a process can shift the nature of the goals they seek, as particular means of influence are more conducive to certain goals and inappropriate to others. Shifts in goals can transform the identities of actors, and, in consequence, the character of the system.

<sup>16</sup> Scott Shane, 'Report questions legality of briefings on surveillance', *New York Times*, 19 Jan. 2006, p. A19.

<sup>17</sup> Lowell Bergman, Eric Lichtblau, Scott Shane and Don Van Natta, Jr, 'Spy agency data after Sept. 11 led FBI to dead ends', *New York Times*, 17 Jan. 2006, pp. A1, 12; David E. Sanger and Eric Lichtblau, 'Administration starts weeklong blitz in defense of eavesdropping program', *New York Times*, 24 Jan. 2006, p. A18; Eric Lichtblau, 'Gonzales invokes actions of other presidents in defense of US spying', *New York Times*, 25 Jan. 2006, p. A18; Eric Lichtblau and Adam Liptak, 'Bush presses on in legal defense for wiretapping', *New York Times*, 28 Jan. 2006, p. A1, A9.

The international arena can be considered a site of contestation where different actors—by no means all of them states—claim standing on the basis of diverse criteria. They often invest considerable resources in publicizing and justifying their claims in efforts to gain support. I do not know of any surveys that have asked questions specifically aimed at ranking the prestige of states, or tracking how these rankings might have changed over time. There is, however, strong evidence for a precipitous decline in American standing since the end of the Cold War. Public opinion polls indicate that respect for the United States has plummeted by reason of its unilateralist foreign policies and military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>18</sup> This decline is independent of perceptions of American power, which remain high, and indicates the extent to which criteria other than military and economic power have become important. This shift in attitudes, documented among elites and public opinion in almost all regions of the world, may help explain why the United States may be the most powerful state the world has ever witnessed, yet finds it increasingly difficult to translate that power into influence.

We can conjure up quite contrasting visions of the future. If current attempts to restructure the basis of standing fail, military power is likely to remain the principal criterion for ranking states. If there is a shift in the nature of standing, and especially one that delegitimizes the use of force for anything but the most immediate defensive purposes, or in humanitarian intervention with the backing of large segments of the world community, America's standing—in the absence of a major reorientation of the country's foreign policy—will continue to decline.

The Iraq war is likely to play an important role in determining the nature of standing. Military power is likely to be validated, and the United States to remain at the top of the international pecking order, to the extent that it can impose its preferences on Iraq and the Middle East more generally. This was certainly the expectation of key policy-makers in the Bush administration, who recognized that the greatest comparative advantage of the United States was its powerful and technologically sophisticated military instrument. They counted on Operation Shock and Awe to soften up Iraqi resistance and impress a watching world with the ease with which US and British ground forces could go on to topple Saddam Hussein and install a puppet regime in Baghdad. They expected other countries to bandwagon, and Iran, Saudi Arabia, Palestine and North Korea to become more pliant. None of this happened, in part because of Washington's flawed political and military strategy, but more fundamentally because of the difficulty of imposing one's will on an occupied country—especially when its occupier is isolated politically and its internal adversaries are in receipt of outside physical and moral support. When a future generation of international relations theorists looks back on the Iraq war, they may see it as a decisive turning point in international history, as the beginning of a post-Clausewitzian era in which it became all but impossible to use

<sup>18</sup> Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 'Bush unpopular in Europe, seen as unilateralist', 15 April 2000, <http://people-press.org/reports/print.php3?PageID=36>; 'What the world thinks in 2002', <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=165>; BBC News, 18 March 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/2862343.stm>; Time Europe, <http://www.time.com/time/europe/gdml/peace2003.html>, last accessed 12 April 2006.

force to achieve political goals by bending or breaking the will of an adversary.

Existing theories of international relations do not ask questions of this kind, nor are they capable of answering them. They have impoverished conceptions of human motives, and either do not address the question of standing or subordinate it to security. They fail to recognize the diversity of goals that states and their leaders seek, or how the hierarchy of goals can change within states or across cultures and epochs, and how goals and means are influenced by the robustness of regional and international societies and their conceptions of standing. These are questions pertinent to international relations, not just to foreign policy, because they influence, even perhaps determine, the character of the system.

The spirit tends to express itself in a negative way when threatened. Affronts to the integrity or independence of actors accordingly arouse anger and resistance. This phenomenon helps to sustain the Iraqi insurgency, as it does Palestinian opposition to Israel's occupation of the West Bank. More positive expressions of the spirit require a relatively robust society. To achieve standing, there must be some consensus about how it is won and lost, formal or informal rules for making this determination, and actors or institutions responsible for this task. Standing can be attained within groups and organizations, and the incentive to do so can be exploited by leaders to advance their political goals. Hamas and other groups that have sponsored suicide bombings have publicized the names of successful bombers, paid stipends to their families and encouraged young people to lionize them.<sup>19</sup> Society has always been most problematic at the regional and international levels, but it has often been thick enough, especially at the regional level, to allow, and even regulate, competition for standing among participating units. This was certainly true in fifth- and fourth-century BCE Greece, and at various periods of Indian and modern European history.

Appetite can be satisfied outside society. In ancient times, raids and brigandage were accepted ways of procuring wealth and women. Affluence and sex are acquired differently within society, and the former, if not the latter, can be pursued and enjoyed more effectively when actors understand and adhere to a common set of rules or norms. Modern industrial economies are distinguished by mechanical sources of power and the division of labour, both of which, as Adam Smith was among the first to observe, permit more efficient production and wealthier societies.<sup>20</sup> These developments occur only in societies that are physically secure, where contracts are protected by laws and courts, and where there are no unreasonable barriers to raw materials, labour and markets. Economists maintain that efficiency and overall wealth are further facilitated by the extension of these conditions beyond the confines of individual political units.

<sup>19</sup> CBS News, 3 April 2002, 'Salaries for suicide bombers', <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/04/03/world/main505316.shtml>, last accessed 12 April 2006.

<sup>20</sup> For a contemporaneous and somewhat jaundiced account of the social consequences of the division of labour, see Adam Smith, *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), ch. 1.

## The problem of order

As the degree of order and its character determine the character of politics, any theory of international relations must be rooted in a broader theory of society. Existing paradigms and theories within them are inadequate in this regard. Realism all but denies the existence of society at the international level, and realist theories generally treat the character of international relations as universal, timeless and unchanging. Liberalism recognizes a strong two-way connection between the character of state actors and the nature of their relationships; but it says little or nothing about what shapes the character of actors or how they evolve, and, moreover, is restricted to one historical epoch. Constructivism emphasizes the decisive role of society in constituting actors and shaping their identities, but has as yet failed to produce a full-blown theory of international relations. Marxism links society and international relations in a more comprehensive manner, because it is fundamentally a theory of society. It nevertheless fails in its accounts of history and of international relations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

As politics and society are inseparable, the first requirement of a good theory of international relations is that it provide a theory of society, or at least those aspects of it most relevant to the character and evolution of politics at the state, regional and international levels. This is a daunting task. It also involves something of a Catch-22, because understandings of society and politics presuppose each other, at least in part. Their codependency harks back to a paradox that troubled Greek philosophers of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. If true knowledge is holistic—and I believe it is—we need to know everything before we can know anything. Plato developed his theory of a priori knowledge to get around this paradox. He posited a soul that had experienced multiple lives in the course of which it learned all the forms. Knowledge could be recovered with the help of a dialectical ‘midwife’ who asks appropriate questions.<sup>21</sup> Thucydides pioneered a more practical strategy: he nested his analysis of the Peloponnesian War in a broader political framework, which in turn was embedded in an account of the rise and fall of civilization. By this means, the particular could be understood—as it had to be—by reference to the general. Knowledge, once retrieved and transcribed, could become ‘a possession for all time’.<sup>22</sup> I hope to emulate Thucydides—certainly not in writing a possession for all time, but in explaining the particular with reference to the general. I offer my theory of international relations as a special case of a theory of political order. Both theories are embedded in an understanding of the historical evolution of society.

Of necessity, then, my project has a double theoretical focus: political order and international relations. As each theory is implicated in the other, a simple linear approach is out of the question. I can neither formulate a theory of political order and extend it to international relations, nor develop a theory of international relations and base a theory of political order on it. I adopt a more complicated,

<sup>21</sup> Plato, *Meno*, 86b1–2, and *Cratylus*, 400c.

<sup>22</sup> Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 1.22.4. For an account of this framework, see Richard Ned Lebow, *The tragic vision of politics: ethics, interests and orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), chs 3, 4, 7.

layered strategy. I begin with the problem of order, and propose a framework for its study, but not a theory. This framework provides the scaffolding for a theory of international relations. As I noted at the outset, I develop a paradigm of politics based on the spirit and apply it to international relations. I subsequently intend to integrate this paradigm into a more comprehensive theory of international relations. I will ultimately draw on my theory to refine our understanding of order. Like the calculus, such a series of approximations can bring us closer to our goal, if never actually there.

## Do we need another grand theory?

Social scientists have been working away at the problem of order for a long time—though none of them, to my knowledge, has analysed it in terms of Plato's and Aristotle's categories. Scholars have worked from the bottom up, tackling small and more manageable pieces of the puzzle, and from the top down, in the form of grand theories in the tradition of Hegel and Marx. Both approaches are valuable, and it is arguable that the former would be much more difficult to do in the absence of the latter. Grand theories establish research agendas that enumerate the more discrete questions that scholars attempt to answer. They are also responsible for many of the frameworks and concepts that shape this research.

The heyday of grand theories in the social sciences was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For scientific and normative reasons they became an increasingly disreputable enterprise. They ignored the extent to which their concepts and premises were the products of specific historical circumstances. They devalued agency and individuality. Wittgenstein and Feyerabend in philosophy, Benedict and Geertz in anthropology, and Mills in sociology all sought to replace such theories with local and contingent understandings. Post-modernism is even more hostile to grand theories. Jean-François Lyotard defines post-modernism as 'incredulity toward meta-narratives' and the idea of progress they encode. He calls upon scholars to replace them with open-ended, multicultural, relativistic, non-judgemental accounts.<sup>23</sup> Some of the opponents of grand theories (e.g. Feyerabend, Kuhn and Foucault) have been accused of favouring a relativism that borders on incoherence. Quentin Skinner notes with irony that some of the writers (e.g. Wittgenstein, Foucault, Derrida) most opposed to theory have themselves authored such theories.<sup>24</sup> Other figures, like Althusser, Habermas and Rawls, returned quite self-consciously to the project of grand theory in the 1960s and 1970s.

Many early modern and Enlightenment figures, and all nineteenth-century grand theories, generally assumed both epistemological and social-historical progress. Reason would lead us to a better understanding of the human condition and the course of history. The future would be better than the present, and understanding the course of history would help bring a better world into being. Marxism is the

<sup>23</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, *The postmodern condition: a report on knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 'Introduction', p. xxiv.

<sup>24</sup> Quentin Skinner, 'Introduction: the return of grand theory', in *The return of grand theory in the human sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 12–16.

quintessential example of such a theory, but many modern thinkers—Locke, Kant and Hegel among them—were optimists in this sense. Nietzsche broke with this tradition. To the extent that he envisaged an ‘end to history’, it took the form of cultural desolation. Two world wars and the Holocaust sounded the death knell of philosophical optimism, and appeared to many to confirm Nietzsche’s view of history. Post-structuralists like Foucault and Derrida rejected the Enlightenment ‘project’ and its progressive narrative of history as a defunct and dangerous fiction.<sup>25</sup>

Epistemological optimism, which reached its high-water mark in prewar Popperian neo-positivism, has also been seriously eroded. Hermeneutic approaches have made great inroads. They stress the importance of understanding and self-reflection, which constitute a kind of knowledge that is not described by science. Theory is limited in a double sense: it cannot possibly encompass all there is to know; and it is undermined by self-reflection, which leads people to remake their worlds, and by doing so to invalidate any social laws that previously described their practices.<sup>26</sup> Hermeneutics has reduced epistemology to a subset of knowledge; but, as Rorty has argued, it is not unalterably opposed to epistemology.<sup>27</sup> It rejects all privileged standpoints, but is not relativistic. North American neo-positivism, well entrenched in economics and political science, seems the only outpost of neopositivist social science.

I appreciate both objections to grand theory. The post-Second World War disillusionment with the Enlightenment represents a predictable response to the horrors of that conflict, recurrent episodes of ethnic cleansing and genocide, the threat of nuclear annihilation most recently associated with the Cold War, and the ever more real possibility of environmental catastrophe. Like all historical moments, it is a unique one, not a privileged position from which to make objective judgements. There was probably more pessimism at the end of the Thirty Years War, yet within a century it gave way to the extraordinary optimism of the Enlightenment. One cannot rule out a similar reversal in the future, given the dependence of the moods and practices of philosophy and social science alike on developments in broader society. There are nevertheless sound epistemological reasons for questioning meta-narratives of progress. Even if they rely on a dialectic as their mechanism to move history forwards, it is always through a series of progressive stages and towards a predetermined telos that represents an end to history. All grounds for judging one epoch or socio-economic order as superior to another are arbitrary.

Grand theories can be purged of normative assumptions and teloi. We can describe changes in human societies, and their organizing principles, without

<sup>25</sup> Michel Foucault, *Language, counter-memory, practice*, ed. D. F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 153–4.

<sup>26</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and human interests*, trans. Jeremy Shapiro (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1971); Gadamer, *Truth and method and Philosophical hermeneutics*, trans David E. Linge (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 18–82. Weber made this latter point during the turn of the century *Methodenstreit*: see his “Objectivity” in social science and social policy’, in Edward Shils, ed., *Max Weber, The methodology of the social sciences* (New York: Free Press, 1969), ch. 2..

<sup>27</sup> Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the mirror of nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), part III.

embedding judgements about which societies are superior, more conducive to justice or better able to meet human needs. We can even incorporate a concept of 'development' (although not of 'progress') in our analysis without smuggling in normative assumptions, if by development we mean nothing more than increasing complexity. The theory of evolution understands development in this way. In the course of the past few decades, biologists and other serious students of the subject have moved away from the longstanding portrayal of evolution as the upward ascent of life to the pinnacle of *Homo sapiens* to recognition of it as a process not driven by any purpose and not leading to any particular end. Evolution is the quintessential theory of process, and the appropriate model for the kind of theory I have in mind.

Post-modernists also oppose grand theory on the grounds that it is inimical to freedom, self-definition and choice because it imposes analytical categories on societies and their members and, by doing so, creates or strengthens pressures on them to conform to these archetypes. Many social scientists understand that neither typologies nor propositions can possibly capture the diversity of behaviour and beliefs. Such formulations do not, of necessity, deny agency, although most theories that rely on so-called structures to do their heavy lifting have strong incentives to downplay the role of actors. I am sensitive both to the need for organizing principles and to the ability of actors to transcend them. This is one of the reasons why my foundational concepts are based on the Greek understanding of the psyche. It generates a useful set of ideal types. As is true of all Weberian ideal types, they do not describe real individuals or societies, which contain elements of all three ideal-type worlds I describe. My theory celebrates diversity and explores its consequences for both order and agency. It derives its analytical power from changes in the distribution of the three motives associated with the psyche, their consequences for order at the individual, societal, regional and international levels, and the implication of this for interactions across these levels of aggregation.

## Why international relations?

International relations is clearly the hardest and most interesting case for any theory of political order. Does it make sense to begin a study of order at the international level? Why not approach it at the less complex levels of the individual or the group? Plato opted for this strategy; he develops a theory of individual order in the *Republic*, which he then extends to society. Thucydides uses a roughly similar formulation to bridge individual, polis and regional levels of order. Modern psychology also starts with the individual, and progresses to group and mass behaviour. I do something similar, starting with the individual and working my way up to international society and system. Following the Greeks, I contend that the dynamics of order are more or less the same at every level. I nevertheless emphasize different kinds of challenges to order at different levels of social aggregation, and see different resources available for coping with them. The most important divide is between groups and societies on the one hand and nations

and international relations on the other.<sup>28</sup> They differ with respect to the overlap between legal and social norms, the extent to which behaviour conforms to norms of both kinds, and the nature of the mechanisms that can be used to encourage or enforce conformity. In developing his concept of organic solidarity, Durkheim observes, and subsequent research tends to confirm, that legal and social norms are more in accord, and informal mechanisms of social control more effective, in smaller and less developed societies (e.g. villages and towns), where the division of labour is relatively simple.<sup>29</sup> Moral disapproval of deviance is also more outspoken in these settings, and a powerful force for behavioural conformity. So too is tolerance of deviance when it is understood as closing ranks against outside interference.<sup>30</sup> On the whole, however, tolerance of deviance varies directly with the division of labour; it is most pronounced in larger and more complex social systems. Order is more difficult to achieve and sustain at higher levels of social aggregation.

Regional and international orders are particularly challenging because they are likely to have competing, rather than reinforcing, norms, and more glaring contradictions between norms and behaviour. In these orders, moral outrage is generally a strategy of the weak, and is frequently associated with agents who are not even recognized as legitimate actors. Some striking instances aside—among them, the boycott of South Africa to end apartheid, and the Montreal Protocol and subsequent agreements to ban chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and restore the ozone layer—moral suasion only occasionally serves as a source of social control or catalyst for change.<sup>31</sup> As informal mechanisms of control are more important than formal ones in domestic societies, their relative absence—and not the absence of central authority, as realists insist—may be *the* defining characteristic of the international society and system. The lack of normative consensus, paucity of face-to-face social interactions and the greater difficulty of mutual surveillance all but preclude effective social control at the regional and international levels. That we observe any degree of order at these levels is truly remarkable, and makes it a particularly interesting puzzle.

Regional and international orders are set apart by another phenomenon: the human tendency to generate social cohesion by creating distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘others’. The research of Tajfel and others on ‘entativity’ suggests this binary may be endemic to all human societies.<sup>32</sup> It was first conceptualized in

<sup>28</sup> Regional orders come in between and display considerable variance. Regional order in Europe more closely resembles a domestic society, whereas regional orders in the Middle East or South Asia—to the extent that we can even use the term ‘order’—more closely resemble international relations. Thucydides and Plato distinguished Greece from the rest of the ancient world on the basis of its cultural unity, which led to a different structure of relations among its political units.

<sup>29</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The division of labor in society*, trans. W. D. Halls (New York: Macmillan, 1984), pp. 400–401.

<sup>30</sup> Brian Lavery, in ‘Scandal? For an Irish parish, it’s just a priest with a child’, *New York Times*, 22 Jan. 2005, p. A6, describes local support for a 73-year-old Roman Catholic priest who fathered the child of a local school teacher and unwillingness to talk about it to representatives of outside media. The local bishop was also supportive and did not remove the priest from his pastoral duties.

<sup>31</sup> On the role of moral outrage in the two issues cited, see Audie Klotz, *Norms in international regimes: the struggle against apartheid* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), and Edward A. Parson, *Protecting the ozone layer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>32</sup> Henri Tajfel, *Human groups and social categories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Henri Tajfel and John Turner, ‘The social identity theory of intergroup behavior’, in Stephen Worchel and William Austin, eds, *Psychology of intergroup relations* (Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall, 1986), pp. 359–429.



the eighteenth century in response to an emerging pattern in western Europe of promoting domestic cohesion and development by means of foreign conflict. Immanuel Kant theorized that the 'unsocial sociability' of people draws them together into societies, but leads them to act in ways that break them up. He considers this antagonism innate to our species, and an underlying cause of the development of the state. Warfare drove people apart, but their need to defend themselves against others compelled them to band together and submit to the rule of law. Each political unit has unrestricted freedom in the same way individuals did before the creation of societies, and hence is in a constant state of war. The price of order at home is conflict among societies. The 'us' is maintained at the expense of 'others'.<sup>33</sup>

Hegel built on this formulation, and brought to it his understanding that modern states differed from their predecessors in that their cohesion does not rest so much on pre-existing cultural, religious or linguistic identities as it does on the allegiance of their citizens to central authorities who provide for the common defence. Citizens develop a collective identity through the external conflicts of their state and the sacrifices it demands of them. 'States', he writes in 'The German Constitution', 'stand to one another in a relation of might', a relationship that 'has been universally revealed and made to prevail'. In contrast to Kant, who considers this situation tragic, Hegel rhapsodizes about the life of states as active and creative agents that play a critical role in the unfolding development of the spirit and humankind. Conflict among states helps each to become aware of itself by encouraging self-knowledge on the part of citizens. It can serve an ethical end by uniting subjectivity and objectivity and resolving the tension between particularity and universality.<sup>34</sup>

International relations as a zone of conflict and war was further legitimized by the gradual development of international law and its conceptualization of international relations as intercourse among sovereign states. The concept of sovereignty created the legal basis for the state and the nearly unrestricted right of its leaders to act as they wish within its borders. It also justified the pursuit of national interests by force beyond those borders so long as its application was in accord with the laws of war. Sovereignty, first popularized in the sixteenth century, is a concept with diverse and even murky origins. At that time, more importance was placed on its domestic than international implications. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century jurists and historians, many of them Germans influenced by Kant and Hegel (e.g. Heeren, Clausewitz, Ranke, Treitschke), developed a narrative about sovereignty that legitimized the accumulation of power by central governments and portrayed the state as the sole focus of a people's economic, political and social life. Without

<sup>33</sup> Immanuel Kant, 'Idea for a universal history with a cosmopolitan purpose', pp. 44–7, and 'Perpetual peace: a philosophical sketch', p. 112, both in *Kant: political writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>34</sup> For the development of his thought on the state, see Georg W. F. Hegel, 'The German Constitution', in *Political writings*, trans. H. B. Nisbet, ed. Laurence Dickey and H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 6–101; 'The philosophical history of the world', in *Lectures on the philosophy of world history*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); *Elements of the philosophy of the right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet, ed. Allen H. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

empirical justification, they described the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia as ushering in a novel, sovereignty-based international political order. The ideology of sovereignty neatly divided actors from one another, and made the binary of 'us' and 'others' appear a natural, if not progressive, development, conferring a similar status on conflict and warfare among states.<sup>35</sup> This binary was reflected at the regional level in the concept of the European 'system', which initially excluded Russia and the Ottoman Empire as political and cultural 'others'. There was no concept of the 'international' until the late eighteenth century, and its development reflected and facilitated the transformation of the European system into an international one in the course of the following century.<sup>36</sup> Here too, sharp distinctions were made, initially between the European 'us' and Asian and African 'others', most of them societies not yet organized along the lines of the European state. The antagonism that Kant describes reasserted itself at the regional and international levels.

Twentieth-century international relations theory took shape against the background of the Westphalia myth, which became foundational for realists.<sup>37</sup> Their writings made interstate war appear the norm, and enduring cooperation an anomaly that required an extraordinary explanation. They plucked lapidary quotes out of context from Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes to lend authority to their claims that the international arena was distinct from the domestic one and that anarchy and warfare were its norm. Watered-down versions of the realist worldview have come to dominate the policy communities on a nearly worldwide basis. Sovereignty and untrammelled pursuit of the national interest revealed themselves to be mutually constitutive. They are also in part self-fulfilling, as foreign policies based on narrow constructions of self-interest, made possible by the legal edifice of sovereignty, appear to confirm realist depictions of international relations and the fundamental differences they assert exist in politics within states and between them. Writing in the mid-1960s, before the emergence of constructivism, Martin Wight lamented that the realist project precluded any serious theorizing about international society. The 'theory of the good life', he observed, is applicable only to orderly societies, and realists framed the international arena as a 'precontractual state of nature', where no real theory is possible. Within this framework, the most theorists could do was to describe patterns of interaction among units.<sup>38</sup>

If the challenge of studying order at the international level is intriguing, the prospect of doing so is a little less daunting than it used to be. There has been mounting criticism of 'us'/'other' dichotomies, and of the false, or at least exaggerated, binary constructed by historians, jurists and realists between domestic and international politics.<sup>39</sup> Important differences between politics at these levels

<sup>35</sup> Kant, 'Idea for a universal history with a cosmopolitan purpose', pp. 41–53, and 'Perpetual peace', p. 112; Jens Bartelson, *A genealogy of sovereignty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 220–9.

<sup>36</sup> Bartelson, *A genealogy of sovereignty*, ch. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Morgenthau, *Politics among nations*, 3rd edn (New York: Knopf, 1960), p. 312; Stephen Krasner, *Sovereignty: organized hypocrisy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 73–82.

<sup>38</sup> Martin Wight, 'Why is there no international theory?', in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight, *Diplomatic investigations: essays in the theory of international politics* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966), pp. 17–34.

<sup>39</sup> See e.g. R. B. J. Walker, *Inside/outside: international relations as political theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Giorgio Agamben, *Homo sacer: sovereign power and bare life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford,

nevertheless remain, and between both of them and individual behaviour. One of the key insights of the Enlightenment, since elaborated by social science, is the extent to which systems produce outcomes that cannot be predicted or explained by knowledge about the actors that constitute the system. It is nevertheless impossible, as the failure of neo-realism has made abundantly clear, to build good theories solely on the basis of system-level characteristics and processes.

A wise scholar might be tempted to stop here. There are, however, compelling reasons to forge ahead. The most powerful one is normative. As I noted at the outset, justice is best served by an ordered world, but one that must be pliable enough to allow, if not encourage, the freedom, choice and overall development of actors. No existing order can be considered just, but many domestic orders—social and political—come closer to meeting the conditions in which this might become possible than do regional orders or the international system. Failed states (e.g. Somalia, Afghanistan, Haiti) and the international system as a whole are undeniably the most anarchical kinds of political systems, and the most in need of our attention, practical as well as theoretical.<sup>40</sup> Understanding both levels of ‘order’ in comparison to other levels can provide insights that cannot be gained by studying them in isolation. Given the connection between theory and practice, it is important to create an alternative narrative that lends additional support to those scholars and practitioners who are attempting to move beyond narrow concepts of sovereignty and understandings of regional and international relations that assume that war is an unavoidable fact of life. For intellectual, ethical and practical reasons alike, we need to pursue our investigations even if our answers are partial, tentative and almost certain to be superseded.

## Overview of the argument

My theory of international relations is based on a simple set of assumptions about human motives. Following the Greeks, I posit spirit, appetite and reason as fundamental drives with distinct objects or ends. I describe the different characteristics of spirit-, appetite- and reason-based worlds for individuals, societies, and regional and international political systems. As the three drives are always present—along with, often, fear as well—real societies are mixed worlds that combine multiple motives in varying degrees. They are also likely to be lumpy, in that the mix of motives differs among the units or regions that make up the system.

The most stable and just individuals and societies are those in which reason is able to constrain and educate spirit and appetite to work with it to achieve a happy life. Such a state of balance is uncommon among individuals, rarer still among the societies in which they live, and hardly ever seen in the regional or international systems in which these societies interact. Imbalance occurs when reason never gains control of the spirit or appetite or subsequently loses control over

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CA: Stanford University Press, 1998); Jenny Edkins and Véronique Pin-Fat, ‘Through the wire: relations of power and relations of violence’, *Millennium* 24: 1, 2005, pp. 1–26.

<sup>40</sup> Robert I. Rotberg, *When states fail: causes and consequences* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), is a good starting point.

either. Imbalance is a matter of degree, as is the disorder it brings to individuals or systems. Imbalance is almost always one-sided in the direction of either spirit or appetite.

Individuals, societies, and regional and international systems exist at different levels of social aggregation. They differ in numerous ways, but, again following the Greeks, I treat them as similar for analytical purposes on the grounds that each level of aggregation can fairly be characterized by its mix of motives and degree of balance. This assumption allows me to bridge levels and develop a theory of change that explains movement towards order and disorder in terms of changes in balance and imbalance at the level in question and the ways in which it affects, and is affected by, balance and imbalance at adjacent levels. I offer two types of explanations for balance and imbalance: breakdown of traditional constraints among elite actors; and broader changes associated with modernization and exposure to alternative discourses.

I describe the mechanisms that translate imbalance into social disorder and breakdown. I argue that both spirit-directed and appetite-directed societies are delicately balanced, even when well functioning. Spirit and appetite alike are satisfied through competition, and spirit-driven competition for standing is particularly intense because of its relational nature. When not held in check by reason, competition for either standing or wealth can transgress the accepted constraints and lead to a rapid unravelling of order. Imbalance in the direction of spirit can intensify intra-elite competition to the point where a critical mass of elite actors come to fear that they will be denied standing or even forfeit their lives. This fear becomes paramount when one actor or faction (or state or alliance) appears on the verge of capturing the mechanisms of state (or abusing its power to establish unwanted authority over others) in pursuit of its parochial goals. In these circumstances, violence or warfare may break out, precipitated by a bid for power by one side or pre-emption by the other. Imbalance in the direction of appetite on the part of an elite is likely to lead to both emulation and resentment by other actors. It risks unravelling the social order through widespread violation of *nomos* and increasing class tensions that ultimately lead to the same kind of fear and responses to it associated with an excess of spirit.

Social orders at every level undergo cycles of consolidation and decline. As it is always easier to enter fear-based worlds than to escape from them, realism is the default social condition. Human history at this level is cyclical, as realists contend. However, there are broader historical trends. Over the span of human existence, societies, which are originally appetite-based, have evolved into spirit-based worlds, and then back into worlds of appetite, but ones that emphasize material well-being at the expense of other appetites. I raise the prospect of further evolution in the form of a return to a spirit-based world that would be not a warrior society, but one with diverse, if still competitive, forms of recognition and standing. This evolution is discontinuous, far from uniform, and driven by neither a single nor a necessarily dialectical process. Breakdowns of existing orders are an essential component, as they make way for change, but also stimulate

learning (in the form of a renewed commitment to constrain and educate spirit and appetite). Evolution also exploits technological developments, for purposes of building and destroying orders. Although spirit-, appetite- and fear-based worlds have existed in pre- and post-industrial societies, with strikingly similar characteristics, technological, intellectual and social changes have contributed to transitions between them. Future advances in bio- and nanotechnology, and the ways in which they shape our thinking, might be expected to do the same.

## 3η Συνάντηση

### «Το Δίλημμα Ασφάλειας και ο Πόλεμος»

Στη 3<sup>η</sup> συνάντηση προσεγγίζεται το δίλημμα ασφάλειας ως μια από τις βασικές γενεσιουργές αιτίες του πολεμικού φαινομένου. Κεντρικά ερωτήματα προς συζήτηση:

Ποια τα στάδια εξέλιξης του Διλήμματος Ασφάλειας; Πως κατοχυρώνεται η έννοια της ασφάλειας από τις εθνοκρατικές μονάδες; Αποτελεί το δίλημμα ασφάλειας μια κανονιστική εξέλιξη του πολεμικού φαινομένου; Αν ένα κράτος μειώσει το δίλημμα ασφάλειας που αποστέλλει στο διεθνές σύστημα, μπορεί να αποφύγει την εκδήλωση ενός πολέμου;

#### **Θέμα Παρουσίασης:**

*«Αναλύστε τη διάσταση του Διλήμματος Ασφάλειας μέσα από την ενεργητική και την παθητική προσέγγιση των κρατών.»*

# The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict

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Barry R. Posen

The end of the Cold War has been accompanied by the emergence of nationalist, ethnic and religious conflict in Eurasia. However, the risks and intensity of these conflicts have varied from region to region: Ukrainians and Russians are still getting along relatively well; Serbs and Slovenians had a short, sharp clash; Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims have waged open warfare; and Armenians and Azeris seem destined to fight a slow-motion attrition war. The claim that newly released, age-old antipathies account for this violence fails to explain the considerable variance in observable intergroup relations.

The purpose of this article is to apply a basic concept from the realist tradition of international relations theory, 'the security dilemma', to the special conditions that arise when proximate groups of people suddenly find themselves newly responsible for their own security. A group suddenly compelled to provide its own protection must ask the following questions about any neighbouring group: is it a threat? How much of a threat? Will the threat grow or diminish over time? Is there anything that must be done immediately? The answers to these questions strongly influence the chances for war.

This article assesses the factors that could produce an intense security dilemma when imperial order breaks down, thus producing an early resort to violence. The security dilemma is then employed to analyse two cases – the break-up of Yugoslavia and relations between Russia and Ukraine – to illustrate its utility. Finally, some actions are suggested to ameliorate the tendency towards violence.

## THE SECURITY DILEMMA

The collapse of imperial regimes can be profitably viewed as a problem of 'emerging anarchy'. The longest standing and most useful school of international relations theory – realism – explicitly addresses the consequences of anarchy – the absence of a sovereign – for political

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relations among states.<sup>1</sup> In areas such as the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, 'sovereigns' have disappeared. They leave in their wake a host of groups – ethnic, religious, cultural – of greater or lesser cohesion. These groups must pay attention to the first thing that states have historically addressed – the problem of security – even though many of these groups still lack many of the attributes of statehood.

Realist theory contends that the condition of anarchy makes security the first concern of states. It can be otherwise only if these political organizations do not care about their survival as independent entities. As long as some do care, there will be competition for the key to security – power. The competition will often continue to a point at which the competing entities have amassed more power than needed for security and, thus, consequently begin to threaten others. Those threatened will respond in turn.

Relative power is difficult to measure and is often subjectively appraised: what seems sufficient to one state's defence will seem, and will often be, offensive to its neighbours. Because neighbours wish to remain autonomous and secure, they will react by trying to strengthen their own positions. States can trigger these reactions even if they have no expansionist inclinations. This is the security dilemma: what one does to enhance one's own security causes reactions that, in the end, can make one less secure. Cooperation among states to mute these competitions can be difficult because someone else's 'cheating' may leave one in a militarily weakened position. All fear betrayal.

Often statesmen do not recognize that this problem exists: they do not empathize with their neighbours; they are unaware that their own actions can seem threatening. Often it does not matter if they know of this problem. The nature of their situation compels them to take the steps they do.

The security dilemma is particularly intense when two conditions hold. First, when offensive and defensive military forces are more or less identical, states cannot signal their defensive intent – that is, their limited objectives – by the kinds of military forces they choose to deploy. Any forces on hand are suitable for offensive campaigns. For example, many believe that armoured forces are the best means of defence against an attack by armoured forces. However, because armour has a great deal of offensive potential, states so outfitted cannot distinguish one another's intentions. They must assume the worst because the worst is possible.

A second condition arises from the effectiveness of the offence versus the defence. If offensive operations are more effective than defensive operations, states will choose the offensive if they wish to survive. This may encourage pre-emptive war in the event of a political crisis because



the perceived superiority of the offensive creates incentives to strike first whenever war appears likely. In addition, in the situation in which offensive capability is strong, a modest superiority in numbers will appear to provide greatly increased prospects for military success. Thus, the offensive advantage can cause preventive war if a state achieves a military advantage, however fleeting.

The barriers to cooperation inherent in international politics provide clues to the problems that arise as central authority collapses in multi-ethnic empires. The security dilemma affects relations among these groups, just as it affects relations among states. Indeed, because these groups have the added problem of building new state structures from the wreckage of old empires, they are doubly vulnerable.

Here it is argued that the process of imperial collapse produces conditions that make offensive and defensive capabilities indistinguishable and make the offence superior to the defence. In addition, uneven progress in the formation of state structures will create windows of opportunity and vulnerability. These factors have a powerful influence on the prospects for conflict, regardless of the internal politics of the groups emerging from old empires. Analysts inclined to the view that most of the trouble lies elsewhere, either in the specific nature of group identities or in the short-term incentives for new leaders to 'play the nationalist card' to secure their power, need to understand the security dilemma and its consequences. Across the board, these strategic problems show that very little nationalist rabble-rousing or nationalistic combativeness is required to generate very dangerous situations.

### **The Indistinguishability of Offence and Defence**

Newly independent groups must first determine whether neighbouring groups are a threat. They will examine one another's military capabilities to do so. Because the weaponry available to these groups will often be quite rudimentary, their offensive military capabilities will be as much a function of the quantity and commitment of the soldiers they can mobilize as the particular characteristics of the weapons they control. Thus, each group will have to assess the other's offensive military potential in terms of its cohesion and its past military record.

The nature of military technology and organization is usually taken to be the main factor affecting the distinguishability of offence and defence. Yet, clear distinctions between offensive and defensive capabilities are historically rare, and they are particularly difficult to make in the realm of land warfare. For example, the force structures of armed neutrals such as Finland, Sweden and Switzerland are often categorized as defensive. These countries rely more heavily on infantry, which is thought to have weak offensive potential, than on tanks and other

mechanized weaponry, which are thought to have strong offensive potential. However, their weak offensive capabilities have also been a function of the massive military power of what used to be their most plausible adversary, the former Soviet Union. Against states of similar size, similarly armed, all three countries would have considerable offensive capabilities – particularly if their infantries were extraordinarily motivated – as German and French infantry were at the outset of World War I, as Chinese and North Vietnamese infantry were against the Americans and as Iran's infantry was against the Iraqis.

Ever since the French Revolution put the first politically motivated mass armies into the field, strong national identity has been understood by both scholars and practitioners to be a key ingredient of the combat power of armies.<sup>2</sup> A group identity helps the individual members cooperate to achieve their purposes. When humans can readily cooperate, the whole exceeds the sum of the parts, creating a unit stronger relative to those groups with a weaker identity. Thus, the 'groupness' of the ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic collectivities that emerge from collapsed empires gives each of them an inherent offensive military power.

The military capabilities available to newly independent groups will often be less sophisticated: infantry-based armies will be easy to organize, augmented by whatever heavier equipment is inherited or seized from the old regime. Their offensive potential will be stronger the more cohesive their sponsoring group appears to be. Particularly in the close quarters in which these groups often find themselves, the combination of infantry-based, or quasi-mechanized, ground forces with strong group solidarity is likely to encourage groups to fear each other. Their capabilities will appear offensive.

The solidarity of the opposing group will strongly influence how each group assesses the magnitude of the military threat of the others. In general, however, it is quite difficult to perform such assessments. One expects these groups to be 'exclusive' and, hence, defensive. Frenchmen generally do not want to turn Germans into Frenchmen, or the reverse. Nevertheless, the drive for security in one group can be so great that it produces near-genocidal behaviour towards neighbouring groups. Because so much conflict has been identified with 'group' identity throughout history, those who emerge as the leaders of any group and who confront the task of self-defence for the first time will be sceptical that the strong group identity of others is benign.

What methods are available to a newly independent group to assess the offensive implications of another's sense of identity?<sup>3</sup> The main mechanism that they will use is history: how did other groups behave the last time they were unconstrained? Is there a record of offensive military activity by the other? Unfortunately, the conditions under

which this assessment occurs suggest that these groups are more likely to assume that their neighbours are dangerous than not.

The reason is that the historical reviews that new groups undertake rarely meet the scholarly standards that modern history and social science hold as norms (or at least as ideals) in the West. First, the recently departed multi-ethnic empires probably suppressed or manipulated the facts of previous rivalries to reinforce their own rule; the previous regimes in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia lacked any systemic commitment to truth in historical scholarship. Second, the members of these various groups no doubt did not forget the record of their old rivalries; it was preserved in oral history. This history was undoubtedly magnified in the telling and was seldom subjected to critical appraisal. Third, because their history is mostly oral, each group has a difficult time divining another's view of the past. Fourth, as central authority begins to collapse and local politicians begin to struggle for power, they will begin to write down their versions of history in political speeches. Yet, because the purpose of speeches is domestic political mobilization, these stories are likely to be emotionally charged.

The result is a worst-case analysis. Unless proven otherwise, one group is likely to assume that another group's sense of identity, and the cohesion that it produces, is a danger. Proving it to be otherwise is likely to be very difficult. Because the cohesion of one's own group is an essential means of defence against the possible depredations of neighbours, efforts to reinforce cohesion are likely to be undertaken. Propagandists are put to work writing a politicized history of the group, and the mass media are directed to disseminate that history. The media may either willingly, or under compulsion, report unfolding events in terms that magnify the threat to the group. As neighbouring groups observe this, they do the same.

In sum, the military capability of groups will often be dependent on their cohesion, rather than their meagre military assets. This cohesion is a threat in its own right because it can provide the emotional power for infantry armies to take the offensive. An historical record of large-scale armed clashes, much less wholesale mistreatment of unarmed civilians, however subjective, will further the tendency for groups to see other groups as threats. They will all simultaneously 'arm' – militarily and ideologically – against each other.

### **The Superiority of Offensive over Defensive Action**

Two factors have generally been seen as affecting the superiority of offensive over defensive action – technology and geography. Technology is usually treated as a universal variable, which affects the military capabilities of all the states in a given competition. Geography is a

situational variable, which makes offence particularly appealing to specific states for specific reasons. This is what matters most when empires collapse.

In the rare historical cases in which technology has clearly determined the offence–defence balance, such as World War I, soldiers and statesmen have often failed to appreciate its impact. Thus, technology need not be examined further, with one exception: nuclear weapons. If a group inherits a nuclear deterrent, and its neighbours do as well, ‘groupness’ is not likely to affect the security dilemma with as much intensity as would be the case in non-nuclear cases. Because group solidarity would not contribute to the ability of either side to mount a counterforce nuclear attack, nationalism is less important from a military standpoint in a nuclear relationship.

Political geography will frequently create an ‘offence-dominant world’ when empires collapse. Some groups will have greater offensive capabilities because they will effectively surround some or all of the other groups. These other groups may be forced to adopt offensive strategies to break the ring of encirclement. Islands of one group’s population are often stranded in a sea of another. Where one territorially concentrated group has ‘islands’ of settlement of its members distributed across the nominal territory of another group (irredenta), the protection of these islands in the event of hostile action can seem extremely difficult. These islands may not be able to help one another; they may be subject to blockade and siege, and by virtue of their numbers relative to the surrounding population and because of topography, they may be militarily indefensible. Thus, the brethren of the stranded group may come to believe that only rapid offensive military action can save their irredenta from a horrible fate.<sup>4</sup>

The geographic factor is a variable, not a constant. Islands of population can be quite large, economically autonomous and militarily defensible. Alternatively, they can have large numbers of nearby brethren who form a powerful state, which could rescue them in the event of trouble. Potentially, hostile groups could have islands of another group’s people within their states; these islands could serve as hostages. Alternatively, the brethren of the ‘island’ group could deploy nuclear weapons and thus punish the surrounding group if they misbehave. In short, it might be possible to defend irredenta without attacking or to deter would-be aggressors by threatening to retaliate in one way or another.

Isolated ethnic groups – ethnic islands – can produce incentives for preventive war. Theorists argue that perceived offensive advantages make preventive war more attractive: if one side has an advantage that will not be present later and if security can best be achieved by offensive military action in any case, then leaders will be inclined to attack during

this 'window of opportunity'.<sup>5</sup> For example, if a surrounding population will ultimately be able to fend off relief attacks from the home territory of an island group's brethren, but is currently weak, then the brethren will be inclined to attack sooner rather than later.

In disputes among groups interspersed in the same territory, another kind of offensive advantage exists – a tactical offensive advantage. Often the goal of the disputants is to create ever-growing areas of homogeneous population for their brethren. Therefore, the other group's population must be induced to leave. The Serbs have introduced the term 'ethnic cleansing' to describe this objective, a term redolent with the horrors of 50 years earlier. The offence has tremendous tactical military advantages in operations such as these. Small military forces directed against unarmed or poorly armed civilians can generate tremendous terror. This has always been true, of course, but even simple modern weapons, such as machine guns and mortars, increase the havoc that small bands of fanatics can wreak against the defenceless: Consequently, small bands of each group have an incentive to attack the towns of the other in the hopes of driving the people away.<sup>6</sup> This is often quite successful, as the vast populations of war refugees in the world today attest.

The vulnerability of civilians makes it possible for small bands of fanatics to initiate conflict. Because they are small and fanatical, these bands are hard to control. (This allows the political leadership of the group to deny responsibility for the actions those bands take.) These activities produce disproportionate political results among the opposing group – magnifying initial fears by confirming them. The presence or absence of small gangs of fanatics is thus itself a key determinant of the ability of groups to avoid war as central political authority erodes. Although almost every society produces small numbers of people willing to engage in violence at any given moment, the rapid emergence of organized bands of particularly violent individuals is a sure sign of trouble.

The characteristic behaviour of international organizations, especially the United Nations (UN), reinforces the incentives for offensive action. Thus far, the UN has proven itself unable to anticipate conflict and provide the credible security guarantees that would mitigate the security dilemma. Once there is politically salient trouble in an area, the UN may try to intervene to 'keep the peace'. However, the conditions under which peacekeeping is attempted are favourable to the party that has had the most military success. As a general rule, the UN does not make peace: it negotiates cease-fires. Two parties in dispute generally agree to a cease-fire only because one is successful and happy with its gains, while the other has lost, but fears even worse to come. Alternatively, the two sides have fought to a bloody stalemate

and would like to rest. The UN thus protects, and to some extent legitimates, the military gains of the winning side, or gives both a respite to recover. This approach by the international community to intervention in ethnic conflict, helps create an incentive for offensive military operations.

### **Windows of Vulnerability and Opportunity**

Where central authority has recently collapsed, the groups emerging from an old empire must calculate their power relative to each other at the time of collapse and make a guess about their relative power in the future. Such calculations must account for a variety of factors. Objectively, only one side can be better off. However, the complexity of these situations makes it possible for many competing groups to believe that their prospects in a war would be better earlier, rather than later. In addition, if the geographic situation creates incentives of the kind discussed earlier, the temptation to capitalize on these windows of opportunity may be great. These windows may also prove tempting to those who wish to expand for other reasons.

The relative rate of state formation strongly influences the incentives for preventive war. When central authority has collapsed or is collapsing, the groups emerging from the political rubble will try to form their own states. These groups must choose leaders, set up bureaucracies to collect taxes and provide services, organize police forces for internal security and organize military forces for external security. The material remnants of the old state (especially weaponry, foreign currency reserves, raw material stocks and industrial capabilities) will be unevenly distributed across the territories of the old empire. Some groups may have had a privileged position in the old system. Others will be less well placed.

The states formed by these groups will thus vary greatly in their strength. This will provide immediate military advantages to those who are farther along in the process of state formation. If those with greater advantages expect to remain in that position by virtue of their superior numbers, then they may see no window of opportunity. However, if they expect their advantage to wane or disappear, then they will have an incentive to solve outstanding issues while they are much stronger than the opposition.

This power differential may create incentives for preventive expropriation, which can generate a spiral of action and reaction. With military resources unevenly distributed and perhaps artificially scarce for some due to arms embargoes, cash shortages or constrained access to the outside world, small caches of armaments assume large importance. Any military depot will be a tempting target, especially for the poorly

armed. Better armed groups also have a strong incentive to seize these weapons because this would increase their margin of superiority.

In addition, it matters whether or not the old regime imposed military conscription on all groups in society. Conscription makes arms theft quite easy because hijackers know what to look for and how to move it. Gains are highly cumulative because each side can quickly integrate whatever it steals into its existing forces. High cumulativeness of conquered resources has often motivated states in the past to initiate preventive military actions.

Expectations about outside intervention will also affect preventive war calculations. Historically, this usually meant expectations about the intervention of allies on one side or the other, and the value of such allies. Allies may be explicit or tacit. A group may expect itself or another to find friends abroad. It may calculate that the other group's natural allies are temporarily preoccupied, or a group may calculate that it or its adversary has many other adversaries who will attack in the event of conflict. The greater the number of potential allies for all groups, the more complex this calculation will be and the greater the chance for error. Thus, two opposing groups could both think that the expected behaviour of others makes them stronger in the short term.

A broader window-of-opportunity problem has been created by the large number of crises and conflicts that have been precipitated by the end of the Cold War. The electronic media provide free global strategic intelligence about these problems to anyone for the price of a short-wave radio, much less a satellite dish. Middle and great powers, and international organizations, are able to deal with only a small number of crises simultaneously. States that wish to initiate offensive military actions, but fear outside opposition, may move quickly if they learn that international organizations and great powers are preoccupied momentarily with other problems.

#### **CROATS AND SERBS**

Viewed through the lens of the security dilemma, the early stages of Yugoslavia's disintegration were strongly influenced by the following factors. First, the parties identified the re-emerging identities of the others as offensive threats. The last time these groups were free of constraint, during World War II, they slaughtered one another with abandon. In addition, the Yugoslav military system trained most men for war and distributed infantry armament widely across the country. Second, the offensive appeared to have the advantage, particularly against Serbs 'marooned' in Croatian and Muslim territory. Third, the new republics were not equally powerful. Their power assets varied in terms of people and economic resources; access to the wealth and military

assets of the previous regime: access to external allies; and possible outside enemies. Preventive war incentives were consequently high. Fourth, small bands of fanatics soon appeared on the scene. Indeed, the political and military history of the region stressed the role of small, violent, committed groups; the resistance to the Turks; the Ustashe in the 1930s; and the Ustashe state and Serbian Chetniks during World War II.

Serbs and Croats both have a terrifying oral history of each other's behaviour. This history goes back hundreds of years, although the intense Croat–Serb conflict is only about 125 years old. The history of the region is quite warlike: the area was the frontier of the Hapsburg and Turkish empires, and Croatia had been an integral part of the military apparatus of the Hapsburg empire. The imposition of harsh Hungarian rule in Croatia in 1868; the Hungarian divide-and-conquer strategy that pitted Croats and Serbs in Croatia against each other; the rise of the independent Serbian nation-state out of the Ottoman empire, formally recognized in Europe in 1878; and Serbian pretensions to speak for all south Slavs were the main origins of the Croat–Serb conflict. When Yugoslavia was formed after World War I, the Croats had a very different vision of the new state than the Serbs. They hoped for a confederal system, while the Serbs planned to develop a centralized nation-state.<sup>7</sup> The Croats did not perceive themselves to be treated fairly under this arrangement, and this helped stimulate the development of a violent resistance movement, the Ustashe, which collaborated with the Fascist powers during the 1930s.

The Serbs had some reasons for assuming the worst about the existence of an independent Croatian state, given Croatian behaviour during World War II. Ustashe leadership was established in Croatia by Nazi Germany. The Serbs, both communist and non-communist, fought the Axis forces, including the Croats, and each other. (Some Croats also fought in Josef Tito's communist partisan movement against the Nazis.) Roughly a million people died in the fighting – some 5.9% of Yugoslavia's pre-war population.<sup>8</sup> The Croats behaved with extraordinary brutality towards the Serbs, who suffered nearly 500,000 dead, more than twice as many dead as the Croats.<sup>9</sup> (Obviously, the Germans were responsible for many Serbian deaths as well.) Most of these were not killed in battle; they were civilians murdered in large-scale terrorist raids.

The Croats themselves suffered some 200,000 dead in World War II, which suggests that depredations were inflicted on many sides. (The non-communist, 'nationalist' Chetniks were among the most aggressive killers of Croats, which helps explain why the new Croatian republic is worried by the nationalist rhetoric of the new Serbian republic.) Having



lived in a pre- and post-war Yugoslavia largely dominated by Serbs, the Croats had reason to suspect that the demise of the Yugoslavian Communist Party would be followed by a Serbian bid for hegemony. In 1971, the Croatian Communist Party had been purged of leaders who had favoured greater autonomy. In addition, the historical record of the Serbs during the past 200 years is one of regular efforts to establish an ever larger centralized Serbian national state on the Balkan Peninsula. Thus, Croats had sufficient reason to fear the Serbs.

Serbs in Croatia were scattered in a number of vulnerable islands; they could only be 'rescued' by offensive action from Serbia. Such a rescue, of course, would have been enormously complicated by an independent Bosnia, which in part explains the Serbian war there. In addition, Serbia could not count on maintaining absolute military superiority over the Croats forever: almost twice as many Serbs as Croats inhabit the territory of what was once Yugoslavia, but Croatia is slightly wealthier than Serbia.<sup>10</sup> Croatia also has some natural allies within former Yugoslavia, especially Bosnian Muslims, and seemed somewhat more adept at winning allies abroad. As Croatia adopted the trappings of statehood and achieved international recognition, its military power was expected to grow. From the Serbian point of view, Serbs in Croatia were insecure and expected to become more so as time went by.

From a military point of view, the Croats probably would have been better off postponing their secession until after they had made additional military preparations. However, their experience in 1971, more recent political developments and the military preparations of the Yugoslav army probably convinced them that the Serbs were about to strike and that the Croatian leadership would be rounded up and imprisoned or killed if they did not act quickly.

Each side not only had to assess the other's capabilities, but also its intentions, and there were plenty of signals of malign intent. Between 1987 and 1990, Slobodan Milosevic ended the administrative autonomy within Serbia that had been granted to Kosovo and Vojvodina in the 1974 constitution.<sup>11</sup> In August 1990, Serbs in the Dalmatia region of Croatia held a cultural autonomy referendum, which they defended with armed roadblocks against expected Croatian interference.<sup>12</sup> By October, the Yugoslav army began to impound all of the heavy weapons stored in Croatia for the use of the territorial defence forces, thus securing a vast military advantage over the nascent armed forces of the republic.<sup>13</sup> The Serbian window of opportunity, already large, grew larger. The Croats accelerated their own military preparations.

It is difficult to tell just how much interference the Croats planned, if any, in the referendum in Dalmatia. However, Croatia had stoked the

fires of Serbian secessionism with a series of ominous rulings. In the spring of 1990, Serbs in Croatia were redefined as a minority, rather than a constituent nation, and were asked to take a loyalty oath. Serbian police were to be replaced with Croats, as were some local Serbian officials. No offer of cultural autonomy was made at the time. These Croatian policies undoubtedly intensified Serbian fears about the future and further tempted them to exploit their military superiority.

It appears that the Croats overestimated the reliability and influence of the Federal Republic of Germany as an ally due to some combination of World War II history, the widespread misperception created by the European media and by Western political leaders of Germany's near-superpower status, the presumed influence of the large Croatian émigré community in Germany and Germany's own diplomacy, which was quite favourable to Croatia even before its June 1991 declaration of independence.<sup>14</sup> These considerations may have encouraged Croatia to secede. Conversely, Serbian propaganda was quick to stress the German–Croatian connection and to speculate on future German ambitions in the Balkans.<sup>15</sup> Fair or not, this prospect would have had an impact on Serbia's preventive war calculus.

#### RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

Through the lens of the security dilemma, several important factors in Russian–Ukrainian relations can be identified that suggest that the potential for conflict is not as great as for Yugoslavia. First, the propensity of Russians and Ukrainians to view one another's cohesion as an offensive military threat is slight. A principal stabilizing factor here is the presence of former Soviet nuclear forces in both Russia and Ukraine, which provides each republic with a powerful deterrent. Second, each side's perception of the other's 'identity' is comparatively benign. Third, settlement patterns create comparatively less pressure for offensive action. These three factors reduce the pressure for preventive war.<sup>16</sup>

The nuclear forces of the former Soviet Union – both those clearly under Commonwealth (effectively Russian) control and those with a more ambiguous status in Ukraine – have probably helped stabilize Russian–Ukrainian relations. This is because nuclear weapons make it dangerous for either to launch a campaign of violence against the other. Mutual deterrence prevails. In a clash of wills between two nuclear-armed states about attacks on minority populations, the state representing the interests of the victims would have more credibility; it would be the defender of the *status quo*. The potential military consequences of each side's 'groupness' is thus muted.

Most of the Soviet nuclear forces came under the control of the Russian Republic, thereby rendering large-scale anti-Russian violence in Ukraine very risky. The presence of large numbers of nuclear weapons on Ukrainian soil gives Ukraine a nuclear 'threat that leaves something to chance'. Although these weapons are believed to remain under the technical control of the Commonwealth (Russian) command structure, military action by Russians against Ukraine could precipitate a Ukrainian attempt to seize these weapons. Given the significant representation of Ukrainians in the Soviet officer and non-commissioned officer corps, it is quite likely that there are many Ukrainians who know a lot about nuclear weapons, making their seizure quite plausible. This would be a novel kind of nuclear crisis, but it would probably be enough of a crisis to produce the prudent behaviour among nuclear powers that existed during the Cold War. An overt nationalist political campaign in Russia for action against Ukraine could also provoke Ukrainian seizure of these weapons.

Russian and Ukrainian histories of each other, as well as their past relations, are less terrifying than those found among groups within the former Yugoslavia. There is no record of large-scale Russian-Ukrainian military rivalry and no clear, salient incident of nationalist bloodletting. However, one dangerous historical episode could play a significant role in the development of an anti-Russian, Ukrainian history: the communist war on independent farmers and its concomitant famine in 1930-32 killed millions.<sup>17</sup> If Ukrainians begin to blame the famine on Russians, this would be quite dangerous politically. If, instead, the famine continues to be blamed on a Communist Party headed by a renegade Georgian psychopath, then this experience will cause less trouble. Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk, in his public utterances, tends to portray the Bolsheviks, not the Russians, as the culprit.<sup>18</sup>

That the famine has not played a large role in Ukrainian nationalist rhetoric is a good sign, but this event provides potential tinder. Russian nationalists should therefore be very careful how they portray future Russian-Ukrainian relations. If they project a subordinate status for Ukraine, then Ukrainian nationalists will have a strong incentive to portray the famine as a Russian crime in their effort to build cohesion to resist Russian domination. *Izvestia* reports that Sergei Baburin, leader of the Russian Unity bloc in the Russian parliament, informed the Ukrainian ambassador that 'either Ukraine reunites again with Russia or there will be war'.<sup>19</sup> Such statements will be heard and acted upon in Ukraine.

It is difficult for Ukrainian nationalists to argue convincingly that they were exploited by Russia.<sup>20</sup> Ukrainians seem to have achieved at least proportional representation in the Soviet governing and military

apparatus.<sup>21</sup> They produced a share of Soviet gross national product (GNP) more than proportional to their share of population, and the kinds of goods they produced suggest that Ukraine enjoyed a fair share of industrial investment.<sup>22</sup> Ukrainian nationalists assert, however, that the Soviet Union extracted substantial economic resources from Ukraine – perhaps as much as half of Ukrainian GNP.<sup>23</sup>

Of greater importance, Ukrainian nationalists believe and many scholars agree that both the Russian empire and the later Soviet Union did everything possible to retard the growth of an independent Ukrainian identity and to Russify Ukraine. This experience led to the reassertion of Ukraine's cultural and political identity.<sup>24</sup> Alarming, *Rukh*, the main pro-independence party in Ukraine, has apparently drifted towards a more virulent nationalism, one that portrays Russia and Russians as the enemy.<sup>25</sup>

These worrisome signs must be put in context, however. In general, ethnic hatred has not played a great role in Ukrainian efforts to define their state. Initially, both of the large political parties in Ukraine tried to accommodate all groups in the country. There is no record of Ukrainian persecution of resident Russians. The Ukrainians and the Russians living in the eastern part of the country have had amicable relations for a great many years. A majority of Russians voted for Ukrainian independence. There are no reports of Ukrainian nationalist gangs operating against Russians.<sup>26</sup>

The history of relations between Russians and Ukrainians is thus conducive to peace. Neither has strong reasons to assume that the other's 'groupness' constitutes a strong offensive threat to its survival. That said, Russian-Ukrainian political history is conducive to Ukrainian mistrust, and the famine is a singular historical episode that could prove problematic.

The security situation between the two republics is favourable from a stability standpoint. The 12 million Russians in the Ukraine (who constitute 21% of the population) are not settled in small vulnerable islands; many of the areas of settlement are proximate to each other and to the Russian border. Others are proximate to the Black Sea coast, which may help explain the intensity of the dispute about the ultimate disposition of the Black Sea Fleet. Large numbers of Russians are still to be found in the armed forces of the newly independent Ukraine, complicating any Ukrainian state action against resident Russians. The expulsion of Russians from eastern Ukraine would thus be a tough job for the Ukrainians. Russia is also a nuclear power and thus in a position to make credible threats to protect the safety of its own. In addition, the proximity of many Ukrainian Russians to the border of the Russian Republic would facilitate a conventional rescue operation, should that

prove necessary. The fact that Russia has at least three times the population, wealth and probable conventional combat power of Ukraine would favour such a rescue. In sum, Russia is not being forced to take offensive conventional action to protect its nationals in Ukraine. Because Russians can probably protect their brethren in the Ukraine later, they have only limited incentives to solve the problem now.

To say that the Russians can protect their brethren, however, is not to say that military intervention in Ukraine would be cheap or safe. The Ukrainians inherited ample stocks of armaments from the Soviet Union; the Ukrainian presence in the Soviet military made fatuous any Russian thoughts of spirited away this vast quantity of military equipment and guarantees that the Ukrainian military will know how to use the weaponry in its possession.<sup>27</sup> Efforts to coerce Ukraine would likely precipitate Ukrainian efforts to seize the nuclear weapons now within its territory. Thus, although Russia clearly has the power to protect Ukrainian Russians in the event of oppression, lacking such a provocation, Russian nationalists would have great difficulty convincing their compatriots that Ukraine is ripe for the picking.

Finally, unlike Yugoslavia, external factors reinforce restraint in Russian-Ukrainian relations. Because they are quite close to Western Europe and heavily armed, it is reasonable for Russians and Ukrainians to assume that conflict between the two republics would be condemned by outside powers. Each side has reason to fear being branded the aggressor in such a conflict because the United States and the Europeans lack any deep organic ties to either Russia or Ukraine. Thus, Western diplomacy should encourage even-handedness towards the two parties. Thus far, the West has shown a tendency to patronize the Ukrainians and dote on the Russians; this is a mistake. It would be better for both to believe that whoever was labelled the aggressor in a Russian-Ukrainian conflict could end up earning the enmity of the wealthiest and most powerful coalition of powers in the history of the world.

In sum, although there are some danger signs in Russian-Ukrainian relations, the security dilemma is not particularly intense in this case. To the extent that Western powers have an interest in peace between these two powers, efforts should be made to preserve this favourable state of affairs.

#### COMPARISON SUMMARY

A brief review of these two cases highlights the factors that favoured war in Yugoslavia and that still favour peace in Russian-Ukrainian relations. This comparison also identifies some early warning indicators that should be monitored regarding Russia and Ukraine.

In Yugoslavia, Croats and Serbs found each other's identity a threat because of the primitive military capabilities they could field and the terrible record of their historical relationship. In the Russia-Ukraine case, nuclear weapons mute the conventional competition, making group cohesion less of a military asset. If Ukraine eliminates its nuclear arsenal, as it has pledged to do, it will increasingly come to rely on nationalism to strengthen an army that will only be able to stand against Russia through superior motivation. Eliminating Ukraine's nuclear arsenal will therefore make Russia stronger and Ukraine more nationalistic. This could prove dangerous.

In Yugoslavia, Serbs in Croatia were militarily vulnerable, and Serbs in Serbia had only one way to defend them – a speedy, powerful offensive. Russians in Ukraine are less geographically isolated and can be protected in several ways: Russians in Ukraine may be able to defend themselves by virtue of their numbers and their presence in the Ukrainian army; Russia itself could make nuclear threats; and the Russian army will probably maintain a marked quantitative superiority over Ukraine, which would facilitate a counter-offensive rescue operation, should one be needed. Systematic de-Russification of the Ukrainian armed forces, accompanied by a precipitate decline in Russia's military capabilities, would therefore be a sign of trouble in Russian-Ukrainian relations.

Although Ukrainians and Russians in the eastern Ukraine do live together, no violent bands have emerged and begun to engage in intercommunal terror. In Yugoslavia, such bands emerged early in the dissolution process. It may be that the Russian presence in the Ukrainian army has helped discourage such developments, or it may be that there are enough lawless places in the former Soviet Union to absorb those prone to violence. Aspiring Croatian and Serbian thugs had no other outlet for their violent inclinations. The appearance of small Russian or Ukrainian terrorist groups could have a powerful incendiary effect on relations between the two republics and would thus indicate trouble.

In Yugoslavia, the Serbs had many incentives for preventive war. They outnumbered the Croats by only two to one and enjoyed no economic advantage. The Croats were likely to find allies within the former Yugoslavia. They were also likely to find allies abroad. Serbia was less well placed. Serbia enjoyed privileged access to the spoils of Yugoslavia, so it was initially much more powerful militarily than Croatia. The combination of dependence on an offensive to protect brethren in Croatia, and a temporary but wide military advantage, proved to be too large a temptation to resist.

The Russians have few incentives for preventive war. With three times the human and material resources of Ukraine, it is unlikely that the balance of military power will soon shift against them, nor does it seem likely that Ukraine will be better than Russia at finding allies abroad. Ukrainian pledges to become a non-nuclear state make it attractive even for nationalist Russians to postpone aggression until later; making war now would be a risky proposition. If Ukraine's economy recovers much more quickly than Russia's, or if Ukraine finds powerful allies abroad while Russia finds itself isolated, or if Russia begins to fear that endless border wars will tie down many of its forces in the future, Russians might begin to think more about preventive action against Ukraine.

Even if many of the factors that currently favour peace change, Russia's possession of nuclear weapons should continue to mute its incentives for defensively motivated, preventive conventional war. It should be noted, however, that nuclear powers had a tendency to solve security problems conventionally – when they could – during the Cold War.

#### CONCLUSION

Three main conclusions follow from the preceding analysis. First, the security dilemma and realist international relations theory more generally have considerable ability to explain and predict the probability and intensity of military conflict among groups emerging from the wreckage of empires.

Second, the security dilemma suggests that the risks associated with these conflicts are quite high. Several of the causes of conflict and war highlighted by the security dilemma operate with considerable intensity among the groups emerging from empires. The kind of military power that these groups can initially develop and their competing versions of history will often produce mutual fear and competition. Settlement patterns, in conjunction with unequal and shifting power, will often produce incentives for preventive war. The cumulative effect of conquered resources will encourage preventive grabs of military equipment and other assets.

Finally, if outsiders wish to understand and perhaps reduce the odds of conflict, they must assess the local groups' strategic view of their situation. Which groups fear for their physical security and why? What military options are open to them? By making these groups feel less threatened and by reducing the salience of windows of opportunity, the odds of conflict may be reduced.

Because the international political system as a whole remains a self-help system, it will be difficult to act on such calculations. Outsiders rarely have major material or security interests at stake in regional dis-

puts. It is difficult for international institutions to threaten credibly in advance to intervene, on humanitarian grounds, to protect groups that fear for the future. Vague humanitarian commitments will not make vulnerable groups feel safe and will probably not deter those who wish to repress them. In some cases, however, such commitments may be credible because the conflict has real security implications for powerful outside actors.

Groups drifting into conflict should be encouraged to discuss their individual histories of mutual relations. Competing versions of history should be reconciled if possible. Domestic policies that raised bitter memories of perceived past injustices or depredations should be examined. This exercise need not be managed by an international political institution; non-governmental organizations could play a role. Discussions about regional history would be an intelligent use of the resources of many foundations. A few conferences will not, of course, easily undo generations of hateful, politicized history, bolstered by reams of more recent propaganda. The exercise would cost little and, therefore, should be tried.<sup>28</sup>

In some cases, outside powers could threaten not to act: this would discourage some kinds of aggressive behaviour. For example, outside powers could make clear that if a new state abuses a minority and then gets itself into a war with that minority and its allies, the abuser will find little sympathy abroad if it begins to lose. To accomplish this, however, outside powers must have a way of detecting mistreatment of minorities.

In other cases, it may be reasonable for outside powers to provide material resources, including armaments, to help groups protect themselves. However, this kind of hard-bitten policy is politically difficult for liberal democratic governments now dominating world politics to pursue, even on humanitarian grounds. In addition, it is an admittedly complicated game in its own right because it is difficult to determine the amount and type of military assistance needed to produce effective defensive forces, but not offensive capabilities. Nevertheless, considerable diplomatic leverage may be attained by the threat to supply armaments to one side or the other.

Non-proliferation policy also has a role to play. In some cases, nuclear weaponry may be an effective way of protecting the weak from the strong. Russia may behave with considerable restraint towards Ukraine as long as some nuclear weapons remain on Ukrainian territory, vulnerable to Ukrainian seizure. However, once the last weapon is gone, Russian nationalists may become much more assertive.

The future balance of power between Ukraine and Russia is less conducive to good relations than the current one, which is the reason Ukrainians have sought Western security guarantees as a *quid pro quo*



for ratifying the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) Treaty, for adhering to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and for ridding themselves of nuclear weapons. Absent such guarantees and the measures needed to render them credible, Ukrainians can be expected to prolong the 'transition' phase to the non-nuclear status that they have promised.<sup>29</sup> It would be politically difficult for the United States to reverse the arms control initiatives already launched, but it is reasonable to stretch out their implementation. Recent suggestions to accelerate the denuclearization of Ukraine (and Belarus and Kazakhstan), therefore, have it exactly backward.<sup>30</sup> The West should hold Ukraine to a steady, proportional withdrawal schedule over the longest period consistent with the prescribed outline of the START I agreement. Some of the benefits of nuclear deterrence could thus be secured during the coming difficult political and economic transition in Russia and Ukraine.

It will frequently prove impossible, however, to arrange military assets, external political commitments and political expectations so that all neighbouring groups are relatively secure and perceive themselves as such. War is then likely. These wars will confirm and intensify all the fears that led to their initiation. Their brutality will tempt outsiders to intervene, but peace efforts originating from the outside will be unsuccessful if they do not realistically address the fears that triggered the conflicts initially. In most cases, this will require a willingness to commit large numbers of troops and substantial amounts of military equipment to troubled areas for a very long time.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The following realist literature is essential for those interested in the analysis of ethnic conflict: Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*

(Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1979). Chapters 6 and 8; Robert Jervis, 'Cooperation under the security dilemma', *World Politics*, no. 2, January 1978, pp. 167-213; Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), Chapter 3; Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966, 1976), Chapters 1 and 6.

<sup>2</sup> See Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 591-92; Robert Gilpin, 'The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism', in Robert E. Keohane, *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York: Columbia University

Press, 1986), pp. 300–21, especially pp. 304–308.

<sup>3</sup> This problem shades into an assessment of ‘intentions’, another very difficult problem for states in international politics. This issue is treated as a capabilities problem because the emergence of anarchy forces leaders to focus on military potential, rather than on intentions. Under these conditions, every group will ask whether neighbouring groups have the cohesion, morale and martial spirit to take the offensive if their leaders call on them to do so.

<sup>4</sup> It is plausible that the surrounding population will view irredenta in their midst as an offensive threat by the outside group. They may be perceived as a ‘fifth column’, that must be controlled, repressed or even expelled.

<sup>5</sup> See Stephen Van Evera, ‘The cult of the offensive and the origins of the First World War’, *International Security*, vol. 9, no. 1, Summer 1984, pp. 58–107.

<sup>6</sup> Why do they not go to the defence of their own, rather than attack the other? Here, it is hypothesized that such groups are scarce relative to the number of target towns and villages, so they cannot ‘defend’ their own with any great confidence.

<sup>7</sup> James Gow, ‘Deconstructing Yugoslavia’, *Survival*, vol. 33, no. 4, July/August 1991, p. 292; J.B. Hoptner, *Yugoslavia in Crisis 1934–1941* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), pp. 1–9.

<sup>8</sup> Ivo Banac, ‘Political change and national diversity’, *Daedalus*, vol. 119, no. 1, Winter 1990, pp. 145–150, estimates that 487,000 Serbs, 207,000 Croats, 86,000 Bosnian Muslims and 60,000 Jews died in Yugoslavia during the war.

<sup>9</sup> Aleksa Djilas, *The Contested Country* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 103–28. See especially, Chapter 4, ‘The National State and Genocide: The Ustasha

Movement, 1929–1945’, especially pp. 120–27, which vividly describes large-scale Croatian murders of Serbs, as well as Jews and Gypsies; however, Djilas does not explain how 200,000 Croats also died.

<sup>10</sup> See Sabrina Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia 1962–1991* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2nd ed., 1992), Appendix 2, p. 286.

<sup>11</sup> Gow, *op. cit.* in note 6, p. 294. Vojvodina contains the only petroleum and gas in Yugoslavia proximate to Serbia, so this act probably had a strategic motive: see Central Intelligence Agency, *Atlas of Eastern Europe* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, August 1990), p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Strategic Survey 1990–1991*, (London: Brassey’s for the IISS, 1991), p. 167.

<sup>13</sup> Gow, *op. cit.* in note 6, p. 299.

<sup>14</sup> See John Newhouse, ‘The diplomatic round’, *The New Yorker*, 24 August 1992, especially p. 63. See also John Zametica, *The Yugoslav Conflict*, Adelphi Paper 270 (London: Brassey’s for the IISS, 1992), pp. 63–65.

<sup>15</sup> Ramet, *op. cit.* in note 10, p. 265.

<sup>16</sup> Untangling the strategic from the purely nationalist aspects of the dispute about the Crimea is difficult. It is doubtful that Russian nationalists fear for the safety of Russians in Crimea because they are the clear majority there, and the Crimea is quite defensible. Russian nationalists want it because the conquest of the Crimea from the Turks is seen as a major Russian national achievement. It is likely that Ukrainians want to keep the Crimea because they fear that concessions on this point will lead to new Russian demands for territorial adjustments. Strategic elements are likely salient in both sides’ calculus. Control of Crimea and the Black Sea Fleet would give Russia military

dominance of the Ukraine's seaborne trade from Odessa.

<sup>17</sup> Norman Stone, 'The mark of history', *The National Interest*, vol. 27, Spring 1992, p. 37 gives a figure of eight million dead in the famine.

<sup>18</sup> See interviews with Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk in *Le Figaro*, 23 January 1992 as quoted in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (hereafter FBIS), 27 January 1992 and in *Der Spiegel*, 3 February 1992, as quoted in FBIS, 2 April 1992.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Roman Solchanyk, 'The Crimean imbroglio: Kiev and Moscow', *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Report*, vol. 1, no. 40, 9 October 1992.

<sup>20</sup> Abraham Brumberg, 'Not so free at last', *New York Review of Books*, 22 October 1992, p. 62, suggests that many Ukrainians believe that Moscow always views Ukraine as '... a colony to be exploited'.

<sup>21</sup> Ukrainians made up roughly one-quarter of the Soviet officer corps and were also well represented in the Communist Party. See Brian Taylor, 'Red Army blues: the future of military power in the former Soviet Union', *Breakthroughs*, vol. 2, no. 1, Spring 1992, pp. 1-8; Adrian Karatnycky, 'The Ukrainian factor', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 71, no. 3, Summer 1992, p. 107.

<sup>22</sup> Ukraine had about 18% of Soviet population and is said to have produced, '33 percent of televisions, 25 percent of computation and automation equipment, 22 percent of tractors, 31 percent of harvesters'. See Karatnycky, *op. cit.* in note 20, pp. 96-97. Julian Cooper suggests that some 17.5% of defence workers in the USSR were to be found in the Ukraine in the mid-1980s, and some 13.7% of defence firms. See Tables 5 and 7 in 'Reconversion industrielle', *La Décomposition de l'Armée Soviétique*, Dossier No. 45 (Paris: FEDN, April 1992), pp. 151, 153.

<sup>23</sup> Valeriy Semivolos, 'An army for Ukraine', *Vecherniye novosti*, 20 July 1991, p. 3 (as translated in *Commonwealth of Independent States. A Journal of Selected Press Translations*, vol. 2, no. 2, Spring 1992, pp. 33-34). Semivolos suggests that 100 billion rubles out of a Ukrainian GNP of 218.5bn went to Moscow.

<sup>24</sup> Brumberg, *op. cit.* in note 20, p. 60.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>26</sup> The appearance of self-styled Cossacks, however, is a cause for concern, but so far they have not revealed specific anti-Russian tendencies.

<sup>27</sup> Taylor, *op. cit.* in note 21, p. 3, suggests there were 20 divisions based in Ukraine and 4,000 nuclear warheads. There were 28 air bases and 2-4 naval bases. Ostensibly, the ground- and air-launched tactical nuclear weapons are gone, leaving somewhat more than 1,200 strategic nuclear warheads associated with ballistic missiles and strategic bombers. The status of the Black Sea Fleet's nuclear weapons is unclear.

<sup>28</sup> See Stephen Van Evera, *Managing the Eastern Crisis: Preventing War in the Former Soviet Empire* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Defense and Arms Control Studies Program, 6 January 1992), p. 12.

<sup>29</sup> Security guarantees are an unlikely substitute for an independent Ukrainian deterrent. Recall the endless arguments about the credibility of the US nuclear guarantee to Germany, in which the United States stationed more than 300,000 troops and thousands of tactical nuclear warheads. The US guarantee to Germany was credible, but mainly due to the elaborate measures taken to make it so.

<sup>30</sup> See Steven Miller, 'Western diplomacy and the Soviet nuclear legacy', *Survival*, vol. 34, no. 3, Autumn 1992, pp. 21-22, especially footnote 57.



## Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma

Robert Jervis

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# COOPERATION UNDER THE SECURITY DILEMMA

By ROBERT JERVIS\*

## I. ANARCHY AND THE SECURITY DILEMMA

**T**HE lack of an international sovereign not only permits wars to occur, but also makes it difficult for states that are satisfied with the status quo to arrive at goals that they recognize as being in their common interest. Because there are no institutions or authorities that can make and enforce international laws, the policies of cooperation that will bring mutual rewards if others cooperate may bring disaster if they do not. Because states are aware of this, anarchy encourages behavior that leaves all concerned worse off than they could be, even in the extreme case in which all states would like to freeze the status quo. This is true of the men in Rousseau's "Stag Hunt." If they cooperate to trap the stag, they will all eat well. But if one person defects to chase a rabbit—which he likes less than stag—none of the others will get anything. Thus, all actors have the same preference order, and there is a solution that gives each his first choice: (1) cooperate and trap the stag (the international analogue being cooperation and disarmament); (2) chase a rabbit while others remain at their posts (maintain a high level of arms while others are disarmed); (3) all chase rabbits (arms competition and high risk of war); and (4) stay at the original position while another chases a rabbit (being disarmed while others are armed).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This kind of rank-ordering is not entirely an analyst's invention, as is shown by the following section of a British army memo of 1903 dealing with British and Russian railroad construction near the Persia-Afghanistan border:

The conditions of the problem may . . . be briefly summarized as follows:

- a) If we make a railway to Seistan while Russia remains inactive, we gain a considerable defensive advantage at considerable financial cost;
- b) If Russia makes a railway to Seistan, while we remain inactive, she gains a considerable offensive advantage at considerable financial cost;
- c) If both we and Russia make railways to Seistan, the defensive and offensive advantages may be held to neutralize each other; in other words, we shall have spent a good deal of money and be no better off than we are at present. On the

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Unless each person thinks that the others will cooperate, he himself will not. And why might he fear that any other person would do something that would sacrifice his own first choice? The other might not understand the situation, or might not be able to control his impulses if he saw a rabbit, or might fear that some other member of the group is unreliable. If the person voices any of these suspicions, others are more likely to fear that he will defect, thus making them more likely to defect, thus making it more rational for him to defect. Of course in this simple case—and in many that are more realistic—there are a number of arrangements that could permit cooperation. But the main point remains: although actors may know that they seek a common goal, they may not be able to reach it.

Even when there is a solution that is everyone's first choice, the international case is characterized by three difficulties not present in the Stag Hunt. First, to the incentives to defect given above must be added the potent fear that even if the other state now supports the status quo, it may become dissatisfied later. No matter how much decision makers are committed to the status quo, they cannot bind themselves and their successors to the same path. Minds can be changed, new leaders can come to power, values can shift, new opportunities and dangers can arise.

The second problem arises from a possible solution. In order to protect their possessions, states often seek to control resources or land outside their own territory. Countries that are not self-sufficient must try to assure that the necessary supplies will continue to flow in wartime. This was part of the explanation for Japan's drive into China and Southeast Asia before World War II. If there were an international authority that could guarantee access, this motive for control would disappear. But since there is not, even a state that would prefer the status quo to increasing its area of control may pursue the latter policy.

When there are believed to be tight linkages between domestic and foreign policy or between the domestic politics of two states, the quest for security may drive states to interfere pre-emptively in the domestic politics of others in order to provide an ideological buffer zone. Thus,

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other hand, we shall be no worse off, whereas under alternative (b) we shall be much worse off. Consequently, the theoretical balance of advantage lies with the proposed railway extension from Quetta to Seistan.

W. G. Nicholson, "Memorandum on Seistan and Other Points Raised in the Discussion on the Defence of India," (Committee of Imperial Defence, March 20, 1903). It should be noted that the possibility of neither side building railways was not mentioned, thus strongly biasing the analysis.

Metternich's justification for supervising the politics of the Italian states has been summarized as follows:

Every state is absolutely sovereign in its internal affairs. But this implies that every state must do nothing to interfere in the internal affairs of any other. However, any false or pernicious step taken by any state in its internal affairs may disturb the repose of another state, and this consequent disturbance of another state's repose constitutes an interference in that state's internal affairs. Therefore, every state—or rather, every sovereign of a great power—has the duty, in the name of the sacred right of independence of every state, to supervise the governments of smaller states and to prevent them from taking false and pernicious steps in their internal affairs.<sup>2</sup>

More frequently, the concern is with direct attack. In order to protect themselves, states seek to control, or at least to neutralize, areas on their borders. But attempts to establish buffer zones can alarm others who have stakes there, who fear that undesirable precedents will be set, or who believe that their own vulnerability will be increased. When buffers are sought in areas empty of great powers, expansion tends to feed on itself in order to protect what is acquired, as was often noted by those who opposed colonial expansion. Balfour's complaint was typical: "Every time I come to a discussion—at intervals of, say, five years—I find there is a new sphere which we have got to guard, which is supposed to protect the gateways of India. Those gateways are getting further and further away from India, and I do not know how far west they are going to be brought by the General Staff."<sup>3</sup>

Though this process is most clearly visible when it involves territorial expansion, it often operates with the increase of less tangible power and influence. The expansion of power usually brings with it an expansion of responsibilities and commitments; to meet them, still greater power is required. The state will take many positions that are subject to challenge. It will be involved with a wide range of controversial issues unrelated to its core values. And retreats that would be seen as normal if made by a small power would be taken as an index of weakness inviting predation if made by a large one.

The third problem present in international politics but not in the Stag Hunt is the security dilemma: many of the means by which a state tries to increase its security decrease the security of others. In domestic

<sup>2</sup> Paul Schroeder, *Metternich's Diplomacy at Its Zenith, 1820-1823* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press 1969), 126.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Michael Howard, *The Continental Commitment* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin 1974), 67.

society, there are several ways to increase the safety of one's person and property without endangering others. One can move to a safer neighborhood, put bars on the windows, avoid dark streets, and keep a distance from suspicious-looking characters. Of course these measures are not convenient, cheap, or certain of success. But no one save criminals need be alarmed if a person takes them. In international politics, however, one state's gain in security often inadvertently threatens others. In explaining British policy on naval disarmament in the interwar period to the Japanese, Ramsey MacDonald said that "Nobody wanted Japan to be insecure."<sup>4</sup> But the problem was not with British desires, but with the consequences of her policy. In earlier periods, too, Britain had needed a navy large enough to keep the shipping lanes open. But such a navy could not avoid being a menace to any other state with a coast that could be raided, trade that could be interdicted, or colonies that could be isolated. When Germany started building a powerful navy before World War I, Britain objected that it could only be an offensive weapon aimed at her. As Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary, put it to King Edward VII: "If the German Fleet ever becomes superior to ours, the German Army can conquer this country. There is no corresponding risk of this kind to Germany; for however superior our Fleet was, no naval victory could bring us any nearer to Berlin." The English position was half correct: Germany's navy was an anti-British instrument. But the British often overlooked what the Germans knew full well: "in every quarrel with England, German colonies and trade were . . . hostages for England to take." Thus, whether she intended it or not, the British Navy constituted an important instrument of coercion.<sup>5</sup>

## II. WHAT MAKES COOPERATION MORE LIKELY?

Given this gloomy picture, the obvious question is, why are we not all dead? Or, to put it less starkly, what kinds of variables ameliorate the impact of anarchy and the security dilemma? The workings of several

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Gerald Wheeler, *Prelude to Pearl Harbor* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press 1963), 167.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Leonard Wainstein, "The Dreadnought Gap," in Robert Art and Kenneth Waltz, eds., *The Use of Force* (Boston: Little, Brown 1971), 155; Raymond Sontag, *European Diplomatic History, 1871-1932* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts 1933), 147. The French had made a similar argument 50 years earlier; see James Phinney Baxter III, *The Introduction of the Ironclad Warship* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1933), 149. For a more detailed discussion of the security dilemma, see Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1976), 62-76.



can be seen in terms of the Stag Hunt or repeated plays of the Prisoner's Dilemma. The Prisoner's Dilemma differs from the Stag Hunt in that there is no solution that is in the best interests of all the participants; there are offensive as well as defensive incentives to defect from the coalition with the others; and, if the game is to be played only once, the only rational response is to defect. But if the game is repeated indefinitely, the latter characteristic no longer holds and we can analyze the game in terms similar to those applied to the Stag Hunt. It would be in the interest of each actor to have others deprived of the power to defect; each would be willing to sacrifice this ability if others were similarly restrained. But if the others are not, then it is in the actor's interest to retain the power to defect.<sup>6</sup> The game theory matrices for these two situations are given below, with the numbers in the boxes being the order of the actors' preferences.

		<i>STAG HUNT</i>		<i>PRISONER'S DILEMMA</i>	
		COOPERATE	DEFECT	COOPERATE	DEFECT
		A		A	
COOPERATE	B	1	2	2	1
DEFECT	B	4	3	4	3

We can see the logical possibilities by rephrasing our question: "Given either of the above situations, what makes it more or less likely that the players will cooperate and arrive at CC?" The chances of achieving this outcome will be increased by: (1) anything that increases incentives to cooperate by increasing the gains of mutual cooperation (CC) and/or decreasing the costs the actor will pay if he cooperates and the other does not (CD); (2) anything that decreases the incentives for defecting by decreasing the gains of taking advantage of the other (DC) and/or increasing the costs of mutual noncooperation (DD); (3) anything that increases each side's expectation that the other will cooperate.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Experimental evidence for this proposition is summarized in James Tedeschi, Barry Schlenker, and Thomas Bonoma, *Conflict, Power, and Games* (Chicago: Aldine 1973), 135-41.

<sup>7</sup> The results of Prisoner's Dilemma games played in the laboratory support this argument. See Anatol Rapoport and Albert Chammah, *Prisoner's Dilemma* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1965), 33-50. Also see Robert Axelrod, *Conflict of Interest* (Chicago: Markham 1970), 60-70.

## THE COSTS OF BEING EXPLOITED (CD)

The fear of being exploited (that is, the cost of CD) most strongly drives the security dilemma; one of the main reasons why international life is not more nasty, brutish, and short is that states are not as vulnerable as men are in a state of nature. People are easy to kill, but as Adam Smith replied to a friend who feared that the Napoleonic Wars would ruin England, "Sir, there is a great deal of ruin in a nation."<sup>8</sup> The easier it is to destroy a state, the greater the reason for it either to join a larger and more secure unit, or else to be especially suspicious of others, to require a large army, and, if conditions are favorable, to attack at the slightest provocation rather than wait to be attacked. If the failure to eat that day—be it venison or rabbit—means that he will starve, a person is likely to defect in the Stag Hunt even if he really likes venison and has a high level of trust in his colleagues. (Defection is especially likely if the others are also starving or if they know that he is.) By contrast, if the costs of CD are lower, if people are well-fed or states are resilient, they can afford to take a more relaxed view of threats.

A relatively low cost of CD has the effect of transforming the game from one in which both players make their choices simultaneously to one in which an actor can make his choice after the other has moved. He will not have to defect out of fear that the other will, but can wait to see what the other will do. States that can afford to be cheated in a bargain or that cannot be destroyed by a surprise attack can more easily trust others and need not act at the first, and ambiguous, sign of menace. Because they have a margin of time and error, they need not match, or more than match, any others' arms in peacetime. They can mobilize in the prewar period or even at the start of the war itself, and still survive. For example, those who opposed a crash program to develop the H-bomb felt that the U.S. margin of safety was large enough so that even if Russia managed to gain a lead in the race, America would not be endangered. The program's advocates disagreed: "If we let the Russians get the super first, catastrophe becomes all but certain."<sup>9</sup>

When the costs of CD are tolerable, not only is security easier to attain but, what is even more important here, the relatively low level of arms and relatively passive foreign policy that a status-quo power will be able to adopt are less likely to threaten others. Thus it is easier for

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Bernard Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1959), 6.

<sup>9</sup> Herbert York, *The Advisors: Oppenheimer, Teller, and the Superbomb* (San Francisco: Freeman 1976), 56-60.

status-quo states to act on their common interests if they are hard to conquer. All other things being equal, a world of small states will feel the effects of anarchy much more than a world of large ones. Defensible borders, large size, and protection against sudden attack not only aid the state, but facilitate cooperation that can benefit all states.

Of course, if one state gains invulnerability by being more powerful than most others, the problem will remain because its security provides a base from which it can exploit others. When the price a state will pay for DD is low, it leaves others with few hostages for its good behavior. Others who are more vulnerable will grow apprehensive, which will lead them to acquire more arms and will reduce the chances of cooperation. The best situation is one in which a state will not suffer greatly if others exploit it, for example, by cheating on an arms control agreement (that is, the costs of CD are low); but it will pay a high long-run price if cooperation with the others breaks down—for example, if agreements cease functioning or if there is a long war (that is, the costs of DD are high). The state's invulnerability is then mostly passive; it provides some protection, but it cannot be used to menace others. As we will discuss below, this situation is approximated when it is easier for states to defend themselves than to attack others, or when mutual deterrence obtains because neither side can protect itself.

The differences between highly vulnerable and less vulnerable states are illustrated by the contrasting policies of Britain and Austria after the Napoleonic Wars. Britain's geographic isolation and political stability allowed her to take a fairly relaxed view of disturbances on the Continent. Minor wars and small changes in territory or in the distribution of power did not affect her vital interests. An adversary who was out to overthrow the system could be stopped after he had made his intentions clear. And revolutions within other states were no menace, since they would not set off unrest within England. Austria, surrounded by strong powers, was not so fortunate; her policy had to be more closely attuned to all conflicts. By the time an aggressor-state had clearly shown its colors, Austria would be gravely threatened. And foreign revolutions, be they democratic or nationalistic, would encourage groups in Austria to upset the existing order. So it is not surprising that Metternich propounded the doctrine summarized earlier, which defended Austria's right to interfere in the internal affairs of others, and that British leaders rejected this view. Similarly, Austria wanted the Congress system to be a relatively tight one, regulating most disputes. The British favored a less centralized system. In other words, in order

to protect herself, Austria had either to threaten or to harm others, whereas Britain did not. For Austria and her neighbors the security dilemma was acute; for Britain it was not.

The ultimate cost of CD is of course loss of sovereignty. This cost can vary from situation to situation. The lower it is (for instance, because the two states have compatible ideologies, are similar ethnically, have a common culture, or because the citizens of the losing state expect economic benefits), the less the impact of the security dilemma; the greater the costs, the greater the impact of the dilemma. Here is another reason why extreme differences in values and ideologies exacerbate international conflict.

It is through the lowering of the costs of CD that the proposed Rhodesian "safety net"—guaranteeing that whites who leave the country will receive fair payment for their property—would have the paradoxical effect of making it more likely that the whites will stay. This is less puzzling when we see that the whites are in a multi-person Prisoner's Dilemma with each other. Assume that all whites are willing to stay if most of the others stay; but, in the absence of guarantees, if there is going to be a mass exodus, all want to be among the first to leave (because late-leavers will get less for their property and will have more trouble finding a country to take them in). Then the problem is to avoid a self-fulfilling prophecy in which each person rushes to defect because he fears others are going to. In narrowing the gap between the payoff for leaving first (DC) and leaving last (CD) by reducing the cost of the latter, the guarantees make it easier for the whites to cooperate among themselves and stay.

*Subjective Security Demands.* Decision makers act in terms of the vulnerability they feel, which can differ from the actual situation; we must therefore examine the decision makers' subjective security requirements.<sup>10</sup> Two dimensions are involved. First, even if they agree about the objective situation, people can differ about how much security they desire—or, to put it more precisely, about the price they are willing to pay to gain increments of security. The more states value their security above all else (that is, see a prohibitively high cost in CD), the more they are likely to be sensitive to even minimal threats, and to demand high levels of arms. And if arms are positively valued be-

<sup>10</sup> For the development of the concept of subjective security, see Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press 1962), chap. 10. In the present section we assume that the state believes that its security can be best served by increasing its arms; later we will discuss some of the conditions under which this assumption does not hold.

cause of pressures from a military-industrial complex, it will be especially hard for status-quo powers to cooperate. By contrast, the security dilemma will not operate as strongly when pressing domestic concerns increase the opportunity costs of armaments. In this case, the net advantage of exploiting the other (DC) will be less, and the costs of arms races (that is, one aspect of DD) will be greater; therefore the state will behave as though it were relatively invulnerable.

The second aspect of subjective security is the perception of threat (that is, the estimate of whether the other will cooperate).<sup>11</sup> A state that is predisposed to see either a specific other state as an adversary, or others in general as a menace, will react more strongly and more quickly than a state that sees its environment as benign. Indeed, when a state believes that another not only is not likely to be an adversary, but has sufficient interests in common with it to be an ally, then it will actually welcome an increase in the other's power.

British and French foreign policies in the interwar years illustrate these points. After the rise of Hitler, Britain and France felt that increases in each other's arms increased rather than decreased their own security. The differing policies that these states followed toward Germany can be explained by their differences on both dimensions of the variable of subjective security.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the period, France perceived Germany as more of a threat than England did. The British were more optimistic and argued that conciliation could turn Germany into a supporter of the status quo. Furthermore, in the years immediately following World War I, France had been more willing to forego other values in order to increase her security and had therefore followed a more belligerent policy than England, maintaining a larger army and moving quickly to counter German assertiveness. As this example shows, one cannot easily say how much subjective security a state should seek. High security requirements make it very difficult to capitalize on a common interest and run the danger of setting off spirals of arms races and hostility. The French may have paid this price in the 1920's. Low security requirements avoid this trap, but run the risk of having too few arms and of trying to conciliate an aggressor.

One aspect of subjective security related to the predisposition to per-

<sup>11</sup> The question of when an actor will see another as a threat is important and understudied. For a valuable treatment (although one marred by serious methodological flaws), see Raymond Cohen, "Threat Perception in International Relations," Ph.D. diss. (Hebrew University 1974). Among the important factors, touched on below, are the lessons from the previous war.

<sup>12</sup> Still the best treatment is Arnold Wolfers, *Britain and France Between Two Wars* (New York: Harcourt, Brace 1940).

ceive threat is the state's view of how many enemies it must be prepared to fight. A state can be relaxed about increases in another's arms if it believes that there is a functioning collective security system. The chances of peace are increased in a world in which the prevailing international system is valued in its own right, not only because most states restrain their ambitions and those who do not are deterred (these are the usual claims for a Concert system), but also because of the decreased chances that the status-quo states will engage in unnecessary conflict out of the quest for security. Indeed, if there were complete faith in collective security, no state would want an army. By contrast, the security dilemma is insoluble when each state fears that many others, far from coming to its aid, are likely to join in any attack. Winston Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty, was setting a high security requirement when he noted:

Besides the Great Powers, there are many small states who are buying or building great ships of war and whose vessels may by purchase, by some diplomatic combination, or by duress, be brought into the line against us. None of these powers need, like us, navies to defend their actual safety of independence. They build them so as to play a part in world affairs. It is sport to them. It is death to us.<sup>13</sup>

It takes great effort for any one state to be able to protect itself alone against an attack by several neighbors. More importantly, it is next to impossible for all states in the system to have this capability. Thus, a state's expectation that allies will be available and that only a few others will be able to join against it is almost a necessary condition for security requirements to be compatible.

#### GAINS FROM COOPERATION AND COSTS OF A BREAKDOWN (CC AND DD)

The main costs of a policy of reacting quickly and severely to increases in the other's arms are not the price of one's own arms, but rather the sacrifice of the potential gains from cooperation (CC) and the increase in the dangers of needless arms races and wars (DD). The greater these costs, the greater the incentives to try cooperation and wait for fairly unambiguous evidence before assuming that the other must be checked by force. Wars would be much more frequent—even if the first choice of all states was the status quo—if they were less risky and costly, and if peaceful intercourse did not provide rich benefits. Ethiopia recently asked for guarantees that the Territory of Afars and Issas would not join a hostile alliance against it when it gained independ-

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Peter Gretton, *Former Naval Person* (London: Cassell 1968), 151.

ence. A spokesman for the Territory replied that this was not necessary: Ethiopia "already had the best possible guarantee in the railroad" that links the two countries and provides indispensable revenue for the Territory.<sup>14</sup>

The basic points are well known and so we can move to elaboration. First, most statesmen know that to enter a war is to set off a chain of unpredictable and uncontrollable events. Even if everything they see points to a quick victory, they are likely to hesitate before all the uncertainties. And if the battlefield often produces startling results, so do the council chambers. The state may be deserted by allies or attacked by neutrals. Or the postwar alignment may rob it of the fruits of victory, as happened to Japan in 1895. Second, the domestic costs of wars must be weighed. Even strong states can be undermined by dissatisfaction with the way the war is run and by the necessary mobilization of men and ideas. Memories of such disruptions were one of the main reasons for the era of relative peace that followed the Napoleonic Wars. Liberal statesmen feared that large armies would lead to despotism; conservative leaders feared that wars would lead to revolution. (The other side of this coin is that when there are domestic consequences of foreign conflict that are positively valued, the net cost of conflict is lowered and cooperation becomes more difficult.) Third—turning to the advantages of cooperation—for states with large and diverse economies the gains from economic exchange are rarely if ever sufficient to prevent war. Norman Angell was wrong about World War I being impossible because of economic ties among the powers; and before World War II, the U.S. was Japan's most important trading partner. Fourth, the gains from cooperation can be increased, not only if each side gets more of the traditional values such as wealth, but also if each comes to value the other's well-being positively. Mutual cooperation will then have a double payoff: in addition to the direct gains, there will be the satisfaction of seeing the other prosper.<sup>15</sup>

While high costs of war and gains from cooperation will ameliorate the impact of the security dilemma, they can create a different problem. If the costs are high enough so that DD is the last choice for both sides, the game will shift to "Chicken." This game differs from the Stag Hunt in that each actor seeks to exploit the other; it differs from Prisoner's Dilemma in that both actors share an interest in avoiding

<sup>14</sup> Michael Kaufman, "Tension Increases in French Colony," *New York Times*, July 11, 1976.

<sup>15</sup> Experimental support for this argument is summarized in Morton Deutsch, *The Resolution of Conflict* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1973), 181-95.

mutual non-cooperation. In Chicken, if you think the other side is going to defect, you have to cooperate because, although being exploited (CD) is bad, it is not as bad as a total breakdown (DD). As the familiar logic of deterrence shows, the actor must then try to convince his adversary that he is going to stand firm (defect) and that the only way the other can avoid disaster is to back down (cooperate). Commitment, the rationality of irrationality, manipulating the communications system, and pretending not to understand the situation, are among the tactics used to reach this goal. The same logic applies when both sides are enjoying great benefits from cooperation. The side that can credibly threaten to disrupt the relationship unless its demands are met can exploit the other. This situation may not be stable, since the frequent use of threats may be incompatible with the maintenance of a cooperative relationship. Still, de Gaulle's successful threats to break up the Common Market unless his partners acceded to his wishes remind us that the shared benefits of cooperation as well as the shared costs of defection can provide the basis for exploitation. Similarly, one reason for the collapse of the Franco-British entente more than a hundred years earlier was that decision makers on both sides felt confident that their own country could safely pursue a policy that was against the other's interest because the other could not afford to destroy the highly valued relationship.<sup>16</sup> Because statesmen realize that the growth of positive interdependence can provide others with new levers of influence over them, they may resist such developments more than would be expected from the theories that stress the advantages of cooperation.

#### GAINS FROM EXPLOITATION (DC)

Defecting not only avoids the danger that a state will be exploited (CD), but brings positive advantages by exploiting the other (DC). The lower these possible gains, the greater the chances of cooperation. Even a relatively satisfied state can be tempted to expand by the hope of gaining major values. The temptation will be less when the state sees other ways of reaching its goals, and/or places a low value on what exploitation could bring. The gains may be low either because the immediate advantage provided by DC (for example, having more arms than the other side) cannot be translated into a political advantage (for example, gains in territory), or because the political advantage itself

<sup>16</sup> Roger Bullen, *Palmerston, Guizot, and the Collapse of the Entente Cordiale* (London: Athlone Press 1974), 81, 88, 93, 212. For a different view of this case, see Stanley Mellon, "Entente, Diplomacy, and Fantasy," *Reviews in European History*, II (September 1976), 376-80.



is not highly valued. For instance, a state may not seek to annex additional territory because the latter lacks raw materials, is inhabited by people of a different ethnic group, would be costly to garrison, or would be hard to assimilate without disturbing domestic politics and values. A state can reduce the incentives that another state has to attack it, by not being a threat to the latter and by providing goods and services that would be lost were the other to attempt exploitation.

Even where the direct advantages of DC are great, other considerations can reduce the net gain. Victory as well as defeat can set off undesired domestic changes within the state. Exploitation has at times been frowned upon by the international community, thus reducing the prestige of a state that engages in it. Or others might in the future be quicker to see the state as a menace to them, making them more likely to arm, and to oppose it later. Thus, Bismarck's attempts to get other powers to cooperate with him in maintaining the status quo after 1871 were made more difficult by the widely-held mistrust of him that grew out of his earlier aggressions.<sup>17</sup>

#### THE PROBABILITY THAT THE OTHER WILL COOPERATE

The variables discussed so far influence the payoffs for each of the four possible outcomes. To decide what to do, the state has to go further and calculate the expected value of cooperating or defecting. Because such calculations involve estimating the probability that the other will cooperate, the state will have to judge how the variables discussed so far act on the other. To encourage the other to cooperate, a state may try to manipulate these variables. It can lower the other's incentives to defect by decreasing what it could gain by exploiting the state (DC)—the details would be similar to those discussed in the previous paragraph—and it can raise the costs of deadlock (DD). But if the state cannot make DD the worst outcome for the other, coercion is likely to be ineffective in the short run because the other can respond by refusing to cooperate, and dangerous in the long run because the other is likely to become convinced that the state is aggressive. So the state will have to concentrate on making cooperation more attractive. One way to do this is to decrease the costs the other will pay if it cooperates and the state defects (CD). Thus, the state could try to make the other less vulnerable. It was for this reason that in the late 1950's and early 1960's

<sup>17</sup> Similarly, a French diplomat has argued that "the worst result of Louis XIV's abandonment of our traditional policy was the distrust it aroused towards us abroad." Jules Cambon, "The Permanent Bases of French Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, VIII (January 1930), 179.

some American defense analysts argued that it would be good for both sides if the Russians developed hardened missiles. Of course, decreasing the other's vulnerability also decreases the state's ability to coerce it, and opens the possibility that the other will use this protection as a shield behind which to engage in actions inimical to the state. But by sacrificing some ability to harm the other, the state can increase the chances of mutually beneficial cooperation.

The state can also try to increase the gains that will accrue to the other from mutual cooperation (CC). Although the state will of course gain if it receives a share of any new benefits, even an increment that accrues entirely to the other will aid the state by increasing the likelihood that the other will cooperate.<sup>18</sup>

This line of argument can be continued through the infinite regressions that game theory has made familiar. If the other is ready to cooperate when it thinks the state will, the state can increase the chances of CC by showing that it *is* planning to cooperate. Thus the state should understate the gains it would make if it exploited the other (DC) and the costs it would pay if the other exploited it (CD), and stress or exaggerate the gains it would make under mutual cooperation (CC) and the costs it would pay if there is deadlock (DD). The state will also want to convince the other that it thinks that the other is likely to cooperate. If the other believes these things, it will see that the state has strong incentives to cooperate, and so it will cooperate in turn. One point should be emphasized. Because the other, like the state, may be driven to defect by the fear that it will be exploited if it does not, the state should try to reassure it that this will not happen. Thus, when Khrushchev indicated his willingness to withdraw his missiles from Cuba, he simultaneously stressed to Kennedy that "we are of sound mind and understand perfectly well" that Russia could not launch a successful attack against the U.S., and therefore that there was no reason for the U.S. to contemplate a defensive, pre-emptive strike of its own.<sup>19</sup>

There is, however, a danger. If the other thinks that the state has little choice but to cooperate, it can credibly threaten to defect unless the state provides it with additional benefits. Great advantages of mutual cooperation, like high costs of war, provide a lever for com-

<sup>18</sup> This assumes, however, that these benefits to the other will not so improve the other's power position that it will be more able to menace the state in the future.

<sup>19</sup> Walter LaFeber, ed., *The Dynamics of World Power; A Documentary History of United States Foreign Policy 1945-1973*, II: *Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (New York: Chelsea House in association with McGraw-Hill 1973), 700.

petitive bargaining. Furthermore, for a state to stress how much it gains from cooperation may be to imply that it is gaining much more than the other and to suggest that the benefits should be distributed more equitably.

When each side is ready to cooperate if it expects the other to, inspection devices can ameliorate the security dilemma. Of course, even a perfect inspection system cannot guarantee that the other will not later develop aggressive intentions and the military means to act on them. But by relieving immediate worries and providing warning of coming dangers, inspection can meet a significant part of the felt need to protect oneself against future threats, and so make current cooperation more feasible. Similar functions are served by breaking up one large transaction into a series of smaller ones.<sup>20</sup> At each transaction each can see whether the other has cooperated; and its losses, if the other defects, will be small. And since what either side would gain by one defection is slight compared to the benefits of continued cooperation, the prospects of cooperation are high. Conflicts and wars among status-quo powers would be much more common were it not for the fact that international politics is usually a series of small transactions.

How a statesman interprets the other's past behavior and how he projects it into the future is influenced by his understanding of the security dilemma and his ability to place himself in the other's shoes. The dilemma will operate much more strongly if statesmen do not understand it, and do not see that their arms—sought only to secure the status quo—may alarm others and that others may arm, not because they are contemplating aggression, but because they fear attack from the first state. These two failures of empathy are linked. A state which thinks that the other knows that it wants only to preserve the status quo and that its arms are meant only for self-preservation will conclude that the other side will react to its arms by increasing its own capability only if it is aggressive itself. Since the other side is not menaced, there is no legitimate reason for it to object to the first state's arms; therefore, objection proves that the other is aggressive. Thus, the following exchange between Senator Tom Connally and Secretary of State Acheson concerning the ratification of the NATO treaty:

Secretary Acheson: [The treaty] is aimed solely at armed aggression.

Senator Connally: In other words, unless a nation . . . contemplates, meditates, or makes plans looking toward aggression or armed attack on another nation, it has no cause to fear this treaty.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press 1963), 134-35.

Secretary Acheson: That is correct, Senator Connally, and it seems to me that any nation which claims that this treaty is directed against it should be reminded of the Biblical admonition that 'The guilty flee when no man pursueth.'

Senator Connally: That is a very apt illustration.

What I had in mind was, when a State or Nation passes a criminal act, for instance, against burglary, nobody but those who are burglars or getting ready to be burglars need have any fear of the Burglary Act. Is that not true?

Secretary Acheson: The only effect [the law] would have [on an innocent person] would be for his protection, perhaps, by deterring someone else. He wouldn't worry about the imposition of the penalties on himself.<sup>21</sup>

The other side of this coin is that part of the explanation for détente is that most American decision makers now realize that it is at least possible that Russia may fear American aggression; many think that this fear accounts for a range of Soviet actions previously seen as indicating Russian aggressiveness. Indeed, even 36 percent of military officers consider the Soviet Union's motivations to be primarily defensive. Less than twenty years earlier, officers had been divided over whether Russia sought world conquest or only expansion.<sup>22</sup>

Statesmen who do not understand the security dilemma will think that the money spent is the only cost of building up their arms. This belief removes one important restraint on arms spending. Furthermore, it is also likely to lead states to set their security requirements too high. Since they do not understand that trying to increase one's security can actually decrease it, they will overestimate the amount of security that is attainable; they will think that when in doubt they can "play it safe" by increasing their arms. Thus it is very likely that two states which support the status quo but do not understand the security dilemma will end up, if not in a war, then at least in a relationship of higher conflict than is required by the objective situation.

The belief that an increase in military strength always leads to an increase in security is often linked to the belief that the only route to security is through military strength. As a consequence, a whole range of meliorative policies will be downgraded. Decision makers who do not believe that adopting a more conciliatory posture, meeting the

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Hearings, North Atlantic Treaty*, 81st Cong., 1st sess. (1949), 17.

<sup>22</sup> Bruce Russett and Elizabeth Hanson, *Interest and Ideology* (San Francisco: Freeman 1975), 260; Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier* (New York: Free Press 1960), chap. 13.

other's legitimate grievances, or developing mutual gains from cooperation can increase their state's security, will not devote much attention or effort to these possibilities.

On the other hand, a heightened sensitivity to the security dilemma makes it more likely that the state will treat an aggressor as though it were an insecure defender of the status quo. Partly because of their views about the causes of World War I, the British were predisposed to believe that Hitler sought only the rectification of legitimate and limited grievances and that security could best be gained by constructing an equitable international system. As a result they pursued a policy which, although well designed to avoid the danger of creating unnecessary conflict with a status-quo Germany, helped destroy Europe.

#### GEOGRAPHY, COMMITMENTS, BELIEFS, AND SECURITY THROUGH EXPANSION

A final consideration does not easily fit in the matrix we have been using, although it can be seen as an aspect of vulnerability and of the costs of CD. Situations vary in the ease or difficulty with which all states can simultaneously achieve a high degree of security. The influence of military technology on this variable is the subject of the next section. Here we want to treat the impact of beliefs, geography, and commitments (many of which can be considered to be modifications of geography, since they bind states to defend areas outside their homelands). In the crowded continent of Europe, security requirements were hard to mesh. Being surrounded by powerful states, Germany's problem—or the problem created by Germany—was always great and was even worse when her relations with both France and Russia were bad, such as before World War I. In that case, even a status-quo Germany, if she could not change the political situation, would almost have been forced to adopt something like the Schlieffen Plan. Because she could not hold off both of her enemies, she had to be prepared to defeat one quickly and then deal with the other in a more leisurely fashion. If France or Russia stayed out of a war between the other state and Germany, they would allow Germany to dominate the Continent (even if that was not Germany's aim). They therefore had to deny Germany this ability, thus making Germany less secure. Although Germany's arrogant and erratic behavior, coupled with the desire for an unreasonably high level of security (which amounted to the desire to escape from her geographic plight), compounded the problem, even wise German statesmen would have been hard put to gain a high degree of security without alarming their neighbors.

A similar situation arose for France after World War I. She was committed to protecting her allies in Eastern Europe, a commitment she could meet only by taking the offensive against Germany. But since there was no way to guarantee that France might not later seek expansion, a France that could successfully launch an attack in response to a German move into Eastern Europe would constitute a potential danger to German core values. Similarly, a United States credibly able to threaten retaliation with strategic nuclear weapons if the Soviet Union attacks Western Europe also constitutes a menace, albeit a reduced one, to the Soviet ability to maintain the status quo. The incompatibility of these security requirements is not complete. Herman Kahn is correct in arguing that the United States could have Type II deterrence (the ability to deter a major Soviet provocation) without gaining first-strike capability because the expected Soviet retaliation following an American strike could be great enough to deter the U.S. from attacking unless the U.S. believed it would suffer enormous deprivation (for instance, the loss of Europe) if it did not strike.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, the Franco-German military balance could have been such that France could successfully attack Germany if the latter's armies were embroiled in Eastern Europe, but could not defeat a Germany that was free to devote all her resources to defending herself. But this delicate balance is very hard to achieve, especially because states usually calculate conservatively. Therefore, such a solution is not likely to be available.

For the United States, the problem posed by the need to protect Europe is an exception. Throughout most of its history, this country has been in a much more favorable position: relatively self-sufficient and secure from invasion, it has not only been able to get security relatively cheaply, but by doing so, did not menace others.<sup>24</sup> But ambitions and commitments have changed this situation. After the American conquest of the Philippines, "neither the United States nor Japan could assure protection for their territories by military and naval means without compromising the defenses of the other. This problem would plague American and Japanese statesmen down to 1941."<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, to the extent that Japan could protect herself, she could resist American threats to go to war if Japan did not respect China's inde-

<sup>23</sup> Kahn, *On Thermonuclear War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1960), 138-60. It should be noted that the French example is largely hypothetical because France had no intention of fulfilling her obligations once Germany became strong.

<sup>24</sup> Wolfers (fn. 9), chap. 15; C. Vann Woodward, "The Age of Reinterpretation," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 67 (October 1960), 1-19.

<sup>25</sup> William Braisted, *The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909* (Austin: University of Texas Press 1958), 240.

pendence. These complications were minor compared to those that followed World War II. A world power cannot help but have the ability to harm many others that is out of proportion to the others' ability to harm it.

Britain had been able to gain security without menacing others to a greater degree than the Continental powers, though to a lesser one than the United States. But the acquisition of colonies and a dependence on foreign trade sacrificed her relative invulnerability of being an island. Once she took India, she had to consider Russia as a neighbor; the latter was expanding in Central Asia, thus making it much more difficult for both countries to feel secure. The need to maintain reliable sea lanes to India meant that no state could be allowed to menace South Africa and, later, Egypt. But the need to protect these two areas brought new fears, new obligations, and new security requirements that conflicted with those of other European nations. Furthermore, once Britain needed a flow of imports during both peace and wartime, she required a navy that could prevent a blockade. A navy sufficient for that task could not help but be a threat to any other state that had valuable trade.

A related problem is raised by the fact that defending the status quo often means protecting more than territory. Nonterritorial interests, norms, and the structure of the international system must be maintained. If all status-quo powers agree on these values and interpret them in compatible ways, problems will be minimized. But the potential for conflict is great, and the policies followed are likely to exacerbate the security dilemma. The greater the range of interests that have to be protected, the more likely it is that national efforts to maintain the status quo will clash. As a French spokesman put it in 1930: "Security! The term signifies more indeed than the maintenance of a people's homeland, or even of their territories beyond the seas. It also means the maintenance of the world's respect for them, the maintenance of their economic interests, everything in a word, which goes to make up the grandeur, the life itself, of the nation."<sup>26</sup> When security is thought of in this sense, it almost automatically has a competitive connotation. It involves asserting one state's will over others, showing a high degree of leadership if not dominance, and displaying a prickly demeanor. The resulting behavior will almost surely clash with that of others who define their security in the same way.

The problem will be almost insoluble if statesmen believe that their security requires the threatening or attacking of others. "That which

<sup>26</sup> Cambon (fn. 17), 185.

stops growing begins to rot," declared a minister to Catherine the Great.<sup>27</sup> More common is the belief that if the other is secure, it will be emboldened to act against one's own state's interests, and the belief that in a war it will not be enough for the state to protect itself: it must be able to take the war to the other's homeland. These convictions make it very difficult for status-quo states to develop compatible security policies, for they lead the state to conclude that its security requires that others be rendered insecure.

In other cases, "A country engaged in a war of defense might be obliged for strategic reasons to assume the offensive," as a French delegate to an interwar disarmament conference put it.<sup>28</sup> That was the case for France in 1799:

The Directory's political objectives were essentially defensive, for the French wanted only to protect the Republic from invasion and preserve the security and territory of the satellite regimes in Holland, Switzerland, and Italy. French leaders sought no new conquests; they wanted only to preserve the earlier gains of the Revolution. The Directory believed, however, that only a military offensive could enable the nation to achieve its defensive political objective. By inflicting rapid and decisive defeats upon one or more members of the coalition, the directors hoped to rupture allied unity and force individual powers to seek a separate peace.<sup>29</sup>

It did not matter to the surrounding states that France was not attacking because she was greedy, but because she wanted to be left in peace. Unless there was some way her neighbors could provide France with an alternate route to her goal, France had to go to war.

### III. OFFENSE, DEFENSE, AND THE SECURITY DILEMMA

Another approach starts with the central point of the security dilemma—that an increase in one state's security decreases the security of others—and examines the conditions under which this proposition holds. Two crucial variables are involved: whether defensive weapons and policies can be distinguished from offensive ones, and whether the

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Adam Ulam, *Expansion and Co-Existence* (New York: Praeger 1968), 5. In 1920 the U.S. Navy's General Board similarly declared "A nation must advance or retrocede in world position." Quoted in William Braisted, *The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922* (Austin: University of Texas Press 1971), 488.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Marion Boggs, *Attempts to Define and Limit "Aggressive" Armament in Diplomacy and Strategy* (Columbia: University of Missouri Studies, xvi, No. 1, 1941), 41.

<sup>29</sup> Steven Ross, *European Diplomatic History, 1789-1815* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday 1969), 194.



defense or the offense has the advantage. The definitions are not always clear, and many cases are difficult to judge, but these two variables shed a great deal of light on the question of whether status-quo powers will adopt compatible security policies. All the variables discussed so far leave the heart of the problem untouched. But when defensive weapons differ from offensive ones, it is possible for a state to make itself more secure without making others less secure. And when the defense has the advantage over the offense, a large increase in one state's security only slightly decreases the security of the others, and status-quo powers can all enjoy a high level of security and largely escape from the state of nature.

#### OFFENSE-DEFENSE BALANCE

When we say that the offense has the advantage, we simply mean that it is easier to destroy the other's army and take its territory than it is to defend one's own. When the defense has the advantage, it is easier to protect and to hold than it is to move forward, destroy, and take. If effective defenses can be erected quickly, an attacker may be able to keep territory he has taken in an initial victory. Thus, the dominance of the defense made it very hard for Britain and France to push Germany out of France in World War I. But when superior defenses are difficult for an aggressor to improvise on the battlefield and must be constructed during peacetime, they provide no direct assistance to him.

The security dilemma is at its most vicious when commitments, strategy, or technology dictate that the only route to security lies through expansion. Status-quo powers must then act like aggressors; the fact that they would gladly agree to forego the opportunity for expansion in return for guarantees for their security has no implications for their behavior. Even if expansion is not sought as a goal in itself, there will be quick and drastic changes in the distribution of territory and influence. Conversely, when the defense has the advantage, status-quo states can make themselves more secure without gravely endangering others.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, if the defense has enough of an advantage and if the states are of roughly equal size, not only will the security dilemma cease to inhibit status-quo states from cooperating, but aggression will be next to impossible, thus rendering international anarchy relatively unimportant. If states cannot conquer each other, then the

<sup>30</sup> Thus, when Wolfers (fn. 10), 126, argues that a status-quo state that settles for rough equality of power with its adversary, rather than seeking preponderance, may be able to convince the other to reciprocate by showing that it wants only to protect itself, not menace the other, he assumes that the defense has an advantage.

lack of sovereignty, although it presents problems of collective goods in a number of areas, no longer forces states to devote their primary attention to self-preservation. Although, if force were not usable, there would be fewer restraints on the use of nonmilitary instruments, these are rarely powerful enough to threaten the vital interests of a major state.

Two questions of the offense-defense balance can be separated. First, does the state have to spend more or less than one dollar on defensive forces to offset each dollar spent by the other side on forces that could be used to attack? If the state has one dollar to spend on increasing its security, should it put it into offensive or defensive forces? Second, with a given inventory of forces, is it better to attack or to defend? Is there an incentive to strike first or to absorb the other's blow? These two aspects are often linked: if each dollar spent on offense can overcome each dollar spent on defense, and if both sides have the same defense budgets, then both are likely to build offensive forces and find it attractive to attack rather than to wait for the adversary to strike.

These aspects affect the security dilemma in different ways. The first has its greatest impact on arms races. If the defense has the advantage, and if the status-quo powers have reasonable subjective security requirements, they can probably avoid an arms race. Although an increase in one side's arms and security will still decrease the other's security, the former's increase will be larger than the latter's decrease. So if one side increases its arms, the other can bring its security back up to its previous level by adding a smaller amount to its forces. And if the first side reacts to this change, its increase will also be smaller than the stimulus that produced it. Thus a stable equilibrium will be reached. Shifting from dynamics to statics, each side can be quite secure with forces roughly equal to those of the other. Indeed, if the defense is much more potent than the offense, each side can be willing to have forces much smaller than the other's, and can be indifferent to a wide range of the other's defense policies.

The second aspect—whether it is better to attack or to defend—influences short-run stability. When the offense has the advantage, a state's reaction to international tension will increase the chances of war. The incentives for pre-emption and the “reciprocal fear of surprise attack” in this situation have been made clear by analyses of the dangers that exist when two countries have first-strike capabilities.<sup>31</sup> There is no way for the state to increase its security without menacing,

<sup>31</sup> Schelling (fn. 20), chap. 9.

or even attacking, the other. Even Bismarck, who once called preventive war "committing suicide from fear of death," said that "no government, if it regards war as inevitable even if it does not want it, would be so foolish as to leave to the enemy the choice of time and occasion and to wait for the moment which is most convenient for the enemy."<sup>32</sup> In another arena, the same dilemma applies to the policeman in a dark alley confronting a suspected criminal who appears to be holding a weapon. Though racism may indeed be present, the security dilemma can account for many of the tragic shootings of innocent people in the ghettos.

Beliefs about the course of a war in which the offense has the advantage further deepen the security dilemma. When there are incentives to strike first, a successful attack will usually so weaken the other side that victory will be relatively quick, bloodless, and decisive. It is in these periods when conquest is possible and attractive that states consolidate power internally—for instance, by destroying the feudal barons—and expand externally. There are several consequences that decrease the chance of cooperation among status-quo states. First, war will be profitable for the winner. The costs will be low and the benefits high. Of course, losers will suffer; the fear of losing could induce states to try to form stable cooperative arrangements, but the temptation of victory will make this particularly difficult. Second, because wars are expected to be both frequent and short, there will be incentives for high levels of arms, and quick and strong reaction to the other's increases in arms. The state cannot afford to wait until there is unambiguous evidence that the other is building new weapons. Even large states that have faith in their economic strength cannot wait, because the war will be over before their products can reach the army. Third, when wars are quick, states will have to recruit allies in advance.<sup>33</sup> Without the opportunity for bargaining and re-alignments during the opening stages of hostilities, peacetime diplomacy loses a degree of the fluidity that facilitates balance-of-power policies. Because alliances must be secured during peacetime, the international system is more likely to become bipolar. It is hard to say whether war therefore becomes more or less likely, but this bipolarity increases tension between the two camps and makes it harder for status-quo states to gain the benefits of cooperation. Fourth, if wars are frequent, statesmen's perceptual thresholds will be adjusted accordingly and they will be quick to perceive

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Fritz Fischer, *War of Illusions* (New York: Norton 1975), 377, 461.

<sup>33</sup> George Quester, *Offense and Defense in the International System* (New York: John Wiley 1977), 105-06; Sontag (fn. 5), 4-5.

ambiguous evidence as indicating that others are aggressive. Thus, there will be more cases of status-quo powers arming against each other in the incorrect belief that the other is hostile.

When the defense has the advantage, all the foregoing is reversed. The state that fears attack does not pre-empt—since that would be a wasteful use of its military resources—but rather prepares to receive an attack. Doing so does not decrease the security of others, and several states can do it simultaneously; the situation will therefore be stable, and status-quo powers will be able to cooperate. When Herman Kahn argues that ultimatums “are vastly too dangerous to give because . . . they are quite likely to touch off a pre-emptive strike,”<sup>34</sup> he incorrectly assumes that it is always advantageous to strike first.

More is involved than short-run dynamics. When the defense is dominant, wars are likely to become stalemates and can be won only at enormous cost. Relatively small and weak states can hold off larger and stronger ones, or can deter attack by raising the costs of conquest to an unacceptable level. States then approach equality in what they can do to each other. Like the .45-caliber pistol in the American West, fortifications were the “great equalizer” in some periods. Changes in the status quo are less frequent and cooperation is more common wherever the security dilemma is thereby reduced.

Many of these arguments can be illustrated by the major powers' policies in the periods preceding the two world wars. Bismarck's wars surprised statesmen by showing that the offense had the advantage, and by being quick, relatively cheap, and quite decisive. Falling into a common error, observers projected this pattern into the future.<sup>35</sup> The resulting expectations had several effects. First, states sought semi-permanent allies. In the early stages of the Franco-Prussian War, Napoleon III had thought that there would be plenty of time to recruit Austria to his side. Now, others were not going to repeat this mistake. Second, defense budgets were high and reacted quite sharply to increases on the other side. It is not surprising that Richardson's theory of arms races fits this period well. Third, most decision makers thought that the next Euro-

<sup>34</sup> Kahn (fn. 23), 211 (also see 144).

<sup>35</sup> For a general discussion of such mistaken learning from the past, see Jervis (fn. 5), chap. 6. The important and still not completely understood question of why this belief formed and was maintained throughout the war is examined in Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics* (New York: Macmillan 1973), 262-70; Brodie, “Technological Change, Strategic Doctrine, and Political Outcomes,” in Klaus Knorr, ed., *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas 1976), 290-92; and Douglas Porch, “The French Army and the Spirit of the Offensive, 1900-14,” in Brian Bond and Ian Roy, eds., *War and Society* (New York: Holmes & Meier 1975), 117-43.

pean war would not cost much blood and treasure.<sup>36</sup> That is one reason why war was generally seen as inevitable and why mass opinion was so bellicose. Fourth, once war seemed likely, there were strong pressures to pre-empt. Both sides believed that whoever moved first could penetrate the other deep enough to disrupt mobilization and thus gain an insurmountable advantage. (There was no such belief about the use of naval forces. Although Churchill made an ill-advised speech saying that if German ships “do not come out and fight in time of war they will be dug out like rats in a hole,”<sup>37</sup> everyone knew that submarines, mines, and coastal fortifications made this impossible. So at the start of the war each navy prepared to defend itself rather than attack, and the short-run destabilizing forces that launched the armies toward each other did not operate.)<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, each side knew that the other saw the situation the same way, thus increasing the perceived danger that the other would attack, and giving each added reasons to precipitate a war if conditions seemed favorable. In the long and the short run, there were thus both offensive and defensive incentives to strike. This situation casts light on the common question about German motives in 1914: “Did Germany unleash the war deliberately to become a world power or did she support Austria merely to defend a weakening ally,” thereby protecting her own position?<sup>39</sup> To some extent, this question is misleading. Because of the perceived advantage of the offense, war was seen as the best route both to gaining expansion and to avoiding drastic loss of influence. There seemed to be no way for Germany merely to retain and safeguard her existing position.

Of course the war showed these beliefs to have been wrong on all points. Trenches and machine guns gave the defense an overwhelming advantage. The fighting became deadlocked and produced horrendous casualties. It made no sense for the combatants to bleed themselves to death. If they had known the power of the defense beforehand, they would have rushed for their own trenches rather than for the enemy’s territory. Each side could have done this without increasing the other’s

<sup>36</sup> Some were not so optimistic. Gray’s remark is well-known: “The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our life-time.” The German Prime Minister, Bethmann Hollweg, also feared the consequences of the war. But the controlling view was that it would certainly pay for the winner.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, III, *The Challenge of War, 1914–1916* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1971), 84.

<sup>38</sup> Quester (fn. 33), 98–99. Robert Art, *The Influence of Foreign Policy on Seapower*, II (Beverly Hills: Sage Professional Papers in International Studies Series, 1973), 14–18, 26–28.

<sup>39</sup> Konrad Jarausch, “The Illusion of Limited War: Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg’s Calculated Risk, July 1914,” *Central European History*, 11 (March 1969), 50.

incentives to strike. War might have broken out anyway, just as DD is a possible outcome of Chicken, but at least the pressures of time and the fear of allowing the other to get the first blow would not have contributed to this end. And, had both sides known the costs of the war, they would have negotiated much more seriously. The obvious question is why the states did not seek a negotiated settlement as soon as the shape of the war became clear. Schlieffen had said that if his plan failed, peace should be sought.<sup>40</sup> The answer is complex, uncertain, and largely outside of the scope of our concerns. But part of the reason was the hope and sometimes the expectation that breakthroughs could be made and the dominance of the offensive restored. Without that hope, the political and psychological pressures to fight to a decisive victory might have been overcome.

The politics of the interwar period were shaped by the memories of the previous conflict and the belief that any future war would resemble it. Political and military lessons reinforced each other in ameliorating the security dilemma. Because it was believed that the First World War had been a mistake that could have been avoided by skillful conciliation, both Britain and, to a lesser extent, France were highly sensitive to the possibility that interwar Germany was not a real threat to peace, and alert to the danger that reacting quickly and strongly to her arms could create unnecessary conflict. And because Britain and France expected the defense to continue to dominate, they concluded that it was safe to adopt a more relaxed and nonthreatening military posture.<sup>41</sup> Britain also felt less need to maintain tight alliance bonds. The Allies' military posture then constituted only a slight danger to Germany; had the latter been content with the status quo, it would have been easy for both sides to have felt secure behind their lines of fortifications. Of course the Germans were not content, so it is not surprising that they devoted their money and attention to finding ways out of a defense-dominated stalemate. *Blitzkrieg* tactics were necessary if they were to use force to change the status quo.

The initial stages of the war on the Western Front also contrasted with the First World War. Only with the new air arm were there any

<sup>40</sup> Brodie (fn. 8), 58.

<sup>41</sup> President Roosevelt and the American delegates to the League of Nations Disarmament Conference maintained that the tank and mobile heavy artillery had re-established the dominance of the offensive, thus making disarmament more urgent (Boggs, fn. 28, pp. 31, 108), but this was a minority position and may not even have been believed by the Americans. The reduced prestige and influence of the military, and the high pressures to cut government spending throughout this period also contributed to the lowering of defense budgets.

incentives to strike first, and these forces were too weak to carry out the grandiose plans that had been both dreamed and feared. The armies, still the main instrument, rushed to defensive positions. Perhaps the allies could have successfully attacked while the Germans were occupied in Poland.<sup>42</sup> But belief in the defense was so great that this was never seriously contemplated. Three months after the start of the war, the French Prime Minister summed up the view held by almost everyone but Hitler: on the Western Front there is “deadlock. Two Forces of equal strength and the one that attacks seeing such enormous casualties that it cannot move without endangering the continuation of the war or of the aftermath.”<sup>43</sup> The Allies were caught in a dilemma they never fully recognized, let alone solved. On the one hand, they had very high war aims; although unconditional surrender had not yet been adopted, the British had decided from the start that the removal of Hitler was a necessary condition for peace.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, there were no realistic plans or instruments for allowing the Allies to impose their will on the other side. The British Chief of the Imperial General Staff noted, “The French have no intention of carrying out an offensive for years, if at all”; the British were only slightly bolder.<sup>45</sup> So the Allies looked to a long war that would wear the Germans down, cause civilian suffering through shortages, and eventually undermine Hitler. There was little analysis to support this view—and indeed it probably was not supportable—but as long as the defense was dominant and the numbers on each side relatively equal, what else could the Allies do?

To summarize, the security dilemma was much less powerful after World War I than it had been before. In the later period, the expected power of the defense allowed status-quo states to pursue compatible security policies and avoid arms races. Furthermore, high tension and fear of war did not set off short-run dynamics by which each state, trying to increase its security, inadvertently acted to make war more likely. The expected high costs of war, however, led the Allies to believe

<sup>42</sup> Jon Kimche, *The Unfought Battle* (New York: Stein 1968); Nicholas William Bethell, *The War Hitler Won: The Fall of Poland, September 1939* (New York: Holt 1972); Alan Alexandroff and Richard Rosecrance, “Deterrence in 1939,” *World Politics*, xxix (April 1977), 404-24.

<sup>43</sup> Roderick Macleod and Denis Kelly, eds., *Time Unguarded: The Ironside Diaries, 1937-1940* (New York: McKay 1962), 173.

<sup>44</sup> For a short time, as France was falling, the British Cabinet did discuss reaching a negotiated peace with Hitler. The official history ignores this, but it is covered in P.M.H. Bell, *A Certain Eventuality* (Farnborough, England: Saxon House 1974), 40-48.

<sup>45</sup> Macleod and Kelly (fn. 43), 174. In flat contradiction to common sense and almost everything they believed about modern warfare, the Allies planned an expedition to Scandinavia to cut the supply of iron ore to Germany and to aid Finland against the Russians. But the dominant mood was the one described above.

that no sane German leader would run the risks entailed in an attempt to dominate the Continent, and discouraged them from risking war themselves.

*Technology and Geography.* Technology and geography are the two main factors that determine whether the offense or the defense has the advantage. As Brodie notes, "On the tactical level, as a rule, few physical factors favor the attacker but many favor the defender. The defender usually has the advantage of cover. He characteristically fires from behind some form of shelter while his opponent crosses open ground."<sup>46</sup> Anything that increases the amount of ground the attacker has to cross, or impedes his progress across it, or makes him more vulnerable while crossing, increases the advantage accruing to the defense. When states are separated by barriers that produce these effects, the security dilemma is eased, since both can have forces adequate for defense without being able to attack. Impenetrable barriers would actually prevent war; in reality, decision makers have to settle for a good deal less. Buffer zones slow the attacker's progress; they thereby give the defender time to prepare, increase problems of logistics, and reduce the number of soldiers available for the final assault. At the end of the 19th century, Arthur Balfour noted Afghanistan's "non-conducting" qualities. "So long as it possesses few roads, and no railroads, it will be impossible for Russia to make effective use of her great numerical superiority at any point immediately vital to the Empire." The Russians valued buffers for the same reasons; it is not surprising that when Persia was being divided into Russian and British spheres of influence some years later, the Russians sought assurances that the British would refrain from building potentially menacing railroads in their sphere. Indeed, since railroad construction radically altered the abilities of countries to defend themselves and to attack others, many diplomatic notes and much intelligence activity in the late 19th century centered on this subject.<sup>47</sup>

Oceans, large rivers, and mountain ranges serve the same function as buffer zones. Being hard to cross, they allow defense against superior numbers. The defender has merely to stay on his side of the barrier and so can utilize all the men he can bring up to it. The attacker's men, however, can cross only a few at a time, and they are very vulnerable

<sup>46</sup> Brodie (fn. 8), 179.

<sup>47</sup> Arthur Balfour, "Memorandum," Committee on Imperial Defence, April 30, 1903, pp. 2-3; see the telegrams by Sir Arthur Nicolson, in G. P. Gooch and Harold Temperley, eds., *British Documents on the Origins of the War*, Vol. 4 (London: H.M.S.O. 1929), 429, 524. These barriers do not prevent the passage of long-range aircraft; but even in the air, distance usually aids the defender.



when doing so. If all states were self-sufficient islands, anarchy would be much less of a problem. A small investment in shore defenses and a small army would be sufficient to repel invasion. Only very weak states would be vulnerable, and only very large ones could menace others. As noted above, the United States, and to a lesser extent Great Britain, have partly been able to escape from the state of nature because their geographical positions approximated this ideal.

Although geography cannot be changed to conform to borders, borders can and do change to conform to geography. Borders across which an attack is easy tend to be unstable. States living within them are likely to expand or be absorbed. Frequent wars are almost inevitable since attacking will often seem the best way to protect what one has. This process will stop, or at least slow down, when the state's borders reach—by expansion or contraction—a line of natural obstacles. Security without attack will then be possible. Furthermore, these lines constitute salient solutions to bargaining problems and, to the extent that they are barriers to migration, are likely to divide ethnic groups, thereby raising the costs and lowering the incentives for conquest.

Attachment to one's state and its land reinforce one quasi-geographical aid to the defense. Conquest usually becomes more difficult the deeper the attacker pushes into the other's territory. Nationalism spurs the defenders to fight harder; advancing not only lengthens the attacker's supply lines, but takes him through unfamiliar and often devastated lands that require troops for garrison duty. These stabilizing dynamics will not operate, however, if the defender's war materiel is situated near its borders, or if the people do not care about their state, but only about being on the winning side. In such cases, positive feedback will be at work and initial defeats will be insurmountable.<sup>48</sup>

Imitating geography, men have tried to create barriers. Treaties may provide for demilitarized zones on both sides of the border, although such zones will rarely be deep enough to provide more than warning. Even this was not possible in Europe, but the Russians adopted a gauge for their railroads that was broader than that of the neighboring states, thereby complicating the logistics problems of any attacker—including Russia.

Perhaps the most ambitious and at least temporarily successful attempts to construct a system that would aid the defenses of both sides were the interwar naval treaties, as they affected Japanese-American

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, the discussion of warfare among Chinese warlords in Hsi-Sheng Chi, "The Chinese Warlord System as an International System," in Morton Kaplan, ed., *New Approaches to International Relations* (New York: St. Martin's 1968), 405-25.

relations. As mentioned earlier, the problem was that the United States could not defend the Philippines without denying Japan the ability to protect her home islands.<sup>49</sup> (In 1941 this dilemma became insoluble when Japan sought to extend her control to Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. If the Philippines had been invulnerable, they could have provided a secure base from which the U.S. could interdict Japanese shipping between the homeland and the areas she was trying to conquer.) In the 1920's and early 1930's each side would have been willing to grant the other security for its possessions in return for a reciprocal grant, and the Washington Naval Conference agreements were designed to approach this goal. As a Japanese diplomat later put it, their country's "fundamental principle" was to have "a strength insufficient for attack and adequate for defense."<sup>50</sup> Thus, Japan agreed in 1922 to accept a navy only three-fifths as large as that of the United States, and the U.S. agreed not to fortify its Pacific islands.<sup>51</sup> (Japan had earlier been forced to agree not to fortify the islands she had taken from Germany in World War I.) Japan's navy would not be large enough to defeat America's anywhere other than close to the home islands. Although the Japanese could still take the Philippines, not only would they be unable to move farther, but they might be weakened enough by their efforts to be vulnerable to counterattack. Japan, however, gained security. An American attack was rendered more difficult because the American bases were unprotected and because, until 1930, Japan was allowed unlimited numbers of cruisers, destroyers, and submarines that could weaken the American fleet as it made its way across the ocean.<sup>52</sup>

The other major determinant of the offense-defense balance is technology. When weapons are highly vulnerable, they must be employed before they are attacked. Others can remain quite invulnerable in their bases. The former characteristics are embodied in unprotected missiles and many kinds of bombers. (It should be noted that it is not vulnerability *per se* that is crucial, but the location of the vulnerability. Bombers and missiles that are easy to destroy only after having been launched toward their targets do not create destabilizing dynamics.) Incentives to strike first are usually absent for naval forces that are threatened by

<sup>49</sup> Some American decision makers, including military officers, thought that the best way out of the dilemma was to abandon the Philippines.

<sup>50</sup> Quoted in Elting Morrison, *Turmoil and Tradition: A Study of the Life and Times of Henry L. Stimson* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1960), 326.

<sup>51</sup> The U.S. "refused to consider limitations on Hawaiian defenses, since these works posed no threat to Japan." Braisted (fn. 27), 612.

<sup>52</sup> That is part of the reason why the Japanese admirals strongly objected when the civilian leaders decided to accept a seven-to-ten ratio in lighter craft in 1930. Stephen Pelz, *Race to Pearl Harbor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1974), 3.

a naval attack. Like missiles in hardened silos, they are usually well protected when in their bases. Both sides can then simultaneously be prepared to defend themselves successfully.

In ground warfare under some conditions, forts, trenches, and small groups of men in prepared positions can hold off large numbers of attackers. Less frequently, a few attackers can storm the defenses. By and large, it is a contest between fortifications and supporting light weapons on the one hand, and mobility and heavier weapons that clear the way for the attack on the other. As the erroneous views held before the two world wars show, there is no simple way to determine which is dominant. "[T]hese oscillations are not smooth and predictable like those of a swinging pendulum. They are uneven in both extent and time. Some occur in the course of a single battle or campaign, others in the course of a war, still others during a series of wars." Longer-term oscillations can also be detected:

The early Gothic age, from the twelfth to the late thirteenth century, with its wonderful cathedrals and fortified places, was a period during which the attackers in Europe generally met serious and increasing difficulties, because the improvement in the strength of fortresses outran the advance in the power of destruction. Later, with the spread of firearms at the end of the fifteenth century, old fortresses lost their power to resist. An age ensued during which the offense possessed, apart from short-term setbacks, new advantages. Then, during the seventeenth century, especially after about 1660, and until at least the outbreak of the War of the Austrian Succession in 1740, the defense regained much of the ground it had lost since the great medieval fortresses had proved unable to meet the bombardment of the new and more numerous artillery.<sup>53</sup>

Another scholar has continued the argument: "The offensive gained an advantage with new forms of heavy mobile artillery in the nineteenth century, but the stalemate of World War I created the impression that the defense again had an advantage; the German invasion in World War II, however, indicated the offensive superiority of highly mechanized armies in the field."<sup>54</sup>

The situation today with respect to conventional weapons is un-

<sup>53</sup> John Nef, *War and Human Progress* (New York: Norton 1963), 185. Also see *ibid.*, 237, 242-43, and 323; C. W. Oman, *The Art of War in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press 1953), 70-72; John Beeler, *Warfare in Feudal Europe, 730-1200* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press 1971), 212-14; Michael Howard, *War in European History* (London: Oxford University Press 1976), 33-37.

<sup>54</sup> Quincy Wright, *A Study of War* (abridged ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1964), 142. Also see 63-70, 74-75. There are important exceptions to these generalizations—the American Civil War, for instance, falls in the middle of the period Wright says is dominated by the offense.

clear. Until recently it was believed that tanks and tactical air power gave the attacker an advantage. The initial analyses of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war indicated that new anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons have restored the primacy of the defense. These weapons are cheap, easy to use, and can destroy a high proportion of the attacking vehicles and planes that are sighted. It then would make sense for a status-quo power to buy lots of \$20,000 missiles rather than buy a few half-million dollar tanks and multi-million dollar fighter-bombers. Defense would be possible even against a large and well-equipped force; states that care primarily about self-protection would not need to engage in arms races. But further examinations of the new technologies and the history of the October War cast doubt on these optimistic conclusions and leave us unable to render any firm judgment.<sup>55</sup>

Concerning nuclear weapons, it is generally agreed that defense is impossible—a triumph not of the offense, but of deterrence. Attack makes no sense, not because it can be beaten off, but because the attacker will be destroyed in turn. In terms of the questions under consideration here, the result is the equivalent of the primacy of the defense. First, security is relatively cheap. Less than one percent of the G.N.P. is devoted to deterring a direct attack on the United States; most of it is spent on acquiring redundant systems to provide a lot of insurance against the worst conceivable contingencies. Second, both sides can simultaneously gain security in the form of second-strike capability. Third, and related to the foregoing, second-strike capability can be maintained in the face of wide variations in the other side's military posture. There is no purely military reason why each side has to react quickly and strongly to the other's increases in arms. Any spending that the other devotes to trying to achieve first-strike capability can be neutralized by the state's spending much smaller sums on protecting its second-strike capability. Fourth, there are no incentives to strike first in a crisis.

Important problems remain, of course. Both sides have interests that go well beyond defense of the homeland. The protection of these interests creates conflicts even if neither side desires expansion. Furthermore, the shift from defense to deterrence has greatly increased the importance and perceptions of resolve. Security now rests on each side's belief that the other would prefer to run high risks of total destruction rather than sacrifice its vital interests. Aspects of the se-

<sup>55</sup> Geoffrey Kemp, Robert Pfaltzgraff, and Uri Ra'anani, eds., *The Other Arms Race* (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath 1975); James Foster, "The Future of Conventional Arms Control," *Policy Sciences*, No. 8 (Spring 1977), 1-19.

curity dilemma thus appear in a new form. Are weapons procurements used as an index of resolve? Must they be so used? If one side fails to respond to the other's buildup, will it appear weak and thereby invite predation? Can both sides simultaneously have images of high resolve or is there a zero-sum element involved? Although these problems are real, they are not as severe as those in the prenuclear era: there are many indices of resolve, and states do not so much judge images of resolve in the abstract as ask how likely it is that the other will stand firm in a particular dispute. Since states are most likely to stand firm on matters which concern them most, it is quite possible for both to demonstrate their resolve to protect their own security simultaneously.

#### OFFENSE-DEFENSE DIFFERENTIATION

The other major variable that affects how strongly the security dilemma operates is whether weapons and policies that protect the state also provide the capability for attack. If they do not, the basic postulate of the security dilemma no longer applies. A state can increase its own security without decreasing that of others. The advantage of the defense can only ameliorate the security dilemma. A differentiation between offensive and defensive stances comes close to abolishing it. Such differentiation does not mean, however, that all security problems will be abolished. If the offense has the advantage, conquest and aggression will still be possible. And if the offense's advantage is great enough, status-quo powers may find it too expensive to protect themselves by defensive forces and decide to procure offensive weapons even though this will menace others. Furthermore, states will still have to worry that even if the other's military posture shows that it is peaceful now, it may develop aggressive intentions in the future.

Assuming that the defense is at least as potent as the offense, the differentiation between them allows status-quo states to behave in ways that are clearly different from those of aggressors. Three beneficial consequences follow. First, status-quo powers can identify each other, thus laying the foundations for cooperation. Conflicts growing out of the mistaken belief that the other side is expansionist will be less frequent. Second, status-quo states will obtain advance warning when others plan aggression. Before a state can attack, it has to develop and deploy offensive weapons. If procurement of these weapons cannot be disguised and takes a fair amount of time, as it almost always does, a status-quo state will have the time to take countermeas-

ures. It need not maintain a high level of defensive arms as long as its potential adversaries are adopting a peaceful posture. (Although being so armed should not, with the one important exception noted below, alarm other status-quo powers.) States do, in fact, pay special attention to actions that they believe would not be taken by a status-quo state because they feel that states exhibiting such behavior are aggressive. Thus the seizure or development of transportation facilities will alarm others more if these facilities have no commercial value, and therefore can only be wanted for military reasons. In 1906, the British rejected a Russian protest about their activities in a district of Persia by claiming that this area was "only of [strategic] importance [to the Russians] if they wished to attack the Indian frontier, or to put pressure upon us by making us think that they intend to attack it."<sup>56</sup>

The same inferences are drawn when a state acquires more weapons than observers feel are needed for defense. Thus, the Japanese spokesman at the 1930 London naval conference said that his country was alarmed by the American refusal to give Japan a 70 percent ratio (in place of a 60 percent ratio) in heavy cruisers: "As long as America held that ten percent advantage, it was possible for her to attack. So when America insisted on sixty percent instead of seventy percent, the idea would exist that they were trying to keep that possibility, and the Japanese people could not accept that."<sup>57</sup> Similarly, when Mussolini told Chamberlain in January 1939 that Hitler's arms program was motivated by defensive considerations, the Prime Minister replied that "German military forces were now so strong as to make it impossible for any Power or combination of Powers to attack her successfully. She could not want any further armaments for defensive purposes; what then did she want them for?"<sup>58</sup>

Of course these inferences can be wrong—as they are especially likely to be because states underestimate the degree to which they menace others.<sup>59</sup> And when they are wrong, the security dilemma is deepened. Because the state thinks it has received notice that the other is aggressive, its own arms building will be less restrained and the chances of

<sup>56</sup> Richard Challener, *Admirals, Generals, and American Foreign Policy, 1898–1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1973), 273; Grey to Nicolson, in Gooch and Temperley (fn. 47), 414.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in James Crowley, *Japan's Quest for Autonomy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1966), 49. American naval officers agreed with the Japanese that a ten-to-six ratio would endanger Japan's supremacy in her home waters.

<sup>58</sup> E. L. Woodward and R. Butler, eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939*, Third series, III (London: H.M.S.O. 1950), 526.

<sup>59</sup> Jervis (fn. 5), 69–72, 352–55.

cooperation will be decreased. But the dangers of incorrect inferences should not obscure the main point: when offensive and defensive postures are different, much of the uncertainty about the other's intentions that contributes to the security dilemma is removed.

The third beneficial consequence of a difference between offensive and defensive weapons is that if all states support the status quo, an obvious arms control agreement is a ban on weapons that are useful for attacking. As President Roosevelt put it in his message to the Geneva Disarmament Conference in 1933: "If all nations will agree wholly to eliminate from possession and use the weapons which make possible a successful attack, defenses automatically will become impregnable, and the frontiers and independence of every nation will become secure."<sup>60</sup> The fact that such treaties have been rare—the Washington naval agreements discussed above and the anti-ABM treaty can be cited as examples—shows either that states are not always willing to guarantee the security of others, or that it is hard to distinguish offensive from defensive weapons.

Is such a distinction possible? Salvador de Madariaga, the Spanish statesman active in the disarmament negotiations of the interwar years, thought not: "A weapon is either offensive or defensive according to which end of it you are looking at." The French Foreign Minister agreed (although French policy did not always follow this view): "Every arm can be employed offensively or defensively in turn. . . . The only way to discover whether arms are intended for purely defensive purposes or are held in a spirit of aggression is in all cases to enquire into the intentions of the country concerned." Some evidence for the validity of this argument is provided by the fact that much time in these unsuccessful negotiations was devoted to separating offensive from defensive weapons. Indeed, no simple and unambiguous definition is possible and in many cases no judgment can be reached. Before the American entry into World War I, Woodrow Wilson wanted to arm merchantmen only with guns in the back of the ship so they could not initiate a fight, but this expedient cannot be applied to more common forms of armaments.<sup>61</sup>

There are several problems. Even when a differentiation is possible, a status-quo power will want offensive arms under any of three conditions. (1) If the offense has a great advantage over the defense, protection through defensive forces will be too expensive. (2) Status-quo

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in Merze Tate, *The United States and Armaments* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1948), 108.

<sup>61</sup> Boggs (fn. 28), 15, 40.

states may need offensive weapons to regain territory lost in the opening stages of a war. It might be possible, however, for a state to wait to procure these weapons until war seems likely, and they might be needed only in relatively small numbers, unless the aggressor was able to construct strong defenses quickly in the occupied areas. (3) The state may feel that it must be prepared to take the offensive either because the other side will make peace only if it loses territory or because the state has commitments to attack if the other makes war on a third party. As noted above, status-quo states with extensive commitments are often forced to behave like aggressors. Even when they lack such commitments, status-quo states must worry about the possibility that if they are able to hold off an attack, they will still not be able to end the war unless they move into the other's territory to damage its military forces and inflict pain. Many American naval officers after the Civil War, for example, believed that "only by destroying the commerce of the opponent could the United States bring him to terms."<sup>62</sup>

A further complication is introduced by the fact that aggressors as well as status-quo powers require defensive forces as a prelude to acquiring offensive ones, to protect one frontier while attacking another, or for insurance in case the war goes badly. Criminals as well as policemen can use bulletproof vests. Hitler as well as Maginot built a line of forts. Indeed, Churchill reports that in 1936 the German Foreign Minister said: "As soon as our fortifications are constructed [on our western borders] and the countries in Central Europe realize that France cannot enter German territory, all these countries will begin to feel very differently about their foreign policies, and a new constellation will develop."<sup>63</sup> So a state may not necessarily be reassured if its neighbor constructs strong defenses.

More central difficulties are created by the fact that whether a weapon is offensive or defensive often depends on the particular situation—for instance, the geographical setting and the way in which the weapon is used. "Tanks . . . spearheaded the fateful German thrust through the Ardennes in 1940, but if the French had disposed of a properly concentrated armored reserve, it would have provided the best means for their cutting off the penetration and turning into a disaster for the Germans what became instead an overwhelming victory."<sup>64</sup> Anti-aircraft weapons seem obviously defensive—to be used, they must wait

<sup>62</sup> Kenneth Hagan, *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy, 1877-1889* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press 1973), 20.

<sup>63</sup> Winston Churchill, *The Gathering Storm* (Boston: Houghton 1948), 206.

<sup>64</sup> Brodie, *War and Politics* (fn. 35), 325.



for the other side to come to them. But the Egyptian attack on Israel in 1973 would have been impossible without effective air defenses that covered the battlefield. Nevertheless, some distinctions are possible. Sir John Simon, then the British Foreign Secretary, in response to the views cited earlier, stated that just because a fine line could not be drawn, "that was no reason for saying that there were not stretches of territory on either side which all practical men and women knew to be well on this or that side of the line." Although there are almost no weapons and strategies that are useful only for attacking, there are some that are almost exclusively defensive. Aggressors could want them for protection, but a state that relied mostly on them could not menace others. More frequently, we cannot "determine the absolute character of a weapon, but [we can] make a comparison . . . [and] discover whether or not the offensive potentialities predominate, whether a weapon is more useful in attack or in defense."<sup>65</sup>

The essence of defense is keeping the other side out of your territory. A purely defensive weapon is one that can do this without being able to penetrate the enemy's land. Thus a committee of military experts in an interwar disarmament conference declared that armaments "incapable of mobility by means of self-contained power," or movable only after long delay, were "only capable of being used for the defense of a State's territory."<sup>66</sup> The most obvious examples are fortifications. They can shelter attacking forces, especially when they are built right along the frontier,<sup>67</sup> but they cannot occupy enemy territory. A state with only a strong line of forts, fixed guns, and a small army to man them would not be much of a menace. Anything else that can serve only as a barrier against attacking troops is similarly defensive. In this category are systems that provide warning of an attack, the Russian's adoption of a different railroad gauge, and nuclear land mines that can seal off invasion routes.

If total immobility clearly defines a system that is defensive only, limited mobility is unfortunately ambiguous. As noted above, short-range fighter aircraft and anti-aircraft missiles can be used to cover an attack. And, unlike forts, they can advance with the troops. Still, their inability to reach deep into enemy territory does make them more

<sup>65</sup> Boggs (fn. 28), 42, 83. For a good argument about the possible differentiation between offensive and defensive weapons in the 1930's, see Basil Liddell Hart, "Aggression and the Problem of Weapons," *English Review*, Vol. 55 (July 1932), 71-78.

<sup>66</sup> Quoted in Boggs (fn. 28), 39.

<sup>67</sup> On these grounds, the Germans claimed in 1932 that the French forts were offensive (*ibid.*, 49). Similarly, fortified forward naval bases can be necessary for launching an attack; see Braisted (fn. 27), 643.

useful for the defense than for the offense. Thus, the United States and Israel would have been more alarmed in the early 1970's had the Russians provided the Egyptians with long-range instead of short-range aircraft. Naval forces are particularly difficult to classify in these terms, but those that are very short-legged can be used only for coastal defense.

Any forces that for various reasons fight well only when on their own soil in effect lack mobility and therefore are defensive. The most extreme example would be passive resistance. Noncooperation can thwart an aggressor, but it is very hard for large numbers of people to cross the border and stage a sit-in on another's territory. Morocco's recent march on the Spanish Sahara approached this tactic, but its success depended on special circumstances. Similarly, guerrilla warfare is defensive to the extent to which it requires civilian support that is likely to be forthcoming only in opposition to a foreign invasion. Indeed, if guerrilla warfare were easily exportable and if it took ten defenders to destroy each guerrilla, then this weapon would not only be one which could be used as easily to attack the other's territory as to defend one's own, but one in which the offense had the advantage: so the security dilemma would operate especially strongly.

If guerrillas are unable to fight on foreign soil, other kinds of armies may be unwilling to do so. An army imbued with the idea that only defensive wars were just would fight less effectively, if at all, if the goal were conquest. Citizen militias may lack both the ability and the will for aggression. The weapons employed, the short term of service, the time required for mobilization, and the spirit of repelling attacks on the homeland, all lend themselves much more to defense than to attacks on foreign territory.<sup>68</sup>

Less idealistic motives can produce the same result. A leading student of medieval warfare has described the armies of that period as follows: "Assembled with difficulty, insubordinate, unable to maneuver, ready to melt away from its standard the moment that its short period of service was over, a feudal force presented an assemblage of unsoldierlike qualities such as have seldom been known to coexist. Primarily intended to defend its own borders from the Magyar, the Northman, or the Saracen . . . , the institution was utterly unadapted to take the offensive."<sup>69</sup> Some political groupings can be similarly described. In-

<sup>68</sup> The French made this argument in the interwar period; see Richard Challener, *The French Theory of the Nation in Arms* (New York: Columbia University Press 1955), 181-82. The Germans disagreed; see Boggs (fn. 28), 44-45.

<sup>69</sup> Oman (fn. 53), 57-58.

ternational coalitions are more readily held together by fear than by hope of gain. Thus Castlereagh was not being entirely self-serving when in 1816 he argued that the Quadruple Alliance “could only have owed its origin to a sense of common danger; in its very nature it must be conservative; it cannot threaten either the security or the liberties of other States.”<sup>70</sup> It is no accident that most of the major campaigns of expansion have been waged by one dominant nation (for example, Napoleon’s France and Hitler’s Germany), and that coalitions among relative equals are usually found defending the status quo. Most gains from conquest are too uncertain and raise too many questions of future squabbles among the victors to hold an alliance together for long. Although defensive coalitions are by no means easy to maintain—conflicting national objectives and the free-rider problem partly explain why three of them dissolved before Napoleon was defeated—the common interest of seeing that no state dominates provides a strong incentive for solidarity.

Weapons that are particularly effective in reducing fortifications and barriers are of great value to the offense. This is not to deny that a defensive power will want some of those weapons if the other side has them: Brodie is certainly correct to argue that while their tanks allowed the Germans to conquer France, properly used French tanks could have halted the attack. But France would not have needed these weapons if Germany had not acquired them, whereas even if France had no tanks, Germany could not have foregone them since they provided the only chance of breaking through the French lines. Mobile heavy artillery is, similarly, especially useful in destroying fortifications. The defender, while needing artillery to fight off attacking troops or to counterattack, can usually use lighter guns since they do not need to penetrate such massive obstacles. So it is not surprising that one of the few things that most nations at the interwar disarmament conferences were able to agree on was that heavy tanks and mobile heavy guns were particularly valuable to a state planning an attack.<sup>71</sup>

Weapons and strategies that depend for their effectiveness on surprise are almost always offensive. That fact was recognized by some of the delegates to the interwar disarmament conferences and is the principle behind the common national ban on concealed weapons. An earlier representative of this widespread view was the mid-19th-century Philadelphia newspaper that argued: “As a measure of defense, knives, dirks,

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Charles Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, II, 1815–1822 (London: G. Bell and Sons 1963), 510.

<sup>71</sup> Boggs (fn. 28), 14-15, 47-48, 60.

and sword canes are entirely useless. They are fit only for attack, and all such attacks are of murderous character. Whoever carries such a weapon has prepared himself for homicide."<sup>72</sup>

It is, of course, not always possible to distinguish between forces that are most effective for holding territory and forces optimally designed for taking it. Such a distinction could not have been made for the strategies and weapons in Europe during most of the period between the Franco-Prussian War and World War I. Neither naval forces nor tactical air forces can be readily classified in these terms. But the point here is that when such a distinction is possible, the central characteristic of the security dilemma no longer holds, and one of the most troublesome consequences of anarchy is removed.

*Offense-Defense Differentiation and Strategic Nuclear Weapons.* In the interwar period, most statesmen held the reasonable position that weapons that threatened civilians were offensive.<sup>73</sup> But when neither side can protect its civilians, a counter-city posture is defensive because the state can credibly threaten to retaliate only in response to an attack on itself or its closest allies. The costs of this strike are so high that the state could not threaten to use it for the less-than-vital interest of compelling the other to abandon an established position.

In the context of deterrence, offensive weapons are those that provide defense. In the now familiar reversal of common sense, the state that could take its population out of hostage, either by active or passive defense or by destroying the other's strategic weapons on the ground, would be able to alter the status quo. The desire to prevent such a situation was one of the rationales for the anti-ABM agreements; it explains why some arms controllers opposed building ABM's to protect cities, but favored sites that covered ICBM fields. Similarly, many analysts want to limit warhead accuracy and favor multiple re-entry vehicles (MRV's), but oppose multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRV's). The former are more useful than single warheads for penetrating city defenses, and ensure that the state has a second-strike capability. MIRV's enhance counterforce capabilities. Some arms controllers argue that this is also true of cruise missiles, and therefore do not want them to be deployed either. There is some evidence that the Russians are not satisfied with deterrence and are seeking to regain the capability for defense. Such an effort, even if not inspired by aggressive designs, would create a severe security dilemma.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in Philip Jordan, *Frontier Law and Order* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press 1970), 7; also see 16-17.

<sup>73</sup> Boggs (fn. 28), 20, 28.

What is most important for the argument here is that land-based ICBM's are both offensive and defensive, but when both sides rely on Polaris-type systems (SLBM's), offense and defense use different weapons. ICBM's can be used either to destroy the other's cities in retaliation or to initiate hostilities by attacking the other's strategic missiles. Some measures—for instance, hardening of missile sites and warning systems—are purely defensive, since they do not make a first strike easier. Others are predominantly offensive—for instance, passive or active city defenses, and highly accurate warheads. But ICBM's themselves are useful for both purposes. And because states seek a high level of insurance, the desire for protection as well as the contemplation of a counterforce strike can explain the acquisition of extremely large numbers of missiles. So it is very difficult to infer the other's intentions from its military posture. Each side's efforts to increase its own security by procuring more missiles decreases, to an extent determined by the relative efficacy of the offense and the defense, the other side's security. That is not the case when both sides use SLBM's. The point is not that sea-based systems are less vulnerable than land-based ones (this bears on the offense-defense ratio) but that SLBM's are defensive, retaliatory weapons. First, they are probably not accurate enough to destroy many military targets.<sup>74</sup> Second, and more important, SLBM's are not the main instrument of attack against other SLBM's. The hardest problem confronting a state that wants to take its cities out of hostage is to locate the other's SLBM's, a job that requires not SLBM's but anti-submarine weapons. A state might use SLBM's to attack the other's submarines (although other weapons would probably be more efficient), but without anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capability the task cannot be performed. A status-quo state that wanted to forego offensive capability could simply forego ASW research and procurement.

There are two difficulties with this argument, however. First, since the state's SLBM's are potentially threatened by the other's ASW capabilities, the state may want to pursue ASW research in order to know what the other might be able to do and to design defenses. Unless it does this, it cannot be confident that its submarines are safe. Second, because some submarines are designed to attack surface ships, not launch missiles, ASW forces have missions other than taking cities out of hostage. Some U.S. officials plan for a long war in Europe which would require keeping the sea lanes open against Russian submarines. De-

<sup>74</sup> See, however, Desmond Ball, "The Counterforce Potential of American SLBM Systems," *Journal of Peace Research*, xiv (No. 1, 1977), 23-40.

signing an ASW force and strategy that would meet this threat without endangering Soviet SLBM's would be difficult but not impossible, since the two missions are somewhat different.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, the Russians do not need ASW forces to combat submarines carrying out conventional missions; it might be in America's interest to sacrifice the ability to meet a threat that is not likely to materialize in order to reassure the Russians that we are not menacing their retaliatory capability.

When both sides rely on ICBM's, one side's missiles can attack the other's, and so the state cannot be indifferent to the other's building program. But because one side's SLBM's do not menace the other's, each side can build as many as it wants and the other need not respond. Each side's decision on the size of its force depends on technical questions, its judgment about how much destruction is enough to deter, and the amount of insurance it is willing to pay for—and these considerations are independent of the size of the other's strategic force. Thus the crucial nexus in the arms race is severed.

Here two objections not only can be raised but have been, by those who feel that even if American second-strike capability is in no danger, the United States must respond to a Soviet buildup. First, the relative numbers of missiles and warheads may be used as an index of each side's power and will. Even if there is no military need to increase American arms as the Russians increase theirs, a failure to respond may lead third parties to think that the U.S. has abandoned the competition with the U.S.S.R. and is no longer willing to pay the price of world leadership. Furthermore, if either side believes that nuclear "superiority" matters, then, through the bargaining logic, it will matter. The side with "superiority" will be more likely to stand firm in a confrontation if it thinks its "stronger" military position helps it, or if it thinks that the other thinks its own "weaker" military position is a handicap. To allow the other side to have more SLBM's—even if one's own second-strike capability is unimpaired—will give the other an advantage that can be translated into political gains.

The second objection is that superiority *does* matter, and not only because of mistaken beliefs. If nuclear weapons are used in an all-or-none fashion, then all that is needed is second-strike capability. But limited, gradual, and controlled strikes are possible. If the other side has superiority, it can reduce the state's forces by a slow-motion war

<sup>75</sup> Richard Garwin, "Anti-Submarine Warfare and National Security," *Scientific American*, Vol. 227 (July 1972), 14-25.

of attrition. For the state to strike at the other's cities would invite retaliation; for it to reply with a limited counterforce attack would further deplete its supply of missiles. Alternatively, the other could employ demonstration attacks—such as taking out an isolated military base or exploding a warhead high over a city—in order to demonstrate its resolve. In either of these scenarios, the state will suffer unless it matches the other's arms posture.<sup>76</sup>

These two objections, if valid, mean that even with SLBM's one cannot distinguish offensive from defensive strategic nuclear weapons. Compellence may be more difficult than deterrence,<sup>77</sup> but if decision makers believe that numbers of missiles or of warheads influence outcomes, or if these weapons can be used in limited manner, then the posture and policy that would be needed for self-protection is similar to that useful for aggression. If the second objection has merit, security would require the ability to hit selected targets on the other side, enough ammunition to wage a controlled counterforce war, and the willingness to absorb limited countervalue strikes. Secretary Schlesinger was correct in arguing that this capability would not constitute a first-strike capability. But because the "Schlesinger Doctrine" could be used not only to cope with a parallel Russian policy, but also to support an American attempt to change the status quo, the new American stance would decrease Russian security. Even if the U.S.S.R. were reassured that the present U.S. Government lacked the desire or courage to do this, there could be no guarantee that future governments would not use the new instruments for expansion. Once we move away from the simple idea that nuclear weapons can only be used for all-out strikes, half the advantage of having both sides rely on a sea-based force would disappear because of the lack of an offensive-defensive differentiation. To the extent that military policy affects political relations, it would be harder for the United States and the Soviet Union to cooperate even if both supported the status quo.

Although a full exploration of these questions is beyond the scope of this paper, it should be noted that the objections rest on decision makers' beliefs—beliefs, furthermore, that can be strongly influenced by American policy and American statements. The perceptions of third

<sup>76</sup> The latter scenario, however, does not require that the state closely match the number of missiles the other deploys.

<sup>77</sup> Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1966), 69-78. Schelling's arguments are not entirely convincing, however. For further discussion, see Jervis, "Deterrence Theory Re-Visited," Working Paper No. 14, UCLA Program in Arms Control and International Security.

nations of whether the details of the nuclear balance affect political conflicts—and, to a lesser extent, Russian beliefs about whether superiority is meaningful—are largely derived from the American strategic debate. If most American spokesmen were to take the position that a secure second-strike capability was sufficient and that increments over that (short of a first-strike capability) would only be a waste of money, it is doubtful whether America's allies or the neutrals would judge the superpowers' useful military might or political will by the size of their stockpiles. Although the Russians stress war-fighting ability, they have not contended that marginal increases in strategic forces bring political gains; any attempt to do so could be rendered less effective by an American assertion that this is nonsense. The bargaining advantages of possessing nuclear "superiority" work best when both sides acknowledge them. If the "weaker" side convinces the other that it does not believe there is any meaningful difference in strength, then the "stronger" side cannot safely stand firm because there is no increased chance that the other will back down.

This kind of argument applies at least as strongly to the second objection. Neither side can employ limited nuclear options unless it is quite confident that the other accepts the rules of the game. For if the other believes that nuclear war cannot be controlled, it will either refrain from responding—which would be fine—or launch all-out retaliation. Although a state might be ready to engage in limited nuclear war without acknowledging this possibility—and indeed, that would be a reasonable policy for the United States—it is not likely that the other would have sufficient faith in that prospect to initiate limited strikes unless the state had openly avowed its willingness to fight this kind of war. So the United States, by patiently and consistently explaining that it considers such ideas to be mad and that any nuclear wars will inevitably get out of control, could gain a large measure of protection against the danger that the Soviet Union might seek to employ a "Schlesinger Doctrine" against an America that lacked the military ability or political will to respond in kind. Such a position is made more convincing by the inherent implausibility of the arguments for the possibility of a limited nuclear war.

In summary, as long as states believe that all that is needed is second-strike capability, then the differentiation between offensive and defensive forces that is provided by reliance on SLBM's allows each side to increase its security without menacing the other, permits some inferences about intentions to be drawn from military posture, and removes the main incentive for status-quo powers to engage in arms races.



IV. FOUR WORLDS

The two variables we have been discussing—whether the offense or the defense has the advantage, and whether offensive postures can be distinguished from defensive ones—can be combined to yield four possible worlds.

	OFFENSE HAS THE ADVANTAGE	DEFENSE HAS THE ADVANTAGE
OFFENSIVE POSTURE NOT DISTINGUISHABLE FROM DEFENSIVE ONE	<b>1</b> Doubly dangerous	<b>2</b> Security dilemma, but security requirements may be compatible.
OFFENSIVE POSTURE DISTINGUISHABLE FROM DEFENSIVE ONE	<b>3</b> No security dilemma, but aggression possible. Status-quo states can follow different policy than aggressors. Warning given.	<b>4</b> Doubly stable

The first world is the worst for status-quo states. There is no way to get security without menacing others, and security through defense is terribly difficult to obtain. Because offensive and defensive postures are the same, status-quo states acquire the same kind of arms that are sought by aggressors. And because the offense has the advantage over the defense, attacking is the best route to protecting what you have; status-quo states will therefore behave like aggressors. The situation will be unstable. Arms races are likely. Incentives to strike first will turn crises into wars. Decisive victories and conquests will be common. States will grow and shrink rapidly, and it will be hard for any state to maintain its size and influence without trying to increase them. Cooperation among status-quo powers will be extremely hard to achieve.

There are no cases that totally fit this picture, but it bears more than a passing resemblance to Europe before World War I. Britain and Germany, although in many respects natural allies, ended up as enemies. Of course much of the explanation lies in Germany's ill-chosen policy. And from the perspective of our theory, the powers' ability to avoid war in a series of earlier crises cannot be easily explained. Nevertheless, much of the behavior in this period was the product of technology and beliefs

that magnified the security dilemma. Decision makers thought that the offense had a big advantage and saw little difference between offensive and defensive military postures. The era was characterized by arms races. And once war seemed likely, mobilization races created powerful incentives to strike first.

In the nuclear era, the first world would be one in which each side relied on vulnerable weapons that were aimed at similar forces and each side understood the situation. In this case, the incentives to strike first would be very high—so high that status-quo powers as well as aggressors would be sorely tempted to pre-empt. And since the forces could be used to change the status quo as well as to preserve it, there would be no way for both sides to increase their security simultaneously. Now the familiar logic of deterrence leads both sides to see the dangers in this world. Indeed, the new understanding of this situation was one reason why vulnerable bombers and missiles were replaced. Ironically, the 1950's would have been more hazardous if the decision makers had been aware of the dangers of their posture and had therefore felt greater pressure to strike first. This situation could be recreated if both sides were to rely on MIRVed ICBM's.

In the second world, the security dilemma operates because offensive and defensive postures cannot be distinguished; but it does not operate as strongly as in the first world because the defense has the advantage, and so an increment in one side's strength increases its security more than it decreases the other's. So, if both sides have reasonable subjective security requirements, are of roughly equal power, and the variables discussed earlier are favorable, it is quite likely that status-quo states can adopt compatible security policies. Although a state will not be able to judge the other's intentions from the kinds of weapons it procures, the level of arms spending will give important evidence. Of course a state that seeks a high level of arms might be not an aggressor but merely an insecure state, which if conciliated will reduce its arms, and if confronted will reply in kind. To assume that the apparently excessive level of arms indicates aggressiveness could therefore lead to a response that would deepen the dilemma and create needless conflict. But empathy and skillful statesmanship can reduce this danger. Furthermore, the advantageous position of the defense means that a status-quo state can often maintain a high degree of security with a level of arms lower than that of its expected adversary. Such a state demonstrates that it lacks the ability or desire to alter the status quo, at least at the present time. The strength of the defense also allows states to

react slowly and with restraint when they fear that others are menacing them. So, although status-quo powers will to some extent be threatening to others, that extent will be limited.

This world is the one that comes closest to matching most periods in history. Attacking is usually harder than defending because of the strength of fortifications and obstacles. But purely defensive postures are rarely possible because fortifications are usually supplemented by armies and mobile guns which can support an attack. In the nuclear era, this world would be one in which both sides relied on relatively invulnerable ICBM's and believed that limited nuclear war was impossible. Assuming no MIRV's, it would take more than one attacking missile to destroy one of the adversary's. Pre-emption is therefore unattractive. If both sides have large inventories, they can ignore all but drastic increases on the other side. A world of either ICBM's or SLBM's in which both sides adopted the "Schlesinger Doctrine" would probably fit in this category too. The means of preserving the status quo would also be the means of changing it, as we discussed earlier. And the defense usually would have the advantage, because compellence is more difficult than deterrence. Although a state might succeed in changing the status quo on issues that matter much more to it than to others, status-quo powers could deter major provocations under most circumstances.

In the third world there may be no security dilemma, but there are security problems. Because states can procure defensive systems that do not threaten others, the dilemma need not operate. But because the offense has the advantage, aggression is possible, and perhaps easy. If the offense has enough of an advantage, even a status-quo state may take the initiative rather than risk being attacked and defeated. If the offense has less of an advantage, stability and cooperation are likely because the status-quo states will procure defensive forces. They need not react to others who are similarly armed, but can wait for the warning they would receive if others started to deploy offensive weapons. But each state will have to watch the others carefully, and there is room for false suspicions. The costliness of the defense and the allure of the offense can lead to unnecessary mistrust, hostility, and war, unless some of the variables discussed earlier are operating to restrain defection.

A hypothetical nuclear world that would fit this description would be one in which both sides relied on SLBM's, but in which ASW techniques were very effective. Offense and defense would be different, but

the former would have the advantage. This situation is not likely to occur; but if it did, a status-quo state could show its lack of desire to exploit the other by refraining from threatening its submarines. The desire to have more protecting you than merely the other side's fear of retaliation is a strong one, however, and a state that knows that it would not expand even if its cities were safe is likely to believe that the other would not feel threatened by its ASW program. It is easy to see how such a world could become unstable, and how spirals of tensions and conflict could develop.

The fourth world is doubly safe. The differentiation between offensive and defensive systems permits a way out of the security dilemma; the advantage of the defense disposes of the problems discussed in the previous paragraphs. There is no reason for a status-quo power to be tempted to procure offensive forces, and aggressors give notice of their intentions by the posture they adopt. Indeed, if the advantage of the defense is great enough, there are no security problems. The loss of the ultimate form of the power to alter the status quo would allow greater scope for the exercise of nonmilitary means and probably would tend to freeze the distribution of values.

This world would have existed in the first decade of the 20th century if the decision makers had understood the available technology. In that case, the European powers would have followed different policies both in the long run and in the summer of 1914. Even Germany, facing powerful enemies on both sides, could have made herself secure by developing strong defenses. France could also have made her frontier almost impregnable. Furthermore, when crises arose, no one would have had incentives to strike first. There would have been no competitive mobilization races reducing the time available for negotiations.

In the nuclear era, this world would be one in which the superpowers relied on SLBM's, ASW technology was not up to its task, and limited nuclear options were not taken seriously. We have discussed this situation earlier; here we need only add that, even if our analysis is correct and even if the policies and postures of both sides were to move in this direction, the problem of violence below the nuclear threshold would remain. On issues other than defense of the homeland, there would still be security dilemmas and security problems. But the world would nevertheless be safer than it has usually been.

## 4η Συνάντηση

### «Ο Θουκυδίδης και ο Ηγεμονικός Πόλεμος»

Στην 4<sup>η</sup> συνάντηση θα παρουσιασθεί η διάσταση του Ηγεμονικού Πολέμου υπό τη συνθήκη του θεωρητικού επηρεασμού της θουκυδίδειας προσέγγισης. Τα κεντρικά ερωτήματα που θα αναλυθούν είναι:

Ποια τα κύρια χαρακτηριστικά του Ηγεμονικού Πολέμου; Ποια δεδομένα καθιστούν τον Ηγεμονικό Πόλεμο διακριτό από άλλα είδη πολέμου; Ποιοι οι στόχοι ενός Ηγεμονικού Πολέμου;

#### **Θέμα Εργασίας:**

«Ο Ηγεμονικός Πόλεμος ως έννοια και πρακτική: Αναλύστε τις πολιτικές διαστάσεις του φαινομένου σε ενδοκρατικό και διακρατικό επίπεδο.»



**the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the editors of *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History***

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The Theory of Hegemonic War

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Robert Gilpin

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**The Theory of Hegemonic War** In the introduction to his history of the great war between the Spartans and the Athenians, Thucydides wrote that he was addressing “those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past as an aid to the interpretation of the future, which in the course of human things must resemble if it does not reflect it. . . . In fine, I have written my work, not as an essay which is to win the applause of the moment, but as a possession for all time.”<sup>1</sup> Thucydides, assuming that the behavior and phenomena that he observed would repeat themselves throughout human history, intended to reveal the underlying and unalterable nature of what is today called international relations.

In the language of contemporary social science, Thucydides believed that he had uncovered the general law of the dynamics of international relations. Although differences exist between Thucydides’ conceptions of scientific law and methodology and those of present-day students of international relations, it is significant that Thucydides was the first to set forth the idea that the dynamic of international relations is provided by the differential growth of power among states. This fundamental idea—that the uneven growth of power among states is the driving force of international relations—can be identified as the theory of hegemonic war.

This essay argues that Thucydides’ theory of hegemonic war constitutes one of the central organizing ideas for the study of international relations. The following pages examine and evaluate Thucydides’ theory of hegemonic war and contemporary variations of that theory. To carry out this task, it is necessary to make Thucydides’ ideas more systematic, expose his basic assumptions, and understand his analytical method. Subsequently, this article

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1 Thucydides (trans. John H. Finley, Jr.), *The Peloponnesian War* (New York, 1951), 14–15.

discusses whether or not Thucydides' conception of international relations has proved to be a "possession for all time." Does it help explain wars in the modern era? How, if at all, has it been modified by more modern scholarship? What is its relevance for the contemporary nuclear age?

**THUCYDIDES' THEORY OF HEGEMONIC WAR** The essential idea embodied in Thucydides' theory of hegemonic war is that fundamental changes in the international system are the basic determinants of such wars. The structure of the system or distribution of power among the states in the system can be stable or unstable. A stable system is one in which changes can take place if they do not threaten the vital interests of the dominant states and thereby cause a war among them. In his view, such a stable system has an unequivocal hierarchy of power and an unchallenged dominant or hegemonic power. An unstable system is one in which economic, technological, and other changes are eroding the international hierarchy and undermining the position of the hegemonic state. In this latter situation, untoward events and diplomatic crises can precipitate a hegemonic war among the states in the system. The outcome of such a war is a new international structure.

Three propositions are embedded in this brief summary of the theory. The first is that a hegemonic war is distinct from other categories of war; it is caused by broad changes in political, strategic, and economic affairs. The second is that the relations among individual states can be conceived as a system; the behavior of states is determined in large part by their strategic interaction. The third is that a hegemonic war threatens and transforms the structure of the international system; whether or not the participants in the conflict are initially aware of it, at stake is the hierarchy of power and relations among states in the system. Thucydides' conception and all subsequent formulations of the theory of hegemonic war emerge from these three propositions.

Such a structural theory of war can be contrasted with an escalation theory of war. According to this latter theory, as Waltz has argued in *Man, the State, and War*, war occurs because of the simple fact that there is nothing to stop it.<sup>2</sup> In the anarchy of the

2 Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York, 1959).



international system, statesmen make decisions and respond to the decisions of others. This action–reaction process in time can lead to situations in which statesmen deliberately provoke a war or lose control over events and eventually find themselves propelled into a war. In effect, one thing leads to another until war is the consequence of the interplay of foreign policies.

Most wars are the consequence of such an escalatory process. They are not causally related to structural features of the international system, but rather are due to the distrust and uncertainty that characterizes relations among states in what Waltz has called a self-help system.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the history of ancient times, which introduces Thucydides' history, is a tale of constant warring. However, the Peloponnesian War, he tells us, is different and worthy of special attention because of the massive accumulation of power in Hellas and its implications for the structure of the system. This great war and its underlying causes were the focus of his history.

Obviously, these two theories do not necessarily contradict one another; each can be used to explain different wars. But what interested Thucydides was a particular type of war, what he called a great war and what this article calls a hegemonic war—a war in which the overall structure of an international system is at issue. The structure of the international system at the outbreak of such a war is a necessary, but not a sufficient cause of the war. The theory of hegemonic war and international change that is examined below refers to those wars that arise from the specific structure of an international system and in turn transform that structure.

*Assumptions of the Theory* Underlying Thucydides' view that he had discovered the basic mechanism of a great or hegemonic war was his conception of human nature. He believed that human nature was unchanging and therefore the events recounted in his history would be repeated in the future. Since human beings are driven by three fundamental passions—interest, pride, and, above all else, fear—they always seek to increase their wealth and power until other humans, driven by like passions, try to stop them. Although advances in political knowledge could contribute to an understanding of this process, they could not control or

3 *Idem, Theory of International Relations* (Reading, Mass., 1979).

arrest it. Even advances in knowledge, technology, or economic development would not change the fundamental nature of human behavior or of international relations. On the contrary, increases in human power, wealth, and technology would serve only to intensify conflict among social groups and enhance the magnitude of war. Thucydides the realist, in contrast to Plato the idealist, believed that reason would not transform human beings, but would always remain the slave of human passions. Thus, uncontrollable passions would again and again generate great conflicts like the one witnessed in his history.

*Methodology* One can understand Thucydides' argument and his belief that he had uncovered the underlying dynamics of international relations and the role of hegemonic war in international change only if one comprehends his conception of science and his view of what constituted explanation. Modern students of international relations and of social science tend to put forth theoretical physics as their model of analysis and explanation; they analyze phenomena in terms of causation and of models linking independent and dependent variables. In modern physics, meaningful propositions must, at least in principle, be falsifiable—that is, they must give rise to predictions that can be shown to be false.

Thucydides, by contrast, took as his model of analysis and explanation the method of Hippocrates, the great Greek physician.<sup>4</sup> Disease, the Hippocratic school argued, had to be understood as a consequence of the operation of natural forces and not as a manifestation of some supernatural influence. Through dispassionate observation of the symptoms and the course of a disease, one could understand its nature. Thus, one explained a disease by recognizing its characteristics and charting its development from its genesis through inevitable periods of crisis to its final resolution in recovery or death. What was central to this mode of explanation was the evolution of the symptoms and the manifestations of the disease rather than the search for the underlying causes sought by modern medicine.

Thucydides wrote his history to fulfill the same prognostic purpose, namely, to recognize that great wars were recurrent phenomena with characteristic manifestations. A great or hege-

4 W. Robert Connor, *Thucydides* (Princeton, 1984), 27.

monic war, like a disease, displays discernible symptoms and follows an inevitable course. The initial phase is a relatively stable international system characterized by a hierarchical ordering of the states in the system. Over time the power of a subordinate state begins to grow disproportionately, and that rising state comes into conflict with the dominant or hegemonic state in the system. The ensuing struggle between these two states and their respective allies leads to a bipolarization of the system, to an inevitable crisis, and eventually to a hegemonic war. Finally, there is the resolution of the war in favor of one side and the establishment of a new international system that reflects the emergent distribution of power in the system.

The dialectical conception of political change implicit in his model was borrowed from contemporary Sophist thinkers. This method of analysis postulated a thesis, its contradiction or antithesis, and a resolution in the form of a synthesis. In his history this dialectic approach can be discerned as follows:

- (1) The *thesis* is the hegemonic state, in this case, Sparta, which organizes the international system in terms of its political, economic, and strategic interests.
- (2) The *antithesis* or contradiction in the system is the growing power of the challenging state, Athens, whose expansion and efforts to transform the international system bring it into conflict with the hegemonic state.
- (3) The *synthesis* is the new international system that results from the inevitable clash between the dominant state and the rising challenger.

Similarly, Thucydides foresaw that throughout history new states like Sparta and challenging states like Athens would arise and the hegemonic cycle would repeat itself.

*Conception of Systemic Change* Underlying this analysis and the originality of Thucydides' thought was his novel conception of classical Greece as constituting a system, the basic components of which were the great powers—Sparta and Athens. Foreshadowing later realist formulations of international relations, he believed that the structure of the system was provided by the distribution of power among states; the hierarchy of power among these states defined and maintained the system and determined the relative prestige of states, their spheres of influence, and their

political relations. The hierarchy of power and related elements thus gave order and stability to the system.

Accordingly, international political change involved a transformation of the hierarchy of the states in the system and the patterns of relations dependent upon that hierarchy. Although minor changes could occur and lesser states could move up and down this hierarchy without necessarily disturbing the stability of the system, the positioning of the great powers was crucial. Thus, as he tells us, it was the increasing power of the second most powerful state in the system, Athens, that precipitated the conflict and brought about what I have elsewhere called systemic change, that is, a change in the hierarchy or control of the international political system.<sup>5</sup>

Searching behind appearances for the reality of international relations, Thucydides believed that he had found the true causes of the Peloponnesian War, and by implication of systemic change, in the phenomenon of the uneven growth of power among the dominant states in the system. "The real cause," he concluded in the first chapter, "I consider to be the one which was formally most kept out of sight. The growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Lacedaemon [Sparta], made war inevitable."<sup>6</sup> In a like fashion and in future ages, he reasoned, the differential growth of power in a state system would undermine the status quo and lead to hegemonic war between declining and rising powers.

In summary, according to Thucydides, a great or hegemonic war, like a disease, follows a discernible and recurrent course. The initial phase is a relatively stable international system characterized by a hierarchical ordering of states with a dominant or hegemonic power. Over time, the power of one subordinate state begins to grow disproportionately; as this development occurs, it comes into conflict with the hegemonic state. The struggle between these contenders for preeminence and their accumulating alliances leads to a bipolarization of the system. In the parlance of game theory, the system becomes a zero-sum situation in which one side's gain is by necessity the other side's loss. As this bipolarization occurs the system becomes increasingly unstable, and a

5 Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York, 1981), 40.

6 Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, 15.

small event can trigger a crisis and precipitate a major conflict; the resolution of that conflict will determine the new hegemon and the hierarchy of power in the system.

*The Causes of Hegemonic War* Following this model, Thucydides began his history of the war between the Spartans and the Athenians by stating why, at its very inception, he believed that the war would be a great war and thus worthy of special attention. Contrasting the beginnings of the Peloponnesian War to the constant warring of the Greeks, he began in the introduction to analyze the unprecedented growth of power in Hellas from ancient times to the outbreak of the war. Although, as we have already noted, Thucydides did not think of causes in the modern or scientific sense of the term, his analysis of the factors that altered the distribution of power in ancient Greece, and ultimately accounted for the war, is remarkably modern.

The first set of factors to explain the rise of power in Athens and the expansion of the Athenian empire contained geographical and demographic elements. Because of the poverty of its soil, Attica (the region surrounding Athens) was not envied by any other peoples; it enjoyed freedom from conflict. As a consequence, "the most powerful victims of war or faction from the rest of Hellas took refuge with the Athenians as a safe retreat," became naturalized, and swelled the population.<sup>7</sup> With an increase in population Attica became too small to sustain its growing numbers, and Athens began to send out colonies to other parts of Greece. Athens itself turned to commerce to feed her expanding population and became the "workshop of ancient Greece," exporting manufactured products and commodities in exchange for grain. Thus, Athens began its imperial career from demographic pressure and economic necessity.

The second set of influences was economic and technological: the Greek, and especially the Athenian, mastery of naval power, which had facilitated the expansion of commerce among the Greek states and the establishment of the hegemony of Hellas in the Eastern Mediterranean. After the defeat of Troy, Thucydides tells us, Hellas attained "the quiet which must precede growth" as the Greeks turned to commerce and the acquisition of wealth. Although Athens and other seafaring cities grew "in revenue and

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

in dominion,” there was no great concentration of power in Hellas prior to the war with Persia: “There was no union of subject cities round a great state, no spontaneous combination of equals for confederate expeditions; what fighting there was consisted merely of local warfare between rival neighbours.”<sup>8</sup> The technical innovation of naval power, the introduction into Greece of fortification techniques, and the rise of financial power associated with commerce, however, made possible an unprecedented concentration of military and economic power. These developments, by transforming the basis of military power, created the conditions for the forging of substantial alliances, a profound shift in the power balance, and the creation of large seaborne empires. In this novel environment, states interacted more intimately, and an interdependent international economic and political system took shape. These military, technological, and economic changes were to favor the growth of Athenian power.

The final factor leading to the war was political: the rise of the Athenian empire at the conclusion of the war with Persia. That war and its aftermath stimulated the growth of Athenian power at the same time that the war and its aftermath encouraged Sparta, the reigning hegemon and the leader of the Greeks in their war against the Persians, to retreat into isolation. With the rise of a wealthy commercial class in Athens, the traditional form of government—a hereditary monarchy—was overthrown, and a new governing elite representing the rising and enterprising commercial class was established; its interest lay with commerce and imperial expansion. While the Athenians grew in power through commerce and empire, the Spartans fell behind and found themselves increasingly encircled by the expanding power of the Athenians.

As a consequence of these developments, the Greeks anticipated the approach of a great war and began to choose sides. In time, the international system divided into two great blocs. “At the head of the one stood Athens, at the head of the other Lacedaemon, one the first naval, the other the first military power in Hellas.”<sup>9</sup> The former—commercial, democratic, and expansionist—began to evoke alarm in the more conservative Spartans. In

8 *Ibid.*, 9, 11.

9 *Ibid.*, 12.

this increasingly bipolar and unstable world a series of diplomatic encounters, beginning at Epidamnus and culminating in the Megara Decree and the Spartan ultimatum, were to plunge the rival alliances into war. In order to prevent the dynamic and expanding Athenians from overturning the international balance of power and displacing them as the hegemonic state, the Spartans eventually delivered an ultimatum that forced Athens to declare war.

In brief, it was the combination of significant environmental changes and the contrasting natures of the Athenian and Spartan societies that precipitated the war. Although the underlying causes of the war can be traced to geographical, economic, and technological factors, the major determinant of the foreign policies of the two protagonists was the differing character of their domestic regimes. Athens was a democracy; its people were energetic, daring, and commercially disposed; its naval power, financial resources, and empire were expanding. Sparta, the traditional hegemon of the Hellenes, was a slavocracy; its foreign policy was conservative and attentive merely to the narrow interests of preserving its domestic status quo. Having little interest in commerce or overseas empire, it gradually declined relative to its rival. In future ages, in Thucydides' judgment, situations similar to that of Athens and Sparta would arise, and this fateful process would repeat itself eternally.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THUCYDIDES' MODEL      Thucydides' history and the pattern that it reveals have fascinated students of international relations in all eras. Individuals of every political persuasion from realist to idealist to Marxist have claimed kinship to him. At critical moments scholars and statesmen have seen their own times reflected in his account of the conflict between democratic Athens and undemocratic Sparta. The American Civil War, World War I, and the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union have been cast in its light. In a similar vein, Mackinder and other political geographers have interpreted world history as the recurrent struggle between landpower (Sparta, Rome, and Great Britain) and seapower (Athens, Carthage, and Germany) and have observed that a great or hegemonic war has taken place and transformed world affairs approximately every 100 years. The writings of Wright and Toynbee on general war are cast in a similar vein. The Marxist theory of intra-capitalist

wars can be viewed as a subcategory of Thucydides' more general theory. More recently, a number of social scientists have revived the concept of hegemonic war. The "power transition theory" of Organski, Modelski's theory of long cycles and global war, and the present writer's book on international change are examples of elaborations of Thucydides' fundamental insights into the dynamics of international relations.<sup>10</sup> Although these variations and extensions of Thucydides' basic model raise many interesting issues, they are too numerous and complex to be discussed here. Instead, the emphasis will be on the contribution of Thucydides' theory, its applicability to modern history, and its continuing relevance for international relations.

The theory's fundamental contribution is the conception of hegemonic war itself and the importance of hegemonic wars for the dynamics of international relations. The expression hegemonic war may have been coined by Aron; certainly he has provided an excellent definition of what Thucydides called a great war. Describing World War I as a hegemonic war, Aron writes that such a war "is characterized less by its immediate causes or its explicit purposes than by its extent and the stakes involved. It affect[s] all the political units inside one system of relations between sovereign states. Let us call it, for want of a better term, a war of hegemony, hegemony being, if not the conscious motive, at any rate the inevitable consequence of the victory of at least one of the states or groups." Thus, the outcome of a hegemonic war, according to Aron, is the transformation of the structure of the system of interstate relations.<sup>11</sup>

In more precise terms, one can distinguish a hegemonic war in terms of its scale, the objectives at stake, and the means employed to achieve those objectives. A hegemonic war generally involves all of the states in the system; it is a world war. Whatever

10 Halford J. Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History," in Anthony J. Pearce (ed.), *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (New York, 1962), 1-2; Quincy Wright, *A Study of War* (Chicago, 1942); Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (London, 1961), III, IV; Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (New York, 1939). See, for example, A. F. K. Organski, *World Politics* (New York, 1968; 2nd ed.); Organski and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger* (Chicago, 1980); George Modelski (ed.), *Exploring Long Cycles* (Boulder, 1987); Gilpin, *War and Change*.

11 Raymond Aron, "War and Industrial Society," in Leon Bramson and George W. Goethals (eds.), *War—Studies from Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology* (New York, 1964), 359.



the immediate and conscious motives of the combatants, as Aron points out, the fundamental issues to be decided are the leadership and structure of the international system. Its outcome also profoundly affects the internal composition of societies because, as the behavior of Athens and Sparta revealed, the victor remolds the vanquished in its image. Such wars are at once political, economic, and ideological struggles. Because of the scope of the war and the importance of the issues to be decided, the means employed are usually unlimited. In Clausewitzian terms, they become pure conflicts or clashes of society rather than the pursuit of limited policy objectives.

Thus, in the Peloponnesian War the whole of Hellas became engaged in an internecine struggle to determine the economic and political future of the Greek world. Although the initial objectives of the two alliances were limited, the basic issue in the contest became the structure and leadership of the emerging international system and not merely the fate of particular city-states. Ideological disputes, that is, conflicting views over the organization of domestic societies, were also at the heart of the struggle; democratic Athens and aristocratic Sparta sought to reorder other societies in terms of their own political values and socioeconomic systems. As Thucydides tells us in his description of the leveling and decimation of Melos, there were no constraints on the means employed to reach their goals. The war released forces of which the protagonists had previously been unaware; it took a totally unanticipated course. As the Athenians had warned the Spartans in counseling them against war, “consider the vast influence of accident in war, before you are engaged in it.”<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, neither rival anticipated that the war would leave both sides exhausted and thereby open the way to Macedonian imperialism.

The central idea embodied in the hegemonic theory is that there is incompatibility between crucial elements of the existing international system and the changing distribution of power among the states within the system. The elements of the system—the hierarchy of prestige, the division of territory, and the international economy—became less and less compatible with the shifting distribution of power among the major states in the system. The resolution of the disequilibrium between the super-

12 Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, 45.

structure of the system and the underlying distribution of power is found in the outbreak and intensification of what becomes a hegemonic war.

The theory does not necessarily concern itself with whether the declining or rising state is responsible for the war. In fact, identification of the initiator of a particular war is frequently impossible to ascertain and authorities seldom agree. When did the war actually begin? What actions precipitated it? Who committed the first hostile act? In the case of the Peloponnesian War, for example, historians differ over whether Athens or Sparta initiated the war. Whereas most regard the Megara decree issued by Athens as the precipitating cause of the war, one can just as easily argue that the decree was the first act of a war already begun by Sparta and its allies.

Nor does the theory address the question of the explicit consequences of the war. Both the declining and rising protagonists may suffer and a third party may be the ultimate victor. Frequently, the chief beneficiary is, in fact, a rising peripheral power not directly engaged in the conflict. In the case of the Peloponnesian War, the war paved the way for Macedonian imperialism to triumph over the Greeks. In brief, the theory makes no prediction regarding the consequences of the war. What the theory postulates instead is that the system is ripe for a fundamental transformation because of profound ongoing changes in the international distribution of power and the larger economic and technological environment. This is not to suggest that the historic change produced by the war must be in some sense progressive; it may, as happened in the Peloponnesian War, weaken and eventually bring an end to one of mankind's most glorious civilizations.

Underlying the outbreak of a hegemonic war is the idea that the basis of power and social order is undergoing a fundamental transformation. Halévy must have had something like this conception of political change in mind when, in analyzing the causes of World War I, he wrote that "it is thus apparent why all great convulsions in the history of the world, and more particularly in modern Europe, have been at the same time wars and revolutions. The Thirty Years' War was at once a revolutionary crisis, a conflict, within Germany, between the rival parties of Protestants and Catholics, and an international war between the Holy Roman

Empire, Sweden, and France.”<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Halévy continues, the wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon as well as World War I must be seen as upheavals of the whole European social and political order.

The profound changes in political relations, economic organization, and military technology behind hegemonic war and the associated domestic upheavals undermine both the international and domestic status quo. These underlying transformations in power and social relations result in shifts in the nature and locus of power. They give rise to a search for a new basis of political and social order at both the domestic and international levels.

This conception of a hegemonic war as associated with a historic turning point in world history is exemplified by the Peloponnesian War. A basic change in the nature and hence in the location of economic and military power was taking place in Greece during the fifth century B.C. This changing economic and technological environment had differing implications for the fortunes of the two major protagonists. The Peloponnesian War would be the midwife for the birth of the new world. This great war, like other transforming wars, would embody significant long-term changes in Greece’s economy, military affairs, and political organization.

Prior to and during the Persian wars, power and wealth in the Greek world were based on agriculture and land armies; Sparta was ascendant among the Greek city-states. Its political position had a secure economic foundation, and its military power was unchallenged. The growth in the importance of naval power and the accompanying rise of commerce following the wars transformed the basis of power. Moreover, the introduction into Greece of fortification technology and the erection of walls around Athens canceled much of the Spartan military advantage. In this new environment, naval power, commerce, and finance became increasingly important components of state power. Thus, whereas in the past the nature of power had favored the Spartans, the transformed environment favored Athens and other rising commercial and naval powers.

Athens rather than Sparta benefited from this new military and economic environment. Domestically, Athens had experi-

13 Eli Halévy (trans. R. G. Webb), *The Era of Tyrannies* (Garden City, N.Y., 1965), 212.

enced political and social changes that enabled it to take advantage of the increased importance of seapower and commerce. Its entrenched landed aristocracy, which had been associated with the former dominance of agriculture and land armies, had been overthrown and replaced by a commercial elite whose interests lay with the development of naval power and imperial expansion. In an increasingly monetarized international economy, the Athenians had the financial resources to outfit a powerful navy and expand its dominion at the expense of the Spartans.

By contrast, the Spartans, largely for domestic economic and political reasons, were unable or unwilling to make the necessary adjustment to the new economic and technological environment. It was not merely because Sparta was land-locked, but also because the dominant interests of the society were committed to the maintenance of an agricultural system based on slave labor. Their foremost concern was to forestall a slave revolt, and they feared external influences that would stimulate the Helots to rebel. Such a rebellion had forced them to revert into isolation at the end of the Persian wars. It appears to have been the fear of another revolt that caused them eventually to challenge the Athenians. The Megara decree aroused the Spartans because the potential return of Megara to Athenian control would have opened up the Peloponnesus to Athenian influence and thereby enabled the Athenians to assist a Helot revolt. Thus, when Athenian expansionism threatened a vital interest of the Spartans, the latter decided that war was inevitable, and delivered an ultimatum to the Athenians.<sup>14</sup>

The differing abilities of the Athenians and the Spartans to adjust to the new economic and technological environment and the changed nature of power ultimately led to the war. The development of naval power and acquisition of the financial resources to purchase ships and hire sailors necessitated a profound reordering of domestic society. Whereas the Athenians had reformed themselves in order to take advantage of new opportunities for wealth and power, the Spartans would or could not liberalize due to a constellation of domestic interests and their fear of unleashing a rebellion of the Helots. The result was the uneven growth of power among these rivals that Thucydides viewed as the real cause of the war.

14 G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* (London, 1972).

The critical point arrived when the Spartans began to believe that time was moving against them and in favor of the Athenians. A tipping-point or fundamental change in the Spartan perception of the balance of power had taken place. As certain contemporary historians assert, Athenian power may have reached its zenith by the outbreak of the war and had already begun to wane, but the reality of the situation is not particularly relevant, since the Spartans believed that Athens was growing stronger. The decision facing them had become when to commence the war rather than whether to commence it. Was it better to fight while the advantage still lay with them or at some future date when the advantage might have turned? As Howard has written, similar perceptions and fears of eroding power have preceded history's other hegemonic wars.<sup>15</sup>

The stability of the Greek international system following the Persian wars was based on an economic and technological environment favoring Spartan hegemony. When agriculture and land armies became less vital to state power and commerce and navies became more important, the Spartans were unable to adjust. Therefore, the locus of wealth and power shifted to the Athenians. Although the Athenians lost the war when they failed to heed the prudent strategy laid down by Pericles, the basic point is not altered; the war for hegemony in Greece emerged from a profound social, economic, and technological revolution. Wars like this one are not merely contests between rival states but political watersheds that mark transitions from one historical epoch to the next.

Despite the insight that it provides in understanding and explaining the great wars of history, the theory of hegemonic war is a limited and incomplete theory. It cannot easily handle perceptions that affect behavior and predict who will initiate a hegemonic war. Nor can it forecast when a hegemonic war will occur and what the consequences will be. As in the case of the theory of biological evolution, it helps one understand and explain what has happened; but neither theory can make predictions that can be tested and thereby meet rigorous scientific standard of falsifiability. The theory of hegemonic war at best is a complement to other theories such as those of cognitive psychology and

15 Michael Howard, *The Causes of War* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), 16.

expected utility and must be integrated with them. It has, however, withstood the test of time better than any other generalization in the field of international relations and remains an important conceptual tool for understanding the dynamics of world politics.

HEGEMONIC WAR IN THE MODERN INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM In the modern world, three hegemonic wars have successively transformed the international system. Each of these great struggles not only involved a contest for supremacy of two or more great powers, but also represented significant changes in economic relations, technological capacities, and political organization. The war arose from profound historical changes and the basic incongruity between new environmental forces and existing structures. Each was a world war involving almost all of the states in the system and, at least in retrospect, can be considered as having constituted a major turning point in human history. These long and intense conflicts altered the fundamental contours of both domestic societies and international relations.<sup>16</sup>

The first of the modern hegemonic wars was the Thirty Years' War (1619 to 1648). Although this war may be regarded as a series of separate wars that at various times involved Sweden, France, Spain, Poland, and other powers, in sum it involved all the major states of Europe. As Gutmann points out in his contribution to this volume, the origins of the war were deeply embedded in the history of the previous century.<sup>17</sup> At issue was the organization of the European state system as well as the internal economic and religious organization of domestic societies. Was Europe to be dominated and organized by Habsburg imperial power or autonomous nation-states? Was feudalism or commercial capitalism to be the dominant mode of organizing economic activities? Was Protestantism or Catholicism to be the prevalent religion? The clash over these political, economic, and ideological issues caused physical devastation and loss of life not seen in Western Europe since the Mongol invasions of earlier centuries.

16 Summary accounts of the wars and their backgrounds are contained in R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, *The Encyclopedia of Military History from 3500 B.C. to the Present* (New York, 1984; 2nd rev. ed.), 522–546, 730–769, 915–990.

17 Myron P. Gutmann, "The Origins of the Thirty Years' War," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XVIII (1988), 749–770.

Underlying the intensity and duration of the war was a profound change in the nature of power. Although the power of a state continued to be based primarily on the control of territory, technology and organization were becoming more important in military and political affairs. From classical times to the seventeenth century, military technology, tactics, and organization had hardly changed; the pike, the Greek phalanx, and heavy cavalry continued to characterize warfare. By the close of that century, however, mobile artillery, professional infantry in linear formations, and naval innovations had come to dominate the tactics of war. In conjunction with what has been called the Military Revolution, the modern bureaucratic state also came into existence. This development greatly enhanced the ability of rulers to mobilize and increase the efficient use of national resources. With these military and political innovations, the exercise of military power became an instrument of foreign policy; war was no longer “the [unrestrained] clash of societies” that was characteristic of warfare in the ancient and medieval worlds.<sup>18</sup>

The Thirty Years’ War transformed the domestic and international political scene. The Habsburg bid for universal empire was defeated, and the nation-state became the dominant form of political organization in the modern world. In the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), the principle of national sovereignty and non-intervention was established as the governing norm of international relations; this political innovation ended the ideological conflict over the religious ordering of domestic societies. For the next century and a half, foreign policy was based on the concepts of national interest and the balance of power; as a result, the scale of European wars tended to be limited. The commercial revolution triumphed over feudalism, and the pluralistic European state system provided the necessary framework for the expansion of the global market system.<sup>19</sup> With their superior armaments and organization, the several states of Western Europe created overseas empires and subdued the other civilizations of the globe.

In the closing decade of the eighteenth century, a second great war or series of wars once again transformed international

18 Howard, *Causes*, 16; Michael Roberts, *The Military Revolution, 1560–1660* (Belfast, 1956); George Clark, *War and Society in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1958).

19 Jean Baechler (trans. Barry Cooper), *The Origins of Capitalism* (Oxford, 1975), 73–86.

affairs and ushered in a new historical epoch. For nearly a century France and Great Britain, operating within the framework of the classical balance of power system, had been fighting a series of limited conflicts both in Europe and overseas to establish the primacy of one or the other. This “hundred years’ war,” to use Seeley’s expression, culminated in the great or hegemonic wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon Bonaparte (1792 to 1815).<sup>20</sup> As in other hegemonic conflicts, profound political, economic, and ideological issues were joined: French or British hegemony of the European political system, mercantilistic or market principles as the organizing basis of the world economy, and revolutionary republicanism or more conservative political forms as the basis of domestic society. The ensuing conflagration engulfed the entire international political system, resulting in unprecedented violence and the opening of a new age of economic and political affairs.

During the second half of the eighteenth and the first decade of the nineteenth century, economic, technological, and other developments had transformed the nature of power and undermined the relative stability of the previous system of limited warfare. At sea the British had gained mastery of the new tactics and technology of naval power. On land the military genius of Napoleon brought to a culmination the revolution wrought by gunpowder as the new weaponry, tactics, and doctrine were integrated. The most significant innovations, however, were organizational, political, and sociological. The conception of the *levée en masse* and the nation at arms made it possible for the French to field mass armies and overwhelm their enemies. Under the banner of nationalism the era of peoples’ wars had arrived. The new means of military organization had transformed the nature of European warfare.<sup>21</sup>

After twenty years of global warfare extending to the New World and the Middle East, the British and their allies defeated the French, and a new international order was established by the Treaty of Vienna (1815). On the continent of Europe, an equilib-

20 John R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures* (Boston, 1905), 28–29.

21 See Gunther G. Rothenberg, “The Origins, Causes, and Extension of the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XVIII (1988), 771–793.



rium was created that was to last until the unification of German power in the middle of the century. British interests and naval power guaranteed that the principles of the market and *laissez faire* would govern global economic affairs. Underneath the surface of this Pax Britannica, new forces began to stir and gather strength as the decades passed. Following a century of relative peace, these changes in the economic, political, and technological environment would break forth in the modern world's third hegemonic war.

Like many other great wars, World War I commenced as a seemingly minor affair, even though its eventual scale and consequences were beyond the comprehension of contemporary statesmen. In a matter of a few weeks, the several bilateral conflicts of the European states and the cross-cutting alliances joined the Europeans in a global struggle of horrendous dimensions. The British-German naval race, the French-German conflict over Alsace-Lorraine, and the German/Austrian-Russian rivalry in the Balkans drew almost all of the European states into the struggle that would determine the structure and leadership of the European and eventually of the global political system.

The scope, intensity, and duration of the war reflected the culmination of strengthening forces and novel forms of national power. The French under Napoleon had first unleashed the new religion of nationalism. During the ensuing decades of relative peace, the spread of nationalistic ideas tore at the traditional fabric of European society, undermined stable political structures, and set one people against another. The Industrial Revolution also had diffused from Great Britain to the Continent. War had become industrialized and fused with the passion of nationalism. An era of rapid economic change and social upheaval had also given rise to radical movements threatening revolution and challenging the domestic status quo of many states.<sup>22</sup> In this new environment of industrialized and nationalistic warfare, the political leaders lost control over the masses, and war reverted to what it had been in the premodern era: an unrestrained clash of societies. Nations threw men and machinery at one another causing massive carnage and social dislocations from which Europe found it difficult to

22 Robert E. Osgood and Robert W. Tucker, *Force, Order, and Justice* (Baltimore, 1967), 3–192; Halévy, *Era*, 209–247.

recover. Only mutual exhaustion and the intervention of a non-European power—the United States—ended the destruction of total war.

The terrible devastation of the war brought to a close the European domination of world politics and resulted in a new attitude toward war. The democratization and industrialization of war had undermined the legitimacy of military force as a normal and legitimate instrument of foreign policy. In the Treaty of Versailles (1919), statesmen outlawed war, and the revolutionary concept of collective security was embodied in the charter of the League of Nations. States for the first time were legally forbidden to engage in war except in self-defense and were required to join together in the punishment of any aggressor. In contrast to the other great peace conferences and treaties of European diplomacy the settlement failed to reflect the new realities of the balance of power and thereby was unable to establish a new and stable European political order.<sup>23</sup> This failure laid the foundation for World War II, which should be seen as the continuation of the hegemonic struggle begun in 1914 with the breakdown of the European political order.

The postwar international order has been based on American-Soviet bipolarity and the concept of mutual deterrence. Peace has been maintained and war as a means of settling conflicts between the superpowers has been stayed by the nuclear threat and the possibility of mutual annihilation. Whether or not this system will also one day be undermined by historical developments and utterly destroyed by a hegemonic war fought with weapons of mass destruction is the fundamental question of our time.

THE NUCLEAR REVOLUTION AND HEGEMONIC WAR     Although the theory of hegemonic war may be helpful in understanding the past, one must ask whether it is relevant to the contemporary world. Has it been superseded or somehow transcended by the nuclear revolution in warfare? Since no nation that enters a nuclear war can avoid its own destruction, does it make any sense to think in terms of great or hegemonic wars? Morgenthau was referring to this profound change in the nature of warfare and its political significance when he wrote that the “rational relationship

23 Howard, *Causes*, 163.

between violence as a means of foreign policy and the ends of foreign policy has been destroyed by the possibility of all-out nuclear war."<sup>24</sup>

That a revolution in the nature of warfare has occurred cannot be denied. Nuclear weapons have indeed profoundly transformed the destructiveness and consequences of a great war. It is highly doubtful that a war between two nuclear powers could be limited and escalation into a full-scale war prevented. Nor is it likely that either protagonist could escape the terrible devastation of such a great war or find the consequences in any sense acceptable.<sup>25</sup> In the nuclear age, the primary purpose of nuclear forces should be to deter the use of nuclear weapons by one's opponent and thereby prevent the outbreak of hegemonic warfare.

It does not necessarily follow that this change in the nature of warfare, as important as it surely is, has also changed the nature of international relations. The fundamental characteristics of international affairs unfortunately have not been altered and, if anything, have been intensified by the nuclear revolution. International politics continues to be a self-help system. In the contemporary anarchy of international relations, distrust, uncertainty, and insecurity have caused states to arm themselves and to prepare for war as never before.

To be able to say that nuclear weapons have changed the nature of international relations and thus made impossible the outbreak of hegemonic war, a transformation of human consciousness itself would have to take place. Humankind would have to be willing to subordinate all other values and goals to the preservation of peace. To insure mutual survival, it would need to reject the anarchy of international relations and submit itself to the Leviathan of Thomas Hobbes. Little evidence exists to suggest that any nation is close to making this choice. Certainly in this world of unprecedented armaments of all types, no state is behaving as if nuclear weapons had changed its overall set of national priorities.

One cannot even rule out the possibility of a great or hegemonic war in the nuclear age. The theory of hegemonic war does

24 Hans J. Morgenthau in *idem*, Sidney Hook, H. Stuart Hughes, and Charles P. Snow, "Western Values and Total War," *Commentary*, XXXII (1961), 280.

25 Robert Jervis, *The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy* (Ithaca, 1984), 19–46.

not argue that statesmen “will” a great war; the great wars of history were seldom predicted, and their course has never been foreseen. As Thucydides argued in his discussion of the role of accident in war, once it has begun, war unleashes forces that are totally unanticipated by the protagonists. In the nuclear age there is no guarantee that a minor conflict between the superpowers or their allies will not set in motion untoward developments over which they would soon lose control. In brief, the fact that nuclear war would wreak unprecedented devastation on mankind has not prevented the world’s nuclear powers from preparing for such a war, perhaps thereby making it more likely.

What nuclear weapons have accomplished is to elevate the avoidance of a total war to the highest level of foreign policy and the central concern of statesmen. Yet this goal, as important as it surely is, has joined, not supplanted, other values and interests for which societies in the past have been willing to fight. All of the nuclear states seek to avoid nuclear war at the same time that they are attempting to safeguard more traditional interests. The result has been, for the superpowers at least, the creation of a new basis of international order. In contrast to the balance-of-power system of early modern Europe, the Pax Britannica of the nineteenth century, or the ill-fated collective security system associated with the League of Nations, order in the nuclear age has been built on the foundation of mutual deterrence.

The long-term stability of this nuclear order is of crucial importance, and the threat to its existence over time certainly cannot be disregarded. Each superpower fears that the other might achieve a significant technological breakthrough and seek to exploit it. How else can one explain the hopes and anxieties raised by the Strategic Defense Initiative? In addition, with the proliferation of nuclear weapons to more and more states, there is a growing danger that these weapons might fall into the hands of desperate states or terrorist groups. The nuclear order is a function of deliberate policies and not, as some argue, an existential condition.

Historically, nations have consciously decided to go to war, but they have seldom, if ever, knowingly begun hegemonic wars. Statesmen try to make rational or cost/benefit calculations concerning their efforts to achieve national objectives, and it seems unlikely that any statesman would view the eventual gains from

the great wars of history as commensurate with the eventual costs of those wars. It cannot be overstressed that, once a war, however limited, begins, it can release powerful forces unforeseen by the instigators of the war. The results of the Peloponnesian War, which was to devastate classical Greece, were not anticipated by the great powers of the day. Nor were the effects of World War I, which ended the primacy of Europe over other civilizations, anticipated by European statesmen. In both cases, the war was triggered by the belief of each protagonist that it had no alternative but to fight while the advantage was still on its side. In neither case did the protagonists fight the war that they had wanted or expected.

The advent of nuclear weapons has not altered this fundamental condition. A nation still might start a war for fear that its relative strength will diminish with time, and an accident still might precipitate unprecedented devastation. It is not inconceivable that some state, perhaps an overpowered Israel, a frightened South Africa, or a declining superpower, might one day become so desperate that it resorts to nuclear blackmail in order to forestall its enemies. As in war itself, an accident during such a confrontation could unleash powerful and uncontrollable forces totally unanticipated by the protagonists. Although the potential violence and destructiveness of war have been changed by the advent of nuclear arms, there is unfortunately little to suggest that human nature has also been transformed.

**CONCLUSION** One can hope that the fear of nuclear holocaust has chastened statesmen. Perhaps they have come to appreciate that a nuclear order based on mutual deterrence should be their highest priority. But against this expectation one must set the long history of human foibles and mankind's seeming inability to sustain peace for very long. Only time will tell whether the theory of hegemonic war holds true in the nuclear age. In the meanwhile, avoidance of a nuclear war has become imperative.

## 5<sup>η</sup> Συνάντηση

### «Ηθική και Ισχύς στη Θεωρία Πολέμου»

Στην παρούσα συνάντηση θα αναλυθεί η σχέση που αναπτύσσεται μεταξύ των εννοιών «Ηθική και Ισχύς». Κεντρικά ερωτήματα:

Ποια είναι η μορφή της ηθικής στο πλαίσιο της Θεωρίας Πολέμου; Ποια η σχέση μεταξύ ηθικής και ισχύος; Ποια η υπέρτατη ηθική αρχή για την ηγεσία ενός κράτους;

#### **Θέμα Εργασίας:**

Η εμπέδωση της ηθικής μέσω της αναζήτησης νέων φορτίων ισχύος:  
Ουτοπία ή Ορθολογισμός;



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# ETHICS AND POWER IN INTERNATIONAL POLICY

## THE THIRD MARTIN WIGHT MEMORIAL LECTURE \*

*Michael Howard*

THERE has perhaps been no teacher in the field of international politics in our time whose approach to his subject was more deeply serious than that of Martin Wight—more serious, or more erudite. There have been many specialists more influential, more articulate and, regrettably, more prolific in their publications. Wight left behind him a lamentably small number of writings, enough to give only a mere glimpse of the qualities which so awed his pupils, his colleagues and his friends. It is thus all the more necessary that those of us who did have the privilege of knowing him should recall and retail as much as we can of his personality—of the moral force which he brought to intellectual questions, of the profound, sombre questioning which characterised his work.

Wight was a philosopher in the oldest and best sense of the word: a man who sought and loved wisdom. He was also a scholar in the oldest and best sense: a man who loved learning. He was above all a deeply committed Christian. He never forgot—and I think quite literally never for a moment forgot—that in the field of international politics one is dealing with the very fundamentals of life and death: with the beliefs, the habits, the structures which shape moral communities and for which it is considered appropriate to die—and, worse, to kill. He saw his subject neither as the interaction of abstract state-entities nor as the equally abstract legal and structural problems of international organisations, but as the exercise of crushing responsibilities by statesmen in an infinitely complex world; the conduct of policies for which the ultimate sanction might have to be war. And war was no matter of heroics or war-gaming, but the deliberate infliction, and endurance, of extremes of suffering as the ultimate test of the validity of human institutions and beliefs. The work of some American ‘behaviourists’, who sought to reduce the vast and tragic tapestry of human affairs to elegant mathematical formulae was not simply repellent to him. It was unintel-

\* Given at Chatham House on January 12, 1977.



ligible. He could not understand how people could do such things. He refused even to discuss it. For him, International Relations did not consist of a succession of problems to be solved in conformity with any overarching theory. Rather, like the whole of human life, it was a predicament: one to be intelligently analysed, where possible to be mitigated, but if necessary to be endured—and the more easily mitigated and endured if it could be understood. In his acceptance of the ineluctably tragic nature of human destiny he was a thinker in a European tradition going back to that classical antiquity in which his own learning was so deeply rooted.

To superficial appearances Wight presented something of a contradiction. He accepted the fact, as he saw it, of 'Power Politics'. The brief study with this title which he wrote under the auspices of Chatham House in 1946 has been recently revised, enlarged and edited with an introduction by Professor Hedley Bull, and will soon be republished.<sup>1</sup> It is an almost defiantly traditional work, disdainful both of Liberal Utopianism and of the contributions of the behavioural scientists to the subject. It expounds the mechanisms of power politics in the international system without praise or condemnation: this is the way it has been, he implies, and there is no reason to suppose it could be otherwise. But at the same time he was a Christian pacifist and a conscientious objector, and no one who met him could be in any doubt of the profundity and the unshakeable firmness of the convictions on which his pacifism rested.

In actuality there was for him no contradiction. In a world of evil one must face the fact of evil and the need, in face of that fact, for the unfortunate Children of Darkness to be wise in their generation. In such a world statesmen and soldiers have responsibilities and duties which they cannot and should not seek to evade. Nevertheless in such a world it is the duty of some Christians to bear witness to a transcendent loyalty; and those on whom this duty is laid will know it in their inmost conscience and must fulfil it, irrespective of consequent embarrassment or hardship. Martin Wight's burning sincerity fused the apparent contradiction—not, probably, without much inner anguish—into a single coherent philosophy; one which provided an analysis of the world predicament as much as a guide to his own actions.

Wight was in fact a Christian pessimist, as were so many of that generation which had seen the hopes of the Locarno era wither, and who grew to maturity under the shadow of the vast menaces of the 1930s. Even the menaces of the 1950s, the perils, as they appeared at the time, of nuclear holocaust, never loomed so large in the eyes of contemporary observers. Those perils could be, and indeed have been

<sup>1</sup> By Leicester University Press and Penguin.

kept at bay by prudent statesmanship. The nuclear danger is predictable and controllable. But the 1930s saw the emergence of forces of irrationality which it would be neither inappropriate nor hyperbolic to call forces of *evil*: unpredictable, uncontrollable, still only partially understood. These forces fitted into the world picture neither of the Liberal humanists nor of the Marxists. Both of these schools were children of eighteenth-century rationalism and nineteenth-century radicalism. Each believed in its own way in inevitable progress towards world democratic systems and had welcomed the overthrow of the militarist autocracies of Central Europe as obstacles to the gradual convergence of mankind towards unity and peace. But in Fascism one was dealing with something consciously beyond reason and defiant to reason—something of which no secular ideology had hitherto taken account.

Christianity, unlike Liberalism or Marxism, did provide an explanation; not the cheerful liberal humanitarian Christian teaching which read little into the Bible except the Nativity and the Sermon on the Mount, but the teaching which digested all the implications of the Old Testament, including the prophetic books, before turning to the New, which emphasised that the Gospels themselves were full of uncompromisingly dark passages, and which faced the fact that at the centre of the Christian religion, as of no other great world religion, was the symbol of agonising and unavoidable suffering. The Christian eschatology, long disdained by liberal humanists even within the Church itself, once again became terrifyingly relevant to human affairs. The works of Charles Williams, of C. S. Lewis, and—drawing on yet wider sources of Manichean myth—of J. R. Tolkien were deservedly popular as allegorical commentaries on the events of the time. And the teachers who best provided an adequate framework for understanding were the philosophers and the theologians—Niebuhr, Bonhoeffer, Karl Barth, Tillich—who accepted uncomplainingly the remoteness, the inscrutability of God, who saw the focus of Christianity as the Passion rather than the Sermon on the Mount; men for whom the march of humanitarian, utilitarian liberalism, including its change of gear into Marxian socialism, had simply been a long excursion into the desert in pursuit of a mirage.

In the light of such a philosophy the accepted explanations of the problems of international politics and the causes of war all appeared inadequate to the point of superficiality. The received wisdom among liberal thinkers of the 1920s was that wars in general, and the First World War in particular, had been caused precisely by the operation of 'power politics' which in their turn reflected the prejudices of a militaristic ruling class and the interests of capitalist investors and armaments manufacturers. The solution lay in the abandonment of

power politics conducted by means of secret diplomacy, and the adoption instead of programmes of collective security, arbitration, disarmament and the resolution of differences through open and reasoned discussion at the League of Nations. The problems which called for solution were those arising from the inequities of the Paris Peace Settlement, which was far too tainted with the evils of the old system. If only Germany could be reconciled and the injustices done to it undone, then a new world order, a new era in the history of mankind, might be expected to dawn.

These ideas were reiterated in a deliberately simplistic form by publicists—E. D. Morel, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, H. N. Brailsford, Leonard Woolf—who with some reason saw their first duty as the re-education of that public opinion on which they relied to make their dreams come true, but which had repeatedly shown itself vulnerable to stubborn fits of atavistic xenophobia. Few of them were as naïve as sometimes appears from their writings. The complexity of the problems of international politics was certainly not underrated by the founders of Chatham House. This group included not only such outstanding idealists as Lord Robert Cecil and Philip Noel-Baker but ‘realists’ of the stamp of Eyre Crowe and Neil Malcolm and such scholarly specialists as James Headlam-Morley and Arnold Toynbee; men who had discovered at Paris how terribly under-equipped the Allied statesmen were to deal with the tangled problems which victory had dumped in their laps, how vast was the distance which separated popular expectations from practical realities, and how important it was for the future peace of mankind that judgment on foreign affairs should be formulated on a basis of widely-shared expert knowledge.

Yet in broad terms these men certainly shared the aspirations of the liberal idealists. There was a broad ethical consensus that international politics should be conducted, not with the aim of maximising the national interest, but in order to enable mankind to live in a community of mutual tolerance and respect, settling its differences rationally, resolving its conflicts by peaceful means. This could best be achieved by the creation and management of international institutions, in particular the League of Nations; and by the education of public opinion in loyalties wider than narrow, old-fashioned patriotism. And finally Britain’s own national affairs should be conducted in accordance with a Kantian categorical imperative, to provide an example for other nations and to smooth the path towards the development of a higher national community based on the rule of law. They would have accepted that it was their task to transcend the old order based on national power and to create a new one based on consent. It was very appropriate that the Royal Institute of International Affairs should have found a

permanent home in the house once occupied by Mr. Gladstone at Chatham House, 10 St. James's Square.

But what this generation did not fully appreciate was how far these values, the fine flower of Victorian Liberalism, was tied up with a social order and national institutions which might continue to need power, and in the last resort *military* power, for their survival. All had supported the Allied cause during the Great War on the not unwarranted assumption that its defeat would be a catastrophic setback to the progress of liberal ideas. All believed that responsibility for the war rested very largely with the militaristic ideology rooted in the quasi-feudal monarchical social order in Central Europe whose destruction had removed a serious obstacle to world peace. What was harder for them to appreciate was that the destruction of that order would not make easier the work of peace-loving bourgeoisie such as themselves, but infinitely more difficult: that it would create a vacuum to be filled by warring forces of revolution and counter-revolution out of which régimes would arise far more ferocious than those they had replaced—regimes even less susceptible to reason or enamoured of an order based on consent. It was the tragedy of the League of Nations, that consummation of a century of striving and dreaming, that it was founded at a moment when it could not hope to operate successfully except as the executive organ of a group of like-minded nations prepared in the last resort to enforce their decisions by precisely those mechanisms of military power which its very existence was intended to render obsolete.

The lesson was not lost on the men who had to reconstruct the international system after the Second World War. They were more modest in their aspirations—more modest also, it must be admitted, in their talents. The new generation, at least in Britain, produced no one to equal the vigour and vision of the surviving veterans, Toynbee, Webster, Lionel Curtis, Philip Noel-Baker. The officials and the statesmen—Strang, Jebb, Cadogan, Bevin—were the equals if not the superiors of their predecessors; but there were no seers to inspire them, no prophets of a new order. Only one new academic figure of any eminence had been tempted by wartime experience to reflect with any degree of profundity on the state of the world—Herbert Butterfield; and he did so in terms which echoed the teaching of Reinhold Niebuhr across the Atlantic, and which were to provide a continuing influence on Martin Wight. There were certainly no British thinkers who felt that the world was now theirs to mould; who would claim, as Dean Acheson was to claim, that they were present at the Creation. Perhaps the failure of the first creation was too fresh in all their minds. But what *was* dominant in their consciousness was the impotence,

almost one might say the irrelevance, of ethical aspirations in international politics in the absence of that factor to which so little attention had been devoted by their more eminent predecessors, to which indeed so many of them had been instinctively hostile—military power: power not necessarily to impose their standards upon others (though that, in the re-education of the defeated enemy, was not irrelevant) but simply to ensure the survival of the societies in which those ethical values were maintained. And to the vulnerability of such societies and their value-systems a sad procession of emigré scholars and statesmen from Central and Eastern Europe bore eloquent witness—both before and after 1945.

This realisation of the impotence of ethical principle to operate unaided in a world of power does much to explain the speed with which the world rearmed after 1950. The spirit of historical irony will record that it was Mr. Attlee and his colleagues, not excepting Sir Stafford Cripps, the men who had voted and spoken so eloquently in the 1930s against power politics and great national armaments, who now took the decision to equip the United Kingdom as a nuclear power; that the Minister of Supply responsible for the construction of the atomic bomb was Mr. John Wilmot—the same John Wilmot whose election for the constituency of East Fulham in 1934 had convinced Stanley Baldwin of the impossibility of persuading the country to accept a major rearmament programme; and that the Secretary of State for Air in 1947, when the Air Ministry began to design the V-bombers which would deliver the bombs, was that most tireless and dedicated advocate of disarmament, Mr. Philip Noel-Baker. And in the United States liberals of equally impeccable antecedents, men who had throughout their lives fought against American entanglement in the old world of power politics, now helped to build up an armoury of terrifying strength in order to ‘defend the Free World’.

It is easy enough either to deplore this apparent volte-face as a shameful betrayal of principle, or to sneer at it as a belated acceptance of the facts of life. But both reactions arise from an attitude towards political morality—indeed, towards social action as a whole—which has, although very widely shared, proved throughout history to be misleading. According to this view, actions are to be judged against a single scale which runs from the pole of ‘power politics’ at one end to that of ‘ethical action’ at the other. Ethical considerations are held *automatically* to enfeeble power; considerations of power are regarded as unavoidably sully ethics. It is an attitude no less popular with professed ‘men of the world’ and ‘realists’ than it is with idealists and reformers. The reluctance of liberal critics seriously to examine the technical problems faced by the military—a reluctance as evident today as it was in the 1930s—is paralleled by the scepticism with which a substantial number of officials, soldiers and ‘defence

experts' regard the relevance of ethical factors to the problems which they face. War, they say, is war. Business is business. What needs to be done, has to be done.<sup>2</sup>

The assumption that the exercise of coercive power is in itself fundamentally immoral, and that involvement in power relationships automatically vitiates ethical behaviour, is natural enough. How can good ends be served by evil means? How can one get peace by preparing for war? How can all the mechanisms of military power—the disciplining of soldiers, the development of weapons, the training to kill, the posing of threats, to say nothing of the awful actuality of warfare, shocking enough in the pre-nuclear age, inconceivable today—how can such activities conceivably contribute to ethical goals? Is not the whole 'power system' alien to and irreconcilable with any ethical objectives except those of the barbarian—and in adopting it even to fight barbarians, is one not becoming a barbarian oneself? To adopt the methods of coercive power—and economic can be as debasing as military power—is *in itself* considered to be unethical, to debase the cause which those methods are intended to serve.

Are ethics and power in fact such poles apart? Most of us in practice do not consider that they are, and within our own experience we can normally reconcile them without too much difficulty. But this may simply be the result of our own moral obtuseness and intellectual laziness. To provide a satisfactory conceptual synthesis is not so easy. The long debate over *raison d'état*, which Sir Herbert Butterfield took as the subject of the first Martin Wight Memorial Lecture,<sup>3</sup> has never been properly concluded. The tradition that led through Plato and Machiavelli to Hegel, by which all contradictions were resolved in service to a State which was itself the highest value since it made possible all other values, disastrously popular as it became in Germany, has never been acceptable to Anglo-Saxon Liberals—although the Marxist variant which for 'State' would substitute 'Revolution' succeeded in attracting some of them in the 1930s. But perhaps a clue to a more satisfactory formula can be found in the work of another German thinker, albeit one who is seldom regarded as an authority on ethical questions: Karl von Clausewitz.

Clausewitz did not indeed deal with ethical questions as such. He did not fundamentally question the crude Machiavellianism of

<sup>2</sup> Although in my experience, in this country at least, defence specialists are more likely to be concerned about questions of ethics than are 'peace researchers' and liberal reformers about the problems, either fundamental or technical, of military or any other kind of power. It is significant that association by universities with the Ministry of Defence in this country, or with the Pentagon or the Central Intelligence Agency in the United States, is regarded by many students as being immoral almost by definition, and one is regarded as extremely naïve if one ventures to ask why.

<sup>3</sup> Given at the University of Sussex on April 23, 1975.

eighteenth-century politics: the Grotian Law of Nations he dismissed as 'certain self-imposed, imperceptible limitations hardly worth mentioning, known as international law and custom'. But on the relationship between war and politics he did, as we know, have interesting and original things to say; and these may provide useful guidance in any consideration of the relationship between power and ethics.

Clausewitz's theory was teleological. In warfare, every engagement was planned to serve a tactical purpose. These tactical purposes were determined by the requirements of strategy. The requirements of strategy were determined by the object of the war; and the object of the war was determined by State policy, the State being the highest embodiment of the values and the interests of the community. Thus the objectives of State policy ultimately dominated and determined military means the whole way down the hierarchy of strategy and tactics. War was not an independent entity with a value-system of its own.

For Clausewitz State policy was the ultimate mover and justification, the criterion by which all other actions were to be judged—which in itself would make his doctrine as it stands unacceptable to the liberal. But what if one introduces one further, and ultimate, step in the hierarchy, to which State policy itself should be subordinated—the ethical goal? The State itself then becomes not an end but the means to an end. It has a dual role. It exists primarily to enable its own citizens to realise their ethical values; but it exists also to make possible an *international* community of mankind, whose values and interests are ultimately determinant, not only of State policy as such, but of all the means, military and otherwise, that are used to implement State policy.

Such a pattern goes beyond that 'Grotian' concept of international relations of which Hedley Bull spoke in the second Martin Wight Lecture last year<sup>4</sup>; for although in the Grotian formulation States are governed by a 'Law of Nations' which is based partly on a reflection of the divine order and partly on prudential considerations of self-preservation, they need no justification for their policy beyond the requirements of their own existence. They accept a law of nations as man accepts the laws of a just society: because his own needs dictate that he should do so. But in the Clausewitzian formulation, as we have elaborated it, State policy would be determined by and judged according to the needs of the international community. In the same way as war, if it were not directed by State policy, would be 'a senseless thing

<sup>4</sup> Reprinted in *British Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2, July 1976, pp. 101-116.

without an object', so State interests and State policy would make no sense and have no justification if they were not shaped in accordance with the overriding needs of mankind. As military power is subordinated to and guided by State policy, so State power should be subordinated to and guided by ethical norms. The relationship would then become one, not of irreconcilable opposition between mutually exclusive poles, but of hierarchical subordination of means to ends.

That all sounds very fine as a theory. In practice, unfortunately, it settles very little. Having stated his own theory, Clausewitz identified the fundamental problem about its application. The military means should always by definition be subordinated to the political object, true: but the military had its own requirements. It had to work according to its own inner necessities. Only the military specialist could determine whether the goals set by policy were attainable, and if so what the requirements were for attaining them. Military affairs had, as Clausewitz put it, their own grammar, even if they were subordinated to political logic; and the grammar was intricate and ineluctable. Armed forces require bases, and those bases may only be available in countries with which one would, for ethical reasons, prefer not to be allied. National industry, on which military capacity is based, may require access to raw materials available only from countries which are equally politically embarrassing. The successful conduct of the most just and defensive of wars may demand alliance with States whose price is the support of war aims which flatly contradict all one's own normative values—as did those of Italy in the Treaty of London in 1915, that last and most notorious example of power politics and secret diplomacy. Yet rather than yield to Italian demands on Slav territory, would it have been *morally* preferable to have waived the Italian alliance, leaving the Central Powers with their hands free to deal with Russia, and thus prolonging the war if not risking outright defeat?

One can multiply examples endlessly; let me concentrate simply on one. In 1935 there occurred a superb opportunity for Britain to shape its policy in the service of an ethical objective: the implementation of its obligations under the Covenant of the League of Nations by imposing penal sanctions upon Italy in order to deter or punish its aggression against Abyssinia. Not only was the crime unambiguous: the criminal was highly vulnerable. Public opinion, in the 'Peace Ballot', had recently expressed itself in favour of mandatory sanctions, even at the risk of war. The case might have been deliberately created to test the effectiveness of that new system of collective security and the rule of law which had been brought into being since 1918 to replace the old chaotic system of power politics. It would have been a perfect example of the use of coercive means to attain political ends.



We can now see that there were many reasons why the British government flinched from the test; but certainly not the least was the uncompromising and unanimous opposition of those experts in military grammar, the Chiefs of Staff. Within the power structure which it was their duty to operate there were two far more serious threats, not simply to the rule of law in international politics, but to the security of Britain and its Empire: the growing power of Nazi Germany and the increasingly open aggression of Japan. To risk even successful war against Italy would have been to enfeeble the already pathetically weak fleet available to deter Japanese attack in the Far East, and to antagonise a potential ally whose help was, in the eyes of France if not of Britain, indispensable in containing the German threat. The military grammar appeared unanswerable; it was to be that, rather than the ethical imperatives of collective security, which determined State policy.

In retrospect one can say that even in their own terms the military grammarians may have got it wrong. Faced with the real prospect of war Mussolini might very easily have retreated; his catastrophic humiliation would probably have imposed a high degree of caution both on Germany and Japan; a pattern of peace-keeping would have been successfully established. But the arguments of the grammarians could not simply be overridden. The ethical imperative could not be, in Clausewitz's words, 'a despotic lawgiver'. In the last resort the statesmen were, as ever, faced with a balance of imponderables, with problems to which there were no clear-cut ethical solutions.

To say, therefore, that State policy should be subordinated to the ethical imperative as strategic considerations should be subordinated to State policy does not get us very far. The world of power remains stubbornly autonomous; the suzerainty of ethics may be of quite Merovingian ineffectiveness. Moreover such a formulation can lend itself to the crudest of casuistical justification of all coercive means in terms of the ethical end—of police torture of political dissidents in order to preserve a stable and orderly society, of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 in order to preserve the stability of Eastern Europe, of the 'destabilisation' of Chile to maintain the stability of the Western hemisphere, of the secret bombing of Cambodia to maintain the independence of South Vietnam. Because such actions may be dictated by the grammar of coercive power, they cannot—any more than can terroristic destruction of life and property or intimidatory guerrilla massacres—be *justified*, i.e. made in themselves ethical, by an ethical object. The dimensions of power and of ethics remain stubbornly different.

Indeed, so long as we think of power and ethics in terms of

*dimensions*, we may not go too far wrong. Dimensions do not contradict one another, nor can they be subordinated to one another. They are mutually complementary. Political activity takes place in a two-dimensional field—a field which can be defined by the two co-ordinates of ethics and power. The ethical co-ordinate (which we may appropriately conceive as vertical) indicates the purposes which should govern political action: the achievement of a harmonious society of mankind in which conflicts can be peacefully resolved and a community of cultures peacefully co-exist within which every individual can find fulfilment. The horizontal co-ordinate measures the capacity of each actor to impose his will on his environment, whether by economic, military or psychological pressures. Movement along this co-ordinate, the increase or decrease in coercive capability, has *as such* no dimension of morality, any more than does any elevation of moral standards necessarily involve an increase in one's power to implement them.

Effective political action needs to take constant account of both dimensions. To concern oneself with ethical values to the total exclusion of any practical activity in the dimension of power is to abdicate responsibility for shaping the course of affairs. To accumulate coercive power without concern for its ethical ends is the course of the gangster, of St. Augustine's robber bands. Indeed it could be argued that each of these unidimensional courses is self-defeating; that the co-ordinates, if indefinitely prolonged, become circular. Obsession with ethical values with no concern for their implementation is ultimately unethical in its lack of *practical* concern for the course taken by society; concern for coercive capability without the legitimisation of moral acceptance leads ultimately to impotence, and disaster at the hands of an indignant and alienated world. Thus political action, whether in the international or any other sphere of activity, needs to be *diagonal*. Ethical goals should become more ambitious as political capability increases. The political actor, be he statesman or soldier, needs to grow in moral awareness and responsibility as he grows in power. The moralist must accept that his teaching will not reach beyond the page on which it is written or the lectern from which it is expounded without a massive amount of complex activity by men of affairs operating on the plane of their own expertise. The more ambitious and wide-ranging the ethical goals, the greater the power-mechanisms required to achieve them.

In pursuing his diagonal course the statesman is like a pilot reading a compass bearing from which he must not diverge in either direction if he is to achieve his goal. Too rigorous a concern for moral absolutes may reduce or destroy his capacity for effective action. Yet to ignore such norms entirely may gain him short-term advantages at the cost

of ultimately reducing his capacity to operate effectively in a world made up, not of robber bands, but of States functioning as moral as well as military entities, whose authority is as dependent on moral acceptability as on coercive capability. He may have to commit or authorise acts which, as a private citizen, he would deeply deplore. No one involved, for example, in the repatriation of Soviet troops from British-occupied Europe to Russia immediately after the Second World War could have felt anything other than distress bordering on misery at the need for such action. But in the political dimension the object of maintaining friendly relations with the Soviet Union in order to achieve yet wider ethical objectives—the peaceful settlement of Europe and of the world as a whole—had to be regarded as mandatory. To call attention to the ethical problems created by such actions is appropriate and necessary; but they cannot be condemned on such grounds unless account is taken of the political dimension as well.

Acton was being less than fair to the world of politics when he declared that power tends to corrupt. What does tend to happen, as I suggested earlier, is that the grammar of power, so intricate, so compelling, becomes for those who operate it a universe in itself—as indeed for the moralist and the reformer, the ethical objective can become an exclusive obsession which makes him disdain the tedious and murky problem of how to attain it. Yet perhaps there is a kind of gravitational force against which statesmen have consciously to fight, which keeps their activities always closer to the horizontal co-ordinate of power than to the vertical one of ethics, which constantly weighs down their efforts to maintain the diagonal. Overloaded political decision-makers and members of huge bureaucracies have enough to contend with in day-to-day management of affairs without constantly searching their consciences as to the ethical implications of their actions. That makes it all the more important that their ethical perceptions should be internalised and operate automatically and continuously. Government departments seldom carry a chaplain on the establishment to provide an ethical input into policy-making.

The appropriate response of the political moralist to the world of power must therefore be not to condemn but to enlighten, to understand, and to acknowledge and accept that the Children of Darkness have a painfully-learned wisdom in their own generation which is deserving of genuine respect. As Niebuhr put it, 'Politics will, to the end of history, be an area where conscience and power meet, where the ethical and coercive factors of human life will interpenetrate and work out their tentative and uneasy compromises'.<sup>5</sup> As a thinker whose

<sup>5</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* (New York: Scribner, 1949; first publ. 1932), p. 4.

ideas were deeply rooted in ethical values, Martin Wight knew that even he could make no serious contribution to the study of international politics without first attaining a full understanding of the coercive factors operating within it. But he never ceased to look beyond these 'uneasy compromises' to the ultimate goal of full and final reconciliation.

## 6<sup>η</sup> Συνάντηση

### «Εμφύλιος Πόλεμος: Έννοια και Αιτιολόγηση»

Στην 6<sup>η</sup> συνάντηση θα αναλυθεί η έννοια του εμφυλίου πολέμου και η θεωρητική της αφετηρία, όπως αυτή αναδεικνύεται μέσα από τη διάσταση της θουκυδίδειας «Στάσης».

Τα κύρια ερωτήματα που θα τεθούν προς ανάλυση είναι: Ποια η σημασία της «Στάσης» ως εσωτερικό πολιτικό φαινόμενο για την εκδήλωση ενός Εμφυλίου Πολέμου; Ποια τα αίτια που οδηγούν σε έναν εμφύλιο πόλεμο; Ποιος ο ρόλος της βίας στην εξέλιξη του Εμφυλίου Πολέμου;

#### **Θέμα Εργασίας:**

«Αναλύστε το φαινόμενο του Εμφυλίου Πολέμου ως ζήτημα ενδοκρατικής ανωμαλίας και διακρατικής κρίσης.»

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## International Interactions: Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations

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## International Relations Theory and How Civil Wars End

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## **International Relations Theory and How Civil Wars End**

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International relations theory has enriched the research program on civil wars in several ways that represent not only a cross-fertilization between the two fields but perhaps a degree of theoretical integration that is in line with recent trends in actual armed conflict. Since the end of the Cold War (and perhaps earlier), the line between interstate war and civil war is becoming increasingly blurred. The U.S. launched interstate wars against Iraq and Afghanistan, deposing the incumbent regime in both nations and replacing each with a new state that presumably would be a more congenial member of the community of nations. In both cases the end of the interstate war (marked by the defeat and replacement of the incumbent regime) was followed by the eruption of a civil war that has persisted in both nations ever since. Are the interstate and civil war phases of these two conflicts as easily separable as they appear to be in our separate data sets on intrastate and interstate wars? In 1994 the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) rebels overthrew the Rwandan government that had perpetrated the genocide of 1994, driving that government and its followers into exile in refugee camps across the border in Zaire. When Hutu exiles began launching attacks into Rwanda, the RPF (now the government of Rwanda) staged an incursion into Zaire. This incursion touched off a series of dominoes that resulted in the collapse of the Mobutu regime in Zaire and the ascension to power of Laurent Kabila. Later incursions into the renamed Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) by Rwandan, Ugandan, and Zimbabwean forces led some to term the resulting conflict as Africa's world war. Was this an interstate war or a civil war or a conglomeration of both? The same question arises concerning the PKK's (Kurdish Workers' Party) war with the government of Turkey. That conflict has spilled over into Iraq periodically, especially since the first Gulf War in 1991 weakened the Iraqi regime to the point that Iraqi Kurds gained an unprecedented degree of de facto autonomy that has survived the second Gulf War. As Salehyan (2009, 4) observes, "There is frequently nothing 'domestic' about civil war, and conflicts within countries often give rise to tensions between them."

As we consider how international relations theory has enriched research on civil wars, we should keep in mind that this exercise is no longer simply a matter of borrowing theory from international relations and applying it to the analysis of civil wars. As the boundaries between civil war

and interstate war become increasingly blurry, it is appropriate that we think beyond simply borrowing theory from one field to apply in another and consider instead how and to what extent genuine integration of theory is needed (and possible) at this point in the evolution of these two no-longer-so-distinct research programs.

In this essay I will not presume to fulfill that mandate. Instead, I will begin a far more modest effort to highlight one aspect of the conflict process in which civil war research has for some time benefitted from the application of theories developed to explain interstate conflict. The influence of international relations theory is perhaps most visible in research on civil war duration and termination, and less so in research on civil war onset. This is understandable since the factors that have been implicated in defining the set of nations that are at risk of civil war onset are largely attributes of the nation itself. Among those national attributes are the level of economic development, its degree of ethnic fractionalization or polarization, and the institutional configuration and strength of the state. These attributes make civil war onset more or less likely through their effects on levels of popular grievance and/or the ability of aspiring rebels to mobilize enough support to mount an armed challenge to the incumbent regime. Civil war is fundamentally asymmetric conflict because (compared to interstate war) it involves the state and one or more non-state actors (as opposed to two or more sovereign nations) contesting over claims to the sovereign right to rule. Once a civil war is underway, however, the question of how long it will last and how it will end (i.e., in government victory, rebel victory, or negotiated settlement) is more a function of characteristics of the conflict itself than of the attributes of the nation. How a civil war ends and how long it lasts are to a large extent the outcome of an ongoing, iterated bargaining process between government and rebels. In this phase of the conflict process, the parallels between interstate war and civil war are sufficient to enable students of civil conflict to borrow heavily from theories of interstate conflict termination. That is the focus of this essay: how have models of conflict termination, derived from international relations research, enriched our ability to explain and predict how civil wars end?

#### WAR TERMINATION: WIN, LOSE, OR DRAW

One set of theories on how interstate wars end is grounded in bargaining models that depict the onset of war as a failure of the bargaining process caused by disputants withholding or misrepresenting their military capabilities and their resolve to fight. Fearon's (1995) model assumes that, if both protagonists had complete information about the other sides' capabilities and resolve—and, therefore, had a better estimate of the likely outcome of the hypothetical war—they should be able to reach a negotiated settlement that



resolves their conflict of interests, thereby allowing both sides to avoid the costs of war. Filson and Werner (2002) depict war as beginning when an attacker underestimates the target nation's military capability and overestimates that nation's willingness to make concessions. The implicit assumption in these models is that belligerents always suffer some costs from combat, no matter what the stakes or the outcome of the conflict. Accordingly, two states would prefer to reach a bargain without fighting rather than fight, absorb the costs of war, and then reach the same (or similar) bargain (Reiter 2003, 29).

This bargaining framework for explaining interstate war onset does not transfer readily to the explanation of civil war onset because it involves a bargaining process between two sovereign nations, each with its own government, territory, and resource base. The asymmetric nature of civil war—involving a state and one or more non-state entities—does not lend itself to modeling civil war as a failure of bargaining between sovereign equals. What has proven useful for civil war research is the model of the war process itself as an a continuation of that bargaining process by means of armed conflict. Indeed, Smith and Stam (2003) depict their random walk model of conflict as applicable to explaining the duration and termination of both civil wars and interstate wars.

Smith and Stam's (2003, 116) model suggests that the more battles that are fought (i.e., the longer the war lasts), the more certain both sides become about the expected outcome of the next battle. For Filson and Werner (2002), both sides suffer losses in each battle, but the loser suffers more, altering the relative balance of capabilities for the next battle and altering both sides' resolve to continue fighting. Once their expectations about future battle outcomes converge sufficiently, it becomes possible for the protagonists to reach an agreement on the division of stakes that leaves both of them better off than they would be by fighting additional battles and absorbing the accompanying costs.

The conduct of war (both civil and interstate) reveals information to each side about each other's capabilities and resolve. It also alters each side's capabilities and resolve. It reveals to both information about the likely outcome of the war if it continues. It reduces both sides' uncertainty about the likely outcome of the war and about each other's capability and resolve (Wagner 2000). As the conflict progresses, both sides update their estimates of their rival's capabilities and resolve, based on the course of the conflict (including the outcome of battles) until at some point one side defeats the other militarily or their expectations converge so that they can reach a negotiated settlement. And thus war enables the two sides to more accurately assess the terms of a settlement that could be reached that would be preferred by both sides over continued war (Reiter 2003, 31).

In Filson and Werner's model, a nation is more likely to initiate armed conflict the higher the stakes are, the lower the anticipated costs of fighting

each battle are, and the more optimistic the attacker is about the defender's true military capabilities (Filson and Werner 2002, 820). Theories of civil war termination are built around a similar set of factors as determinants of rebels' and governments' willingness to continue fighting versus capitulating versus seeking a negotiated settlement.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY AND ENDING CIVIL WARS

Roy Licklider's (1995, 681) seminal work on civil war outcomes begins with the observation that the patterns of conflict termination in civil wars differ from those that characterize interstate war in the sense that civil wars are more difficult to bring to an end than interstate wars:

"Interstate opponents will presumably eventually retreat to their own territories (wars of conquest have been rare since 1945), but in civil wars the members of the two sides must live side by side and work together in a common government after the killing stops. . . . How do groups of people who have been killing one another with considerable enthusiasm and success come together to form a common government?"

He cites studies by Pillar (1983) and Stedman (1991) showing that the proportion of civil wars that ended in negotiated settlement has been half or less of the proportion of interstate wars that ended by negotiation rather than decisive military victory by one side or the other.

Licklider's observation simultaneously points us to a body of international relations theory that could be used to explain how civil wars end and alerts us to a fundamental difference between the two types of conflict that suggests the need to modify the IR theories we borrow to explain civil war termination. Interstate wars involve conflict between two or more sovereign states, whereas civil wars involve a sovereign state and one or more non-state actors: the rebels. The actors involved in civil conflict are not sovereign equals in a juridical sense, and they do not have the option of withdrawing to their own territories at war's end.

Licklider's work focused on whether negotiated settlements produce a more or less durable peace than military victories in civil wars. Mason and Fett (1996; see also Mason, Weingarten and Fett 1999) backtracked one step in the conflict process to explore the question of what factors account for whether a civil war will end in a military victory or a negotiated settlement. They drew quite explicitly on Wittman's (1979) and Stam's (1996) models of how interstate wars end. Stam modeled this process as an iterated two-person game, whereby at any given time in the course of the war the two nations are faced with the choice between continuing to fight or stopping. If both nations choose to keep fighting, the war continues until the next

point in time at which they must choose between fighting or stopping. If at some point in the course of the war Nation A decides to stop fighting while Nation B continues to fight, Nation B wins, and Nation A must make concessions. If both nations choose to stop, the result is a draw, typically in the form of a truce. The Nash equilibrium is both nations continue to fight: each will choose to continue fighting as long as the costs its opponent can inflict on it do not exceed the anticipated benefits of victory (Stam 1996, 35–36). The logic of this dynamic is comparable to Smith and Stam’s (2003, 2004) and Filson and Werner’s (2002) models, where individual battles represent the points in time during the course of the war at which protagonists adjust their estimates of the likely outcome of future battles and of the war itself.

Mason, Weingarten, and Fett (1999) applied this logic to civil wars, with governments and rebels basing their choice on a decision calculus those authors adapted from Wittman’s (1979) theory of how interstate wars end. Governments and rebels choose between continuing to fight or stopping based on their expected utility from victory versus defeat versus negotiated settlement. If the government continues fighting and the rebels quit, the civil war ends in a government victory. If the rebels continue fighting and the government quits, the rebels win and the government is overthrown and replaced by a new regime. If both quit fighting at the same time, then it is possible that the cease-fire can be consolidated into a formal peace settlement. And if both keep fighting, the civil war continues, and both continue to make adjustments in their estimates of the payoffs from continuing to fight versus stopping.

The decision calculus by which governments and rebels choose between fighting or quitting is derived from Wittman’s (1979) model of how interstate wars end. The payoffs from continuing to fight are a function of the actor’s estimate of a) the probability of achieving victory versus suffering defeat at some point in the future, b) the expected payoffs from victory versus the losses from defeat, c) the rate at which they will have to absorb the costs of conflict from the present until that time in the future when they estimate they will be able to achieve victory, and d) the amount of time that will be required to achieve victory:

$$EU_C = P_V(U_V) + (1 - P_V)(U_D) - \sum_{t_i=0}^{t_v} C_{it} \tag{1}$$

where  $EU_C$  is the expected utility of continuing the conflict,  $U_V$  is the actor’s estimate of the payoff from victory,  $P_V$  is the actor’s estimate of the probability of victory,  $U_D$  is the actor’s estimate of the cost of defeat,  $(1-P_V)$  is the estimated probability of defeat,  $C_{it}$  is the actor’s estimate of the rate at which the costs of conflict will accrue from the present ( $t = 0$ ) to that time in the future when the actor estimates victory can be achieved ( $t_v$ ).

The alternative to continuing to fight is to stop fighting and negotiate a peace agreement to end the conflict. The payoffs from a settlement are a function of the terms of the settlement, with the assumption that these payoffs are always less than the payoff from victory but more than the payoff from defeat.

$$EU_S = P_S(U_S) + \left( \sum_{t_i=0}^{t_v} C_{ti} \right) - \sum_{t_i=0}^{t_S} C_{ti} \quad (2)$$

where  $U_S$  represents that actor's estimate of the payoffs from the terms of the settlement and the cost terms are the same as in Equation (1). The payoffs from a settlement ( $U_S$ ) are presumed to be less than the payoffs from victory ( $U_V$ ). By agreeing to a settlement now, the actor saves the additional costs of conflict that would have to be absorbed in order to achieve victory ( $\sum_{t_i=0}^{t_v} C_{ti}$ ). Instead, that actor has to absorb only those additional costs that accrue between the present and that time in the more immediate future ( $t_S$ )

when the settlement goes into effect and the fighting stops ( $\sum_{t_i=0}^{t_S} C_{ti}$ ).

Victories that require a long time to achieve impose ever accumulating costs on that actor, which eventually will render victory pyrrhic.

This framework allowed these authors to derive several hypotheses on predictors of civil war outcome. The model implies that any factor that a) reduces an actors estimate of the probability of victory, b) reduces the payoffs from victory, c) increases the rate at which the costs of war are absorbed, or d) increases the amount of time required to achieve victory should make that actor more willing to seek a negotiated settlement rather than continue fighting in search of military victory.

The critical insight from Wittman's model is that even if an actor estimates that she will be able to achieve victory in the future, the amount of time she will have to fight and the costs she will have to absorb to achieve that victory may well exceed the expected payoffs from victory. The other less obvious implication of this model is that what determines the outcome of a civil war is more a matter of characteristics of the war itself—e.g., how deadly it is, how long it lasts—rather than the characteristics of the nation in which it occurs. Indeed, Mason and Fett (1996) found that the strongest predictor of a civil war ending in a negotiated settlement was the duration of the conflict: the longer the conflict lasts, the more likely it is to end in negotiated settlement rather than military victory. This “war weariness” effect conforms to Smith and Stam's (2004) finding that the longer an

interstate war lasts, the less likely future disputes between those nations are to escalate to armed conflict. Quinn, Mason, and Gurses (2007) found a similar effect for civil wars: the longer a civil war lasts, the less likely that nation is to experience a recurrence of civil war.

That finding was confirmed in a follow-up study (Mason, Weingarten and Fett 1999) and in more recent studies using updated data and a series of competing risk models (Brandt et al. 2008; see also DeRouen and Sobek 2004). When governments win, they usually win early when they have a distinct advantage in military capability over a nascent rebel movement. Rebels too win early if they win at all. But the longer a civil war lasts, the less likely either side is to win. As the war drags on, both sides are forced to adjust downward their initial estimates of the probability of victory, and both sides are compelled to extend their estimates of the amount of time required to achieve victory. Accordingly, the payoffs from negotiated settlement come to approach and eventually exceed the expected utility from continuing to fight in pursuit of a victory that appears to be increasingly less likely and more distant in the future.

While Mason, Weingarten and Fett were able to specify a set of conditions that made negotiated settlement more likely than military victory, their analysis did not examine the difficulty of getting from the point of military stalemate to a formal settlement agreement. Both sides in a civil war may come to the conclusion that they would be better off negotiating a peace agreement than continuing to fight. However, getting from a battlefield stalemate to a peace agreement is a transition that is fraught with risks as well. It is at this point that the distinction between interstate war and civil war that Licklider (1995) pointed out becomes relevant. When two nations involved in interstate war conclude that a settlement is preferable to continued fighting, they can reach an agreement and retreat to the security of their respective territorial boundaries. When governments and rebels conclude that a negotiated settlement is preferable to continued conflict, they have to share the same territory and live under the same government.

## FROM STALEMATE TO SETTLEMENT

Filson and Werner (2002, 821) contend that most of this existing body of research on interstate war termination tends to focus on conditions that encourage one or both sides to surrender. Among these works are studies on whether there is an advantage to attacking first, whether democracies are more likely to win and, if so, whether it is because they choose their fights more carefully or because democracy somehow confers some advantage in the conduct of war (Bennett and Stam 1998; Reiter and Stam 1998a, 1998b; Reed and Clark 2000; Clark and Reed 2003). According to Filson and Werner (2002), many of these earlier works do not consider fully the

possibility of a negotiated settlement as a way to terminate an ongoing armed conflict. They quote Stam (1996, 35): "States and other actors usually try negotiations, incentives, or diplomacy before resorting to force. After an armed conflict begins, however, states focus on different methods to coerce an opponent to change the policy at the root of the dispute." Yet, empirically we know that many interstate wars do end in a negotiated settlement (Pillar 1983). The same is true of civil wars. Since the end of the Cold War, more civil wars have ended in negotiated settlement than in military victory. The *Human Security Report* (Macte, 2005) notes that during the Cold War twice as many civil wars ended in military victory as ended in negotiated settlement. By contrast, since the end of the Cold War almost twice as many civil wars ended in negotiated settlement (42) as by military victory (23). This trend accelerated between 2000 and 2005, with 17 conflicts ending in negotiated settlement and only four in military victory (see also Harbom et al. 2006).

The proliferation of negotiated settlements to civil wars has spurred closer scrutiny of how governments and rebels locked in a protracted stalemate can get to a peace agreement. This work has been informed quite explicitly by bargaining and game theoretic arguments borrowed from international relations theory. However, Svensson (2007, 178) reminds us of the asymmetry to civil war that complicates the process of negotiating a settlement and, therefore, requires modification of IR theories when applying them to the analysis of negotiating settlements to civil war. As noted earlier, the actors involved in civil conflict are not sovereign equals in a juridical sense. By agreeing to negotiations, the government grants recognition as a *de facto* equal to the rebels. Agreeing to negotiate with the rebels can have audience costs for the government, among its own constituents and among other domestic groups who may consider rebellion in the future. In short, agreeing to negotiate implies a decline in the government's power relative to the rebels (Svensson 2007, 180). For the rebels, agreeing to negotiate gains for them a certain measure of international recognition and domestic legitimacy. Negotiations also involve a pause in the fighting, which gives rebels time to regroup, rearm, and recruit more supporters. If they do eventually agree to a settlement, the terms of that agreement will almost certainly give them access to administrative and financial resources that they had no claim to prior to negotiations. Consequently, should they choose to resume armed conflict at some time in the future, they would do so from a position of greater strength.

Walter (1997, 2002) spelled out the prisoner's dilemma that civil war protagonists face in getting to a settlement, even when they have concluded that they would be better off with a negotiated settlement than with a continued quest for military victory. Her theory draws on the same literature discussed earlier that depicts war as an information revealing process. When civil war protagonists reach a stalemate such that both sides would be better

off reaching a settlement than continuing to fight, each side still has strong incentives to misrepresent their military capabilities and their resolve to continue fighting if no agreement is reached. By overstating capabilities and resolve, each actor hopes to extract more favorable settlement terms from their rival.

Walter points out further that even if civil war protagonists agree to a settlement, each side has powerful incentives to defect from the agreement. Each actor would be even better off if they could induce their rival to disarm and demobilize under the terms of a settlement agreement while retaining a portion of their own forces intact. By cheating on the agreement and not fulfilling their commitment to disarm, an actor can take advantage of their now-disarmed opponent and attack, achieving through deception what they could not achieve on the battlefield. Both governments and rebels know that they and their rival have an incentive to defect from the agreement, and that condition creates a credible commitment problem: neither side can believe the other side's commitment to abide by the terms of the peace agreement because the payoffs from defecting are greater than the payoffs from abiding by the agreement.

Walter's (2002) solution to this dilemma is to invite a third party to enforce the terms of the settlement and prevent defection by either side. With a third party to guarantee each side's commitments, both sides have an incentive to agree to the settlement and abide by its terms. Her findings on the value of peacekeeping forces as a device to resolve the credible commitment problem have been confirmed by other studies as well (see Fortna 2004). Walter's analysis of that critical juncture between battlefield stalemate and settlement agreement explains why so many civil conflicts become protracted, even when it appears obvious to both sides (and the international community) that neither side is likely ever to achieve a decisive military victory.

## CONCLUSION

This essay has highlighted some specific elements of the civil war research program that have benefitted from the application of international relations theory to the analysis of the civil conflict process. In particular, international relations theories on war as an information revealing process have been especially useful in developing theories of how civil wars end. I close by reiterating the point that, given the blurring of the lines between interstate and civil war in the real world, perhaps we are at a point in the evolution of research on these two types of conflict where we can go beyond merely cataloging the borrowing of theory across fields and consider whether there is much to be gained by a more explicit integration of theory on civil and interstate war.

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## PART II

# International Relations Theory and Internal Conflict: Insights from the Interstices

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The presumption that international relations theory can help explain internal conflict is widely shared and accounts for the hubris of many who came late to the topic of domestic violence and civil war from the study of international politics.<sup>1</sup> There has been some useful arbitrage with theories of interstate war providing insights into the causes of intrastate war. But the belief that international relations theory has something uniquely important to contribute to the study of internal violence is wrong—or at least misstated. Rather, we are *approaching* a single, unified theory of political violence of which interstate and intrastate war *may* be particular forms. I emphasize approaching because this general theory has not yet been fully worked out and may because the particular forms of violence and the relationships between them have not yet been defined. Nonetheless, considerable progress has been made.

The real question is what does this general theory tell us about violence? What are the commonalities between interstate and intrastate war? What are the differences? How can the study of one help inform our understanding of the other? If so far scholars have arbitrated from international relations to civil war, it is important to recognize that trade is a two-way process; we should seek to exploit opportunities for gain in both directions. Doing so highlights the irrelevance of some analytic boundaries long taken for granted in the field of political science and focuses our attention for future research on the role of extremists within both domestic groups and states.

### The Bargaining Theory of War

In the last decade, the field of international relations has undergone a revolution in the study of conflict. Where earlier approaches (Wittman 1979; Bueno de Mesquita 1981; Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992) attempted to identify the attributes of individuals, states, and systems that produced conflict, the bargaining theory of war now explains violence as the product of private information with incentives to misrepresent, problems of credible commitment, and issue indivisibilities (for a synthesis and elaboration, see Fearon 1995). In this new approach, war is understood as a bargaining failure that leaves both sides worse off than if they had been able to negotiate an efficient solution. This general theory of violence, in turn, is similar to

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<sup>1</sup>I count myself as one of the latecomers, although my occasional collaborator, Donald Rothchild, is not and has saved me over the years from many mistakes of ignorance (see Lake and Rothchild 1998). Our work has focused primarily on ethnic conflict, but I have now come to the position that there are few if any unique qualities to communal violence and that we should be studying domestic, not ethnic, conflict.

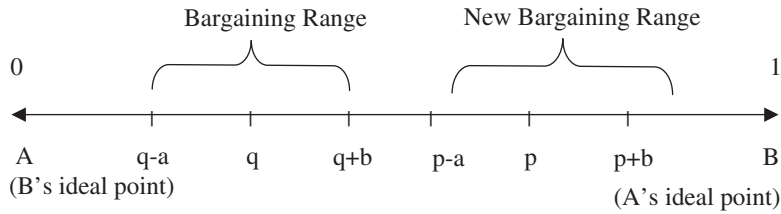


FIG. 1. The Costs of War and Efficient Bargaining.  
(Adapted from Fearon 1995.)

models of strikes and labor unrest, law (especially whether to contest disputes through trial or settle beforehand), and many forms of market failure.

The basic idea is quite simple. Two actors, A and B, have well-defined preferences over the division of an issue, say a piece of territory that lies between them or a set of rules (that is, property rights) that will generate income (for simplicity, a one time event). A prefers to control all the territory or enact that set of rules that gives it all the income, the same for B. Arrayed on a single dimension and valued (without loss of generality) between zero and one, A's ideal point is to the far right at one, B's ideal point is to the far left at zero (see Figure 1).<sup>2</sup> The division of the issue is determined by the (actual or expected) outcome of a violent contest ( $q$ ). If the actors were to fight to alter the division, they would incur costs  $a$  and  $b$ , respectively. Their net benefits to fighting are, for A,  $q-a$  and, for B,  $q+b$ .<sup>3</sup> Since fighting is costly, it opens up a bargaining space (between  $q-a$  and  $q+b$ ) in which both parties would prefer any division of the issue to actually fighting. Even if one side becomes more powerful and could shift the division to, say,  $p$  (representing the expected outcome of a war under a new distribution of capabilities), a bargaining space would still exist between, now,  $p-a$  and  $p+b$ . Thus, even though one side becomes more powerful and the old status quo ( $q$ ) is no longer satisfactory, both parties still have an incentive to negotiate rather than fight.

As James Fearon (1995) succinctly shows, bargaining may fail and war may occur in this framework only if (at least) one of three conditions holds. First, bargaining failures can arise when the parties have private information with incentives to misrepresent. Private information is knowledge an actor possesses that is not available to the other. Such knowledge can include information about the actor's own preferences as well as the strategies of bargaining and fighting it might use. For bargaining failures and war to occur, however, an actor must also have some incentive not to reveal its private information since doing so would otherwise allow a mutually preferred bargain to be reached and the costs of war to be avoided. War plans are especially prone to misrepresentation and, thus, bargaining failures. Since the utility of war plans is greatly reduced once known, as the opponent can then devise a more effective counter-response, actors have little incentive to truthfully reveal their strategies, thereby making successful negotiations less likely.

Private information with incentives to misrepresent may have contributed to the 1991 Persian Gulf War between Iraq and the United States-led coalition. Iraq anticipated a coalition invasion through Kuwait and counted on it being a long, bloody battle through that country, raising the costs of war to the United States.

<sup>2</sup>A single dimension is merely an expository simplification. The same framework carries over to an  $N$ -dimensional issue space. In such a case, the single line in Figure 1 is equivalent to the contract curve created by the tangencies of the indifference curves of the two parties and has the effect of enlarging the number of Pareto-preferred points (to include the entire lens created by the relevant indifference curves) but does not contravene the basic point that, as long as war is costly, some mutually preferred bargain always exists to war.

<sup>3</sup>Both sides incur costs in fighting. Adding  $b$  to  $q$  is required by the assumption that the issue ranges from zero to one. It does not imply that B sometimes benefits from fighting.

Expecting the coalition to bear a higher cost, Iraq held out for a bargain more favorable to itself.<sup>4</sup> Coalition forces, in turn, planned the now famous “left hook” in which they deployed further west along the border of Saudi Arabia and Iraq driving rapidly north and then east to attack the entrenched and unsuspecting Iraqi forces. Expecting a low cost war, the United States refused any bargain with Iraq short of complete capitulation and retreat from Kuwait. Had the United States revealed how it intended to minimize its costs of war before the outbreak of hostilities in an effort to convince Iraq to withdraw, the value of this plan would have been negated. In this case, the two sides disagreed fundamentally about the expected costs of the war *ex post*, preventing them from reaching a satisfactory bargain *ex ante*.

Second, wars also arise when the parties are unable to commit credibly to respect the bargain they may reach. A bargain is credible only when it is in the interests of the parties to fulfill its terms when called upon to do so. Problems of credible commitment often follow from the informational imperfections just discussed. When one side is unsure of the other’s preferences (its “type”), it may not put great faith in its opponent’s promises of future behavior. Over the 1990s, for instance, the United States became sufficiently frustrated with Iraq’s apparent failure to disarm as required under various UN resolutions passed after the 1991 war that it was unwilling to believe any statements from Baghdad indicating its weapons of mass destruction had been dismantled or any promises that it would not rebuild these weapons in the future. As a result, the administration of George W. Bush became convinced that the United States had no choice but to remove the regime of Saddam Hussein.

Even when both sides possess complete information about each other, problems of credible commitment may also arise when relative capabilities shift exogenously over time or there are random shocks that affect capabilities. If one party is expected to grow stronger in the future, any self-enforcing bargain the opponents might reach today will become incredible tomorrow; the actor that is growing stronger will not be able to convince the other that it will abide by the agreement possible today and not demand more later when it can. Uneven rates of growth, as a result, are especially destabilizing, and may have contributed to the outbreak of World War I.<sup>5</sup>

Third, bargaining failures may also occur because the issue contested by the parties is indivisible. The model above assumes that the issue under dispute can be divided into infinitely small gradations and that bargains, as a result, can perfectly reflect the balance of capabilities between the two parties. But if issues are “lumpy” and divisible only into relatively large units or not divisible at all, it may become difficult to find an acceptable solution. Despite the attempts of diplomats to persuade one another otherwise, few issues truly take an “all-or-nothing” form. In addition, “side payments” or linkages to other issues often allow actors to compensate one another for the lumpy quality of relatively indivisible issues. At least theoretically, issue indivisibilities would appear not to be major impediments to successful bargaining (Fearon 1995: 382). Nonetheless, strong “homeland” loyalties often carry great emotional appeal and, thus, serve to render issues less divisible and to make compromise more difficult for some actors (Brubaker 1996). This factor has been particularly important in some ethnic conflicts.

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<sup>4</sup>Iraq’s motivations and calculations in 1990–91 remain somewhat opaque. With the defeat of the Baathist regime in 2003, new information may become available. For a detailed study of the war based on then publicly available information, see Freedman and Karsh (1993).

<sup>5</sup>Traditional explanations for World War I emphasize Germany’s growing economic power at the center of Europe (see Choucri and North 1975; Calleo 1978). Copeland (2000) argues that Russia’s increasing might was the destabilizing force.

The bargaining theory of war has generated an active research program. Much recent work has focused on the problem of private information with the implication, described by Eric Gartzke (1999), that it is precisely the unobservable traits of the actors that lead to violence and, in turn, make war so difficult to predict. The major study using this approach, Robert Powell's (1999) *In the Shadow of Power*, examines exogenous changes in the distribution of capabilities and, in turn, the probability of war under different configurations of power. Problems of credible commitment have been addressed more fully in the literature on war termination (Walter 1997; Goemans 2000). Even more recent work is focusing on the anomaly of why, once they start, wars are not ended quickly with the idea that conflict is a process in which information is revealed, prior beliefs are updated, war aims are altered, and so on (Wagner 2000; Filson and Werner 2002; Reiter 2003; Slantchev 2003).

The theory has also proven remarkably useful in understanding war. Most visibly, it now provides the foundation for several important but still competing explanations of the democratic peace (among others, see Bueno de Mesquita et al. 1999; Schultz 2001). It has also been usefully applied to the study of ethnic conflict (Fearon and Laitin 1996; Fearon 1998; Lake and Rothchild 1998; de Figueiredo and Weingast 1999). It directs our attention away from ancient hatreds, animosity, and competing claims to territory to the proximate causes that turn domestic disagreements into violence. Moreover, it suggests clear mechanisms for enhancing peaceful bargaining through greater transparency, confidence-building measures, mediation, and third-party guarantees (Walter 1997; Lake and Rothchild 1998).

### **The Essential Irrelevance of Anarchy**

As we recognize the similarities in bargaining failures across different arenas, we must confront the question of anarchy, the trait that supposedly sets international relations off from virtually all other areas of politics (see Waltz 1979). If the same general theory explains strikes and legal strategies that occur under the shadow of a hierarchic state as well as war and internal conflict, we can reasonably ask "does anarchy matter"?

Many scholars automatically assume that anarchy, defined as the absence of any higher authority, does matter to domestic violence. Indeed, that was the initial rationale for arbitrating theories from international relations (Posen 1993). When the wave of domestic conflicts broke out in the early 1990s, many international relations scholars, myself included, jumped to the topic with the idea that we now had something to contribute. We expected that as states "failed" and slipped into anarchy, our theories of interstate war would have direct relevance. This expectation, I believe, was not entirely wrong-headed. But equally true, thinking about the conditions for stability and effective bargaining in divided societies tells us just as much, if not more, about anarchy and international politics than vice versa.

Although Somalia, Sierra Leone, and other states descended into anarchy and then widespread violence, there are many other cases of fragile but still effective states being pulled apart by civil war. There is no simple correlation between failed states and domestic violence. In turn, there are states that "failed" but managed to avoid large-scale communal violence, including the "velvet divorce" between the Czech Republic and Slovakia and the several states of the former Soviet Union. Anarchy appears to be neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for violence to erupt.

If internal violence is as much a cause as consequence of state collapse, there must be some prior stage in which authority is reinforced or unravels. In other words, groups must either decide to accept and work within the rules of the hierarchical state or reject those rules and deny the state's authority—thereby

bringing about the anarchy that then characterizes the relationship between the actors. In short, anarchy is endogenous. Civil war forces us to see this fact, long ignored in international relations, with potentially profound implications for how we think about politics and especially the distinction between international relations and comparative politics.

Analytically, the endogenous nature of anarchy implies that the common and often-prized distinction between international relations (the realm of anarchy) and comparative politics (the realm of hierarchy) evaporates, at least when we try to understand internal conflict. When groups choose to take up arms and challenge the status quo through violence, they are opting to act outside the constitutional rules of politics and rejecting the current hierarchy within their states. For any one state, there is no inherent difference between anarchy and hierarchy. Just like agreements between states, a domestic hierarchy is self-enforcing and exists only so long as the parties to that hierarchy consent to its terms. Groups can seek to destroy hierarchy by challenging it, just as the anticipation of its destruction can cause groups to turn to self-defense to protect themselves. Lurking underneath every hierarchical façade is the potential for internal conflict.

This actuality presents an opportunity, then, for arbitrage back from the study of civil war to international relations and political science. In doing so, we see venerable international relations concepts in a new light. For instance, the security dilemma is one of the core concepts in international relations theory and was one of the first “exports” to the study of internal conflict (Posen 1993). It is typically understood as an inherent feature of anarchy in which the efforts of one side to improve its security must necessarily threaten others, who respond in return, precipitating a cycle of escalation and potential violence (Jervis 1978). Yet, when applied to cases of civil war, the security dilemma can exert its devastating effects even prior to state failure—indeed, it may be one of the prime motors of state collapse. Rather than being a necessary consequence of anarchy, the problem of internal conflict coupled with the bargaining theory of war described above help scholars to see that the security dilemma is actually a problem of asymmetric information coupled with a problem of credible commitment. Since each party is unsure of the preferences of the other—whether it is aggressive or not—and no party can bind itself not to exploit the other should the opportunity arise, each must attend to its own security and arm more fully than if these bargaining problems could be resolved. This point is not merely semantic. When reformulated as a problem of asymmetric information and credible commitment, it is immediately apparent that the security dilemma is neither unique to anarchy, since bargaining failures occur in many realms, nor inherent in international relations, since there are mechanisms for mitigating bargaining failures even in the absence of a third-party enforcer. This use of the concept is quite different from how those in international relations typically conceive of it. The challenge becomes to identify the conditions and processes likely to create this potentially lethal combination of private information and uncredible commitments. But if the distinction between anarchy and hierarchy is essentially irrelevant to this dilemma, then the conditions and processes that spur violence within and between states might well be quite similar.

### **The Role of Extremists**

The great weakness in the bargaining theory of war, at least in its current guise, is the “bad men” of history phenomenon. We know that some leaders are, at the very least, willing to run a higher risk of war than others and, at most, may positively desire war. Informational asymmetries, credible commitments, and issue indivisibilities only go so far in explaining violence. There appear to be “war lovers,” as John Stoessinger (2001) terms them, who pull countries into violence even

when bargains may not only be available but known to be available by all parties. Wars prompted by such individuals are hard to reconcile with a bargaining approach.<sup>6</sup>

This parallels the problem of “extremists” in internal conflicts who often appear to desire violence for its own sake or who possess aspirations that cannot be satisfied through bargaining and, therefore, resort to violence. Indeed, Stoessinger (2001) labels Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia a “war lover” as well, arguing that the same desires that drove Adolf Hitler and Saddam Hussein to attack their neighbors led Milosevic to seek Serbian supremacy through violence against other groups within the former Yugoslavia.

Although war lovers and extremists are no doubt important, they do not themselves bring nations to war. Given the costs of fighting that are imposed upon their countries or groups, how do these leaders recruit followers? Why do groups or whole societies follow these warriors into costly conflicts? International relationists often sidestep this question by retreating into models of the state as a unitary actor or assuming that extremists already control the instruments of state. But the case of internal conflict again imposes questions upon scholars more forcefully. At the start of civil wars, extremists are often not in power and, indeed, may exist as mere fringe groups within society. How do extremists build support in the first place and ultimately convince their followers that violence is the best course of action to accomplish their aims?

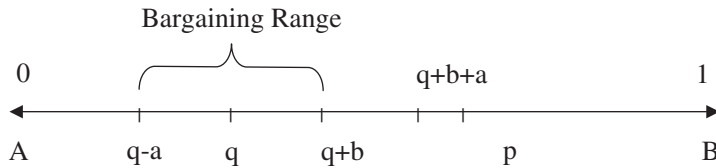
This is, in my view, the central question in conflict studies today. This essay cannot provide a complete answer. It would appear, however, that extremist leaders use violence or the threat of violence to bolster their own political power either vis-à-vis other states or internal opponents—and sometimes both. In turn, this behavior suggests the need for a more dynamic conception of bargaining and conflict in which the purpose of violence, at least in its early stages, is to alter the perceptions of moderates and shift their support to the extremists. (For a similar argument about terrorism, see Lake 2002.)

Extremists by definition hold political preferences that, in any distribution of opinion, lie in one of the “tails.” In other words, their political beliefs are not widely shared by others.<sup>7</sup> It follows from this condition that extremists typically lack the supporters necessary to obtain their goals, at least at first. They are a minority divorced, and often alienated, from the majority. The strategy adopted by extremists follows from their political weakness. Highlighting, accentuating, and even provoking foreign threats, extremists seek to create a “rally around the flag” (or cause) that expands their support. Such actions, of course, are similar to diversionary war hypotheses in international relations (Levy 1989), but the logic is more general. As is well known, Hitler played off feelings of German pride and vulnerability in throwing off the yoke of Versailles, although it is not clear that he was still using foreign threats to bolster his regime when he attacked Poland and began World War II. Similarly, ethnic extremists in the former Yugoslavia clearly precipitated violence toward outgroups to drive ethnic moderates into their arms, leading to a fractionalization and polarization of that state. Indeed, Serbian extremists disguised as Croats may even have used violence against Serbs and desecrated Serbian graves to heighten fears within their own communities and thereby drive moderates into their arms for protection.

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<sup>6</sup>Knowing that B has a greater propensity for risk or for lower costs of war should induce A to offer a more favorable bargain to B but should not affect the probability of war. Only when B’s costs of war are not only negative (that is, B gains positive utility from war) but greater than A’s costs of war is violence inevitable. In short, war lovers must love war far more than others detest it to actually produce war.

<sup>7</sup>A bargaining approach does not itself explain why individuals hold the preferences that they do. For my purposes, it is necessary only to posit that preferences are diverse and randomly distributed over a population, implying that within any society some “extremists” do exist.



If  $p > q+b+a$ , as shown here, violence now “pays” to shift the bargaining range in the future.

FIG. 2. Extremist Strategy and the Shifting Probability of Victory.

Extremists use violence not so much against the other side—although that may be a not undesired consequence—but to mobilize political power for their own purposes. Their ambition is to shift the balance of power in their favor and, over time, to shift the bargaining range closer to their ideals. By running a greater risk of war or even fighting a war, extremists seek to build support for their cause. Just as leaders facing a difficult election or domestic crisis can resort to violence abroad, extremist leaders who lack broad domestic support can provoke ethnic violence and exacerbate threats to build group solidarity.

The success of this strategy depends, of course, on the reactions of the opponent and, in turn, the moderates in the extremist’s own society or group. As Rui de Figueiredo and Barry Weingast (1999) demonstrate, for this strategy to succeed the threatening state or group must act in ways that confirm the extremist’s dire warnings of the hostility of the other. A modest or moderate response from the target may well reveal the extremist as a demagogue or provocateur. But a vigorous and violent response can lead moderates to revise their view of the opponent in a more hostile direction. When the stakes are high, this revision may be sufficient to cause the group or state to rally behind the extremist and follow him into war. Indeed, if the issue is genocide or national survival, even small changes in the beliefs of the moderates about the true intent of the opponent may generate massive shifts in opinion in favor of the extremists; better to ally with the extremists who promise to protect you, the moderates may reason, than to be vulnerable to an opponent who may destroy you. By playing on these fears, war lovers who lack broad support may threaten or use violence to drive frightened moderates into their arms and thereby create new supporters.

In terms of the model above, provoking the opponent and even fighting a war can be rational as long as the increased support from moderates is large enough to shift the outcome of a future conflict ( $p$ ) by more than the best deal the extremists could hope to get today ( $q + b$ ) and current costs of fighting ( $a$ ). In other words, extremist violence “pays” as long as future  $p > q + b + a$  (see Figure 2).<sup>8</sup> Of course, future  $p$  is dependent upon the actions of the target as well as the new support obtained from the moderates, neither of which is captured in the simple heuristic model used here. But the key point is that violence now can sometimes be used to shift the balance of power in favor of the extremists later. In this way, war can be an effective part of a long term, dynamic strategy aimed not at bargaining over the division of an issue today but at shifting the bargaining range for the future.

In current bargaining models, the distribution of capabilities, even if evolving over time, is taken as exogenous. The case of extremist violence highlights that changing the distribution of capabilities can be an action available to actors and needs to be incorporated into the strategic setting—forcing us to reconsider how we model and, in turn, understand violent conflict. Even more important, it reveals

<sup>8</sup>Although Powell (1999:132–133) is concerned with long-term exogenous shifts in power and, therefore, does not consider the possibility that  $p$  might shift more than the total per period cost of fighting ( $a + b$ ), inverting his proposition 4.1, as is done here, demonstrates that war will occur under these circumstances even in the presence of complete information.



once again that very similar processes are at work in both “domestic” and “international” conflicts.

### Conclusion

There are important gains to be had from intellectual arbitrage on both sides of the interstate divide. It is not just researchers in international relations who may have something to add to the study of internal conflict, but the study of civil wars may help produce better theories of international politics as well. Internal conflict forces scholars to rethink cherished distinctions. Anarchy is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for violence, nor is it a cause of the security dilemma. Theories of war premised on the unique nature of international politics are thereby called into question. Indeed, there is a need to endogenize both anarchy and the distribution of capabilities—elements of international structure long taken as exogenous (Waltz 1979). Ultimately, differences between interstate and intrastate war may be found and recognized as important. But, we should not presume that such differences are large or profound or that one form of violence is wholly distinct from another. As always, insights are most likely to be found at the interstices.

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## 7<sup>η</sup> Συνάντηση

### «Η Έννοια της Αποτροπής στο πλαίσιο της Θεωρίας Πολέμου»

Στην 7<sup>η</sup> συνάντηση θα συζητηθεί η έννοια της αποτροπής ως μια διαδικασία Υψηλής Στρατηγικής με προκαθορισμένο πολιτικό πλαίσιο πολιτικής ανάπτυξης και λειτουργίας. Οι κεντρικές ερωτήσεις είναι οι ακόλουθες:

Ποια τα κύρια χαρακτηριστικά της Αποτροπής στη συμβατική και στην πυρηνική της διάσταση; Υπάρχει αιτιώδης συνάφεια μεταξύ αποτροπής και αποφυγής του πολέμου;

#### **Εργασία:**

«Προσεγγίζοντας την αποτροπή ως ολοκληρωμένο πολιτικό φαινόμενο αναδείξτε τη σχέση της αποτροπής με το στόχο πρόκλησης πολέμου, καθώς και με τη διαδικασία αποφυγής αυτού σε μακροσκοπικό επίπεδο.»

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### Taking the long view of deterrence

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DETERRENCE: A ROUNDTABLE REVIEW

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# Taking the Long View of Deterrence

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One of the most interesting aspects of deterrence during the Cold War is how East–West, particularly superpower, deterrence gradually took on many of the trappings of a resource for international system management, so much so that it is often referred to as a regime. It is important that we keep this in mind and consider how the basic idea of deterrence as a security management resource for the system can be relevant today and in the future.

In this connection, the most interesting of the subjects Lawrence Freedman tackles in *Deterrence* is his conception of ‘internalized deterrence’, particularly his assertion that ‘The challenge for strategic deterrence is to create internalized deterrence in its targets’ (p.32). Freedman links internalized deterrence to the inculcation of norms in the target: ‘A norms-based approach [to deterrence] requires reinforcing certain values to the point where it is well understood that they must not be violated’ (p.4).

This is a stimulating notion because it blends two concepts one might otherwise consider antithetical, internalized norms and internalized deterrence. It is important to specify how the two might be related because adherence to norms of behavior as right and proper would seem to eliminate any need for, and thus the existence of, deterrence. Only when what is internalized is *fear of the consequences* of violating certain norms is deterrence at work. As Freedman notes, ‘Deterrence is

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a coercive strategy'. It involves trying to overcome some resistance to behaving in what is, to the deterrer, an acceptable fashion. If norms of behavior are internalized, then behavior is self-directed, not coerced. Freedman describes what he has in mind in this fashion:

Once certain courses of action have been precluded through fear of the consequences should they be attempted, the conclusion may become embedded. It requires little further deliberation. In this way, at one level deterrence never goes away. Certain options – whole categories of actions – are precluded because of the possible responses of others (p.30).

Deterrence is therefore still present but deeply recessed.

Freedman is proposing that deterrence can assist in converting an actor with no internalized norms of proper behavior in international politics into one with powerful internalized norms that eventually make deterrence almost unnecessary. He seems to envision an international system in which this process has spread, leading to a declining incidence of disruptive and destabilizing behavior partly because of the proper application of strategic deterrence.

Analysts have normally approached deterrence in international politics as a way to deal with someone who might attack if an opportunity arose, with no reference to the challenger's internalized norms or their absence. On whether they choose to attack, actors have been depicted as moved by self interest rather than general norms of behavior, and deterrence has been presented as meant to make it in their interest not to attack. Although deterrence might be used to nudge them toward internalizing certain norms, that is something that has been, at best, an afterthought, a secondary consideration or an unanticipated outcome. The goal was clearly to prevent unwanted behavior.

However, this has been problematic for deterrence in practice. Defenders have had a tendency to see deterrence as difficult because of how they have often characterized challengers' motivations for attacking. Challengers are often seen as uninterested in or hostile to norms of suitable behavior – they are evil or fanatical or irrational – and this casts doubt on the reliability of deterrence. Actually, it should make them seem uncontrollable by anything other than threats of harm, that is, deterrence. It is precisely 'rogue states' against which others would most want to use deterrence (and compellence) because nothing else seems likely to work. If 'rogue' means anything it is that such a government flouts norms of proper behavior, so only threats of harm will make it behave. Thus it is misleading to see rogue states as unsuitable targets of deterrence, a common view these days.

Yet this view persists because it is almost inevitably generated in a deeply hostile relationship.

The Cold War led to heavy reliance on deterrence because of profound political hostility, but it also led to complaints about the reliability of deterrence given the purportedly evil, intrinsically hostile, and ideological nature of the opponent and thus to suggestions that preemptive attack or regime change (rollback) be used instead. Today, rogue states have political relations with the United States (US) and some other governments roughly on a par with the East–West relationship during the Cold War and, once again, they are often said to be unpromising targets for deterrence, necessitating policies of preemption and regime change. Israel’s similar view of Palestinian and other radical groups has periodically led to preemptive attacks, assassinations of their leaders, and other alternatives to deterrence.

In contrast, Freedman suggests that, rather than being limited to coping with those who have not internalized what the deterrer regards as ‘proper’ behavior, deterrence may well contribute to the adoption of such norms. What invites this insight is that while the acceptance of norms as valid can eliminate deterrence, in contexts other than international politics deterrence is often used, along with other measures, for conditioning the behavior of actors that have *not yet reached that point* – behavior not yet guided by internalized norms. If this can take place in international politics, it would make deterrence there more attractive.

Freedman is suggesting that we expand our thinking about deterrence. To begin with, he emphasizes *general* deterrence, shifting the focus away from how deterrence was conceptualized and applied in the Cold War and often is now. In those days deterrence theory was meant to help policymakers cope with instances, and fears of future instances, of immediate deterrence because the actors displayed minimal internalization of significant, mutually accepted, norms of behavior. For major actors war seemed a real possibility and crises could, if mishandled, turn into war.

We still largely discuss deterrence in this fashion. However, general deterrence is far more widely practiced and actors are much better off when it is robustly effective. Freedman suggests we take this more seriously and define the objective as achieving a situation in which, having helped internalize norms of good behavior, deterrence becomes recessed and fades into the background. In keeping with the overall nature of general deterrence, this clearly implies that the norms in question must pertain not just to behavior in dangerous disagreements or rivalries, but to behavior that can reduce the *incidence* of such hostile relationships.

Our expanded thinking must also encompass the use of deterrence as a system management resource, in this case as a way to install in actors



deeply-felt restraints on the inappropriate use of force, including when they are dealing with domestic problems. This takes us well beyond the usual practice of focusing on deterrence in confrontations. During the Cold War we began to think of superpower deterrence as a resource for system management but since 1990 discussions of deterrence on behalf of general system welfare are rare.

To get a handle on all this we need an addition to deterrence theory, one that explains how this function of deterrence works or might work. Analysts have often lamented the fact that deterrence does little to resolve conflicts that make it necessary, that deterrence theory is about canceling a challenger's desire to attack and not about how to end the conflict. Years ago, Alexander George and Richard Smoke suggested that deterrence often heightens challenger frustration, leading to renewed efforts to overwhelm or design around it.<sup>1</sup> There are fears that deterrence often produces stasis not only militarily but *politically* – controlling escalation via deterrence threats means the parties have less incentive to undertake the complex negotiations and painful compromises needed to settle conflicts so they unnecessarily drag on. Analysts have also worried that deterrence can even inhibit efforts at conflict abatement. Proponents of a stout deterrence posture are apt to fear that efforts at conflict abatement such as negotiation and compromise will damage the credibility of deterrence threats by conveying weakness or erode domestic support for the tough measures needed to keep deterrence healthy. What can readily develop is the sort of situation displayed in violent extended rivalries where frustration is so high that limited attacks are common in spite of deterrence, culminating in a pattern in which deterrence, rather than preventing attacks, is practiced by periodic retaliation for attacks instead. Deterrence theory is now better equipped to explain how to stabilize a conflict than how deterrence can help develop norms to eliminate it.

Making progress here can contribute to thinking more about the role of deterrence in system security management for coping with regional and global challenges. This will take us into, as Freedman notes, the impact of the international power structure on norm development, but also into the use of deterrence by collective actors charged with repressing violence for the general welfare, and thus into the community development needed to sustain the further evolution of this deterrence function.

### **The Role of Deterrence in the Inculcation of Norms**

Clearly deterrence doesn't automatically inculcate norms. If and when it does, how would this work?

First, deterrence could help directly inculcate norms. It can be used to socialize or educate, as Freedman says in discussing families or crime. In such situations deterrence is, on the one hand, threats or punishment (to deter) and, on the other, a social signal of strong normative disapproval. Hence the ‘this will hurt me more than you’ from parents dishing out punishment – punishing is to help convey how frustrated and disappointed they are about such behavior. The child is supposed to learn not to fear punishment but that his behavior has been wrong and why.

Second, deterrence can reinforce the effectiveness of norms. Knowing something is wrong, someone may still be strongly tempted to do it but be deterred by threats of punishment. When people go ahead, despite the threat of punishment, they often feel guilty and accept the punishment that results (this is one reason criminals often confess to the police). They may feel guilty even when not punished. In short, people can internalize norms, accept them as legitimate, and yet violate them when faced with a powerful temptation. In being used to prevent this, deterrence can also help reinforce the norms involved.<sup>2</sup>

Third, deterrence is often used not only to stifle occasional lapses but as insurance against norms taking hold unevenly. Efforts to get norms instilled are never fully successful because some actors reject them. When success is fully achieved, deterrence is not necessary but who would count on getting everyone to that point? Having insurance against failure of norms in some cases can help solidify commitment to them by everyone else.

Fourth, it could be that frustration is eventually therapeutic. Deterrence foils plans to use force and, over time, the challenger’s attention shifts to other policy options. Kennan’s original design for containment is an illustration. Deterring Soviet expansion, he argued, would lead to either Soviet shifts toward normal behavior or collapse of the regime; it could not go on indefinitely pursuing plans impossible to carry out given the West’s opposition.

This still leaves the question of exactly how states in serious conflicts would come to internalize relevant norms because of deterrence. Here is one example of a possible answer. At one time it was thought that deterrence could be very important in this regard. Possibly norms could be adopted as a conscious response to deterrence itself – a rational adjustment to circumstances that it creates. Cold War deterrence thinking explained how. Inculcating norms is unavoidably linked to the emergence among relevant actors of the beginnings of a community – each process reflects and reinforces the other. In the Cold War deterrence emerged amidst a dearth of community in East–West relations. Nevertheless, Cold War deterrence in practice eventually involved efforts to develop some rules and norms, particularly in regard

to arms control. In the late 1950s, analysts pointed out that, if operated unilaterally by each side, nuclear deterrence seemed certain to be unstable. That necessitated, these analysts suggested, a degree of cooperation to stabilize deterrence and the East–West political competition.

This was perhaps the most innovative contribution of deterrence theory. Early on it was apparent that nuclear deterrence would encourage developing the ability to fight and win the next war by a preemptive attack. What was innovative was to suggest that since mutual preemptive capabilities would be very unstable it was in both sides' interest to cooperate to prevent that situation. By extension, it would be rational to cooperate to contain the costs of the arms race, to prevent nuclear proliferation, and to limit any East–West conflict to something short of war, or short of a nuclear war, or short of an all-out nuclear war. This called for treating the East–West conflict as not militarily winnable and living under deterrence as unavoidable. It assumed that rational decision-makers would grasp the mutuality of the interests involved and the necessity for cooperation. Inculcation of relevant norms was to come from rational appreciation of what was logically required for survival in the nuclear age, regardless of the continued political antagonism.

Arms control advocates went further to suggest that deterrence could help develop norms beyond those for conducting deterrence itself by promoting a related sense, however modest, of community among the parties and encouraging habits of thinking along these lines – an appreciation of the interdependence of security, awareness of security dilemmas, appreciation of the utility of cooperation with enemies under various circumstances, and so on. However, the steps toward arms control were not provoked by, nor did they effectively generate, a real breakthrough in superpower and interbloc relations. Detente was neither a major stimulus for nor a real effect of arms control until very late in the Cold War; frequent claims that it was were incorrect.

In fact, Cold War deterrence was of little help in installing effective norms even on deterrence; it was of more help in promoting a sense of community, and was of most value in encouraging useful habits of thought. Actor rationality on mutual deterrence was never decisive and did not lead to great success in arms control. The norms and rules for deterrence that arms control thinking posited were repeatedly compromised. Decision-makers often feared that deterrence could fail, and prepared for that by seeking a preemptive strategic attack capability. And the deep political conflict led readily to fear that the other side was trying to cheat, reinforced by each side's awareness of its own inclination to do so. The other side tended to be seen as incapable of residing in a stable international community; what it really wanted

was incompatible with that. And while an arms control perspective called for seeking the general interest, actors were far better at seeking to maximize their own. Domestic and bureaucratic political pressures, as in common in competitive international interactions, ran contrary to what theory suggested was rational under mutual deterrence. Thus arms control was repeatedly affected by the general tenor of superpower and broader East–West political relations. When those relations heated up there was sharp domestic criticism of cooperating with the other side, including heightened suspicion of its motives (‘if they want an agreement it must be better for them than us’), delaying or canceling various arms control efforts.

Detaching the conduct of mutual deterrence from the political relationship that made it necessary, and from the domestic politics of conducting that relationship, was impossible. As a result arms control never deeply took hold. Mutual deterrence was primarily stabilized by vast ‘overkill’ capabilities. First-strike-oriented buildups were not abandoned, just made less destabilizing (somewhat inadvertently) by a staggering proliferation of the targets a preemptive attack would need to destroy. The superpowers never abandoned trying to escape from mutual deterrence. Similar pressures against stability characterized the Sino-Soviet deterrence relationship, are displayed in the Indo-Pakistani relationship and seem to have been at work in several other deterrence relationships. Practicing deterrence has done little to install norms of proper behavior.

Missing has been a compelling sense of community. Evidently, this sense of community, however attractive for stabilizing deterrence, cannot readily be generated by rational actors doing their thing. A workable cooperative approach to deterrence requires greater community among the antagonists in their overall political relationship. Not as a *détente* but a deeper relaxation of the conflict to the point that cooperation is more ‘normal’ and the level of conflict is limited, so actors are not driven to evade the constraints of deterrence and cooperation. Accepting rules and norms for purposes of security is far more likely when adherence to norms runs throughout the political relationship.

Where the theory and practice of deterrence seem to have helped is in promoting a way of thinking, an appreciation of the complexities of interdependent decision making. Seeing international relationships in this fashion is a vital starting point for inculcating norms of behavior. Studies of the emergence of ‘new thinking’ in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev indicate that Soviet policymakers were influenced by Western thinking, rooted in deterrence theory, in coming to stress notions of interdependent and comprehensive security. The same perspective has had an impact on the India-Pakistan relationship in

recent years by stimulating concern about strategic stability and the political prerequisites for it.

An alternative approach has had more success, at least in Europe, and does not rely on deterrence contributing to norm development. Instead, it relies on dominant elites rationally opting to limit conflict and promote cooperation because it suits their interests. I have in mind the neofunctionalist school on integration descending from Ernst Haas. More recently, Andrew Moravcsik and others assert that the politics of integration is mostly intergovernmental bargaining shaped by elites' interests and related conceptions of national interests. Etel Solingen traces progress in regional security management and higher levels of security to the rise of liberalizing elites that moderate their state's foreign policies and foreign conflicts because a peaceful external environment is vital for the national development they desire.<sup>3</sup> In effect, dominant elites start internalizing norms that curb conflicts when they perceive that their interests, and the national interest, are best served by this. This assumes that a degree of community has already begun to evolve due to rising interdependence and an appreciation of the need to respect interdependent decision imperatives. In this view a recessed general deterrence, due to a shrinking inclination to act in homicidal ways, is due less to the effects of deterrence than to other developments that build community.

A variation on this is a modified evolutionary approach in which analysts like Barry Buzan cite rising interactions, Daniel Deudney and others stress the perceived threat from nuclear weapons, and Alexander Wendt emphasizes the human struggles for identification and recognition to explain why and how the world can and will consciously opt, eventually for adherence to universal norms and the security management to uphold them.

Are such views relevant today? Perhaps. The world has made a stab at enunciating a norm on weapons of mass destruction (WMD) nonproliferation – despite ongoing disagreements over WMD elimination. There is now strong pressure toward a norm against terrorism as threatening the interests of all governments, a norm many of them subscribe to. Similar moves might someday be applied to a wide range of behavior that governments normally use deterrence to prevent. Notice that governments have to be willing to adhere to rules and norms that restrict sovereignty on these matters. While this has worked less well on direct decisions to use force in several places in Europe, the continent is now rich in norms against armed conflict, internal or interstate. Around the world, however, there are still too many governments displaying the desire to develop WMD, or a willingness to support terrorists.

## Community and Legitimacy

The internalization of norms that preclude violent conflict seems likely to be hardest to achieve in severe state-to-state conflicts or intrastate violence. Deterrence in such situations is more likely to produce frustration and, as others have claimed, put conflicts in a holding pattern rather than transforming the parties' violent inclinations. What Freedman envisions is not impossible at this level – it is fair to say that mutual deterrence made some contribution to the strong aversion to force that now typifies most of Europe. But it is hard to be confident that it will take hold across the globe soon. Getting individual states to adopt common norms in dealing with an antagonist means a readiness to treat at least some of the antagonist's views and goals as acceptable – as legitimate – and constitute a community of sorts with the antagonist. In deep conflicts among long familiar antagonists neither is normally possible. The actors and their citizens are too 'close' to the conflict, have too much emotionally invested in it.

Freedman's analysis seems more applicable in the long-term development of the international system. Possible answers as to how it can be applicable require speculating about community development, which goes hand-in-hand with the development of norms, and about how norms acquire legitimacy for actors. We need to define the international context(s) in which drawing on deterrence for norm internalization might work. We need not only a more elaborate theory of deterrence, but theory about *when* deterrence can play such a role. In international politics, security considerations and war have often forced normative considerations to yield to other concerns. How do we get from the norm-structured realm of domestic life, where deterrence may help socialize, to a configuration of international politics in which this can also take place?

A web of rules and norms, and the expectation they will be adhered to, constitute the cornerstone of a community or of the English school's 'society of states'. In the Cold War community flourished only within the Western bloc; efforts at it in the Soviet bloc eventually failed and among nonaligned nations or other groups they fell short. Depicting the entire system as a 'society of states' did not dominate Western analyses and had little attraction elsewhere.

When Freedman suggests that general deterrence become our primary concern and that it might be recessed because conflicts are muted, presumably the international system has been making progress in shifting toward lodging deterrence within a more communal, less conflictual, framework. Citing Katzenstein on a norm as 'the standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity' (p.69), Freedman notes the constructivist perspective on how norms emerge and are sometimes displaced by other norms in international politics, including security matters. He notes that the crucial development is

always when the norms take on a degree of *legitimacy*. That reduces the necessity for enforcement, as norms are then backstopped by ‘processes of censure, shame, and stigma’ (p.69).

Thus norms ‘are bound up with notions of legitimacy . . .’ (p.69), and he refers to the difficulties of establishing legitimate norms when no central authority exists to manage that process. This means that to work properly deterrence must come to be seen as employed in support of norms that are widely regarded as legitimate; it must be embedded in a larger framework of norms. We can add that it must be widely seen to be legitimate *itself*, both in principle and in terms of how it is practiced.

Deterrence theory has paid no attention to this, probably because Cold War deterrence consistently lacked widespread approval but was clearly necessary anyway. While the superpowers claimed to stand for universal values, much of the world (even some of their allies) saw their conflict as normal amoral, power-driven, international politics. Numerous Western and other critics, ultimately joined by the last leader of the Soviet Union, described the Cold War, and thus its use of deterrence, as in service to inappropriate or unacceptable goals. The context within which deterrence was being practiced lacked legitimacy. Minimal community development was evident in the particularly crude nature of that deterrence, with its well-developed plans to obliterate the other side. A cruder deterrence threat would be hard to imagine and its underlying character never changed. Under those circumstances, adherence to norms was stretched mighty thin.

The main requirement is a strong sense of international community on managing security, linked to rules and norms that have broad acceptance. Gaining legitimacy for deterrence in the view of those subject to it and others must start with the character of what it is being used to uphold. The international system has made some progress in this direction. States which have gone farthest in building security relationships where strong norms and rules put conflict and war under control, so that deterrence has nearly disappeared, are clustered in three large overlapping communities – the Europeans, the West, and the democracies. With the end of the Cold War these states have assumed leadership of global – and several regional – security management efforts. While Western, particularly American, leadership is often challenged as to its legitimacy, the norms and rules being promoted are less controversial:

- reducing the salience of WMD;
- nonproliferation of WMD;
- no direct military aggression;
- respect for national sovereignty in settling disputes;
- no warfare unless the UN Security Council or an equivalent regional community approves;

- no genocide or other excessive violations of human rights in internal conflicts;
- promotion of democracy and human rights;
- enhanced multilevel interdependence;
- no terrorism.

These principles are not universally accepted, particularly in internal conflicts, but in the history of international politics there has never been such significant support for impressive norms in security matters.

As is often the case, existence of the norms is confirmed and reinforced not just by adherence to them but by reactions when they are violated – when efforts are made to uphold them or when violations are at least widely condemned. It is reassuring that the current American government has had such limited success in securing endorsements for violating some of the norms and that its actions have been so widely challenged as illegitimate. As Freedman points out, the US claims that its recent efforts will ultimately be deemed legitimate but this is unlikely. In effect, the claim is that legitimacy lies in the nature of what is being upheld, that the preemptive attack on Iraq was in pursuit of values that enjoy widespread support. The trouble is that the attack was detached from the development of community and the bolstering of legitimacy for community institutions and processes in ordering or at least approving the use of force. In fact, the US attack was shaped by disenchantment with the constraints of international community-building. Preemption for security will turn out to be legitimate as an extension of collective actor deterrence and not as a standard recourse for individual states.

Clearly the second prerequisite for deterrence to be widely internalized across the system, therefore, is international institutions with considerable legitimacy to make the crucial decisions on threats or the use of force to uphold norms. Progress here has also been notable. Several regional organizations and the UN Security Council have managed to garner a degree of legitimacy as expressions of the international community on security management. China and Russia, for instance, are reluctant to condemn the West's norms outright or to assert that they are hypocritically promoted and never taken seriously. Instead, they condemn specific decisions on where and how to uphold them.

What they do object to (as do others) is something much more problematic – that the norms listed above do not stand alone but are elements of the larger Western worldview, so that deterrence through the Security Council or NATO is therefore sustaining and promoting that as well. They cannot ignore the fact that upholding the norms listed above by coercive threats, and the implementation of those threats when necessary, involves expanded power projection by Western states and Western-dominated institutions. Whether this



problem can be overcome is uncertain. Freedman emphasizes that norms do not emerge independently of structures of power and interest, so Western leadership in shaping major international norms is neither surprising nor inherently unacceptable. The question is whether they take on a life of their own over time as detached expressions of proper behavior for all. That is uncertain but it seems more plausible in the future than it has at any time in the last century.

Generating more legitimacy for applying deterrence effectively is the most important element at stake in the current upsurge of reform efforts for the UN and other international organizations. While this lays a foundation for legitimizing deterrence, it is far from sufficient.

The third prerequisite is legitimacy for the specific threats of force and uses of force to uphold the norms. Deterrence must be more than credible and effective. The *means* used and the way they are used must also take on legitimacy – something nuclear deterrence never achieved. This is a tall order. The complexities in the use of sanctions are a good example – they have fallen into disrepute because of their indiscriminate effects in some instances. Deterrence for system management will need legitimacy with respect to:

- the source of the deterrence threats;
- the target;
- the objective;
- the specific harm threatened;
- the means to be used to inflict that harm if deterrence fails;
- the implications of a deterrence success for the future.

Post-Cold War deterrence remains controversial on one or more of these concerns. There is disagreement in principle about deterrence via threats and the use of force against sovereign states to uphold major principles, largely because of its implications for the future. On North Korea, China simultaneously insists that it not continue developing nuclear weapons and that, as a sovereign state, it has every right to do so and the world is not entitled to force it to stop. South Korea similarly rejects the North's nuclear weapons program but holds that the problem must not be solved militarily, that only a peaceful solution is acceptable. There is disagreement about when contravention of the norms has become egregious enough to justify the use of force, not just in terms of the scale and consequences of the violations but in terms of whether they justify the prospective or actual costs of intervening. The situation in the Sudan in recent years is a good example of how a decision to send forces can be very long in coming. The problem of indiscriminate effects or harm to the innocent from intervention remains. And there is often controversy over whether forceful intervention will, in the end, really change things.

How such controversies will be resolved we cannot say. What will not work in the long run is the US assuming unilateral responsibility for upholding international norms. The eventual internalization of deterrence cannot be not readily enhanced in this way. Since the decision process is seen as illegitimate, US action seems self-serving. The invasion of Iraq aroused fear that it would be repeated for other American purposes. Iran, Syria, North Korea and others have not, as a result, moved toward internalizing deterrence. They are likely to continue seeking nuclear weapons out of fear they might be next.

The US has had a better impact on deterrence credibility. Deterrence will not be widely internalized if it is not credible. Since 1990 it has often been difficult to make deterrence threats for upholding norms of international order and security highly credible – the delays in acting, the lack of consensus on doing so, and reluctance to pay a high price in interventions have been evident. Often American forces have provided the bulk of the credibility in multilateral threats to intervene and have served as the key component in an eventual intervention.

Legitimate deterrers seem likely to be a much better source of threats that help internalize deterrence. They will have to be collective actors that derive legitimacy from representing the general will, make decisions via processes that legitimate both the decisions and subsequent actions, and can elicit broad participation in the implementation of those decisions so that the threat of implementation is credible. The emergence of institutions with enough legitimacy to act against egregious threats to human security, and thus able to lend legitimacy to the use of the force for that purpose, so that the norms to be upheld are eventually internalized and force is rarely needed would be the clearest expression of what Freedman envisions.

It must be added that turning the study of deterrence in this direction, so as to lend whatever assistance it can, also benefits from gaining legitimacy for that task, since it has not been our primary orientation up to this point. It is fortunate, therefore, that such an able and distinguished leader in analyzing the theory and practice of deterrence has pointed the way. This is not the least of the strengths of Lawrence Freedman's book.

## Notes

- 1 Alexander George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia UP 1974).
- 2 Of course, we cannot readily tell when proper behavior is due to deterrence or internalized norms. Maybe they are mutually reinforcing; or maybe one is doing all the work and the other is irrelevant.
- 3 Etel Solingen, *Regional Orders at Century's Dawn: Global and Domestic influences on Grand Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP 1998).

## 8<sup>η</sup> Συνάντηση

### «Η Νέα Διάσταση του Πολέμου: Ισλαμικός Φονταμενταλισμός και Τρομοκρατία».

Στην 8<sup>η</sup> συνάντηση θα προσεγγισθεί η έννοια του Πολέμου μέσα από τους πολιτικούς στόχους, την ιδεολογία και τις πρακτικές των ισλαμιστών - ζηλωτών. Κεντρικές ερωτήσεις που θα προσεγγισθούν κατά τη διάρκεια της συνάντησης είναι:

Ποια η σχέση μεταξύ Πολέμου και Ισλάμ σε επίπεδο δογματικής ανάλυσης; Πως μπορεί να λειτουργήσει η έννοια της αποτροπής στον πόλεμο εναντίον του ισλαμικού φονταμενταλισμού;

#### **Θέμα Εργασίας:**

*«Αναλύστε τις πιθανότητες ανάπτυξης της θεωρίας της «Σύγκρουσης των Πολιτισμών».*

# **UNHOLY WAR**

**Terror in the Name of Islam**

John L. Esposito

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## The Making of a Modern Terrorist

Osama bin Laden seems like the last person destined to be a global terrorist. His journey from a life of wealth and privilege, as the scion of a multibillionaire Saudi family with close ties to the king and royal family, to the caves and military training camps of Afghanistan sounds more like the stuff of fiction than reality. What happened to transform a quiet, shy, serious, and wealthy Saudi young man into the world community's most wanted criminal? How are we to understand a man who has been described as "an Islamic zealot, a military genius, a poet, and an impassioned enemy of the United States"?<sup>1</sup>

Osama bin Laden was born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 1957, the seventeenth (the seventh son) of fifty-two children. His father, Muhammad bin Laden, had come to the Kingdom from South Yemen around 1930 as an illiterate laborer. He started a small construction business and went on to become one of Saudi Arabia's wealthiest construction magnates. He developed ties to the royal family and was awarded exclusive contracts. In the 1950s, Osama's father designed and built the al-Hada road, which permitted Muslims from Yemen to make the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*), one of the five basic religious requirements of Islam, more easily. His company also received a multibillion dollar contract to restore and expand the Grand Mosques of Mecca and Medina, raising his company's prestige throughout the Muslim world and setting the stage for the company's expansion beyond Saudi Arabia. The bin Laden family established a large industrial and financial empire,

the Bin Laden Group, which became one of the largest construction companies in the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> Ironically, given Osama's recent outrage at the Saudi-American alliance and the presence of American forces in the Kingdom, the Bin Laden Group built many military support facilities in the Kingdom, including those used by U.S. forces during the Gulf War.

The relationship between the bin Laden clan and the royal family goes beyond business ties to include friendship and intermarriage. The bin Laden sons have attended the same schools as numerous princes of the royal family in Europe and America and have studied at and/or given money to some of the best universities, including Harvard, Oxford, and Tufts.<sup>3</sup>

Osama's father was a strong, hard-working, dominating, pious man who insisted on keeping all of his children in one household and raised them according to a strict moral and religious code. The family home was open to many Muslims, especially during hajj, and Osama was able at an early age to meet Muslim scholars and leaders of Islamic movements from all over the Islamic world.<sup>4</sup> Like many in the Arab world, bin Laden's father is said to have felt passionately about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This appears in an anecdote that has the elder bin Laden seeking to contribute to the liberation of Palestine. One day, as the story goes, he demanded that his company's engineers convert two hundred bulldozers into tanks for the purpose of attacking Israel. Told that the task was impossible, he decided instead to produce as many sons as possible and convert *them* into fighters. But out of all the bin Laden sons, Osama became the only fighter.<sup>5</sup>

Information on Osama bin Laden's youth is limited and at times contradictory. Some maintain that he was a religiously committed young man protected from corruption by his early marriage to a Syrian girl.<sup>6</sup> Other sources report that, like many wealthy youths of his time, he visited Beirut in the early 1970s, where he enjoyed the nightlife and women of this cosmopolitan city, known at that time as "the Paris of the Middle East."<sup>7</sup> Like most young people, he would find or begin to define himself at university.

Bin Laden was educated in Medina and Jeddah, earning his degree in public administration in 1981 at Jeddah's King Abdulaziz University, where he studied management and economics. During his studies, he became more and more religiously oriented, influenced by his university experience and unfolding events in Saudi Arabia and the wider Muslim world. Osama's religious worldview was shaped both by Saudi Arabia's deeply conservative Wahhabi interpretation of Islam and by the revolutionary Islam that began to spread in the 1970s. Each of these influences would be formative in the development of his jihadist vision, mission, and strategy.

### **The Islamic Vision**

Islam emphasizes action, performing the will of God. It more closely resembles Judaism with its focus on following the law than Christianity with its emphasis on belief. Muslims are enjoined to act, to struggle (*jihad*) to implement their belief, to lead a good life, to defend religion, to contribute to the development of a just Islamic society throughout the world. The life and experience of the early community provide the model for the spread and defense of Islam through *hijra* and jihad. When Muhammad and his Companions suffered unrelenting persecution in Mecca, they emigrated (*hijra*) to Yathrib, later renamed Medina, "the city" of the Prophet. Having regrouped, established, and strengthened the community at Medina, Muhammad then set about the struggle (jihad) to spread and defend God's Word and rule. This pattern of *hijra* and jihad in the face of adversity, coupled with the concept of the *ummah* (the worldwide Islamic community), which stresses a pan-Islamic unity, has guided Muslims throughout the ages, including bin Laden and many terrorists today.

### **Jihad and the Creation of Saudi Arabia**

Osama bin Laden's worldview was very much influenced by the religious heritage and political climate in Saudi Arabia and the

Arab world in the 1960s and 1970s. Key influences included the environment of Saudi Arabia, a self-styled Islamic state with a rigid, puritanical, Wahhabi brand of Islam, the militant jihad ideology of Egypt's Sayyid Qutb, whose disciples had found refuge and positions in the kingdom, and the devastating Arab defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

The kingdom of Saudi Arabia from its earliest beginnings has relied on the blending of religion and political power. Its origins stretch back to the eighteenth century when an Islamic revivalist and theologian, Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, formed an alliance with a local tribal chief, Muhammad ibn Saud of Dariyya (a town near modern-day Riyadh), to create a religiopolitical movement, Wahhabism. The movement swept across central Arabia, capturing Mecca and Medina and uniting its tribes in what its followers believed was a re-creation of Islam's seventh-century beginnings under the Prophet Muhammad. Although the movement was crushed by the Ottoman Empire, a descendant of the House of Saud, Abdulaziz ibn Saud (1879–1953), reasserted the family's claims to Arabia and led a religious and political movement that resulted in the establishment of modern-day Saudi Arabia.

The Wahhabi religious vision or brand of Islam, named after Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, has been a staple of the Saudi government, a source of their religious and political legitimation. It is a strict, puritanical faith that emphasizes literal interpretation of the Quran and *Sunnah* (example) of the Prophet Muhammad and the absolute oneness of God. The Wahhabis denounced other tribes and Muslim communities as polytheists or idolaters. Anything the Wahhabis perceived as un-Islamic behavior constituted unbelief (*kufur*) in their eyes, which must be countered by jihad. Thus jihad or holy war was not simply permissible: to fight the unbelievers and reestablish a true Islamic state was required.

Abdulaziz framed the development of Saudi Arabia using stories and symbols drawn from the life and struggles of Muhammad. He recruited Bedouin tribesmen to join the brotherhood of believers and, like Muhammad's community, engage in a process of hijra



and jihad. Like Muhammad and the early community, they emigrated to new settlements where they could live a true Islamic life and be trained religiously and militarily. They combined missionary zeal, military might, and a desire for booty to once again spread Islamic rule in Arabia, waging holy wars approved by their religious leaders. Abdulaziz used the banner of the puritanical Wahhabi to legitimate fighting other Muslim tribal leaders and seizing Mecca and Medina. As in the Christian tradition, death in battle merited martyrdom and eternal bliss in paradise; likewise, as in the Christian Crusades, victory meant not only the triumph of virtue but also the rewards of plunder and booty. Wahhabi history and paradigms were an essential part of Osama bin Laden's religious faith and sense of history, a heritage he would turn to in later life for inspiration and guidance.

During the 1970s many Islamic activists, both Saudi-born and foreigners, were to be found in the Kingdom. Among Osama's teachers at King Abdulaziz University was Dr. Abdullah Azzam, who would later become prominent in Afghanistan. Azzam, a Jordanian member of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood and reportedly a founder of Hamas, had strong academic and Islamic activist credentials.<sup>8</sup> Trained at Damascus University in theology, he earned a doctorate in Islamic jurisprudence at Egypt's famed al-Azhar University. Azzam was an advocate of a militant global jihad ideology and culture, seeing it as a duty incumbent on all Muslims. Sometimes described as the Emir of Jihad or Godfather of global jihad, Azzam was a captivating speaker who preached a clear message of militant confrontation and conflict: "Jihad and the rifle alone: no negotiations, no conferences, and no dialogues."<sup>9</sup> Azzam's jihad was global in scope, aimed at recouping the glories and lands of Islam. "This duty will not end with victory in Afghanistan; jihad will remain an individual obligation until all other lands that were Muslim are returned to us so that Islam will reign again: before us lie Palestine, Bokhara, Lebanon, Chad, Eritrea, Somalia, the Philippines, Burma, Southern Yemen, Tashkent and Andalusia [southern Spain]."<sup>10</sup>

Dr. Muhammad Qutb, a famous scholar and activist, was another of Osama's teachers. He was a brother of Sayyid Qutb, a leader of the militant wing of the Muslim Brotherhood who was executed in 1966 when Gamal Abdel Nasser's government crushed and outlawed the Brotherhood. Sayyid Qutb is widely acknowledged as the father of militant jihad, a major influence on the worldview of radical movements across the Muslim world, and venerated as a martyr of contemporary Islamic revivalism. Qutb's writings and ideas provided the religious worldview and discourse for generations of activists, moderate and extremist. For those Muslims who, like bin Laden, were educated in schools and universities with Islamist teachers, Sayyid Qutb was a staple of their Islamic education.

Bin Laden was educated at a time when Islamic movements and religious extremist or jihad movements were on the rise in the broader Muslim world and within Saudi Arabia. The disastrous and humiliating defeat of the Arabs in the 1967 Six-Day Arab-Israeli war, in which the combined forces of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan were beaten within hours by "tiny little Israel," was a major turning point in the history of contemporary Islam. It generated deep soul-searching about what had gone wrong with Islam, the modern failure and impotence of a Muslim world that for centuries after its creation had experienced unparalleled success and power. What came to be called The Disaster was countered in 1973 by a jihad against Israel fought by Anwar Sadat. Its code name was Badr, symbolizing the first great and miraculous victory of the Prophet Muhammad over a superior Meccan army. This was followed by another significant event in the world of Osama bin Laden. The Arab oil embargo, with its crippling impact on the West, gave Muslims a new sense of pride. The Arab world and the heartland of Islam seemed to reemerge as a major economic power after centuries of subservience to European imperialism.

The 1970s also witnessed an increase in the power and visibility of internal Islamic opposition and reform movements. In Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood along with a series of radical groups re-emerged as a major oppositional force. Iran's Islamic revolution

came as an inspirational rallying cry for Islamic activists across the Muslim world. Saudi Arabia itself was rocked by the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca in 1979 by militants who called for the overthrow of the House of Saud. Many of these militants were well-educated, pious activists who denounced the wealth and corruption of the “infidel” regime and the corrosive impact of the West on religious and social values. They wanted to purify and return to traditional Islam, re-creating a true Islamic state and society. While bin Laden does not seem to have sided with Saudi extremists, he could not help but be strongly affected by the activist mood of the 1970s in Saudi Arabia and beyond.

### **Jihad in Afghanistan: The Making of a Holy Warrior**

A major turning point in Osama bin Laden’s life, the beginning of his journey toward becoming a *mujahid*, or warrior for God, occurred with the 1979 Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. As bin Laden would later say, “What I lived in two years there, I could not have lived in a hundred years elsewhere.”<sup>11</sup> By the 1970s Afghanistan had become overwhelmingly dependent on the Soviet Union’s patronage for its survival. Marxist and Maoist parties thrived while Islamist parties and movements were repressed. In July 1973 Prince Muhammad Daud, a former prime minister and cousin of the Afghan King Zahir Shah, overthrew the government, abolished the monarchy, and proclaimed himself president of Afghanistan. Five years later the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan staged a coup and established a new communist government. This was followed by the direct intervention and occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979. The occupation galvanized Afghanistan’s diverse tribal and religious leaders and movements in a popular jihad. Afghanistan’s tribal society had a fragile unity offset by the realities of its multiethnic tribal society comprising Pashtuns, Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Hazaras divided religiously between a Sunni Muslim majority and a minority of

Shii Muslims. Soviet occupation, however, provided a common enemy and mission. The call for a jihad offered a common, though transient as history would prove, Islamic religious identity and source of inspiration. The *mujahidin* holy war to liberate Islam and Afghanistan from Soviet (atheistic) communist occupation would eventually drive out the Soviet military, defeat the Afghan communists, and lead to the establishment of an Islamic state in 1992.<sup>12</sup>

When the anti-Soviet jihad began, bin Laden was among the first to rush to the Afghan refugee camps in Peshawar, Pakistan, to meet with mujahidin leaders, some of whom he had already come to know during hajj gatherings at his home in Saudi Arabia. From 1979 to 1982 he collected funds and materiel for the jihad and made intermittent visits from Saudi Arabia to Pakistan. In 1982 he finally entered Afghanistan, bringing large quantities of construction machinery as well as funding, and becoming a full participant in the Afghan jihad. By 1984 increasing numbers of Arab mujahidin were arriving in Pakistan to join the holy war. Bin Laden responded by establishing a guesthouse in Peshawar for Arabs on their way to the front in Afghanistan. In 1986 Osama became more directly involved in the war, setting up his own camps and commanding Arab mujahidin forces who became known as Arab Afghans in battle. He subsequently created al-Qaeda (the base), to organize and track the channeling of fighters and funds for the Afghan resistance. Six-foot five-inches tall, with a long beard and piercing eyes, the wealthy and powerfully connected bin Laden was well on his way to becoming a poster-boy for the jihad, at first as a hero and later as a global terrorist.

Bin Laden's activities were applauded by the Saudi government, which, along with the United States, had made a heavy commitment to supporting the jihad against the Soviet Union. For America, this was a "good jihad." Ironically, although the United States had been threatened by Iran's revolutionary Islam and the violence and terrorism committed by jihad groups in Egypt, Lebanon, and elsewhere, our government was able to cheer and support Afghanistan's holy warriors, providing considerable funding as well as

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) advisers. Everyone was in agreement. For Osama bin Laden, as for Saudi Arabia and indeed Muslims worldwide, the Afghan jihad to repel foreigners from Islamic territory was eminently in accord with Islamic doctrine.

Bin Laden proved himself to be a selfless and dedicated mujahid, or holy warrior. Still young, he was more comfortable as an activist than as an ideologue, focused primarily on the jihad in Afghanistan rather than on Muslim international politics and activism. Ahmed Rashid, expert on the Taliban and al-Qaeda, writes of bin Laden:

Arab Afghans who knew him during the jihad say he was neither intellectual nor articulate about what needed to be done in the Muslim world. In that sense he was neither the Lenin of the Islamic revolution, nor was he the internationalist ideologue of the Islamic revolution such as Che Guevara was to the revolution in the third world. Bin Laden's former associates describe him as deeply impressionable, always in need of mentors, men who knew more about Islam and the modern world than he did.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Radicalization of a Saudi Elite**

How did Osama bin Laden, member of the Saudi elite, mujahid, and hero of the war in Afghanistan, become radicalized? After Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia and a job in the family business. Though initially received as a hero, speaking at mosques and to private gatherings, he was soon at loggerheads with the royal family, vociferous in his warning of an impending Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Saudi Arabia, along with Kuwait and the United States, had for many years, in particular during the Iraq-Iran War, been strong supporters of Saddam Hussein's Iraq, seeing it as a check on the Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran. When Iraq did invade Kuwait in August 1990, bin Laden quickly wrote to King Fahd, offering to bring the Arab Afghan mujahidin to Saudi Arabia to defend the kingdom. Instead,

the deafening silence from the palace was shattered by news that American forces were to defend the House of Saud. The admission and stationing of foreign non-Muslim troops in Islam's holy land and their permanent deployment after the Gulf war, bin Laden would later say, transformed his life completely, placing him on a collision course with the Saudi government and the West. He spoke out forcefully against the Saudi alliance with the United States, obtained a *fatwa* (legal opinion) from a senior religious scholar that training was a religious duty, and sent several thousand volunteers to train in Afghanistan.

Like other Arab Afghans who returned to their home countries, in Afghanistan bin Laden had enjoyed the freedom to think and act and to engage in a religious mission to overcome injustice and create an Islamic state and society. In Saudi Arabia he found himself bound within the confines of a regime whose policies and alliances he more and more came to despise as corrupt and un-Islamic. While many of the Arab Afghans who returned to Egypt, Algeria, and elsewhere quickly became involved in radical opposition movements, bin Laden continued to struggle within the system. The government restricted his movement in an attempt to silence him. Finally, in April 1991 he escaped to Afghanistan via Pakistan. When he arrived, however, he found himself not in the Islamic state for which the jihad had been fought but in one mired in the religious and ethnic warfare of its aftermath.

Within a brief period after the Soviet withdrawal, the great Islamic victory had collapsed into interethnic and sectarian warfare, fueled by foreign patrons. The net result was chaos and the devastation of Afghanistan as various warlords vied to set up their own fiefdoms.

Despite the Afghan victory, the jihad had failed to develop a coherent ideology or basis for political unity. The United States walked away from an Afghanistan whose countryside was devastated by a ten-year Soviet occupation that had cost more than one million lives. Mujahidin groups, many of which today make up the Northern Alliance that with U.S. backing fought and defeated

the Taliban, represented competing ethnic, tribal, and religious groups. The country was gripped by a civil war that pitted the majority Pashtun population in the south and east against the ethnic minorities of the north—Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara, and Turkmen. The conflict was further compounded by the intervention and competing agendas of outside powers. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia supported Sunni mujahidin groups while Iran backed an alliance of Shii minority organizations. The majority of Afghans found themselves caught in the middle of a prolonged civil war marked by heavy fighting, lawlessness, pillaging, rape, and plunder. Bin Laden was frustrated by his inability to contribute to the resolution of the problems of chaos and lawlessness. In 1992, after several months amidst the inter-mujahidin squabbling and fighting over succession after the collapse of the pro-Soviet regime, bin Laden moved to Sudan.

### **Sudan and the Entrepreneur-Mujahid**

In January 1989, in a coup led by Colonel Omar al-Bashir, the National Islamic Front (NIF) had come to power in Sudan and established an Islamic republic. Bashir had enlisted the help of Hasan al-Turabi, the Sorbonne-educated leader of the NIF, regarded by many as one of the most brilliant and articulate of the Islamic activist leaders of political Islam internationally. Al-Turabi became the ideologue of the regime, holding a number of political positions, including speaker of the parliament. NIF members provided the backbone and infrastructure for the new government. The government, in a relationship that proved mutually beneficial, welcomed bin Laden. Bin Laden found a refuge and invested his wealth in much-needed construction projects as well as farms and other businesses in the fledgling Islamic state. During these years Sudan, with its open borders, was increasingly condemned by America and Europe for its links with revolutionary Iran and for harboring international terrorists and their training camps. In 1993 Sudan was placed on the State Department's list of countries that

sponsor terrorism. bin Laden was among those individuals whom U.S. intelligence identified as sponsoring terrorist training camps. Although he denied direct involvement and was never formally indicted, bin Laden voiced his approval for the World Trade Center bombing in 1993 and the killing of U.S. troops in Mogadishu, Somalia. American officials were divided as to whether he provided training and arms to those responsible.

Bin Laden's final break with Saudi Arabia came in 1994 when the Kingdom revoked his citizenship and moved to freeze his assets in Saudi Arabia because of his support for fundamentalist movements. From that point on, bin Laden became more outspoken in his denunciation of the House of Saud. Now pushed to the fringe, he joined with other dissident activists and religious scholars to create the Advice and Reform Committee, founded in Saudi Arabia but forced subsequently to move to London. This political opposition group strongly criticized the Saudi regime but did not overtly advocate violence.

By 1995, a series of events and accusations had catapulted the previously obscure bin Laden to center stage. U.S. intelligence sources claimed that he had established extensive training operations in northern Yemen near the Saudi border.<sup>14</sup> Investigators charged that Ramzi Yousef, the captured mastermind of the World Trade Center bombing, had stayed at a bin Laden-financed guesthouse and had financial links to bin Laden. Bin Laden sent a letter to King Fahd advocating guerrilla attacks to drive the U.S. forces out of the Kingdom. Some charged that he was linked to an unsuccessful assassination attempt in Addis Ababa, in June 1995, against President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. When five Americans and two Indians were killed in a truck bombing in Riyadh in November 1995, bin Laden denied involvement but praised those who committed the attack.<sup>15</sup> Responding to mounting international pressure, especially from the United States and Saudi Arabia, in May 1996 Sudan expelled bin Laden. Ironically, Sudan offered to extradite him to Saudi Arabia or America; both refused to take



him. Though some had urged the United States to take advantage of the tentative overtures that the NIF government was making, the Clinton administration chose otherwise.

Bin Laden fled back to Afghanistan.<sup>16</sup> Shortly after, in June, a large truck bomb tore apart the Khobar Towers, a U.S. military residence in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, killing nineteen servicemen. Investigators were initially divided between placing the blame with bin Laden or with a militant Saudi Shii organization.<sup>17</sup> Bin Laden praised those behind the Riyadh and Dhahran bombings but denied direct involvement: "I have great respect for the people who did this. What they did is a big honor that I missed participating in."<sup>18</sup> In June 2001 thirteen members of Saudi Hizbollah, a Shiite group from the Eastern province of Saudi Arabia, were indicted in the United States for the Dhahran bombing.

### **The Taliban and bin Laden**

In 1996, Afghanistan witnessed the rise of an improbable militia that would go on to unite 90 percent of the country and declare the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. After almost eighteen years of Soviet occupation followed by civil war, a seemingly endless cycle of carnage and chaos was abruptly reversed by the astonishing success of a new Islamic movement.

Late in 1994, as if out of nowhere, the predominantly Pashtun Taliban, a band of *madrasa* (seminary) students (*taliban*) who had been living as refugees in Pakistan suddenly appeared. Initially the Taliban were portrayed as having no military background. In fact many of their *mullahs* (religious leaders) and students were veterans of the Afghan-Soviet war who had returned to the madrasas after the departure of the Soviets. Within two years they swept across the country, overwhelming the Northern Alliance of non-Pashtun minorities. Denouncing the contending mujahidin militias, the Taliban claimed the mantle of moral leadership as representatives of the majority of Afghans who were victims of the internecine warfare.

At first the Taliban were hailed as liberators who promised to restore law and order, stability and security, and make the streets safe for ordinary citizens. They disarmed the population, cleaned up corruption and graft, and imposed *Shariah* (Islamic law). Initially, they enjoyed success and popularity as a reform movement. It was not until their capture of Kabul in 1996 that they revealed their intention to rule the country and to impose a strict puritanical form of Islam. With substantial support from Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, by 1998 they had subdued 90 percent of the country and driven the Northern Alliance into a small area of northeast Afghanistan.

The Taliban brand of Islamic radicalism has been significantly influenced by a militant neo-Deobandi movement in Pakistan. Ironically, the Sunni Deobandi began in the Indian subcontinent as a reformist movement. However, its political expression and ideology were transformed within Pakistan's Jamiyyat-i-Ulama-i-Islam (JUI), a religious party with a rigid, militant, anti-American, and anti-non-Muslim culture. Many of the Taliban were trained in the hundreds of JUI madrasas. Often run by semiliterate mullahs, these schools were first set up for Afghan refugees in the Pashtun-dominated areas of Pakistan, along the border with Afghanistan. Many were supported by Saudi funding that brought with it the influence of an ultraconservative Wahhabi Islam. Students received free education, religious, ideological, and military training. The Taliban teachers showed little knowledge or appreciation for their classical Islamic tradition or for currents of Islamic thought in the broader Muslim world today. They espoused a myopic, self-contained, militant worldview in which Islam is used to legitimate their tribal customs and preferences. The classical Islamic belief in jihad as a defense of Islam and the Muslim community against aggression was transformed into a militant jihad culture and worldview that targets unbelievers, including Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

When they came to power, the Taliban turned over many of their training camps to JUI factions, who in turn trained thou-

sands of Pakistani and Arab militants as well as fighters from South and Central Asia and the Arab world in their radical jihad ideology and tactics. Assisted by military support from Pakistan and financial support from the Wahhabi in Saudi Arabia, with JUI mentoring and influenced by Osama bin Laden's evolving radical jihadist political vision, the Taliban promoted their own brand of revolutionary Islam. They imposed their strict Wahhabi-like brand of Islam on Afghan society. They banned women from school and the workplace, required that men wear beards and women *chadors*, banned music, photography, and television, and imposed strict physical punishments on deviators. Their intolerance for any deviation from their brand of Islam expressed itself in the slaughter of many of Afghanistan's Shii minority (10 percent of the population), whom they disdained as heretics, when the Taliban overran Shii areas such as Mazar-e Sharif in northwest Afghanistan.

Many Muslim religious leaders around the world denounced Taliban "Islamic" policies as aberrant. Muslim governments as diverse as Iran and Egypt, along with Western governments and international human rights organizations, condemned Taliban violations of human rights. Despite their control of most of Afghanistan, by the fall of 1998, neither the United Nations nor most of the global community acknowledged their legitimacy. The Taliban government was recognized by only three nations, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates.

Nevertheless, bin Laden found the Taliban's Afghanistan a comfortable haven and useful base of operations. The Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, had been quick to offer sanctuary and express his admiration for bin Laden's sacrifices and dedication to jihad. Bin Laden skillfully cultivated and developed his relationship with Mullah Omar and the Taliban, providing financial support, building roads and other construction projects, and sending his Afghan Arabs to fight alongside the Taliban in critical battles.

Bin Laden's entourage and followers grew steadily. He attracted Arab and other Muslim dissidents, many of whom had had to flee their native countries. Among them were several prominent Eryp-

tian radicals: Dr. Aym an al-Zawahiri, a physician and a leader of the banned Islamic Jihad in Egypt; Rifai Tah a Musa, leader of Egypt's banned Gamaa Islamiyya; and two sons of Shaykh Omar Abdel Rahman, the blind Egyptian preacher indicted for involvement in the assassination of Anwar Sadat, suspected of involvement in the World Trade Center bombing of 1993, and later found guilty of conspiring to blow up major sites in New York City. Omar Abdel Rahman had visited Afghanistan several times during the war against the Soviets, when he and bin Laden had first met. Of these men, however, the one to wield the most influence over bin Laden would be Dr. Aym an al-Zawahiri.

**Aym an al-Zawahiri:  
From Medical School to Jihad University**

The story of Aym an al-Zawahiri is that of a gifted surgeon who became a leader of an Egyptian terrorist group on the road to becoming Osama bin Laden's confidant, reputed mentor, and successor. Aym an al-Zawahiri was born in 1953 into a prominent and conservative religious family. He grew up in Maadi, an upscale suburb of Cairo inhabited by wealthy Egyptians and foreign diplomats. His grandfathers were the rector of al-Azhar University, the Islamic world's oldest and most prestigious religious school, and president of Cairo University, Egypt's leading modern secular university.

Family and friends remember Aym an as a normal, well-adjusted young man—an intelligent, well-read, polite student who went on to become a physician. However, 1967 had been a defining moment for him as it was for many in the Arab world. After the disastrous Arab defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli (Six Day) war and the disillusionment over Arab (secular) nationalism and socialism that followed, al-Zawahiri turned to political Islam. He joined the Muslim Brotherhood when he was only fourteen years old. By 1979, he had embraced a radical option and joined Islamic Jihad, a violent extremist group composed of small clandestine cells. He quickly

became one of its leaders and by 1983 was recruiting members, organizing secret cells and underground operations. After the assassination of Anwar Sadat, Zawahiri was arrested along with hundreds of others. Though no direct link to Sadat's death could be established, he was tried and sentenced to three years in prison on charges of possessing weapons. After his 1984 release from prison, where like many others he had been beaten and tortured, he briefly returned to medical practice in a clinic. The political climate in Egypt and his radical past and prison record, however, prompted al-Zawahiri to emigrate and take a position in Saudi Arabia. Within the year he went to Afghanistan, where he worked as a surgeon, treating wounded Afghan and Arab fighters in field hospitals.<sup>19</sup> It was during this time that he met Dr. Abdullah Azzam, the Palestinian Islamist activist who had taught bin Laden at King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Azzam had gone to Pakistan to make his contribution to the war in Afghanistan. After a short stint teaching at the Islamic University in Islamabad, Pakistan, he founded the Jihad Service Bureau, whose mission was the recruitment of Saudis and other Arabs through publications and other media. Azzam joined with bin Laden and Zawahiri in recruiting and training Muslims for the jihad against the Soviets. They formed a lasting friendship and alliance in their growing commitment to a global jihad. After the Soviet defeat in 1989, Zawahiri returned to Egypt and to his leadership role in Islamic Jihad.

Zawahiri played an important role during the 1990s, organizing underground operations and integrating former mujahidin into the ranks of Islamic Jihad. The violence and terrorism of Islamic Jihad were met with equal force by Egyptian military and police. Bloody confrontations were accompanied by the arrest, interrogation, torture, and imprisonment of thousands.

In 1992 Zawahiri moved to Sudan with bin Laden, and in 1996 both returned to Afghanistan. From there, al-Zawahiri continued to be involved in the jihad against the Egyptian state. He is believed to have been the mastermind behind terrorist attacks, including the massacre of fifty-eight tourists in Luxor in 1997, for

which he was sentenced to death in absentia by an Egyptian court in 1999. He also merged Islamic Jihad with al-Qaeda and worked with Osama bin Laden to plot and execute their global jihad.

Many believed that Zawahiri possessed a deeper theological understanding and more international perspective than bin Laden, and that he was responsible for broadening bin Laden's vista for jihad beyond the Arab world to the wider Muslim world and to a jihad against America and/or the West. Hamid Mir, a Pakistani journalist who interviewed bin Laden, believes that al-Zawahiri also masterminded the September 11, 2001, attacks. Although only religious leaders can legitimately issue fatwas, bin Laden had nevertheless issued a fatwa allowing the killing of innocent people: "to kill Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it." When Mir pressed him on how this was permissible in light of the fact that the Prophet Muhammad forbade Muslims to kill innocent civilians, he noted that bin Laden responded only after consulting with Zawahiri and checking some Islamic sources.<sup>20</sup> Others, however, contend that bin Laden has long had a global animosity toward America and Israel as well as the intellectual and financial means to pursue it, and that it is he who broadened the perspective of Zawahiri, who had spent the bulk of his formative years as a terrorist focused on toppling the regime and establishing an Islamic state in Egypt. Regardless of who influenced whom, the bin Laden and Zawahiri joint venture produced a powerful global ideology and agenda.

### **Afghanistan and bin Laden's Declaration of Holy War**

Safely entrenched in Afghanistan, Osama bin Laden assumed a more visible and vocal leadership role in international terrorism, calling openly for a jihad against America and its allies. In August 1996 he issued a Declaration of Jihad whose goals were to drive U.S. forces out of the Arabian peninsula, overthrow the Saudi gov-

ernment, and liberate Islam's holy sites of Mecca and Medina, as well as support revolutionary groups around the world. In November, he again repeated his threat to wage holy war against the United States and its allies if Washington did not remove its troops from the Gulf.<sup>21</sup> By 1998, he seemed increasingly comfortable and astute in using the media to propagate his message and garner support in the Muslim world. From that time onward, his media appearances and statements were carefully crafted, emphasizing both his image and message.

In 2000 bin Laden announced the formation of the World Islamic Front for the Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders, an umbrella group of radical movements across the Muslim world, and issued a fatwa stating that it is the duty of all Muslims to kill U.S. citizens and their allies. The title of the organization summed up the man and his view of the world. Muslims were under siege, their lands occupied in a world dominated by their historic enemies, militant Christianity and Judaism. All true Muslims had an obligation to heed the call to a global jihad, a defense of the worldwide Islamic community. Global politics were indeed for bin Laden a competition and jihad, a clash of civilizations between the Muslim world and the West, between Islam and a militant Judeo-Christian conspiracy. Foreign influence and intervention in the Islamic world had once again underscored the traditional division of the world into the land of Islam (*dar al-Islam*) and the land of warfare (*dar al-harb*). Because of Western abuses, the entire world has been divided, he claimed, "into two regions—one of faith where there is no hypocrisy and another of infidelity, from which we hope God will protect us."<sup>22</sup> If bin Laden and al-Qaeda's attempt to mobilize the world of Islam for their jihad further convinced most Muslim and Western governments of the magnitude of the Islamic threat, it also seemed to contribute to bin Laden's attraction for a growing number of Muslims, particularly in the younger generation. Like Ayatollah Khomeini and Saddam Hussein before him, bin Laden seeks legitimacy and the mobilization of the "Muslim street" or general population through identification with many of the

perceptions and grievances of mainstream as well as extremist Muslims. He hijacks Islam, using Islamic doctrine and law to legitimate terrorism.

The major issues and themes of bin Laden's message reflect both his Arab roots and a growing awareness of the broader Islamic community. His primary focus was at first the presence of foreign troops in the Arab peninsula, the overthrow of the Saudi regime, and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Bin Laden labeled America and Israel as crusaders and Jews and Zionists and condemned the Saudi regime as compliant and corrupt. He then extended his accusations to embrace the death of one million innocent Iraqis due to Western sanctions as well as struggles in Bosnia, Chechnya, and Kashmir.

Bin Laden played to the Muslim sense of historic oppression, occupation, and injustice at the hands of the West. After September 11, he charged, "What the United States tastes today is a very small thing compared to what we have tasted for tens of years. Our nation has been tasting humiliation and contempt for more than 80 years."<sup>23</sup> He paints a world in which Muslims and Islam are under siege:

America and its allies are massacring us in Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir, and Iraq. The Muslims have the right to attack America in reprisal. . . . The September 11 attacks were not targeted at women and children. The real targets were America's icons of military and economic power.<sup>24</sup>

The heart of bin Laden's jihad against America starts with his outrage at the injustice in his homeland—the infidel's occupation of sacred territory and its support for a corrupt un-Islamic government: "The call to wage war against America was made because America spearheaded the crusade against the Islamic nation, sending tens of thousands of troops to the land of the two Holy Mosques over and above its meddling in Saudi affairs and its politics, and its support of the oppressive, corrupt, and tyrannical regime that



is in control.”<sup>25</sup> Refusing to any longer recognize Saudi Arabia by name, bin Laden referred to the sacred territory it “occupies.” Interestingly, King Fahd and the House of Saud some years earlier had taken to using the title “Custodian of the Two Holy Sites” of Mecca and Medina because they recognized their vulnerability to Islamic critics who insisted that monarchy is antithetical to Islam.

Bin Laden also connected Western presence in the Gulf with a more international concern: America’s complicity in Israeli expansionism, its support for “Jewish and Zionist plans for expansion of what is called Greater Israel.”<sup>26</sup> Contrary to what many said in the aftermath of September 11, Palestine is a primary issue for bin Laden. His messages have consistently spoken of Zionist and Jewish offenses against Muslims. His passionate statements on the plight of the Palestinians, who have been living under Israeli military occupation in violation of UN Security Council resolutions for over forty years, graphically describe, capture, and appeal to the outrage of many in the Arab and Muslim world toward Israeli policy and the complicity of the international community:

For over half a century, Muslims in Palestine have been slaughtered and assaulted and robbed of their honor and of their property. Their houses have been blasted, their crops destroyed. And the strange thing is that any act on their part to avenge themselves or lift the injustice befalling them causes great agitation in the United Nations which hastens to call an emergency meeting only to convict the victim and to censure the wronged and tyrannized whose children have been killed and whose crops have been destroyed and whose farms have been pulverized. . . .<sup>27</sup>

Bin Laden holds the American people, who elect their president and Congress, responsible for Israeli oppression of Palestinians: “their government manufactures arms and gives them to Israel and Israel uses them to massacre Palestinians.”<sup>28</sup> He charges that the Jewish lobby has taken America and the West hostage. He calls upon the American people to rise up against their government as

they did during the Vietnam war and force it to give up America's anti-Muslim policies and massacre of Muslims. Muslims have the right, indeed the obligation, to defend themselves. He appeals then to the Islamic teaching that jihad in the defense of Islam and to correct an unjust political order is legitimate and required:

We are carrying out the mission of the prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him). The mission is to spread the word of God, not to indulge in massacring people. We ourselves are the target of killings, destruction, and atrocities. We are only defending ourselves. This is defensive jihad. We want to defend our people and our land. That is why we say, if we don't get security, the Americans, too, would not get security. This is the simple formula that even an American child can understand. Live and let live.<sup>29</sup>

In bin Laden's view, charges of "terrorism" are specious in a world of immorality and oppression within which ostensible acts of terrorism are sometimes necessary and justified. He paints the modern world in polarities, a world of belief and unbelief, within which the forces of evil, oppression, and injustice assault the forces of good. The Muslim world and Islam are under siege:

They rob us of our wealth and of our resources and of our oil. Our religion is under attack. They kill and murder our brothers. They compromise our honor and our dignity and dare we utter a single word of protest against the injustice, we are called terrorists.<sup>30</sup>

Like a Muslim jurist, he legalistically distinguishes between "commendable" and "reprehensible" terrorism. To terrify the innocent is unjust; however, terrorizing oppressors is necessary:

There is no doubt that every state and every civilization and culture has to resort to terrorism under certain circumstances for the purpose of abolishing tyranny and corruption. . . . The

terrorism we practice is of the commendable kind for it is directed at the tyrants, the traitors who commit acts of treason against their own countries and their own faith and their own prophet and their own nation. Terrorizing those and punishing them are necessary measures to straighten things and make them right.<sup>31</sup>

Osama bin Laden plays to a centuries-long tradition of reform in Islam, most of it aimed in the last one hundred years toward the struggle over Muslim oppression by the West. Why do his calls for a defensive jihad resonate as truth for mainstream Muslims as well as for extremists who live today in the Muslim world? This is the question we will examine in the next chapter.

## Jihad and the Struggle for Islam

If you were watching a television special on *jihad*, with four Muslim speakers, you might well hear four different responses to the question: “What is jihad?” One might say that jihad is striving to lead a good Muslim life, praying and fasting regularly, being an attentive spouse and parent. Another might identify jihad as working hard to spread the message of Islam. For a third, it might be supporting the struggle of oppressed Muslim peoples in Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya, or Kosovo. And for the final speaker, as for Osama bin Laden, jihad could mean working to overthrow governments in the Muslim world and attacking America. However different these interpretations are, all testify to the centrality of jihad for Muslims today. Jihad is a defining concept or belief in Islam, a key element in what it means to be a believer and follower of God’s Will.

In the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries the word jihad has gained remarkable currency. It is used by resistance, liberation, and terrorist movements alike to legitimate their cause and motivate their followers. The Afghan mujahidin, the Taliban and the Northern Alliance, have waged a jihad in Afghanistan against foreign powers and among themselves; Muslims in Kashmir, Chechnya, Dagestan, the southern Philippines, Bosnia, and Kosovo have fashioned their struggles as jihads; Hizbollah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad Palestine have characterized war with Israel as a jihad; Algeria’s Armed Islamic Group has engaged in a jihad of terror against the government there, and Osama bin Laden has waged a global jihad against Muslim governments and the West.

The importance of jihad is rooted in the Quran's command to struggle (the literal meaning of the word jihad) in the path of God and in the example of the Prophet Muhammad and his early Companions. These are fundamentals of Muslim belief and practice. Jihad is a concept with multiple meanings, used and abused throughout Islamic history. Although jihad has always been an important part of the Islamic tradition, in recent years some Muslims have maintained that it is a universal religious obligation for all true Muslims to join the jihad to promote a global Islamic revolution.

Many Muslims today believe that the conditions of their world require a jihad. They look around them and see a world dominated by corrupt authoritarian governments and a wealthy elite, a minority concerned solely with its own economic prosperity, rather than national development, a world awash in Western culture and values in dress, music, television, and movies. Western governments are perceived as propping up oppressive regimes and exploiting the region's human and natural resources, robbing Muslims of their culture and their options to be governed according to their own choice and to live in a more just society. Many believe that the restoration of Muslim power and prosperity requires a return to Islam, the creation of more Islamically oriented states and societies. Some Muslims, a radicalized minority, combine militancy with messianic visions to inspire and mobilize an army of God whose jihad they believe will liberate Muslims at home and abroad.

If jihad has so many meanings, how are they to be understood? Which interpretations are correct? Which of the meanings promote positive improvements and reforms, and which have been exploited to justify extremism and terrorism? These questions are not new—they have been debated by Muslims throughout the ages.

The history of the Muslim community from Muhammad to the present can be read within the framework of what the Quran teaches about jihad. The Quranic teachings have been of essential significance to Muslim self-understanding, piety, mobilization, expansion, and defense. Jihad as struggle pertains to the difficulty

and complexity of living a good life: struggling against the evil in oneself in order to be virtuous and moral, making a serious effort to do good works and to help to reform society. Depending on the circumstances in which one lives, it also can mean fighting injustice and oppression, spreading and defending Islam, and creating a just society through preaching, teaching and, if necessary, armed struggle or holy war.

The two broad meanings of jihad, nonviolent and violent, are contrasted in a well-known prophetic tradition. It is said that when Muhammad returned from battle he told his followers, "We return from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad." The greater jihad is the more difficult and more important struggle against one's ego, selfishness, greed, and evil.

Understanding the various ways in which jihad has been interpreted throughout Muslim history will enable us to distinguish between extremist organizations on the one hand and the majority of Muslims on the other.

When Osama bin Laden or the leaders of other terrorist groups speak today, like all Muslims they often consciously or unconsciously use the past to legitimate their agenda and tactics. They place themselves under the mantle of the Prophet. They also link their militant jihadist worldviews to famous earlier interpretations of jihad, for example, that of the prominent medieval theologian and legal scholar Ibn Taymiyya or that of Sayyid Qutb, the godfather of modern revolutionary Islam. Are they simply appropriating a tradition of holy war or are they reinventing their tradition to support their self-declared unholy wars of violence and terrorism?

The struggle for the soul of Islam going on today is the product of a rich and complex history. From the very beginning, jihad was used both by those in power and by those who challenged that power, by insiders and by outsiders. Early Muslim history provides the clearest antecedents and paradigms for what is going on today. And so to understand jihad, we must begin with the Prophet Muhammad and the Quran.

### **Muhammad's Jihad**

Islam and the Quran, like all the great world religions and their scriptures, offer a universal message, a discourse that can speak to all times and places. Believers in every age and situation find teachings, principles, and values that give them meaning and guidance. Jews can look to the Hebrew Bible to find stories of Joshua and King David spreading and defending their faith and community by warfare, as well as passages that extol the virtues of peace. Christians look to a tradition that can support pacifism but also a just-war theory that legitimates warfare. Similarly, the Quran and the Sunnah, or prophetic example, provide a theology for peace, for living in a world of diverse nations and peoples. They also provide guidelines on how to fight the enemy as well as how to fight against corruption and oppression. As we shall see, the challenge in Islamic history has been to draw a careful line between self-defense and aggression, resistance and rebellion, reform and terrorism.

The world in which Islam emerged in the seventh century was a rough neighborhood where war was the natural state. Arabia and the city of Mecca, in which Muhammad lived and received God's revelation, were beset by tribal raids and cycles of vengeance and vendetta. The broader Near East, in which Arabia was located, was itself divided between two warring superpowers of the day, the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) and the Persian (Sasanian) Empires. Each had competed against the other for world dominion.

Seventh-century Arabia was critically located along the profitable trade routes of the Orient. As a result it was subject to the rivalry and interventions of its powerful imperial neighbors. The rise and spread of Islam was caught in both the local politics and fighting of Arabia and the imperial warfare of the Near East. Muhammad's preaching would add to this mix and would itself become a source of conflict.

Muhammad's reformist message posed an unwelcome challenge to the religious and political establishment, the priests, tribal leaders, and businessmen of the community. The new religious mes-

sage that Muhammad preached, like that of Amos and other biblical prophets before him, denounced the status quo and called for social justice for the poor and the most vulnerable in society—women, children, and orphans. Muhammad and the Quran condemned Arabian polytheism and put a spotlight on Meccan society's unbridled materialism, avarice, and corruption, a condition of ignorance and unbelief called *jahiliyyah*. This is a very important term, rich in meaning, that has been reappropriated and reinterpreted by fundamentalists today to describe and condemn Western society.

Muhammad's prophetic call summoned the people to strive and struggle (jihad) to reform their communities and to live a good life based on religious belief and not loyalty to their tribe. His insistence that each person was personally accountable not to tribal customary law but to an overriding divine law shook the very foundations of Arabian society. Muhammad's newly claimed status and authority as God's messenger and his entreaties to believers to take action against social corruption threatened the authority of powerful elites. Muhammad proclaimed a sweeping program of religious and social reform that affected religious belief and practices, business contracts and practices, male-female and family relations. The Quran rejected Arabian polytheism and insisted that there was only one true God. It denounced the corrupt practices of many merchants and the exploitation of orphans and their inheritance rights. It condemned infanticide, spoke of the religious equality of men and women, and expanded the marriage and inheritance rights of women. To uphold this deeply challenging message and mission, Muhammad and his followers would have to fight, wage jihad, to stay alive.

The example of the original Islamic community has deep significance for reformers as the only model to be emulated. Sayyid Qutb, writing in the mid-twentieth century, echoes those who came before and after him and testifies to the continuing power of the first Islamic community to inspire Muslims in all ages:



At one time this Message [the Quran] created a generation—the generation of the Companions of the Prophet (may God be pleased with them) without comparison in the history of Islam, even in the entire history of man. After this, no other generation of this calibre was ever again to be found.<sup>1</sup>

### **Hijra and Jihad: Response to Persecution and Conflict**

The first decade of Muhammad's preaching met with resistance and persecution and produced limited results. The community remained small and under constant pressure. The experience of Muhammad's nascent community would provide the model for later generations, a guide for responding to persecution and rejection, to threats to the faith, to the security and survival of the community. The twin ideals of *hijra* (which means to emigrate from a hostile un-Islamic jahiliyyah environment) and jihad were established. Faced with ever-increasing threats and persecution, in 622 C.E. Muhammad and his followers moved (*hijra*) from Mecca to Medina, approximately 250 miles away, where he established the first Islamic community or city-state. The central significance given to this move can be seen in the fact that the Muslim calendar begins with the year of the *hijra* and the creation of the Islamic community, rather than earlier dates such as the year Muhammad was born or the year in which he received his first revelation from God.

Moving from the traditional safety of one's tribe and kinsmen in warring Arabia to form alliances with alien tribes based on a broader Islamic ideal and a collective surrender to the will of God was another of Muhammad's revolutionary concepts—one fraught with danger and potential strife. Therefore, it follows that what many refer to as "defensive jihad" appears in the earliest Quranic verses, revealed shortly after the *hijra* to Medina when Muhammad and his followers knew they would be forced to fight for their lives: "Leave is given to those who fight because they were wronged—surely God is able to help them—who were expelled

from their homes wrongfully for saying, ‘Our Lord is God’” (22:39). The defensive nature of jihad is reinforced in 2:190—“And fight in the way of God with those who fight you, but aggress not: God loves not the aggressors.” Both mainstream and extremist movements and “holy warriors” like Osama bin Laden, who emigrated from Saudi Arabia to establish his movement and community with its training bases in Afghanistan, have selectively used the pattern of hijra and jihad for their own purposes.

### **Jihad for Defense and Expansion**

From 622 C.E. until his death ten years later, Muhammad very successfully consolidated his power in Medina and united the feuding tribes of Arabia. At critical points throughout these years Muhammad received revelations from God that provided guidelines for the jihad. As the Muslim community grew, questions quickly emerged about who had religious and political authority, how to handle rebellion and civil war, what was proper behavior during times of war and peace, how to rationalize and legitimize expansion and conquest, violence and resistance. Answers to these questions were developed by referring to Quranic injunctions. The Quran provides detailed guidelines and regulations regarding the conduct of war: who is to fight and who is exempted (48:17, 9:91), when hostilities must cease (2:192), how prisoners should be treated (47:4). Verses such as Quran 2:294 emphasize proportionality in warfare: “whoever transgresses against you, respond in kind.” Other verses provide a strong mandate for making peace: “If your enemy inclines toward peace then you too should seek peace and put your trust in God” (8:61), and “Had Allah wished, He would have made them dominate you and so if they leave you alone and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah allows you no way against them” (4:90). From the earliest times it was forbidden to kill noncombatants as well as women and children and monks and rabbis, who were given the promise of immunity unless they had taken part in the fighting. The Prophet’s example (and Islamic

law) also provide answers to questions about how the Muslim community should act. Stories about how the Prophet behaved are preserved in narrative traditions or *hadith*. They have been and continue to be used throughout the world to provide guidance for Muslim decisions and behavior.

Under the leadership of Muhammad and then his early successors, the Islamic community spread rapidly, creating a vast empire greater than Rome at its zenith and stretching from North Africa to India. Muslim armies—motivated both by economic rewards from the conquest of richer, more developed societies and by religious zeal, the promise of reward in heaven—successfully overran the Byzantine and Persian Empires, which had become exhausted from endless warring with each other.

The religious rationale (as distinct from the practical political and economic motives) for conquest and expansion was not to force conversion to Islam upon other faiths who had their own prophets and revelations—the Quran states clearly, “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:256)—but rather to spread its righteous order so that ignorance and unbelief could be replaced by just societies throughout the world. The religious justification made for a jihad to propagate the faith is connected to Islam’s universal mission to spread the word of God and the just reign of God’s will for all humanity: “So let there be a body among you who may call to the good, enjoin what is esteemed and forbid what is odious. They are those who will be successful” (3:104); and, “Of all the communities raised among men you are the best, enjoining the good, forbidding the wrong, and believing in God” (3:110).

Martyrs who sacrifice their lives to establish Islamic ideals or to defend those ideals hold a special place in Islam. The Quran has many passages that support the notion of martyrdom and that comfort those left behind. For example, “Were you to be killed or to die in the way of God, forgiveness and mercy from God are far better than what they amass” (3:157); and, “Never think that those who are killed in the way of God are dead. They are alive with their Lord, well provided for” (3:169). Both Sunni and Shii tradi-

tions value and esteem martyrdom in their beliefs and devotions. Sunni Islam has historically valorized martyrdom through veneration of the struggles (jihad) of the early community with the Meccan Arabs and within their jahiliyyah culture of unbelief, while Shii Islam celebrates annually the martyrdom of its early leaders who fought to reinstate the true values of Islam into their society.

Hadith literature also provides many affirmations of the rewards for those who die for Islam. Muslim tradition teaches that martyrs are distinguished from others in life after death in several ways: their self-sacrifice and meritorious act render them free of sin and therefore they are not subject to the post-mortem interrogation of the angels Nakir and Munkar; they bypass “purgatory” and proceed to one of the highest locations in heaven near the Throne of God; as a result of their purity, they are buried in the clothes in which they died and do not need to be washed before burial.

With the growth, expansion, and development of the Islamic community, concern about the power and lifestyles of rulers and the need to expound more fully and clearly what the Quran said about the “straight path of Islam” resulted in the emergence of religious scholars (*ulama*, the learned). The ulama developed the *Shariah*, Islamic law, seen as the ideal blueprint for Muslim life.

Over the ages, Islamic law and jurists became the primary authorities for the meanings of jihad, when to declare and when to restrict jihad. While Muslim rulers declared and conducted the jihad, legal experts, known as *muftis*, provided *fatwas* (legal opinions) that could be used either to legitimate or to challenge the legitimacy of a jihad, a practice that continues up to the present day. For example, during the Gulf war, Muslim rulers obtained fatwas to legitimate their participation in the American-led coalition against Saddam Hussein’s declared jihad, and Saudi Arabia obtained a fatwa to legitimate the presence of non-Muslim American troops in the Kingdom.

Islamic law stipulates that it is a Muslim’s duty to wage war not only against those who attack Muslim territory, but also against polytheists, apostates, and People of the Book (at first restricted to

Jews and Christians but later extended to Zoroastrians and other faiths) who refuse Muslim rule. Muslims gave these people two choices: conversion or submission to Muslim rule with the right to retain their religion and pay a poll tax (a common practice applied to outsiders, within and outside of Arabia). If they refused both of these options, they were subject to war. Muslim jurists saw jihad as a requirement in a world divided between what they called the *dar al-Islam* (land of Islam) and the *dar al-harb* (land of war). The Muslim community was required to engage in the struggle to expand the *dar al-Islam* throughout the world so that all of humankind would have the opportunity to live within a just political and social order. One school of law, the Shafii, posited a third category, the land of treaty (*dar al-sulh*), a territory that had concluded a truce with a Muslim government.

Other Quranic verses, sometimes referred to as the “sword verses,” are quoted selectively to legitimate unconditional warfare against unbelievers and were used by jurists to justify great expansion. The argument, developed during the period under the early caliphs, a time when the *ulamā* enjoyed royal patronage, was that the sword verses abrogated all the earlier verses that limited jihad to a defensive war: “When the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them, and confine them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush” (9:5). Yet the full intent of this verse, if it is used in isolation, can be overlooked. It is followed by: “But if they repent and fulfill their devotional obligations and pay the *zakat* [tax for alms] then let them go their way for God is forgiving and kind” (9:5). Although this verse has been used to justify offensive jihad, it has traditionally been read as a call for peaceful relations unless there is interference with the freedom of Muslims. The same is true of the following: “Fight those who believe not in God nor the Last Day, Nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by God and His Apostle, Nor hold the religion of truth (even if they are) of the People of the Book, Until they pay the tax with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued” (9:29).

### **Jihad: Sectarianism and Terrorism in Early Islam**

From its beginnings the faith, unity, and very survival of the Islamic community were threatened by civil war, sectarianism, violence, assassination of its leaders, and terrorism. Disorder (*fitnah*) was and remains a primary political and social evil. The Quran and the example of the Prophet's community or state at Medina linked Islam with politics and society in the struggle (jihad) to implement God's will and to create a just social order. Islam was riven by deep divisions and conflicts revolving around leadership and authority. The community divided into two major and often competing branches, Sunni and Shii.

Although Islam is the second largest religion in the world, many in the West knew nothing about it until Iran's Islamic revolution catapulted Islam into the consciousness of the world. It is ironic that the West's contemporary encounter with Islam began with the actions of Islam's Shii minority, who make up only 15 percent of the Muslim community. Throughout the 1980s, the Western nations' primary experience of Islam was with the Ayatollah Khomeini's brand of radical Islamic fundamentalism. Fears of its export throughout the Muslim world dominated the corridors of power and media headlines.

In the United States, Shii Islam is identified primarily with the militancy, anti-Americanism, and terrorism of the Iranian revolution and of Hizbollah in Lebanon. This has obscured the richness of the Shii religious tradition and spirituality, its diverse branches and differing experiences of and attitudes toward war and peace. Shiism is a faith born out of the experience of oppression and tyranny. It is the official religion of empires and states in North Africa as well as in Iran and Oman. It has fought jihads of liberation and of expansion and conquest. In modern times, its leaders have included a seminary-trained revolutionary like Ayatollah Khomeini and the cosmopolitan, urbane Harvard-trained Agha Khan, who uses his community's wealth for major educational and social welfare projects around the world. The road traveled by

Shii from their origins to the present reveals a rich legacy able to provide support for both reformers and revolutionaries.

The origins of Shii Islam go back to the death of Islam's charismatic prophetic leader in 632 C.E. The community was plunged into a crisis over who would succeed Muhammad. Should the successor be the most pious Muslim or a direct descendant of the Prophet? The seeds of dissent in the Islamic community were planted when the companions of the Prophet moved quickly to select Abu Bakr, Muhammad's father-in-law, an early convert and well-respected member of the community, as the Prophet's first successor or *caliph*. The caliph was to be the political leader of the community. Although not a prophet, a caliph enjoyed a certain religious prestige and authority as head of the community. He led the Friday congregational prayer, and his name was mentioned in the prayer. As the protector of Islam, the caliph led the jihad and was to govern the community by the Shariah (Islamic law). Those who accepted the choice of Abu Bakr, the majority of the community, became known as Sunnis (followers of the *Sunnah*, or example of the Prophet).

This transition of leadership set in motion a sequence of events that led to division, rebellion, and historic conflict. A minority of the community, the Shii (meaning the party or followers of Ali), took strong exception to the selection of Abu Bakr. They believed that before his death Muhammad had designated the senior male of his family, Ali, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, to be leader, or *Imam*, of the community. Ali was eventually chosen as the fourth in a succession of caliphs, but his Shii followers suffered Ali's assassination after five years of rule (656–661) and then the subsequent massacre of Ali's son, the brave and charismatic Hussein, as he and his army battled to try to regain power and reinstate the true values of Islam. Hussein and his forces were defeated by the army of the caliph Yazid in 680 C.E. The death or martyrdom of Hussein in the Battle of Karbala became a defining symbol for Shii Muslims of the profound injustice of the world. It inspired and motivated Shii jihads against what they considered the un-Islamic

Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, whose caliphs they regarded as illegitimate.

During this time the Shii community itself split into two major branches, Twelvers and Seveners, over the issue of leadership. The numerical designation of each branch stems from the death or disappearance of their Imam and thus the disruption of succession. Shii theology resolved the problem of the Imam's absence with the doctrine of the "hidden Imam" who will return as a messianic figure, the Mahdi, at the end of the world to usher in a perfect Islamic society in which truth and justice will prevail.

Shii history and religious symbolism has been used in every age to bring about reform. In the twentieth century modern Shii religious leaders reinterpreted the memory of Hussein's martyrdom to mobilize support for revolutionary movements. Portraying the Shah of Iran as the new Yazid, the Umayyad general responsible for the massacre at Karbala, the Ayatollah Khomeini called for a revolution to overthrow their un-Islamic leader. Khomeini also appealed to Shii in Sunni-dominated Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait to rise up against oppressive regimes and claim their rightful inheritance. With Iranian backing, Lebanon's Shii Hizbollah (Party of God), which had come into being in response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, declared jihad against Israel and its American "patron."

### **Sunni and Shii Conceptions of Jihad**

Despite their historic differences and their ongoing conflicts today, Sunni and Shii both have the same overall conception of jihad as a struggle in the path of God, and both distinguish between the greater jihad, the personal, spiritual struggle, and the lesser, warfare form of jihad. They see jihad as a religious duty incumbent on individuals and the Islamic community to defend life, land, or faith and to prevent invasion or guarantee the freedom to spread the faith. However, they differ with regard to who can declare a jihad. For Sunnis, the caliph, with the support of the ulama (reli-



gious scholars), had the religious and political authority to declare a jihad. Shii view this power as having been unjustly taken from the true successors to Muhammad, the Imams. However, in the absence of their Imam, only a defensive jihad was considered permissible. This problem was resolved as some ulama claimed that all legitimate forms of jihad were defensive and therefore able to be waged in the Imam's absence. This rationale led Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini as well as Lebanon's Hizbollah to declare jihad.

### **Jihad in the Creation of a Worldwide *Ummah***

Sunni and Shii share a common faith rooted in the Quran and Muhammad and belong to the same global Islamic community. Like a family, the members of the *ummah*, or worldwide community of believers, may be very different. They may have bitter family feuds but nevertheless are bound together by a bond that continues to survive in Muslim faith and religious imagination. Like tribal or ethnic communities and nation states, they often pull together when faced by a common external threat but then fall back into intrareligious conflict. Thus, many Sunni Muslims identified with, celebrated, and were inspired by Iran's Islamic revolution, which Khomeini was careful to proclaim an Islamic (not simply a Shii) revolution. However, this bond dissolved when Khomeini attempted to rally the Shii of southern Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war. In this instance, the effects of nationalism and centuries-old Persian-Arab rivalries prevailed, and Iraqi Shii fought for their country.

The concept of the *ummah* developed as the first Muslim community at Medina quickly expanded and established its hegemony over central Arabia under Muhammad's guidance. Through military action and astute diplomatic initiatives, the tribes of Arabia were united in an Arab commonwealth with a common faith, ideology, centralized authority, and law. For the first time, an effective means had been found to end tribal vendettas, to inspire, unite, and replace tribal allegiance with a common religious bond. As the Quran commanded, Muslims were a community of believers,

in a special covenant with God that transcended all other allegiances. They were to realize their obligation to strive (jihad), to submit (*islam*) to God, and to spread their faith both as individuals and as a community.

Islam's transnational dimension was expressed through the existence of empires and sultanates from the seventh to the eighteenth century as Islam became the global power and civilization of its day. The breakup of Muslim empires, the fragmentation of the Muslim world by European colonialism, and the creation of modern nation states in the twentieth century reduced the concept of the ummah to a more distant ideal. In the twentieth century, the resurgence of Islam and the spread of international communications have reinforced and reinvigorated Muslim awareness and identification with the worldwide Islamic community. The influential activist and ideologue Sayyid Qutb describes an ummah that reflects an international perception today:

In this great Islamic society Arabs, Persians, Syrians, Egyptians, Moroccans, Turks, Chinese, Indians, Romans, Greeks, Indonesians, Africans were gathered together—in short, peoples of all nations and all races. Their various characteristics were united, and with mutual cooperation, harmony and unity they took part in the construction of the Islamic community and Islamic culture. This marvellous civilisation was not an “Arabic civilisation,” even for a single day; it was purely an “Islamic civilisation.” It was never a “nationality” but always a “community of belief.”<sup>2</sup>

Consciousness of the ummah has been reinforced in the past few decades by world events, greatly assisted by media coverage. Muslim sentiment, support, and engagement were triggered by the jihad against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, in which thousands of Muslims from the Arab world and beyond came to fight. The Iranian revolution had a similar impact. The creation of international Arab and Muslim newspapers and media, such as

the television station al-Jazeera, with daily coverage from embattled Muslim frontiers, as well as CNN, the BBC, and the Internet have brought the many struggles, or jihads, of Muslim communities in Palestine and Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iraq, Chechnya, and Kashmir into the living rooms and everyday consciousness of Muslims around the world.

The creation and proliferation of Muslim organizations worldwide that sought to change the circumstances in which they lived intensified the language of jihad to fire up the determination needed in their struggle for reform. However, as we shall see, who can declare a jihad and what constitutes a legitimate defensive jihad as opposed to an aggressive unholy war of aggression would, like beauty, be determined by the eye of the beholder/believer. Jihad would remain a powerful defining concept for ideologues seeking, in times of crisis, to use their tradition to return power, peace, and social justice to their communities. How did Islam and jihad get redefined for use in the twentieth century? Who was responsible for the creation and spread of these ideas? To begin to answer these questions we must again visit a distant past.

### **Historical Sources of Revolutionary Jihad**

#### TERROR AND JIHAD IN THE NAME OF GOD

The world of early Islam, like many Muslim societies today, experienced the terror of religious extremist movements. The Kharijites and the Assassins represent early examples of the way in which dissent could turn to unholy war in the name of Islam. As we shall see in the next chapter, traces of the Kharijites' militant piety and fundamentalist worldview are found in Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi movement and in radical twentieth-century movements like Egypt's Islamic Jihad and bin Laden's al-Qaeda.

The Kharijites (from *kharaja*, to go out or exit) were followers of Ali, who broke away because they believed Ali guilty of compromising God's will by agreeing to arbitration to settle a long, drawn-out war. After breaking with Ali (whom they eventually assassinated),

the Kharijites established their own separate community, based on their vision of a true charismatic society strictly following the Quran and the Sunnah. They adopted the prophetic model of hijra and a radical, militant form of jihad. First they withdrew to live in their own community and then from their encampments waged war against their enemies in the name of God.

The Kharijites believed that the Quranic mandate to “command the good and forbid evil” must be applied literally, rigorously, and without qualification or exception. Their world was divided neatly between belief and unbelief, Muslims (followers of God) and non-Muslims (enemies of God), peace and warfare. Any action that did not conform rigorously to the letter of the law constituted a grave or mortal sin. Sinners were guilty of unbelief and thus excommunicated (*takfir*, exclusion for unbelief). Grave sinners were not just seen as religious backsliders but apostates, guilty of treason and meriting death unless they repented.

The Kharijites viewed other Muslims who did not accept their uncompromising viewpoint as infidels or idolaters, and thus the enemies of God. They held the egalitarian belief that the caliph should be selected by popular consent, but they insisted that a caliph could only hold office as long as he was thoroughly upright and sinless. His fall from this state constituted a grave sin. It rendered him an apostate from Islam, outside the protection of its laws, who must be deposed and killed.

Believing that they were God’s army fighting a jihad against the forces of evil, they considered that the end justified the means. Violence, guerrilla warfare, and revolution were not only legitimate but also obligatory in the battle against the sinners who ignored God’s will and sovereignty. This mentality has been replicated in modern times by Islamic Jihad, the assassins of Egypt’s President Anwar Sadat, Osama bin Laden, and other extremists who have called for the overthrow of “un-Islamic” Muslim rulers and for jihad against the West.

Historically, the Kharijites remained on the margins or outside of Islamic orthodoxy, politically and religiously. The same fate of

marginalization awaited the Assassins, as it would later radical movements.

The notorious Assassins, a Shii offshoot, were driven by a messianic vision. They lived apart in secret communities from which they would emerge to strike at unbelievers and were guided by a series of grand masters, who ruled from the mountain fortress of Alamut in northern Persia. Each grand master became known as the Old Man of the Mountain. The Assassins' jihad against the Abbasid dynasty terrorized Abbasid princes, generals, and ulama whom they murdered in the name of the hidden Imam.<sup>3</sup> They struck such terror in the hearts of their Muslim and Crusader enemies that their exploits in Persia and Syria earned them a name and memory in history long after they were overrun and the Mongols executed their last grand master in 1256.

#### IDEOLOGUES AND MOVEMENTS OF REVOLUTIONARY JIHAD

It is therefore necessary—in the way of the Islamic movement—that in the early stages of our training and education we should remove ourselves from all influences of the Jahiliyyah in which we live and from which we derive benefits. We must return to that pure source from which those people derived their guidance . . . which is free from any mixing or pollution . . . From it we must also derive our concepts of life, our principles of government, politics, economics and all other aspects of life.<sup>4</sup>

This statement by Sayyid Qutb illustrates the extent to which Muslims rely heavily on the past for meaning and guidance in the present. Many non-Muslims might be prepared to understand a believer's return to the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad for guidance, but they would be astonished to learn the extent to which the ideas of medieval and pre-modern theologians and movements directly impact the world of Islam today. Both modern reformers and radical extremists draw (often selectively) on the teachings and examples of early Islamic revivalist

thinkers and activist movements to justify their contemporary jihads, their holy and unholy wars.

Islam possesses a long tradition of religious revivalism and social reform starting with the prophet-reformer Muhammad himself and the struggle of the early Islamic community to improve their jahiliyyah world. In every age, the glaring disparities (real or perceived) between God's will and the state of the world inspired religious reformers (*mujaddids*) and movements who called Muslims to follow Islam more faithfully and to reform their society.

For pious believers, political fragmentation and economic and social decline must be evidence of a departure from the straight path of Islam. The heart and soul of renewal require a process of purification and return to the pristine teachings of Islam. Based on a tradition of the Prophet, "God will send to this ummah [community] at the beginning of each century those who will renew its faith," Sunni Islam developed the belief that revitalization would be necessary in every age.<sup>5</sup> The clear disjunction between public life and the Islamic ideal contributed to the popular expectation of a future messianic figure, the Mahdi (the guided one), who would come to deliver the community from oppression by the forces of evil and restore true Islam and the reign of justice on earth. As we have seen, Shii Islam developed its own messianic variant, a belief in the awaited return of the Hidden Imam as the Mahdi. This belief was expressed popularly in the twentieth century when followers of Ayatollah Khomeini took to calling him "Imam Khomeini." Although Khomeini himself never claimed the title Imam, he never publicly discouraged others from doing so. Many Shii who did not follow Khomeini were scandalized by this practice.

Throughout the ages, in times of division and decline religious scholars and movements have risen up to call the community back to its fundamental message and mission. Several prominent examples will give us an idea of the continuing power of the past in the minds of Islamic activists today. Among the most significant reformers for today are the medieval intellectual-activist Taqi al-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyya and the leaders of the great jihad move-

ments of the eighteenth century. Their teachings and actions are part of a revivalist legacy from which contemporary Islamic movements, both mainstream and extremist, have drawn heavily.

#### IBN TAYMIYYAH

Perhaps no medieval scholar-activist has had more influence on radical Islamic ideology than Ibn Taymiyya (1268–1328). A scholar of Islamic law and theology as well as a political figure, he was a major conservative voice who in the modern period is quoted by liberals, conservatives, and extremists alike. Described by some as the spiritual father of (Sunni) revolutionary Islam, others regard him as “the model for revivalists and vigilantes, for fundamentalist reformers, and other apostles of moral rearmament.”<sup>6</sup> Though he was addressing the problems of his society in the thirteenth century, his ideas influenced and have been appropriated by Saudi Arabia’s eighteenth-century Wahhabi movement, Egypt’s modern activist ideologue Sayyid Qutb, Islamic Jihad’s Muhammad al-Farag, and contemporary extremists like Osama bin Laden.

Ibn Taymiyya lived during one of the most disruptive periods of Islamic history, which had seen the fall of Baghdad and the conquest of the Abbasid Empire in 1258 by the Mongols. The empire’s defeat represented the impossible—the apparent conquest of the caliphate and of Islam. Ibn Taymiyya’s family was forced to flee to Damascus; his painful experience as a refugee colored his attitude toward the conqueror Mongols throughout his life. A professor of Hanbali law, the most conservative of the four Sunni schools of law, he balanced the life of a religious scholar with political activism. Like many mujaddids who have followed him, his writing and preaching earned him persecution and imprisonment in Egypt and Syria.<sup>7</sup> Combining ideas and action, his belief in the interconnectedness of religion, state, and society has exerted both conscious and unconscious influence on eighteenth-century and twentieth-century revivalism.

Ibn Taymiyya called on a rigorous, literalist interpretation of the sacred sources (the Quran and Sunnah, and the example of

the early Muslim community) for the crucially needed Islamic renewal and reform of his society. These sources constituted his yardstick for orthodoxy. Like many who came after him, he regarded the community at Medina as the model for an Islamic state. His goal was the purification of Islam. A return to the pristine purity of the period of Muhammad and the First Four Righteous Caliphs, he believed, was necessary to restore the Islamic community's past power and greatness. He distinguished sharply between Islam and non-Islam (the *dar al-Islam* and the *dar al-harb*), the lands of belief and unbelief. In contrast to his vision of a close relationship between religion and the state, he made a sharp distinction between religion and culture. Although a pious Sufi (a practitioner of Islamic mysticism), he denounced as superstition the popular practices of his day such as saint worship and the veneration of Sufi shrines and tombs.

Ibn Taymiyya's ire was especially directed at the Mongols. Despite their conversion to Islam, the Mongols had been locked in a jihad with the Muslim Mamluk rulers of Egypt. Because the Mongols continued to follow the Yasa code of laws of Genghis Khan instead of the Islamic law, Shariah, for Ibn Taymiyya they were no better than the polytheists of the pre-Islamic jahiliyyah. He issued a fatwa that labeled them as unbelievers (*kafirs*) who were thus excommunicated (*takfir*). His fatwa regarding the Mongols established a precedent: despite their claim to be Muslims, their failure to implement Shariah rendered the Mongols apostates and hence the lawful object of jihad. Muslim citizens thus had the right, indeed duty, to revolt against them, to wage jihad.

Later generations, from the Wahhabi movement to modern Egypt's Sayyid Qutb, Islamic Jihad, the assassins of Anwar Sadat, and Osama bin Laden, would use the logic in Ibn Taymiyya's fatwa on the Mongols to call for a jihad against "un-Islamic" Muslim rulers and elites and against the West. Applying the emotive pre-Islamic term jahiliyyah to societies infiltrated by tribal or Western culture, they would draw a rigid distinction between true belief and unbelief, level the charge of unbelief, proclaim excommunication, and call for a jihad.



## EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY JIHAD MOVEMENTS

The global emergence of eighteenth-century revivalist movements holds the key to understanding the mindset of reformers and extremists today. The world of Islam in the eighteenth century experienced an Islamic revivalist wave that, as is happening again today, swept across the Muslim world, from Africa to Asia. In contrast to prior periods when Islamic revivalism occurred in a specific empire or region, eighteenth-century movements extended from modern-day Sudan, Libya, and Nigeria, across the Arabian peninsula and the Indian subcontinent to Southeast Asia.

For our purposes, we will focus on the ideas of the Wahhabi movement in Arabia, a prominent example of eighteenth-century Islamic revivalism, which had a profound impact on Arabia and the development of Saudi Arabia. Perhaps most important, it continues to be a significant force in the Islamic world, informing both mainstream and extremist movements from Afghanistan and Central Asia to Europe and America.

Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1791) studied Islamic law and theology in Mecca and Medina and took Ibn Taymiyya as his exemplar. Disillusioned by the spiritual decline and moral laxity of his society, he denounced popular beliefs and practices as idolatry and jahiliyyah, rejected much of the medieval law of the ulama (religious scholars) as innovation (*bida*) or heresy, and called for a fresh interpretation of Islam that returned to its revealed sources.

Central to al-Wahhab's theology and movement was the doctrine of God's unity (*tawhid*), an absolute monotheism reflected in the Wahhabi's self-designation as "unitarians" (*muwahiddun*)—those who uphold the unity of God. Citing the tradition that Muhammad had destroyed the pantheon of gods in his Meccan shrine, the Wahhabi forces set out to destroy "idolatrous" shrines, tombstones, and sacred objects. They spared neither the sacred tombs of Muhammad and his Companions in Mecca and Medina nor the Shi'ite pilgrimage site at Karbala (in modern Iraq) that housed the tomb of Hussein. The destruction of this venerated

site has never been forgotten by Shii Muslims and has contributed to the historic antipathy between the Wahhabi of Saudi Arabia and Shii Islam in both Saudi Arabia and Iran. Centuries later, many would point to Wahhabi-inspired iconoclasm and religious fanaticism as the source behind the Taliban's wanton destruction of Buddhist monuments in Afghanistan, an action condemned by Muslim leaders worldwide.

Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab joined religious zeal with military might and allied with Muhammad ibn Saud, a local tribal chief, to form a religiopolitical movement. Ibn Saud used Wahhabism as a religious ideal to legitimate his jihad to subdue and unite the tribes of Arabia, converting them to this puritanical version of Islam. Like the Kharijites, the Wahhabi viewed all Muslims who resisted as unbelievers (who could be fought and killed). They were therefore to be subdued in the name of Islamic egalitarianism. In the early nineteenth century Muhammad Ali of Egypt defeated the Saudis, but the Wahhabi movement and the House of Saud proved resilient. In the early twentieth century, Abdulaziz ibn Saud recaptured Riyadh. With the *Ikhwan* (brotherhood), a nontribal military, he once again united the tribes of Arabia, restored the Saudi kingdom, and spread the Wahhabi movement. The kingdom melded the political and religious; it was led by a succession of kings from the House of Saud with the close support of the religious establishment, many of whom are descendants of al-Wahhab, since they had married into the royal family.

The House of Saud's appeal to Wahhabi Islam for legitimacy has also been used against it by dissidents. As discussed in the next chapter, in November 1979 militants seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca, accused the royal family of compromising their Wahhabi faith, and called for the overthrow of the House of Saud. Again in the 1990s and the aftermath of the Gulf war, the Saudi government had to move forcefully to arrest and silence independent, nongovernment ulama in Mecca, Medina, and Riyadh who were calling for greater political participation and accountability and denouncing religious deviance and corruption.

Internationally, the Saudis, both government-sponsored organizations and wealthy individuals, have exported a puritanical and at times militant version of Wahhabi Islam to other countries and communities in the Muslim world and the West. They have offered development aid, built mosques and other institutions, funded and distributed religious tracts, and commissioned imams and religious scholars. They exported their Wahhabi ideology and provided financial support to Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Central Asian republics, China, Africa, Southeast Asia, the United States, and Europe. Wealthy businessmen in Saudi Arabia, both members of the establishment and outsiders such as Osama bin Laden, have provided financial support to extremist groups who follow a militant fundamentalist brand of Islam with its jihad culture.

### **Trailblazers of the Islamic Revolution**

Western historians have marveled at the speed with which Islam took root and grew. Muslim tradition had always viewed the remarkable spread of Islam as a miraculous proof and historic validation of the truth of the Quran and Islam's claims and as a sign of God's guidance. But European colonialism from the eighteenth to the first half of the twentieth century and the subsequent failure of many modern Muslim states posed a serious challenge to this belief. Some Muslims came to believe that Islam had lost its relevance, and many others concluded that Western dominance and Muslim dependency were the result of unfaithfulness and departure from the path of Islam. This was a powerful argument that encouraged holy warriors to struggle (jihad) to bring the ummah back to the straight path. Muslim responses to European colonialism precipitated a new debate about the meaning of jihad.

As discussed in the next chapter, Islamic modernists and movements like the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and Pakistan's Jamaat-i-Islami (Islamic Society) worked to combine religious reform and political mobilization. Islamic activist organizations framed their struggle in a call for a jihad against British imperialism and corrupt Muslim rulers.

Volumes have been written on the ideologues who inspire contemporary activists and terrorists. While a comprehensive discussion is impossible here, three key intellectual-activists—Hasan al-Banna, Mawlana Mawdudi, and Sayyid Qutb—have been so influential in creating the vision of modern Islamic reform that they warrant our attention. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the direct and indirect impact and influence of these three men. Their writings have been published and distributed throughout the Muslim world. Their ideas have been disseminated in short pamphlets and audiocassettes. The leadership of most major Islamic movements, mainstream and extremist, nonviolent and violent alike, has been influenced by their ideas on Islam, Islamic revolution, jihad, and modern Western society. Their recasting of Islam as a comprehensive ideology to address the conditions of modern Muslims produced a reinterpretation of Islamic belief that has been so widely used, it has been integrated unconsciously into the religious discourse of Muslims throughout the world who would normally disassociate themselves from Islamic movements.

When Hasan al-Banna (1906–1949) established the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and Mawlana Mawdudi (1903–1979) created the Jamaat-i-Islami in Pakistan, few in the West or in their own societies took serious notice. Both al-Banna and Mawdudi recognized that change would be slow to come. Expecting rejection and persecution, their focus was to train future generations. They were very successful in achieving their goal.

Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) built upon and radicalized the ideas of al-Banna and Mawdudi. Qutb created an ideological legacy that incorporated all the major historical forms of jihad, from the reforms of Muhammad to the extremes of the Kharijites and the Assassins. Within a few short decades, the ideas of al-Banna's Muslim Brotherhood and Mawdudi's Jamaat-i-Islami, often viewed through the prism of Qutb's more radicalized interpretation, became the primary models for new activist organizations across the Muslim world.

Though part of a centuries-old revivalist tradition, all three men were modern in their responses. They were neofundamentalist in

the sense that they returned to the sources or fundamentals of Islam. But they reinterpreted Islamic sources in response to the challenges of the modern world. This is apparent in their teachings, organization, strategy, tactics, and use of modern science and technology. Indeed, many Islamic activists are the product of modern educations, leaders in professional associations of physicians, engineers, lawyers, journalists, university professors, and students.

#### HASAN AL-BANNA AND MAWLANA MAWDUDI

The Brotherhood and the Jamaat were established in 1928 and 1941 respectively, both within Muslim societies in crisis. Hasan al-Banna, a teacher, and Mawlana Mawdudi, a journalist, were pious, educated men with traditional Islamic religious backgrounds and a knowledge of Western thought. Both placed primary blame for the ills of their society and the decline of the Muslim world upon European imperialism and westernized Muslim elites. Like revivalists of old, they initially called for moral and social reform but soon also became embroiled in political activism and opposition.

For Hasan al-Banna the failure of liberal nationalism in Egypt was reflected in the creation of Israel and the consequent displacement of millions of Palestinians as well as continued British occupation, massive unemployment, poverty, and corruption. He rejected the preference for the spiritual jihad (greater jihad) over a military (lesser jihad) one. Since Muslim lands had been invaded, he said, it was incumbent on all Muslims to repel their invaders just as it was an Islamic imperative for Muslims to oppose rulers who blocked the establishment of Islamic governments.

For Mawdudi, the decline of Muslim rule in South Asia and the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire were the products of British and French colonialism. Muslim identity and unity were threatened by the rise of Hindu secular nationalism and the imposition of modern nationalism, a foreign Western ideology whose purpose was to weaken and divide the Muslim world by replacing the universal pan-Islamic ideal of the equality and solidarity of all Muslims with an identity based upon language, tribe, or ethnicity.

Though inspired by the past, in particular the eighteenth-century revivalist movements, al-Banna and Mawdudi did not retreat to it but responded to modern society. They were just as critical of the failure of the religious establishment's conservatism as they were of secular Muslim elites' Western-oriented reformist visions. Although they were influenced by Islamic modernist reformers, who had attempted to bridge the gap between tradition and modernity, they nevertheless believed that Islamic modernism tended to westernize Islam, to recast Islam in light of Western standards and solutions to the challenge of modernity. Though antiwesternization, they were not against scientific and technological modernization. They both stressed the self-sufficiency of Islam, not the ulama's irrelevant medieval Islamic vision but a new interpretation and application of Islam's revealed sources that addressed the political, economic, and cultural challenges of modernity.

Both al-Banna and Mawdudi proclaimed Islam the clear alternative to the ills and shortcomings of Marxism and Western capitalism. As al-Banna declared, "Until recently, writers, intellectuals, scholars, and governments glorified the principles of European civilization, gave themselves a Western tint, and adopted a European style and manner; today on the contrary, the wind has changed, and reserve and distrust have taken their place. Voices are raised proclaiming the necessity for a return to the principles, teachings and ways of Islam . . . for initiating the reconciliation of modern life with these principles, as a prelude to final 'Islamization.'"<sup>8</sup> Despite differences, Hasan al-Banna and Mawlana Mawdudi shared a common ideological worldview which would come to inspire and inform the struggle (jihad) of later Islamic movements. The following represents the main points of the worldview that the two men shared:

1. Islam is a total, all-encompassing way of life that guides each person and his or her community and political life.
2. The Quran, God's revelation, and the Sunnah of the Prophet and the early Muslim community are the foundations of Muslim life, providing the models that guide daily actions.

3. Islamic law (Shariah) provides the ideal and blueprint for a modern Muslim society not dependent on Western models.
4. Departure from Islam and reliance on the West are the causes for Muslim decline. A return to the straight path of Islam will restore the identity, pride, success, power, and wealth of the Islamic community in this life and merit eternal reward in the next.
5. Science and technology must be harnessed and used. This must be achieved within an Islamic context, not by dependence on foreign Western cultures, to avoid the westernization and secularization of society.
6. Jihad, to strive or struggle, both personally and in community, in ideas and in action to implement Islamic reform and revolution, is the means to bring about a successful Islamization of society and the world.

Both men posited a struggle (jihad) between the forces of God and Satan, good and evil, darkness or ignorance (jahiliyyah) and light. Each envisioned his organization as a vanguard, a righteous community that would serve as a dynamic nucleus for true Islamic reformation within the broader society. Though they were quick to denounce imperialism and the threat of Western culture, they nevertheless realized (as do many Islamic organizations today) that the Muslim predicament was first and foremost a Muslim problem. Rebuilding the community and redressing the balance of power between Islam and the West must begin with a call (*dawah*) to all Muslims to return and reappropriate their faith in its fullness or totality of vision.

Dawah has two meanings: an invitation to non-Muslims to convert to Islam and the call to those who were born Muslim to be better Muslims. The Brotherhood and the Jamaat emphasized the latter, calling on Muslims to renew their faith and practice in order to bring about a social revolution, the re-Islamization of the individual and society. The Brotherhood and Jamaat disseminated their message through schools, mosques, publications, student

organizations, professional associations, and social services that combined religious commitment, modern learning and technology, and social and political activism.

The jihad (struggle) that became a central concept in describing the process of self-transformation and political activism, both against European colonialism and later against corrupt, un-Islamic Muslim states, was primarily one of reform, not violent revolution. Yet, it did include the defense of the Muslim community and of Islam against colonialism and injustice. As a youth, Hasan al-Banna was impressed by an abortive revolt against British occupation: “Despite my preoccupation with Sufism and worship, I believed that duty to country is an inescapable obligation—a holy war.”<sup>9</sup> The conclusion he drew as a thirteen-year-old regarding the relationship of religion to politics would become a foundation stone for the Muslim Brotherhood, from its domestic political opposition in Egypt to its involvement in the war in Palestine.

Despite criticism of Western models of development, al-Banna accepted, though he qualified and Islamized, notions of patriotism, nationalism, and parliamentary democracy. He accepted Egypt’s constitutional government, but criticized the extent to which its laws deviated from Islamic norms regarding alcohol, gambling, prostitution, and usury.<sup>10</sup>

Mawdudi’s early rejection of nationalism and democracy as un-Islamic was influenced more by his opposition to westernization and secularization than by religion. He would later come to accept both with qualifications, and the Jamaat would participate in elections and serve in government. Mawdudi’s prolific writing on Islam, translated into many Muslim languages, has had a global impact. His writing on jihad, in both its defensive and corrective roles, would have unforeseen consequences.

Mawdudi’s conception of “what jihad really is” starts with his argument that jihad has become so difficult for Muslims and non-Muslims to understand because of two major misconceptions. First of all, Islam, he said, is not a religion in the sense of “a hodgepodge of some beliefs, prayers and rituals.”<sup>11</sup> Rather, “it is a com-



prehensive system that tends to annihilate all tyrannical and evil systems in the world and enforce its own program . . . in the interests of mankind.”<sup>12</sup> Secondly, Muslims are not a nation in the conventional sense of the term because Islam urges “mankind as a whole to bring about revolution and reform.”<sup>13</sup> Therefore, Islam is “a revolutionary concept and ideology which seeks to change and revolutionise the world social order and reshape it according to its own concept and ideals.”<sup>14</sup> And so Mawdudi sees Muslims as an international party organized to implement Islam’s revolutionary program, and jihad as the term that denotes the utmost struggle to bring about an Islamic revolution.<sup>15</sup> Mawdudi stresses that jihad is not a war between nations for selfish or material ends, but a “struggle for the Cause of Allah,” that is devoid of all selfish motives such as “gaining wealth and splendour, name and fame, or any personal glory or elevation” and “should be directed to achieve the one and the only end, i.e., the establishment of a just and equitable social order for humanity as a whole.”<sup>16</sup> For Mawdudi, jihad is both offensive and defensive at one and the same time, offensive because the opposing principles and ideology (not the land of the opponents) must be assaulted, and defensive because Muslims must retain power in order to implement their new ideology.<sup>17</sup> Mawdudi’s position on the nature of jihad would be elaborated on by others including the Muslim Brotherhood’s Sayyid Qutb, the ideologue of Islamic revolution in the Sunni world, and the Ayatollah Khomeini in Shi’i Iran.

While both al-Banna and Mawdudi sought to work within the system, the growth of their organizations and condemnation of rulers and regimes brought them into conflict with governments. After World War II, the Brotherhood stepped up their opposition to the British occupation and the Egyptian government’s policies. In 1948 a Brotherhood member assassinated the prime minister; in 1949 Hasan al-Banna was assassinated by members of the secret police.<sup>18</sup>

Mawdudi and the Jamaat found themselves at loggerheads with the government on many occasions but were nevertheless able to

continue to function. Indeed, at one point, although Mawdudi had been sentenced to death, his conviction was overturned. Although Pakistan was ruled by military regimes, state repression was always far less than in Egypt and much of the Arab world and its court system more independent. Thus, the Jamaat remained an opposition able to function within the system. By contrast, the repression of the Muslim Brotherhood under Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser would lead to the emergence and growth of radical jihad organizations.

#### SAYYID QUTB: GODFATHER AND MARTYR OF ISLAMIC RADICALISM

It would be difficult to overestimate the role played by Sayyid Qutb in the reassertion of militant jihad. He was a godfather to Muslim extremist movements around the globe. In many ways, his journey from educated intellectual, government official, and admirer of the West to militant activist who condemned both the Egyptian and American governments and defended the legitimacy of militant jihad has influenced and inspired many militants, from the assassins of Anwar Sadat to the followers of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda.

Just as the interpretations of Hasan al-Banna and Mawlana Mawdudi were conditioned responses to the political and social realities of their times, so too Sayyid Qutb's Islam grew out of the militant confrontation between the repressive Egyptian state and the Brotherhood in the late 1950s and 1960s. Increasingly radicalized by Gamal Abdel Nasser's suppression of the Brotherhood, Qutb transformed the ideology of al-Banna and Mawdudi into a rejectionist revolutionary call to arms. Like al-Banna, he would be remembered as a martyr of the Islamic revival.

Qutb, like al-Banna, had a modern education. He studied at Dar al-Ulum, a college set up by reformers to train teachers in a modern curriculum. He became a great admirer of the West and Western literature. After graduation, he became an official in the Ministry of Public Instruction, as well as a poet and literary critic.

A devout Muslim who had memorized the Quran as a child, he began to write on Islam and the Egyptian state. In 1948, he published *Islam and Social Justice*, in which he argued that Islam possessed its own social teachings and that Islamic socialism avoided both the pitfalls of Christianity's separation of religion and society and those of Communism's atheism.

In the late 1940s Qutb visited the United States. This proved to be a turning point in his life, transforming an admirer into a severe critic of the West. His experiences in America produced a culture shock that made him more religious and convinced him of the moral decadence of the West. He was appalled by its materialism, sexual permissiveness and promiscuity, free use and abuse of alcohol, and its racism, which he directly experienced because of his dark skin. His views on America are summarized in his influential tract, *Milestones*:

Look at this capitalism with its monopolies, its usury . . . at this individual freedom, devoid of human sympathy and responsibility for relatives except under force of law; at this materialistic attitude which deadens the spirit; at this behaviour, like animals, which you call "free mixing of the sexes"; at this vulgarity which you call "emancipation of women"; at this evil and fanatic racial discrimination.<sup>19</sup>

Qutb's stay in America coincided with the establishment of Israel as a state guaranteed by the United States and the beginning of the Cold War between the U.S. and USSR, during which Egypt, under Nasser, aligned itself with Russia and secular nationalism, moving even farther away from the prospect of establishing an Islamic state. In addition, Qutb felt betrayed in America when he saw what he considered to be anti-Arab and pro-Jewish coverage in the newspapers and movies that fostered contempt for Arabs and Muslims. As a final blow, during these years in America, Hasan al-Banna was assassinated and the Muslim Brotherhood was significantly weakened. Shortly after his return to Egypt, Qutb joined the Muslim Brotherhood.

Qutb quickly emerged as a major voice in the Brotherhood and as its most influential ideologue amidst the growing confrontation with a repressive Egyptian regime. Imprisoned and tortured for alleged involvement in a failed attempt to assassinate Nasser, he became increasingly militant and radicalized. While in prison, Qutb witnessed a massacre in which twenty-five members of the Muslim Brotherhood were killed and close to fifty were injured, an experience that strengthened his conviction that the Egyptian government was un-Islamic and jahiliyyah and must be overthrown.

Qutb was an incredibly prolific author, publishing over forty books, many translated into Persian and English and still widely distributed. “Qutb’s fiery style provoked great emotions of dignity, solidarity, unity, universality and . . . could uplift the reader to the greatness of Islam. His style was also capable of stimulating through his criticism, profound anger and revulsion.”<sup>20</sup> During ten years of imprisonment in the equivalent of a concentration camp, Qutb developed a revolutionary vision captured in *Milestones*, which was used as evidence against him and led to his being sentenced to death. The power of his writings was recognized in the fact that anyone in Egypt who owned a copy of *Milestones* could be arrested and charged with sedition. Qutb took many of the core concepts of al-Banna and Mawdudi, reshaped and sharpened them to exhort Muslims to radical action. His ideas reverberate loudly today in the radical rhetoric of revolutionaries from Khomeini to bin Laden.

Qutb developed prescriptions for belief and action that would help Islamic movements in the Muslim world to function within repressive, anti-Islamic governments and societies. As he explains:

It is necessary to revive that Muslim community . . . which is crushed under the weight of those false laws and customs which are not even remotely related to the Islamic teachings, and which in spite of all this, calls itself the “world of Islam.”<sup>21</sup>

Like Ibn Taymiyya before him, he sharply divides Muslim societies into two diametrically opposed camps, the forces of good and

of evil, those committed to the rule of God and those opposed, the party of God and the party of Satan. There was no middle ground:

. . . the callers to Islam should not have any superficial doubts in their hearts concerning the nature of Jahiliyyah and the nature of Islam and the characteristics of Dar-ul-Harb and of Dar-ul-Islam for through these doubts many are led to confusion. Indeed, there is no Islam in a land where Islam is not dominant and where its Shariah is not established; and that place is not Dar-ul-Islam where Islam's way of life and its laws are not practised.<sup>22</sup>

Strongly influenced by Mawdudi, Qutb emphasized the need to develop a special group of true Muslims within this corrupt and faithless society:

How is it possible to start the task of reviving Islam? . . . there should be a vanguard which sets out with this determination and then keeps walking on the path, marching through the vast ocean of Jahiliyyah which has encompassed the entire world . . . and I have written Milestones for this vanguard which I consider to be a waiting reality about to be materialized.<sup>23</sup>

The Islamic movement (*haraka*), the true Muslims, would create a righteous minority adrift in a sea of ignorance and unbelief, akin to the un-Islamic society in which Muhammad was born. Their models for training would be what Qutb considered to be the first unique generation of Muslims whose instruction came solely from one pure source, the Quran. "From it we must also derive our concepts of life, our principles of government, politics, economics and all other aspects of life"<sup>24</sup> because "our foremost objective is to change the practices of this society . . . to change the jahili system at its very roots—this system which is fundamentally at variance with Islam and which, with the help of force and oppression is keeping us from living the sort of life which is demanded by our Creator."<sup>25</sup> Qutb used the classical designation for pre-Islamic Arabian

society, jahiliyyah—a period of ignorance—to paint and condemn all modern societies as un-Islamic and anti-Islamic:

We must free ourselves from the clutches of jahili society, jahili concepts, jahili traditions and jahili leadership. Our mission is not to compromise . . . nor can we be loyal to it . . . we will not change our own values and concepts . . . to make a bargain with this jahili society. Never! We and it are on different roads, and if we take even one step in its company, we will lose our goal entirely and lose our way as well.<sup>26</sup>

Sayyid Qutb's teachings recast the world into black and white polarities. There were no shades of gray. Since the creation of an Islamic government was a divine commandment, he argued, it was not an alternative to be worked toward. Rather, it was an imperative that Muslims must strive to implement or impose immediately:

There is only one place on earth which can be called the home of Islam (Dar-ul-Islam), and it is that place where the Islamic state is established and the Shariah is the authority and God's limits are observed and where all the Muslims administer the affairs of the state with mutual consultation. The rest of the world is the home of hostility (Dar-ul-Harb).<sup>27</sup>

Given the authoritarian and repressive nature of the Egyptian government and many other governments in the Muslim world, Qutb concluded that change from within the system was futile and that Islam was on the brink of disaster. Jihad was the only way to implement the new Islamic order.

For Qutb, jihad, as armed struggle in the defense of Islam against the injustice and oppression of anti-Islamic governments and the neocolonialism of the West and the East (Soviet Union), was incumbent upon all Muslims. There could be no middle ground. Mirroring the Kharijites, Qutb taught that those Muslims who refused to participate were to be counted among the enemies of God,

apostates who were excommunicated (takfir) and who should be fought and killed along with the other enemies of God. Many radical extremist groups formed decades after Qutb's death have kept his vision alive in their ideologies and tactics.

Like Hasan al-Banna and Mawlana Mawdudi, Qutb regarded the West as the historic enemy of Islam and Muslims as demonstrated by the Crusades, European colonialism, and the Cold War. The Western threat was political, economic, and religiocultural. Equally insidious were the elites of the Muslim world who rule and govern according to foreign Western secular principles and values that threaten the faith, identity, and values of their own Islamic societies. Going beyond al-Banna and Mawdudi, Qutb denounced governments and Western secular-oriented elites as atheists against whom all true believers must wage holy war.

Qutb's revolutionary antiestablishment rhetoric can be heard distinctly in this call to jihad by Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini:

Give the people Islam, then, for Islam is the school of jihad, the religion of struggle; let them amend themselves and transform themselves into a powerful force, so that they may overthrow the tyrannical regime imperialism has imposed on us and set up an Islamic government. . . . If certain heads of state of Muslim countries . . . permit foreigners to expand their influence . . . they automatically forfeit their posts. . . . Furthermore, it is a duty of the Muslims to punish them by any means possible.<sup>28</sup>

The two options for an Islamic revolution, evolution, a process of revolutionary change from below, and violent revolution, the use of violence and terrorism to overthrow established ("un-Islamic") governments, have remained the twin paths of contemporary Islamic movements. Both types of movement began to spring up and spread like wildfire across the Muslim world in the 1970s. The quiet that seemed assured after Gamal Abdel Nasser's apparent neutralization of the Muslim Brotherhood in the late 1960s was shattered by the proliferation of radical groups during the rule of his successor, Anwar Sadat.

### **Armies of God: the Vengeance of Militant Jihad**

Sayyid Qutb's revolutionary ideology bore fruit across the Middle East amidst the worsening living conditions experienced by the majority of Arabs following the failures of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Numerous radical organizations in Egypt, Lebanon, and Palestine waged jihad against incumbent governments and the West. By the mid-1970s, the stability and security of Egyptian government and society were threatened by a number of secret Islamic revolutionary organizations; among them, Muhammad's Youth (sometimes referred to as the Islamic Liberation Organization), Jamaat al-Muslimin (Society of Muslims), more popularly known as Takfir wal Hijra (Excommunication and Flight), Salvation from Hell, Gamaa Islamiyya (Islamic Group), and Jamaat al-Jihad or Islamic Jihad. In contrast to mainstream groups like the Egyptian Brotherhood, which rejected Qutb-inspired extremism and pursued a nonviolent path of social and political activism, these clandestine groups espoused violence and terrorism to disrupt and destabilize society politically and economically and sought to overthrow the government.

Their common goal was the creation of a true Islamic society under a restored caliphate. A clear and at times chilling articulation of the new jihadist culture and its indebtedness to the past can be found in the writing of Muhammad al-Farag, a member of the radical organization Islamic Jihad, who articulated its ideology in *The Neglected Duty*. Farag drew heavily from al-Banna, Mawdudi, and especially Ibn Taymiyya and Sayyid Qutb. He takes the ideas of Ibn Taymiyya and Qutb with respect to jihad and pushes their application to its radical conclusion regarding the condition of the Muslim world and Egypt in particular.

Farag believed that the decline of Muslim societies was made possible by those who had lulled the community into believing that jihad was nonviolent; the restoration of the Muslim world to the straight path of Islam hinged on reclaiming the true meaning of jihad, the forgotten or neglected requirement of Islam. Farag maintained that jihad was the sixth pillar of Islam, forgotten or obscured by the majority of ulama and Muslims:



Jihad . . . for God's cause [in the way of Allah], in spite of its importance for the future of religion, has been neglected by the ulama . . . of this age. . . . There is no doubt that the idols of this world can only disappear through the power of the sword.<sup>29</sup>

As in the time of Muhammad, Farag maintained, this was the task of a minority, a vanguard who must be prepared to fight against unbelief and apostasy, prepared to suffer and die for their faith. Looking at the state of the ummah, and especially Muslim governments, he concluded unbelief and apostasy were endemic diseases:

The Rulers of this age are in apostasy from Islam. They were raised at the tables of imperialism, be it Crusaderism, or Communism, or Zionism. They carry nothing from Islam but their names, even though they pray and fast and claim to be Muslim.<sup>30</sup>

The punishment for their apostasy is loss of all rights, including their right to life. Given the authoritarian and corrupt nature of regimes and their societies, a true Islamic state could not be established through nonviolence but only through radical surgery, militant jihad, and the overthrow of apostate rulers.

We have to establish the Rule of God's Religion in our own country first, and to make the Word of God supreme. . . . There is no doubt that the first battlefield for jihad is the extermination of these infidel leaders and to replace them by a complete Islamic Order.<sup>31</sup>

Islamic Jihad and Farag saw the bulk of Egyptian society as basically good Muslims who were caught between the land of Islam or peace and the land of war, living in un-Islamic states, governed by un-Islamic laws and nominal Muslims. Holy war against Egypt's "atheist" state and ruler was both necessary and justified, an obligation for all true believers. The creation of an Islamic state required the eradication of Western law and implementation of Islamic law and the toppling of regimes through armed revolution:

This state is ruled by heathen laws despite the fact that the majority of its people are Muslims. These laws were formulated by infidels who compelled Muslims to abide by them. And because they deserted jihad, Muslims today live in subjugation, humiliation, division and fragmentation. . . . the aim of our group is to rise up to establish an Islamic state and restore Islam to this nation. . . . The means to this end is to fight against heretical rulers and to eradicate the despots who are no more than human beings who have not yet found those who are able to suppress them with the order of God Almighty.<sup>32</sup>

Muhammad Farag's *Neglected Duty* and Islamic Jihad's ideological worldview were but another stage in the spread of Islamic radicalism's jihad across the Muslim world, promulgating the rationale for extremist movements and the growth of networks that would later, as a result of the jihad in Afghanistan, become a global jihad. Their narrow, extremist interpretation of Islam and jihad was one side in the struggle within Islam between extremist and moderate Muslims, and it demonstrated yet again the ability of religious scriptures and tradition to be interpreted, reinterpreted, and misinterpreted.

### **The Struggle for the Meaning of Jihad**

As this review of the development of jihad in response to challenges through the ages amply illustrates, there is no single doctrine of jihad that has always and everywhere existed or been universally accepted. Muslim understanding of what is required by the Quran and the practice of the Prophet regarding jihad has changed over time. The doctrine of jihad is not the product of a single authoritative individual or organization's interpretation. It is rather the product of diverse individuals and authorities interpreting and applying the principles of sacred texts in specific historical and political contexts.

## JIHAD IN WARFARE

Jihad is often simply translated as and equated with aggressive holy war. For many in the West, it has come to symbolize Islam as a religion of violence and fanaticism. Religious extremists and terrorists reinforce this belief as they freely declare jihad to justify attacks against and murders of all who disagree with them. In fact, as we have seen, Muslims throughout the ages have discussed and debated and disagreed about the meaning of jihad, its defensive and expansionist, legitimate and illegitimate forms. Terrorists can attempt to hijack Islam and the doctrine of jihad, but that is no more legitimate than Christian and Jewish extremists committing their acts of terrorism in their own unholy wars in the name of Christianity or Judaism. Therefore, looking at what Islamic history, law, and tradition have to say about jihad and warfare becomes critical both in trying to understand the mind of a bin Laden and in forging future relations between Islam and the West.

Quranic passages referring to jihad as armed struggle fall into two broad categories: defensive, those that emphasize fighting against aggression, and offensive or expansionist, a more general command to fight against all unbelievers and spread the message and public order or Pax Islamica of Islam.

Muslims are urged to fight with great commitment so that victory will come and battle will end: "If you meet them in battle, inflict on them such a defeat as would be a lesson for those who come after them, and that they may be warned" (8:57). However, as is noted in the following passage, if they propose peace, then the fighting must end: "But if they are inclined to peace, make peace with them, and have trust in God for he hears all and knows everything" (8:61).

Many modern reformers, defending Islam against charges that it is a violent religion and sensitive to Western criticisms that violence is endemic to Islam, have emphasized that jihad is only justified for defense and have rejected earlier attempts to abrogate Quranic verses that emphasize defensive jihad by the "sword verses." Prominent modern Shii scholars such as Ayatollahs Mah-

moud Taleqani and Murtaza Mutahhari argue that jihad is the defense of one's life, faith, property, and the integrity of the Muslim ummah. However, Mutahhari and others have interpreted defense broadly to include resistance to oppression not only in one's society but also against oppression anywhere, defense of the oppressed of the earth. In commenting on the Quranic dictum, "There is no compulsion in religion" (2:256), and that therefore wars aimed solely at the spread of Islam by force are not allowed, they also maintain that religious oppression must be resisted whether it is in a Muslim or non-Muslim society.<sup>33</sup>

As with other religious traditions whose controversies must also be understood within their historical contexts, Muslim disagreement over the use of jihad through the ages has been deeply influenced by social and political contexts. The right or obligation to wage jihad against religious, political, or social oppression has gained widespread usage in recent decades in order to justify holy and unholy wars. Khomeini used it to call on Muslims throughout the world, especially in the Gulf, to rise up against un-Islamic rulers. It was a means of legitimating Iran's export of revolution to Lebanon and elsewhere. The Shii of Lebanon experienced both violent and nonviolent expressions of jihad. Imam Musa Sadr was a tall, striking, charismatic Iranian-born religious leader, educated in Qom, the religious center associated with the Ayatollah Khomeini and sometimes referred to as "the Vatican." Musa Sadr moved to Lebanon and in the 1970s led a major social movement, the Movement for the Dispossessed, to protest and demand Muslim equity within Lebanon's Maronite Christian-dominated society. The radical organization Hizbollah emerged in the early 1980s as a resistance movement, inspired by Khomeini and supported by Iran, in reaction to the Israeli invasion and occupation of Lebanon.

Sunni Muslims have been equally drawn to this use of jihad. Hamas in Palestine defines itself, and justifies its jihad, as a resistance movement to Israeli occupation and oppression. Terrorist groups from Egypt to the southern Philippines have also used political and religious oppression as an excuse for their violent jihads.

While the Chinese and Indian governments repress the Uighurs and Kashmiris respectively, Islamic opposition groups press what they regard to be a jihad against oppressive states that have threatened their autonomy and independence. Chechens have harnessed their Islamic identity and called for jihad to resist Russia's reoccupation, and Islamic movements in several Central Asian republics have waged jihad against authoritarian rulers. Even Osama bin Laden has found it useful to claim that his jihad is to overthrow the oppressive and corrupt Saudi regime and prevent the infidel U.S. force from occupying Saudi Arabia, the land of Muhammad.

If some feel a need to justify all jihads as defensive, others do not. Thus, Muslims who insist that the defense of Islam is the only justification for jihad, and that all of the wars in the early days of Islam were defensive, have been criticized by others who believe that the restriction of jihad to defensive wars alone is a product of European colonialism and an unwarranted accommodation to the West.

#### JIHAD FOR CONVERSION

The common Western image is that Islam is a religion of the sword, that Muslims are required to use every means, including force and warfare, to spread and impose their faith. This issue like others is subject to a spectrum of opinions. While most Muslim scholars have agreed that it is never justified to wage jihad against non-Muslims simply because of their faith or to convert them, some bluntly state, as Ibn Khaldun, an acclaimed medieval Muslim historian, did: "In the Muslim community, holy war is a religious duty, because of the universalism of the Muslim mission and (the obligation to) convert everybody to Islam either by persuasion or by force."<sup>34</sup> Other medieval authors, like their Christian counterparts, went even further, teaching that the purpose of jihad is to rid the earth of unbelievers.

Because of the Islamic vision of the inseparability of religion and politics, oppression and injustice came to be equated with

unbelief. However, although jurists and commentators on the Quran often failed to distinguish disbelief from political injustice, they did not sanction jihad merely on grounds of difference in belief. Many modern Muslim thinkers have distinguished disbelief from persecution or injustice and hold that unbelief alone is not a sufficient condition for waging war. The famous twentieth-century Egyptian jurist Mahmud Shaltut, former rector of Egypt's al-Azhar University, an internationally recognized seat of Islamic authority, argued that the Quranic verses that command fighting against the unbelievers are not referring to a jihad against all unbelievers as such but rather to unbelievers who had assailed the Muslim mission.

Even Sayyid Qutb rejected forced conversions, believing instead that a successful jihad included the possibility of conversion as a likely result once people were free to choose:

It is not the intention of Islam to force its beliefs on people, but Islam is not merely "belief." . . . Islam is a declaration of the freedom of man from servitude to other men. Thus it strives . . . to abolish all those systems and governments which are based on the rule of man over men and the servitude of one human being to another. When Islam releases people from this political pressure and presents to them its spiritual message, appealing to their reason, it gives them complete freedom to accept or not to accept its beliefs. However, this freedom does not mean that they can make their desires their gods or that they can choose to remain in the servitude of other human beings, making some men lords over others.<sup>35</sup>

Contemporary scholars utilize Quranic passages to demonstrate Islam's acceptance of a diversity of religious beliefs and laws.<sup>36</sup> For example, "Surely the believers, the Jews, the Sabians and the Christians—whoever believes in God and the Last Day and does good deeds—They shall receive their reward from their Lord. They shall have nothing to fear and they shall not grieve" (5:69 and 2:62).

**Jihad and Martyrdom :  
The Ultimate Profession of Faith**

If you are killed in the cause of God or you die, the forgiveness and mercy of God are better than all that you amass. And if you die or are killed, even so it is to God that you will return (3:157–158).

To die for one's faith is the highest form of witness to God, according to the Quran. Like the Greek word martyr, which simply means witness, as in witness to your faith, the Arabic Quranic word for martyr, *shahid*, means witness. Martyrdom comes from the same root as the Muslim profession of faith (*shahada*) or witness that "There is no God but God and Muhammad is the Prophet of God." When jihad is invoked to urge Muslims to take part in wars against nonbelievers, its main motivator is the belief that someone who is killed on the battlefield, called a *shahid*, will go directly to Paradise.

With the severe dislocations experienced in much of the Muslim world from the eighteenth century to the present, a new understanding of martyrdom has been born. Martyrdom was a powerful theme in the Iran-Iraq war where both Sunni Iraqis and Shii Iranians relied on the promise of martyrdom to motivate their soldiers. Since the late twentieth century, the term martyrdom has been used broadly by Muslims around the world for all of those who die for their faith or in the defense of Muslim territory in "just" causes in Palestine, Iran, Egypt, and Lebanon as well as Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Chechnya, Kashmir, and the southern Philippines.

Shii Islam has a particularly powerful martyrdom tradition and legacy, starting with the martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson Hussein, which became the paradigm for Shii theology and spirituality. This tragic event is ritually reenacted annually in Shii communities. It has expressed itself in the special place given to visiting the graves of the martyrs, and mourning and emulating the suffering of Hussein and his companions with prayer, weeping, and self-flagellation—a ritual analogous to the commemoration of the

passion and death of Jesus Christ. In postrevolutionary Iran, the tradition is reflected in the creation of martyr cemeteries for those who died in the Iran-Iraq war and for the revolution's clergy and supporters who were murdered or assassinated by opposition forces.

In some ways, we have come full circle since 1979–1980. However little Westerners knew about Islam, many were then able to distinguish between two major jihads, Khomeini's Islamic revolution with its threat to the West and the mujahidin's jihad to liberate Afghanistan. The United States government judged the jihad, whether it was a holy or unholy war, and its warriors, whether they were extremists or liberators, by their goals and conduct—by whether they were fighting America's Cold War adversary or an ally, the Shah of Iran. But things were never that simple. Understanding the dynamics of Muslim politics today and the dangers and threats that now exist requires a fuller understanding both of jihad itself and of how the United States got to the point where it is now number one on the hit list of Muslim terrorists.

Wherever one turns, the image and words of Osama bin Laden seem to embody jihad. He stands before us with a Quran in one hand and a Kalashnikov in the other, surrounded by his band of religious zealots. However, bin Laden is symptomatic of a broader phenomenon. His disappearance from the scene will not eliminate the danger of global Islamic terrorism.

We have seen the power that the legacy of the past, faith and tradition, holds for Muslims and the key figures or ideologues whose ideas and examples still live today in the minds and faith of many believers. They provide the multitude of meanings of jihad that individuals and movements draw on when they use the tradition of jihad to renew themselves and their communities today. How has this multifaceted concept of jihad been translated into action by Islamic organizations? What are their motivations, missions, strategies, and tactics? We turn now to the reality, the holy and unholy wars that represent reality for the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.



## 9<sup>η</sup> Συνάντηση

### «Εναλλακτικές Αφορμές διεξαγωγής Πολέμου: Έλεγχος των Ενεργειακών Πηγών»

Στην 9<sup>η</sup> συνάντηση θα αναλυθεί ένα ζήτημα που από μεγάλο των αναλυτών προσεγγίζεται ως μια νέα μορφή πολέμου. Δεν είναι άλλο από τις πολεμικές συγκρούσεις με στόχο τον έλεγχο ενεργειακών πηγών ανά τον πλανήτη. Όπως θα υποστηριχθεί η συγκεκριμένη διαδικασία δεν είναι μια «νέα μορφή πολέμου» αλλά μια εναλλακτική αφορμή ως προς την εκδήλωση της πολεμικής διαδικασίας. Κεντρικά ερωτήματα που θα προσεγγισθούν είναι:

Μπορεί η έννοια των Ενεργειακών Πολέμων να ενταχθεί στο θεωρητικό πλαίσιο της Θεωρίας Πολέμου; Ποια η οξύμωρη σχέση που αναπτύσσεται μεταξύ της δεδηλωμένης απώλειας ισχύος που παράγεται κατά τη διάρκεια εξέλιξης του πολεμικού φαινομένου και αυτή της απόκτησης νέων πηγών ενέργειας μέσω της ανάπτυξης πολιτικών οργανωμένης βίας;

#### **Θέμα Εργασίας:**

*«Αναλύστε έναν «νέο ενεργειακό πόλεμο» υπό τη διαδικασία ανάδειξης των πραγματικών αιτίων και των αφορμών ανάπτυξης αυτού αντιστοίχως».*



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# The political ecology of war: natural resources and armed conflicts

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## Abstract

Throughout the 1990s, many armed groups have relied on revenues from natural resources such as oil, timber, or gems to substitute for dwindling Cold War sponsorship. Resources not only financed, but in some cases motivated conflicts, and shaped strategies of power based on the commercialisation of armed conflict and the territorialisation of sovereignty around valuable resource areas and trading networks. As such, armed conflict in the post-Cold War period is increasingly characterised by a specific political ecology closely linked to the geography and political economy of natural resources. This paper examines theories of relationships between resources and armed conflicts and the historical processes in which they are embedded. It stresses the vulnerability resulting from resource dependence, rather than conventional notions of scarcity or abundance, the risks of violence linked to the conflictuality of natural resource political economies, and the opportunities for armed insurgents resulting from the lootability of resources. Violence is expressed in the subjugation of the rights of people to determine the use of their environment and the brutal patterns of resource extraction and predation. Beyond demonstrating the economic agendas of belligerents, an analysis of the linkages between natural resources and armed conflicts suggests that the criminal character of their inclusion in international primary commodity markets responds to an exclusionary form of globalisation; with major implications for the promotion of peace. © 2001 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

*Keywords:* Armed conflict; Dependence; Natural resources; Political ecology; War

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## Introduction

Natural resources have played a conspicuous role in the history of armed conflicts. From competition over wild game to merchant capital and imperialist wars over precious minerals, natural resources have motivated or financed the violent activities of many different types of belligerents (Westing, 1986).<sup>1</sup> With the sharp drop in foreign assistance to many governments and rebel groups resulting from the end of the Cold War, belligerents have become more dependent upon mobilising private sources of support to sustain their military and political activities; thereby defining a new political economy of war (Berdal & Keen, 1997; Le Billon, 2000a). Similarly, a fall in terms of international trade in primary commodities and structural adjustments have led to a readjustment of the strategies of accumulation of many Southern ruling elites towards ‘shadow’ state politics controlling informal economies and privatised companies (Reno, 1998). Although domestic and foreign state budgets continue to support armed conflict expenditures, other major sources of funding include criminal proceeds from kidnappings or protection rackets, diversion of relief aid, Diaspora remittances, and revenues from trading in commodities such as drugs, timber or minerals (Jean & Rufin, 1996).<sup>2</sup> Arms dumping and the support of corrupt regimes during the Cold War, the liberalisation of international trade, as well as the redeployment of state security personnel and networks into private ventures have frequently participated in the growth of such parallel networks and the ‘routinisation’ of criminal practices within state institutions, most notably in Africa and the former Soviet Union (Bayart, Ellis, & Hibou, 1999; Duffield, 1998). There is growing concern that whereas resources were once a means of funding and waging armed conflict for states to a political end, armed conflict is increasingly becoming the means to individual commercial ends: gaining access to valuable resources (Keen, 1998; Berdal & Malone, 2000). This demise of ideology and politics informs, for example, the assumption of the UN Security Council that the control and exploitation of natural resources motivates and finances parties responsible for the continuation of conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>3</sup>

Beyond increasing the *risk* of armed conflict by financing and motivating conflicts, natural resources also increase the *vulnerability* of countries to armed conflict by weakening the ability of political institutions to peacefully resolve conflicts. Contrary to the widely held belief that abundant resources aid economic growth and are thus positive for political stability, most empirical evidence suggests that countries econ-

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<sup>1</sup> Armed conflicts refer to the deployment of organised physical violence and include coup d’etat, terrorism, and intra- or inter-state armed conflict. The deconstruction of many contemporary armed conflicts also results in a continuum between banditry, organised crime, and armed conflict. In this respect the criteria of annual number of battle death (e.g. 25 or 1000) as well as that of political motivation are not always helpful since the number of violent deaths can be higher in ‘peacetime’ than ‘wartime’ (e.g. El Salvador, South Africa) and economic motives play a significant role.

<sup>2</sup> For a review of the literature on war economies and the political economy of war, see Le Billon (2000b).

<sup>3</sup> Presidential statement dated 2 June 2000 (S/PRST/2000/20).

omically dependent on the export of primary commodities are at a higher risk of political instability and armed conflict (Collier, 2000; Ross, 1999). This notion of a *resource curse* also underpins much of the resource scarcity-war literature (Homer-Dixon, 1999). Indeed, both armed conflicts and chronic political instability in many oil producing regions, such as in the Gulf of Guinea, the Middle-East, or the Caspian region, or in scarce cropland regions, such as the African Great Lakes region point to the *possible* influence of this resource on both vulnerability to and risk of conflict.

This paper analyses the role of natural resources in armed conflict, through their materiality, geography and related socio-economic processes. Section 2 examines the debate over the role of scarce and abundant resource in armed conflicts and extends this approach in building a political ecological framework for the analysis of resource-linked armed conflicts. A tentative typology of armed conflicts is presented in Section 3. Section 4 explores the process by which resources become linked to armed conflicts, focusing on processes of inclusion, exclusion and criminalisation. Section 5 explores resource-linked barriers to transition to peace and discusses implications for peace-building initiatives. Section 6 concludes.

### **Scarcity, abundance, and the political ecology of resource-linked armed conflicts**

Political ecology has rarely examined the relationship between the environment and a core concern of traditional political science, namely regime security and armed conflict, focusing on social conflicts over forest resources, protected areas, agricultural regimes, or productive regions; yet neglecting large-scale violent conflicts.<sup>4</sup> Political ecology is devised as a radical critique against the apolitical perspective and depoliticising effects of mainstream environmental and developmental research and practice. Yet, if it specifically acknowledges the ‘growing human production of nature, and the political forces behind such production’ (Bryant & Bailey, 1997, p. 191), political ecology has nevertheless until recently contained ‘very little politics’; meaning there was no serious treatment of the means of resource control and access, nor of their definition, negotiation and contestation within political arenas (Peet & Watts, 1996).

Addressing these two lacunae within a political ecological approach requires approaching resource-linked armed conflicts as historical processes of dialectic transformation of nature and social groups. Contemporary resource-linked conflicts are rooted in the history of ‘resource’ extraction successively translated by mercantilism, colonial capitalism, and state kleptocracy. The availability *in nature* of any resource is thus not in itself a predictive indicator of conflict. Rather, the desires sparked by this availability as well as people’s needs (or greed), and the practices shaping the political economy of any resource can prove conflictual, with violence becoming the decisive means of arbitration. Such analysis thus requires building on both anthropo-

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<sup>4</sup> For a review of the literature, see Bryant and Bailey (1997).

logical and international relations analyses to relate a variety of scales (on the former see, de Boeck, 1998; Richards, 1996; on the latter see, Lipschutz, 1989).

A political ecology approach also requires engagement with the two perspectives most commonly adopted: that resource scarcity (mostly of renewable resources) causes conflicts, and that resource abundance (mostly with respect to non-renewable resources) causes conflicts. In both perspectives, societies confronted with specific environmental circumstances — scarcity or abundance — have a higher risk of being affected by violent conflicts. Such quasi-environmental determinism is explained, in the best of cases, through the supposed debilitating effects of ‘too much’ or ‘too little’ resources on economies and governing institutions that result in distributional struggles taking a violent turn.

According to advocates of the *scarce resource wars* hypothesis, people or nations will fight each other to secure access to the resources necessary for their survival: the more scarce the resource, the more bitter the fight (Bennett, 1991; Brown, 1977; Homer-Dixon, 1999; Renner, 1996; Suliman, 1998 — for a critique, see Dalby, 1998; Gleditsch, 1998; Peluso & Watts, 2001). An example is the progressive degradation of Easter Islands’ natural resources by its Polynesian inhabitants, which ended through internecine struggle and cannibalism until the number of inhabitants was reduced from 20,000 at its ‘apogee’ to 2000 when Europeans first arrived in 1722 (Diamond, 1998). While some of the most nuanced examinations offer convincing anecdotal evidence, there are several counter-arguments to the generalisation of the scarce resource war perspective. First, resource scarcity and population pressure can result in socio-economic innovation, including a diversification of the economy, which often results in a more equitable distribution of power across society (Boserup, 1965; Tiffen et al., 1994; Leach & Mearns, 1996). Second, international trade and market mechanisms can to some extent counterbalance localised scarcities or motivate innovations and shifts in resources. Third, in resource poor countries the state is more dependent on the diversified financial inputs from society than in resource-rich countries, and so is more likely to be representative and accountable towards it, hence less violently conflictual. Finally, it is in the interest of the elite of resource-poor countries to develop and harness human capital, rather than protect scarce or non-existent resource rents (Ranis, 1987). In this view, the likelihood of violent conflict decreases as human capital develops (e.g. through education, trading and manufacturing skills), the economy diversifies, and governance becomes more representative and accountable.

According to the *abundant resource wars* argument, primary commodities are easily and heavily taxable, and are therefore attractive to both the ruling elites and their competitors (Collier, 2000; Fairhead, 2000; Le Billon, 1997). The availability of abundant resources would therefore represent the ‘prize’ of state or territorial control thereby increasing the risk of greed-driven conflicts, while providing armed groups with the ‘loot’ necessary to purchase military equipment. Such armed conflicts thus tend to be commercialised; that is, characterised by both the integration of trading in natural resources into their economy and a move from political towards private economic agendas (Keen, 1998; Dietrich, 2000). Furthermore, a country’s natural resources endowment influences both its political economy and type of

governance (Auty, 2001; Karl, 1997; Ross, 1999). Natural resources abundance is linked in many of these analyses to poor economic growth and governance, two factors generally associated with a greater likelihood of conflict (Auty, 2001; de Soysa, 2000; Leite & Weidmann, 1999; Sachs & Warner, 1995). The relationship is empirically demonstrated by the higher risk of armed conflict faced by primary commodity exporters (Collier, 2000).<sup>5</sup> However, there is a possible endogenous relation between the lack of economic diversification and the (re)occurrence of war, which is demonstrated by the higher risk of *repeated* war for primary commodity exporters. Other quantitative examinations of resources and conflicts links through multivariate models confirm part of the scarce resource war argument and the overall argument of abundant resource war. Low levels of violence (25–1000 battle-related deaths per year) have a positive relation with environmental *degradation* (Hauge & Ellingsen, 1998), yet low levels of renewable resources *endowment* are not associated with the risk of armed conflict; while abundant renewable resource in otherwise poor countries and non-renewable resources in all countries increases the likelihood of armed conflict (de Soysa, 2000).

Both the resource abundance and resource scarcity perspective fail to take into account the socially constructed nature of resources, and in so doing, fail to explain why an abundance or scarcity of valuable resources is not a necessary or sufficient factor of conflict. Gems or oil can also be mobilised in peaceful development, as is the respective case in Botswana or Norway, for example. Similarly a scarcity of resources did not prevent peaceful development in many countries, Japan being frequently cited as an example of a highly developed resource-poor country.

The creation of resources from the earth's natural endowment is a historical process of social construction; as Zimmerman (1951) noted, 'Resources are not; they become'. Whether or not *nature* is transformed into a resource is related to human desires, needs, and practices; or, from a political economy perspective, the conditions, means and forces of production (Harvey, 1996). Diamonds provide one of the best examples of a useless material, except for industrial cutting and abrasive properties, constructed (both economically and discursively) as one of our most highly priced resources through the manipulation of markets by a cartel and the manipulation of symbols such as purity, love, and eternity through marketing. Economically, if it is scarcity that creates value, it is abundance that creates wealth. Geographically, the scale of analysis is crucial: there is in Angola, for example, a local abundance of globally scarce diamonds. The scarcity or abundance of resources are thus also relative social constructs. These social constructions can evolve: diamonds are now recognised as not only a 'girl's best friend' — as the marketing slogans of the South African diamond cartel De Beers announce — but also the 'best friends'

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<sup>5</sup> The risk of conflict increases with the proportion of primary commodity exports until it reaches 28% of GDP (the risk of conflict is then 4.2 times greater than for a country with no primary exports). The risk then drops, as states with a very high proportion of primary exports would be rich enough to defend themselves or deter armed opposition. Another possible explanation is that very large resource revenues and export concentration offer the possibility of 'buying out' social peace through populist agendas and the co-option, or corruption, of political opponents.

of belligerents bringing ruin to countries such as Angola, D.R. Congo, or Sierra Leone. The need to preserve a glamorous image led the diamond industry to quickly react, at least in terms of public relations. The role played by diamond extraction and revenues in several contemporary African conflicts is neither unique nor a recent phenomena, but is inscribed in the long succession of extraction of 'resources' bringing together networks of local elites, transborder commercial agents, and global markets, to export slaves, rubber, timber, coffee, minerals, petroleum, or diamonds (Hochschild, 1998; Miller, 1988; Misser & Vallée, 1997).

Within the historical processes shaping resource extraction political economies, several factors participate in the reproduction and transformation of resource-linked conflicts. Resources and armed conflicts are related to the distortionary effects of *dependence* upon valuable resources on societies, the *conflictuality* of natural resources political economies. Furthermore, the spatial distribution and *lootability* of resources are crucial with regard to the opportunities of belligerents to seize or retain control over resource revenues. The political economy, materiality and geography of resources can thus significantly influence the likelihood and course of armed conflicts. In turn the needs and practices of war have influenced the pattern of resource exploitation and the state of the environment. It is in this way that we can speak of a political ecology of war.

### *Resource dependence and vulnerability to armed conflict*

Resource dependence is generally a historical product associated with a pattern of relation with the global economy, through colonial powers, private transborder commercial interests, and domestic elites. To some degree, international aid can also be considered a resource, insofar as it creates dependence and can form an essential part of local strategies of accumulation (e.g. Rwanda, see Uvin, 1998). At a country level, resource dependence is associated poor economic performance and greater socio-economic inequalities. Resource-poor economies often grow faster than resource-rich economies (Sachs & Warner, 1995). The economies of resource-rich countries can be affected by 'Dutch disease', whereby greater export revenues lead to an appreciation of the national currency affecting negatively non-resource sectors already shrinking because talent and investment are allocated to the resource sector and rent seeking activities (most non-tradable) rather than into less rewarding productive activities (Ross, 1999). State attempts to support the non-resource sector through subsidies often prove unsustainable when they fail to address long-term competitiveness and are captured by the managing institutions (Karl, 1997).

Other perverse economic and institutional effects of resource dependence include a high exposure to external shock, especially fluctuations in resource prices and poor economic growth due to a neglect of non-resource sectors and low level of economic linkages — itself leading to high levels of income inequality in the absence of effective fiscal policy of redistribution (Auty, 2001). The availability of the resource rent often results in corruption of state institutions, high economic inefficiency and subsi-

disation of politicised schemes, as well as budgetary mismanagement.<sup>6</sup> Over-optimistic resource revenue forecast and the use of future revenues as collateral for loans often leads to high level of debts difficult to reimburse not only in case of resource price fall, but also due to corruption and the allocation of public revenues to unproductive activities. Disproportionate and inefficient allocations to the security sector result both from the opportunities for corruption provided by large arms contracts, and the ‘resource defense dilemma’ (i.e. resource wealth in unstable domestic or regional environments motivates the increase of a defensive capacity perceived as a threat by, as much as a deterrent against potential opponents).

Politically, resource rents provide political leaders with a classic means for staying in power by establishing a regime organised through a system of patronage rewarding followers and punishing opponents (Bates, 1981; Bryant & Parnwell, 1996). Institutional arrangements and clientelist networks linked to the resource sector thus shape power politics. Such regimes can divest themselves of the need for popular legitimacy by eliminating the need for broad-based taxation of a diversified formal economy, financing a repressive security apparatus, rewarding a close circle of supporters. Windfall rents can even allow rulers to extend this clientelist circle to the general population — as in many oil-rich micro-states such as Brunei or Gulf emirates. Windfall rents also provide little incentive for rulers to develop a diversified economy that could give rise to alternative sources of economic power strengthening political competitors. The risk of domestic political competition can be further curtailed by devolving the exploitation of the resource sector to foreign firms (e.g. through privatisation schemes); a measure that also offers the advantage of satisfying international financial institutions and consolidating external political support, including through business interests driven ‘private’ diplomacy (Reno, 2000). More tenuously, populations or interest groups, who are lightly taxed, or not taxed, may be less concerned by governmental unaccountability and illegitimacy than heavily taxed ones.

A tight economic and political control of a dominant resource sector by the ruling elite leaves little scope for accumulating wealth and status outside state patronage, especially in the case of mineral exporters. As the wealth and power gap between the ruling and the ruled increases, so does the frustration of marginalised groups seeing political change as the only avenue for satisfying their greed and aspirations, or expressing their grievances. In the absence of widespread political consensus — which cannot be maintained solely through a distribution of rents and repression — violence becomes for these groups the main, if not only route to wealth and power. Resource dependent countries thus tend to have predatory governments serving sectional interests and to face a greater risk of violent conflict. Even benevolent governments are under pressure from contests for resource rents and have to trade-off coherent economic policies maximising long term welfare against the management of social tension (Auty, 2001). This trade-off results in inefficient investment and low

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<sup>6</sup> Corruption is understood as a violation of public duties by private interests when rules or norms objectively define these two realms. The violation, however, often has an endogenous character that serves functions other than simple financial self-interest, such as political ordering. For an examination of corruption as an extra-legal yet institutionalised form of natural resource management, see Robin (2000).



growth, which — if the resource rent proves insufficient to dampen conflictual demands for reform — increase both the vulnerability of the state and social tensions while lowering the opportunity cost of joining criminal gangs or rebel groups.

### *Resource conflictuality and risk of armed conflict*

The transformation of nature into tradable commodities is a deeply political process; involving the definition of property rights, the organisation of labour, and the allocation of profits. The pattern of social relations as well as the quality and democracy or legitimacy of institutions determine the risk of conflict and deployment of violence. Although this process of transformation can be peaceful and cooperative, it is often conflictual and violence may be deployed, either in the form of physical force or through coercion and domination. Access to the commodity value chain is often closely linked to social identities, articulating in particular entitlements and horizontal inequalities along ethnicity, class, or religion with the political economy of a resource. In the former Zaire, the Kivutien discourse of (armed) resistance against the ‘international bandits from Rwanda, Uganda and some sons of the D.R. Congo to rape the country’ radically transforms the view of the informal economy by exacerbating ethnic divisions and the risk of physical violence against Tutsi-run businesses (Jackson, 2001). This articulation of identity and resources (including territorial) is especially important when fighting itself forms part of both the identity and political economy of social groups. Building on Turton (1992), cattle raiding provides the Mursi pastoralists in Ethiopia the economically rewarding purpose of affirming their identity through violence.

The nature of violence may change whether resources involve production or extraction. With extracted resources (e.g. minerals), violence is most likely to take a physical form to achieve territorial or state control, as was the case of Congo Brazzaville over oil rents in 1997. With produced resources (e.g. crops), violence usually takes a more structural form, such as coercive forms of labour or controls over trade. This structural violence may have secondary effects involving physical violence as an alternative to other expressions of grievances and everyday forms of low-key resistance such as pilfering or foot dragging (Scott, 1985). In Chiapas, the rebellion by self-defense groups and the Zapatista movement mostly served to respond to the violence of a local political economy of neglect and marginalisation, to challenge the neo-liberal political economic order which supported it, and to attract the attention of the government and media to improve their negotiating position (Harvey, 1998). In Rwanda, while the role of scarce environmental resources has been minimised as a direct cause of the armed conflict and genocide that took place in the early 1990s, the dependence of the state and many farmers on coffee exports was the foremost structural factor in the weakening of the state and the radicalisation of exclusionary politics into mass murder (Uvin, 1996).

The violent conflictuality of resource exploitation is closely linked to the failure and degeneration of political systems — most generally patrimonialism or clientelism — into ‘spoil politics’, whereby ‘the primary goal of those competing for political office or power is self-enrichment’ (Allen, 1999, p. 377). Left unchecked by non-

existent, circumvented, or biased institutional structures — such as anti-corruption mechanisms or politically sensible redistribution schemes — the most predatory practices of ‘spoil politics’ risk turning into ‘terminal spoils politics’ along what Bayart (1990, p. 106) termed, the ‘Somali road to development’. The combination and exacerbation of competitive corruption, withdrawal of the (formal) state, counter-productivity of state violence, and sectarianism may ultimately result in the outbreak of armed conflict and the collapse of the state. In short, violence becomes the prime means of political action, economic accumulation, or simply survival. This exacerbation can be explained by economic erosion or crisis resulting from corruption and mismanagement, overburdening rents, exclusion from formal international trade, structural adjustments, the rise of competitive sources of patronage, and the increased ‘connectability’ with internationalised criminal activities. Political exacerbation includes a greater use of illegitimate and privatised violence and the rise of ethnically or religiously based sectarian and exclusionary politics as reliance and confidence in the state decreases. The economic exacerbation of ‘spoil politics’ includes a shift towards increasingly illicit but profitable activities (e.g. drug trafficking, money-laundering) and the unaccountable plunder of available, mostly natural resources. To some extent the viability of, and continuity between ‘spoils’ and ‘terminal’ politics lies in the lootable character — or lootability — of natural resources.

### *Resource lootability and opportunities in armed conflicts*

The motivation and funding of conflict is facilitated because primary commodities are often highly amenable to taxing and looting. This *lootability* arises in part from the fact that resources, and in particular extracted ones, are often easily accessible to governments and rebels alike with minimal bureaucratic infrastructure. Furthermore, resource extraction activities are, to a greater degree than other economic activities, spatially fixed. The business of resource extraction has thus one specific characteristic: it cannot choose where the resources are. Unlike manufacturing and to some extent agriculture, primary resource exploitation activities cannot be relocated. Although resource businesses may decide not to invest or to disengage from their current operations, they generally sustain their access to resources and protect their investments by paying ‘whoever is in power’ — ranging from a few dollars to let a truck pass a check-point, to multi-million dollars concession signature bonuses paid to belligerents. This situation provides ample opportunities for internal contenders to challenge rulers through a direct control over resource-rich areas, transport routes or export points, leading to a splintering of political movements along lines of economic interest.

As natural resources gain in importance for belligerents, so the focus of military activities becomes centred on areas of economic significance. This has a critical effect on the location of conflicts, prompting rebel groups in particular to establish permanent strongholds wherever resources and transport routes are located, thereby complementing their traditional strategy of high mobility and location along international borders. Armed conflict economies, including commercial activities, tend to shift from an economy of proximity, to an *economy of networks*. These diffuse and

extensive networks involve mostly private groups, including international organised crime groups, transnational corporations, and diaspora; but also the leadership of foreign countries, especially regional or former colonial powers; and (mostly unintendedly) consumers in importing countries.

The nature and geography of resources play a crucial role in shaping these networks and therefore conflicts. They do so firstly through the production of territories articulating the *geographical location* of resources with the practices of their exploitation in a condition of armed conflict. In short, the greater the distance or difficulty of access from the centre of control, the greater the cost of control and the higher the risk of losing the resource to the adversary. In other words, a resource close to the capital is less likely to be captured by rebels than a resource close to a border. Resources can thus be classified as *proximate* or *distant*. To take only a few examples, grazing lands in the immediate suburbs of administrative capitals and army barracks are favored by pastoralists eager to avoid confrontation with cattle raiders (e.g. Uganda); gem mines and forests in remote or border areas tend to be overrun by rebel groups and integrated into their armed conflict economy (e.g. Cambodia, Sierra Leone); and offshore oil, while being apparently distant from the centre of control, can be monopolised through international contracts and naval enforcement (e.g. Gulf of Guinea). The higher the availability of valuable resources at the periphery of control, the greater the likelihood of prolonged conflict.<sup>7</sup>

The second geographical dimension is that of *concentration*. Two categories have been identified: *point* resources (or ‘point source’ resources) and *diffuse* resources (Auty, 2001). The former is concentrated in an area and mostly includes resources exploited by extractive industries (i.e. mining). The latter is more widely spread and mostly includes resources exploited by productive industries over large areas (i.e. agriculture, forestry, and fisheries). Aside from the purely physical aspect of this spatial concentration, the mode of exploitation can determine the social aspect of this concentration. For example, plantations are often to be considered point resources as a small number of agribusinesses use mechanisation and enclosures to concentrate profits, while subsistence agriculture remains a diffuse resource.

The two other geographical dimensions relevant to the incorporation of natural resources in conflicts is that of fragmentation and peripheralisation. During conflicts, society and economic activities are affected by a *fragmentation* — or contraction

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<sup>7</sup> To take the example of Angola, if the rebel group UNITA wanted to control offshore oil, it had to control the state and gain the recognition of petroleum companies. UNITA could not even inflict major damages to the oil revenue of the government, as the overwhelming majority of the oil fields were offshore. Similarly, if the government wanted to control diamonds, it had to secure a monopoly of access over a vast territory. Even though the major mines are concentrated in the northeast, alluvial diamonds can be found in many riverbeds over a huge territory covered by bush and facilitating guerrilla activities and are accessible to a large number of firms and even small groups of *garimpeiros* — free lance diggers (de Boeck, 1998). Although diffuse by geography and mode of production, the tight control exercised by UNITA over *garimpeiros* and mines in some regions is such that diamonds can also be considered as a point resource with regard to the concentration of profits. If diamonds had been found only in Kimberlite pipes, as in Botswana, or on the seabed along the coast, as in Namibia, access to diamonds by UNITA would have been complicated, not to say impossible.

and circumscription — in the distribution of populations and economic activities. Populations tend to regroup in the safest areas, leaving vast regions depopulated. This leads to a reconfiguration of economic activities and socio-political structures. Peacetime economic activities contract and are circumscribed both geographically and structurally, with a shift from production to services, resulting in the growth of informal activities. This fragmentation has an important impact on armed conflict economies based on resources as leaders may face difficulties in keeping their allies and controlling their subordinates. Unless the leadership is able to monopolise the means of exchange (e.g. vehicles, airports, roads, bank accounts, export authorisations, middlemen, importers) between a resource and the open economy, an economic space is available for their allies and subordinates to become autonomous through commercial or criminal activities based on local resources. The inherent risk of private appropriation can undermine trust, and result in fighting, between members of an armed group. More generally, this pattern of resource flow is likely to weaken discipline and chains of command. In contrast, when resources are fed into the conflict from outside — the case with Cold War — leaders can maintain the coherence of their armed movements through the tight control of the flow of foreign resources to their allies and subordinates. As a Khmer Rouge commander noted:

The big problem with getting our funding from business [rather than China] was to prevent an explosion of the movement because everybody likes to do business and soldiers risked doing more business than fighting.<sup>8</sup>

In order to prevent such explosion, or fragmentation, armed movements fully support soldiers and their families so that business does not prevail upon fighting. The leadership may also retain authority through coercion, charisma, and strong ideologies, or adopt radical measures, such as strict discipline, harsh sanctions, forced recruitment (especially of children), indoctrination inside the movement, and violent repression of the population. These measures are also used by the leadership to counter other effects such as corruption and greed developing within the movement.

The fragmentation of a conflict is associated with the *peripheralisation* of economic networks as internal trade becomes increasingly risky and is replaced by trans-border trade. This in turn aggravates capital flight and import dependence, characteristic of resource rich-economies. Border towns and internal trading gateways take on a new importance, leading to a peripheralisation and fragmentation of political power. This peripheralisation also affects populations. Diaspora and refugees can be considered as ‘satellite populations’ resulting from this peripheralisation. A ‘central periphery’ can then emerge when large populations of refugees under the control of political factions become new centers of power (e.g. Khmer Rouge in Thailand, the Rwandan Hutu militias in Zaire/D.R. Congo, or the Afghan Mujihadeen in Pakistan).

Fragmentation and peripheralisation together shape new territories extended across scales through *network economies* linking, for example, RUF rebels in Sierra Leone

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with the author, Cambodia, January 2001.

to diamond buyers in New York. Such network includes private companies and middlemen involved in resource exploitation and trade, but also extend to domestic and foreign authorities. In Angola, UNITA's diamonds did not only allow the rebel movement to buy arms, but also to gain diplomatic and logistical support from regional political leaders whose 'friendship' for Savimbi partly rested on business interests, such as the Head of State in Burkina Faso or Togo (UNSC, 2000). In Cambodia, the network of support of the Khmer Rouge rebels included the leadership of the Cambodian government; its adversary in the armed conflict but the authorising agent for its timber exports to Thailand (Le Billon, 2000c). Similarly in Burma, the SPDC/SLORC regime established a taxation system on timber exports to Thailand by insurgents. More informally, lax controls on diamond export licencing by the Angolan government allowed UNITA to sell diamonds through governmental channels, with handsome profits for officials and middlemen facilitating this laundering (Global Witness, 1999a). In this type of 'aggressive-symbiotic' relationship, opposing parties may have an interest in prolonging a profitable military stalemate in order to preserve economic interests that could be threatened by a total victory and subsequent peace.<sup>9</sup> Finally, networks of commercialisation involve consumers in importing countries. In this regard, given their obscure and/or highly diversified character as in the case of diamonds produced in Angola or Sierra Leone, a responsible management of the supply-chain by the industry is necessary to ensure that no commodity ending up on the international market has participated in funding these conflicts.

### **A typology of resource-linked armed conflicts**

Resources are likely to influence the type of violent conflict required and feasible to achieve political and economic aims. Although such bi-dimensional lecture of armed conflicts has obvious limits and caveats given their multi-dimensionality, Table 1 presents a tentative typology associating the geography and political economy of resources with specific conflicts and provides examples.

The relationship between the nature of a resource, its location and concentration or mode of production, and conflicts is complex and these hypotheses need further investigation. However, this basic assessment indicates that a point resource may be more easily monopolised than a diffuse resource, but that its desirability usually makes it vulnerable to contestation and often depends on international recognition for mobilising investors, hence the likelihood of coup d'état or secession as a function of relative proximity. Rewards from resource control are maximised by insurgents when resources are easily accessible and marketable and sufficiently valuable, such as distant diffuse resources, hence the association with warlordism. Finally, proximate diffuse resources involving large number of producers would be more likely to lead to rebellion or rioting in nearby centres of power (provincial or national

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<sup>9</sup> I am indebted to Dr Karen Bakker for this term.

Table 1  
Relation between the nature/geography of a resource and type of conflict

	Point	Diffuse
Proximate	<i>State control/coup d'etat</i>	<i>Rebellion/rioting</i>
	Algeria (gas)	El Salvador (coffee)
	Angola (oil)	Guatemala (cropland)
	Chad (oil)	Israel–Palestine (freshwater)
	Congo–Brazzaville (oil)	Mexico (cropland)
	Iraq–Iran (oil)	Senegal–Mauritania (cropland)
	Iraq–Kuwait (oil)	
	Liberia (iron ore, rubber)	
	Nicaragua (coffee)	
	Rwanda (coffee)	
Sierra Leone (rutile)		
Distant	<i>Secession</i>	<i>Warlordism</i>
	Angola/Cabinda (oil)	Afghanistan (opium)
	Caucasus (oil)	Angola (diamonds)
	D.R. Congo (copper, cobalt, gold)	Burma (opium, timber)
	Indonesia (oil, copper, gold)	Caucasus (drugs)
	Maroco/Western Sahara (phosphate)	Cambodia (gems, timber)
	Nigeria/Biafra (oil)	Colombia (cocaine)
	Papua New Guinea/Bougainville (copper)	D.R. Congo (diamonds, gold)
	Senegal/Casamance (marijuana)	Kurdistan (heroin)
	Sudan (oil)	Lebanon (hash)
		Liberia (timber, diamonds, drugs)
		Peru (cocaine)
		Philippines (marijuana, timber)
		Sierra Leone (diamonds)
		Somalia (bananas, camels)
	Tadjikistan (drugs)	
	Former Yugoslavia (marijuana, timber)	

capital). Much of the political ecology literature on resources and conflict has dealt with diffuse, proximate resources (the upper right-hand quadrant of the table) and has thus focused on conflicts characterised by rebellion and rioting. The remaining three types of conflict (violent state control, secession, and warlordism) have received less attention, and are considered in turn below.

*Resources and violent state control*

In resource dependent countries, resource rents constitute ‘the prize’ for controlling the state and can lead to violent bids for the government, such as coup attempts by populist movements wanting political redress. In Venezuela, the presidential election of an unsuccessful coup leader demonstrated the level of grievances felt by the majority of the population against the corruption and mismanagement of the considerable oil revenue of that country. Alternatively, bids for state control can be motivated by the greed of competing elites. In Liberia, Charles Taylor’s bid for

power in 1989 first targeted the seat of power in the capital Monrovia. Failing to do so because of the intervention of international troops, he nevertheless succeeded in establishing his rule over most of the country by taking control of lucrative sectors, not only in his country (rubber, timber and iron ore), but as well in neighbouring Sierra Leone (diamonds) by supporting the Revolutionary United Front (Alao, 1999; Reno, 1998; Atkinson, 1997; Zack-Williams, 1999). In Congo Brazzaville, the coup of former president Denis Sassou Nguesso against elected president Pascal Lissouba which degenerated into civil armed conflict in 1997 was closely related to the control of the oil rent (Verschave, 2000). In Algeria, although political agendas were predominant, the conflict over state control between the politico-military regime and the democratically elected Muslim ‘fundamentalists’ was also linked to oil and gas revenues (Muller-Mahn, 1995). On one hand, popular grievances against the regime were largely associated with its mismanagement of the falling oil and gas export revenue. On the other hand, the Algerian oligarchy was reluctant to devolve power to the election-winning Muslim party as the main source of wealth was the state-controlled petroleum rent.

### *Resources and violent secession*

Resources can also motivate secessions in resource-rich regions. In this case, the capture of the prize does not require the control of the country but only the de facto sovereignty of the areas necessary for resource control and trade. Resources can thus greatly influence the control, transformation and *production of territories*. Similar to conflicts over state control, popular political agendas or more personal greed-driven initiatives can motivate secessions. The likelihood of political secession increases when ‘outsiders’ are perceived to extract ‘local’ resources without sharing the wealth, and when local populations are displaced by the extractive industry or suffer from its environmental costs. The distribution of benefits and externalities has fuelled the Biafra secession and rebellions in the Delta region of Nigeria, Aceh in Indonesia, and the Cabinda enclave in Angola, to name but a few examples of conflicts in oil-rich regions. While many of these secessions have an indigenous political base, domestic or external actors manipulating local political identities for commercial interests also motivate some. The most glaring example is that of the secession of Katanga in former Zaire. This region was first politically invented by Belgian and Anglo-Saxon interests to secure a hold on its copper mines. In the wake of independence it was used by indigenous political leaders eager to distance themselves from Kinshasa (Balancie and de La Grange, 1999; Fairhead, 2000). The fear of secession can also lead to severe repression by the central government. Southern Sudan, with its conflict over oil, grazing land, and cattle is an example of how resource control can play into secessionist agendas (Nyot Kok, 1992; Keen, 1994). The attempt of insurgents on the island of Bougainville to secede from Papua New Guinea, was in part related to the control of copper revenues (Boge, 1998).

### *Resources and warlordism*

A number of contemporary armed conflicts are now characterised by a high degree of fragmentation or destructuration. These are not so much secession conflicts in a political sense, but rather the expression of a phenomenon of armed warlordism in which areas of de facto sovereignty are often defined by commercial interests, such as the control of a mine, forest, or drug production valley, in association with geographical/military factors (see below). The term ‘warlord’ defines strongmen controlling an area through their ability to wage war and who do not obey higher (central) authorities. A warlord’s power and ability to keep weak central authorities and competing groups at bay largely depends on a war economy, which often includes its integration into international commercial networks. Competing groups may include competing elites (e.g. marginalised politicians or military officers), disenfranchised groups (e.g. unemployed youths), or generally a combination of both. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, armed warlordism and predatory behaviour by ‘sobels’ (i.e. soldier by day, rebel by night) was partly the result of the appropriation of street violence by political elites recruiting and deploying chronically destitute thugs and criminals who, in turn, adopted and diffused the predatory economic ethos of the political class (Kandeh, 1999). External intervention, in the form of foreign governmental or private armies is in such situations quite frequent, either to enforce peace or more generally to secure resource enclaves (Cilliers & Mason, 1999; Musah & Fayemi, 2000). In the former Yugoslavia, the self-proclaimed ‘republics’ in Croatia and Bosnia were highly fragmented and frequently controlled by republican elites associated with criminal groups (Bojicic & Kaldor, 1997). On the Serb side, the personal economic agendas of these local strongmen prevented the centralisation of an armed conflict economy. This fragmentation in turn reduced the efficiency of the ‘Serb republics’ (but probably not the scale of war crimes) and corrupted local politics; thereby preventing the consolidation of a ‘Greater Serbia’. Similarly, on the Muslim side, a faction based in western Bosnia financed — and partly motivated — by its commercial activities with Croats and Serbs opposed militarily the Sarajevo based government of Izetbegovic.

### **Inclusion, exclusion and criminalisation**

The typology presented above allows for the insertion of a geographical perspective into the debate on the resource wars causing so much concern in the post-Cold War period. In particular, the consideration of the spatial distribution of resources (point or diffuse, proximate or distant, at a variety of scales) enables an analysis of conflicts that have historically lain beyond the purview of political ecologists. An expanded political ecology approach also allows for a reformulation of the dominant arguments on contemporary resource wars. Rather than simply being driven by need (resource scarcity) or greed (resource abundance), conflicts may be viewed as a historical product inseparable from the social construction and political economy of resources. The unfolding of conflict as a process entails the restructuring of polities



and commercial networks as countries become (selectively) incorporated into the global economy, often in the form of resource enclaves, in a mutually dependent relationship which encourages and sustains armed conflicts, as the source of power becomes not political legitimacy but violent control over key nodes of the commodity chain.

From this perspective, resource dependence is understood to be a *historical* product. Dependence is not only determined by geographical circumstances — the ‘gift’ of nature — which figures so prominently in the scarce or abundant resource armed conflict arguments, but also by the creation of markets and associated commodity chains, predicated upon the social construction of desirable resources. Although a certain degree of environmental determinism exists with regard to the opportunities provided to social actors by specific environmental conditions, dependence is largely embedded in and thus shaped by *glocal* political economies articulating ‘local’ patterns of resource exploitation to ‘global’ markets (Swyngedouw, 1997). Many countries have moved beyond dependence on primary commodity exports. Similarly, many primary commodity export dependent countries solve potential conflicts through non-violent means. The persistent character of dependence and violence of those who have failed to do so, demonstrates essentially the outcome of power relations between and within countries (Migdal, 1988) as well as the distinctive social processes resulting from the development of specific extractive or productive resources (Bunker, 1985).<sup>10</sup>

The significance of natural resources and violent character of their incorporation into the global economy are symptomatic of a historical process of globalisation responding to a neo-liberal logic of consolidation and *exclusion*, rather than expansion and incorporation (Castells, 1996; Hirst & Thompson, 1996). This ‘liberal exclusion’ affecting many regions in the South is not, however, synonymous with a void. The South has effectively reintegrated itself into the liberal world-system through a ‘non-liberal’ *inclusion* consisting in the spread and deepening of all types of parallel and shadow transborder activities many of which requiring in turn specific forms of governance (Duffield, 1998). Much of these activities revolve around parallel markets, tax evasion, and smuggling schemes, some involving drug trafficking, money laundering, and illegal migration. The illicit character of products or services involved, as well as the illegitimate violence deployed in the informal economy has been interpreted as a ‘criminalisation’ of the South (Bayart et al., 1999). While this paradigm holds some truth, it is worth noting that many of these informal economies are morally benign and socio-economically profitable. In fact millions of people in the South depend on these. Furthermore, the possible criminal character of some activities needs to be judged according to local legitimacy criteria. Finally, far from being anarchic, the political economy of these activities responds to (dis)organised forms of authority and legitimacy, with local actors instrumentalising ‘disorder’ to their advantage (Chabal & Daloz, 1999). The process of ‘criminalisation’ has to be

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<sup>10</sup> A discussion of the political economic concept of ‘dependency’ is beyond the scope of this paper (for a discussion, see Hout, 1993; Altvater, 1998).

understood as new forms of glocal networking and innovative patterns of extra-legal and non-formal North–South integration bringing about new systems of legitimacies in the South, involving both violent and non-violent modes of arbitration, and responding in part to an adaptation to the impact of structural adjustments, declining terms of trade, and disinterest of former patron states (Clapham, 1996).

As many of these activities involve both government and armed opposition officials, governance and insurgency are described as ‘criminalised’, with the risk of depoliticising them. This criminalisation occurs especially when the control and marketing of illicit commodities requires belligerents to develop partnerships with criminal networks to facilitate international trade or retail sales. The criminalisation of political processes rests on the willingness to gain or retain power by all means as not only wealth accumulation but sheer survival is in the balance, as the recent murder of President Kabila demonstrated. As public and private armed forces multiply and develop commercial interests, violence is not only used in high level relations of power, but becomes a ‘dirty trick’ or a form of ‘*débrouillardise*’ (smartness/resourcefulness) as any other in everyday relations (Bayart et al., 1999). Spoils politics can be most easily sustained economically by the availability of lootable resources, mostly valuable natural resources attracting commercial partners, and without systematic recourse to *political* violence as long as violence is itself criminalised and loses its political meaning. Criminalisation and spoils politics are therefore not unidirectional processes with armed conflicts as their inescapable dead-end. Depending to a large extent upon the international economic context in which they are set, social groups can move in and out of criminalisation; an argument that is supported by a loose coalition of proponents of economic (re)integration, debt forgiving, and conditionality lifting.

The above interpretation builds on the concept of ‘bad governance’ characterising ‘weak’ or ‘failed’ states. While developing countries enjoying ‘good governance’ may be considered for inclusion, countries affected by ‘bad governance’ are deemed prone to ‘chaotic’ conflicts and considered a new plague requiring their exclusion. This understanding has fed into the paradigm of a ‘coming [dangerous] anarchy’ resulting from the corruption of governance and the scarcity of revenues (Kaplan, 1994). These views respond to and simultaneously reinforce the dual process of exclusion and criminalisation, resulting in criminal inclusion in global markets, creating an even greater dependence on lootable resources, whether licit or illicit. The toll exacted on populations through violence and poverty is not, however, always related to the ‘criminal’ or ‘illegal’ character of this inclusion. People can, for example, be better off when protected by local warlords dealing in narcotics — not to mention their own economic gains from drug production or trafficking — than when subject to a corrupt and oppressive regime dealing ‘legally’ in petroleum. For populations, the problem is rooted less in ‘criminality’ but in its consequences in terms of economic and institutional vulnerability, for example, the vulnerability of criminal or ‘rogue’ states to international sanctions regimes — which ironically often extend criminalisation by making normal economic activities illicit and pushing the state to engage with criminal gangs to run smuggling operations (Kopp, 1996).

## **Impeding peace**

The economic agendas associated with the exploitation of resources can also influence the course of conflicts through their ‘criminalisation’, as financial motivations may come to override political ones.<sup>11</sup> Financial self-interest may motivate individual soldiers, local commanders, and their political backers to sustain profitable conflicts thereby securing their stake in the resource wealth. Such ‘free-lancing’ and the attendant anarchy usually results in violent competition. Yet, it can also involve accommodation between opposing factions who find a mutual benefit in a ‘comfortable military stalemate’, leaving the territory and its population under a no-armed conflict-nor-peace situation; that is a ‘stable’ conflict situation (Zartman, 1993). While this situation may reduce the intensity of warfare, the stake that belligerents have in maintaining a status quo of entitlement based on violence often prevents successful political and economic reforms and a rapid transition to sustainable peace. A state of armed conflict provides belligerents with economic and political entitlements and opportunities that cannot be achieved by peace or even victory (Kaldor, 1999). Indeed, peace is likely to erode the sources of sustenance of warring parties: fear and hatred as well as ‘legitimated’ repression on the political side; as well as outside assistance and violent asset transfers on the economic one. Furthermore, entrenched interests associated with the capture of rents, together with the difficulty of reversing perverse economic effects can result in a lack of political consensus for reform. At the extreme, even a leader committed to a peace agreement may not be able to ensure its enforcement by followers and subordinates more influenced by their personal economic gains than the structure of authority in the armed group (Keen, 1998).

Furthermore, resource wealth may weaken the leverage of external peace initiatives. The international community often lacks cohesion, willingness, or leverage to forge a consensus. Access to resources acts as a divisive factor among international players. Bilateral actors are inclined to accommodate domestic anti-reform interests in order to secure commercial benefits, particularly for their corporations. In addition, the ability of the belligerents to draw on private financial flow decreases the potential leverage of multilateral agencies (e.g. IMF, UN) exercised through grants and loans. In many contemporary armed conflicts, private capital inflows assume a greater importance than foreign assistance, especially in comparison to conflicts in the Cold War era. Such private capital is largely unaccountable in the current international political system since it gives more weight to the commercial interests of transnational corporations than to the victims of conflict (Le Billon, 2001a). The lack of

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<sup>11</sup> The term criminalisation should be understood as implying a shift from armed conflict economies protecting the basic interests of populations (e.g. through food rationing) to armed conflict economies preying or neglecting populations. Furthermore, resource armed conflicts may appear more criminal than proxy armed conflicts because they are not politically motivated or legitimated by one part of the ‘international community’; yet, in a legal and moral sense, it is the use of violence as an instrument of power against civilians which is criminal (e.g. Geneva Conventions). In this respect both resource and proxy armed conflicts share a common criminal character.

influence of multilateral institutions plays to the advantage of international business corporations, private security firms, and bilateral actors with stakes in resource exploitation (e.g. Pakistan in Afghanistan, Liberia in Sierra Leone, Russia in Chechnya, Zimbabwe in D.R. Congo).

The cynical or permissive attitude of external actors is increasingly being challenged by civil society, advocacy NGOs and governmental and inter-governmental bodies. Greater corporate and governmental accountability in preventing and resolving conflicts has much to do with their complicity in sustaining armed conflict economies, especially in the extractive sector. In the oil sector, for example, the trial of Unocal for complicity in human rights abuses in Burma, the criticisms against French companies Elf and Total in Africa or Burma, and the controversy over the role of Canadian company Talisman points to the possible indictment of businesses motivating or supporting coercive and illegitimate regimes (Harker, 2000; Nelson, 2000; Verschave, 2000). Local and international NGOs play an important role in asking for greater transparency and accountability on the part of international businesses and actions can be taken concerning specific commodities financing conflicts. For example, investigations into marketing networks can reveal the actors and mechanisms linking natural resources exploitation in countries at war and consumption in rich countries (Hartwick, 1998; Le Billon, 1999). A responsible management of the supply-chain by the industry should ensure that no commodity ending up on the international market has participated in funding these conflicts. The diamond cartel De Beers, has pledged to take such steps and there is increasing pressure within the diamond industry to reform its practices.<sup>12</sup> At a governmental and inter-governmental level, the United Nations Security Council is also taking steps to see member states enforce 'smart sanctions', notably by establishing investigative expert panels and monitoring mechanisms having for prime responsibility the 'naming and shaming' of sanction busters.<sup>13</sup>

As example of relative successes, Global Witness, a British NGO, participated in reducing the timber and diamond trade, sustaining the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and UNITA in Angola, respectively (Global Witness, 1999a,b). Both NGO campaigns and UN Security Council reports on 'conflict' or 'blood' diamonds have raised the profile of this issue while been careful not to undermine the legitimate part of a business that employs close to 800,000 people in India alone.<sup>14</sup> So far, sales of diamonds have not declined, but risen, and the diamonds industry can congratulate itself for avoiding the type of public outcry that brought the 'blooded' fur industry to its knees in the 1980s. Victims of armed conflicts in several African countries have less to rejoice. If ethical buyers are to be reassured by certificates asserting that diamonds offered as a sign of pure and eternal love will be 'blood' free, many dealers and customers will continue participating in the murky business of gems fuelling several conflicts in Africa, but also in Burma, Cambodia, or Colombia.

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<sup>12</sup> See for example, the website of the UN Security Council <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/diamond>.

<sup>13</sup> UN Department of Political Affairs official, interview with the author, March 2001.

<sup>14</sup> UN Security Council Exploratory Hearing on the Implementation of Resolution 1306, August 2000.

While, it is rarely in the short-term interest of private corporations and governments to blow the whistle on such practices, it is in their longer-term interest to address the problem as ‘dirty’ industries and commodities may suffer from pressure groups and consumers’ boycotts. Private corporations, either domestic or international, need to assume their political role and to take a moral stand by demonstrating their ‘citizenship’. Such positions should, however, not be cynically used by first world companies to exclude competitors in the third world; for example by characterising African diamonds in general as ‘blood’ diamonds, and those of developed countries (e.g. Australia and Canada) as ‘clean’ ones. Nor should resources produced by multinationals be systematically considered ‘peace-prone’ and artisanal ones ‘conflict-prone’; with the risk of undermining local small-scale producers as happened in Cambodia as a result of a crackdown on small-scale logging mostly conducted by self-demobilised soldiers and seasonal migrants (Le Billon, 2000c).

As access to or control over resource rest on violence and a state of armed conflict, short-term conflict resolution often requires a preliminary agreement on resource sharing, including for local commanders and foot-soldiers who may otherwise resist it to preserve their entitlements. Long-term solutions pass through constitutional reforms and corporate practices ensuring that the populations’ share of resources renders obsolete the control of state rents for personal enrichment and (violent) political survival; a diversification of the economy, which largely depends on a reform of international trade; as well as forms of local governance less reliant on corruption and criminal activities (Le Billon, 2001b). Initiatives to prevent and resolve armed conflicts thus need to better understand and address the role of resources in the political economy of conflicts and to challenge the self-interests of concerned actors, whether they are foot-soldiers, warlords, politicians, or multinationals. Yet, while economic diversification and greater access to international markets, fair and transparent resource revenue allocation schemes, sustained assistance during periods of crisis, and targeted sanctions against profitable armed conflict economies have long been on the development and peace building agendas, these remain largely to be put into practice.

## **Conclusions**

Armed conflicts and natural resources can be directly related in two main ways: armed conflicts motivated by the control of resources, and resources integrated into the financing of armed conflicts. Although few wars are initially motivated by conflict over the control of resources, many integrate resources into their political economy. While it would be an error to reduce armed conflicts to greed-driven resource wars, as political and identity factors remain key, the control of local resources influence the agendas and strategies of belligerents. This influence is played out through local resource exploitation schemes, involving the production of territories based on resource location, control and access to labour and capital, institutional structures and practices of resource management, as well as incorporations into global trading networks. To some extent, many contemporary wars are inscribed in the legacy of

earlier mercantile wars privately financed to serve economic objectives and similarly focusing on resource rich areas and trading posts. The significance of resources also influences the course of conflict as the localisation of authority and motives for violence can be deeply influenced by economic considerations to the point of impeding a transition to peace.

Beyond motivating or financing conflicts, the level of dependence, conflictuality, and lootability of a resource can also increase the vulnerability of societies to, and the risk of armed conflict. Yet, there is no environmentally deterministic relation at hand. Not all countries dependent upon conflictual and lootable resources face armed conflict. If this relation requires the existence of a resource in nature, it is the result of specific social processes. Desires, needs and practices weaving nature into the fabric of societies in the form of resources implies the potentially conflictual restructuring of economic networks and politics. The deployment of violence to arbitrate resource-linked conflicts is itself largely embedded in the historical pattern of social relations within and between countries; requiring both anthropological analyses and international relations ones. Yet, the specific geography and political economy of these resources lent themselves to the exacerbation of conflicts, often as a result of the level of resource dependence created in societies.

Accordingly, a framework of engagement with armed conflicts requires that attention be given to the political ecology of war.

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## 10<sup>η</sup> Συνάντηση

### «21<sup>ος</sup> Αιώνας και η διάσταση του Υβριδικού Πολέμου»

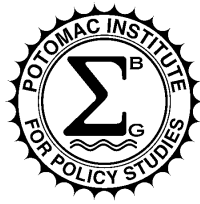
Στη 10<sup>η</sup> συνάντηση θα αναλυθεί η έννοια του Υβριδικού Πολέμου στο πλαίσιο των θεωρητικών μεταβολών που το ζήτημα επιφέρει στη Θεωρία Πόλεμου. Τα κεντρικά ερωτήματα που θα αναλυθούν είναι:

Τι είναι ο υβριδικός πόλεμος; Ποιες νέες θεωρητικές προσεγγίσεις παράγονται εξαιτίας της ύπαρξής του; Αποτελεί ο υβριδικός πόλεμος μέρος της εκδήλωσης πολέμου για την επίτευξη πολιτικών στόχων και σκοπών;

#### **Θέμα Εργασίας:**

*«Αναλύστε την έννοια της κανονικότητας [regularity] και μη κανονικότητας [irregularity] στο πλαίσιο του Υβριδικού Πολέμου».*

CONFLICT IN THE  
21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY:  
THE RISE OF HYBRID WARS



**Frank G. Hoffman**  
**Potomac Institute for Policy Studies**  
**Arlington, Virginia**  
**December 2007**

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POTOMAC INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES  
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## FOREWORD

There has been much discussion and writing over the past decade about the evolution of modern warfare in the post Cold-war world. Several have claimed that we were in the midst of a “Revolution in Warfare.” Frank Hoffman takes this discussion to a new and much more mature level by recognizing that we are entering a time when multiple types of warfare will be used simultaneously by flexible and sophisticated adversaries who understand that successful conflict takes on a variety of forms that are designed to fit one’s goals at that particular time. Mr. Hoffman calls these “Hybrid Wars.”

Frank Hoffman notes that it is too simplistic to merely classify conflict as “Big and Conventional” versus “Small or Irregular.” Today’s enemies, and tomorrow’s, will employ combinations of warfare types. Non-state actors may mostly employ irregular forms of warfare, but will clearly support, encourage, and participate in conventional conflict if it serves their ends. Similarly, nation-states may well engage in irregular conflict in addition to conventional types of warfare to achieve their goals. Clearly the United States must be prepared for the full spectrum of conflict from all fronts and realize that preparing our forces for only selected types of conflict will be a recipe for defeat.

It is important to note that this work is being evaluated by the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) in its ongoing long-range strategic planning and experimentation activities. It has been presented to senior officials at the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) policy level, to policy leaders in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), to the Intelligence Community, to the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and the Office of Naval Research (ONR), and to major military educational institutions including the U.S. National War College, the Naval and Army War Colleges, and the British Joint Command and Staff College.

Frank Hoffman’s paper on Hybrid Wars is a masterpiece of enlightened thinking on conflict in our time. It should be required reading for all students and practitioners of modern warfare.



*Michael S. Swetnam*  
CEO & Chairman

*Potomac Institute for Policy Studies*

**6** | *Conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are a broadening number of challenges facing the United States, as the National Defense Strategy (NDS) noted in 2005. These include traditional, irregular, terrorist and disruptive threats or challengers. This has created a unique planning dilemma for today's military planners, raising a choice between preparing for states with conventional capabilities or the more likely scenario of non-state actors employing asymmetric or irregular tactics. However, these may no longer be separate threats or modes of war. Several strategists have identified an increased merging or blurring of conflict and war forms. The potential for types of conflict that blur the distinction between war and peace, and combatants and non-combatants, appear to be on the rise. Indeed, the NDS itself suggested that the most complex challengers of the future may seek synergies and greater impact by combining multiple modes of war.

As this paper reveals, future contingencies will more likely present unique combinational or *hybrid* threats that are specifically designed to target U.S. vulnerabilities. Instead of separate challengers with fundamentally different approaches (conventional, irregular or terrorist), we can expect to face competitors who will employ *all* forms of war and tactics, perhaps simultaneously. Criminal activity may also be considered part of this problem as well, as it either further destabilizes local government or abets the insurgent or irregular warrior by providing resources, or by undermining the host state and its legitimacy.

It is not just that conventional warfare or interstate conflict is on the decline, there is a fusion of war forms emerging, one that blurs regular and irregular warfare. This emerging understanding is reflected in the recently released national maritime strategy.

Conflicts are increasingly characterized by a hybrid blend of traditional and irregular tactics, decentralized planning and execution, and non-state actors," the strategy states, "using both simple and sophisticated technologies in innovative ways.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> General James T. Conway, USMC, Admiral Gary Roughead, USN and Admiral Thad W. Allen, USCG, *A Cooperative Strategy For Maritime Security*, Washington, D.C., October 2007.

Hybrid threats incorporate a full range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder. Hybrid Wars can be conducted by both states and a variety of non-state actors. These multi-modal activities can be conducted by separate units, or even by the same unit, but are generally operationally and tactically directed and coordinated within the main battlespace to achieve synergistic effects in the physical and psychological dimensions of conflict. The effects can be gained at all levels of war.

At the strategic level, many wars have had regular and irregular components. However, in most conflicts, these components occurred in different theaters or in distinctly different formations. In Hybrid Wars, these forces become blurred into the same force in the same battlespace. While they are operationally integrated and tactically fused, the irregular component of the force attempts to become operationally decisive rather than just protract the conflict, provoke overreactions or extend the costs of security for the defender.

We may find it increasingly perplexing to characterize states as essentially traditional forces, or non-state actors as inherently irregular. Future challenges will present a more complex array of alternative structures and strategies, as seen in the summer of 2006 in the battle between Israel and Hezbollah. Hezbollah clearly demonstrated the ability of non-state actors to study and deconstruct the vulnerabilities of Western style militaries, and devise appropriate countermeasures. The lessons learned from this confrontation are already cross-pollinating with other states and non-state actors. With or without state sponsorship, the lethality and capability of organized groups is increasing, while the incentives for states to exploit nontraditional modes of war are on the rise. This will require that we modify our mindsets with respect to the relative frequency and threats of future conflict. It will also require a rethinking of priorities in defense spending, and serious reflection about the role of technology in our strategic culture.

The National Defense Strategy and the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) quite properly recognized that future challengers will avoid our overwhelming military strengths and seek alternative paths. OSD's senior civilian policy makers sought to shift the Department's capability investments to meet these challengers. The Pentagon's strategy and QDR expands the U.S. military's mission set beyond its

preference for fighting conventional forces. We can no longer focus just on *battles* against preferred enemies, vice *campaigns* against thinking opponents.

Hybrid Warfare presents a mode of conflict that severely challenges America's conventional military thinking.<sup>2</sup> It targets the strategic cultural weaknesses of the American Way of Battle quite effectively. Its chief characteristics—convergence and combinations—occur in several modes. The convergence of various types of conflict will present us with a complex puzzle until the necessary adaptation occurs intellectually and institutionally. This form of conflict challenges longstanding American conceptions about warfighting, and will continue to thwart the West's core interests and world order over the next generation.

The rise of Hybrid Warfare *does not* represent the end of traditional or conventional warfare. But it does present a complicating factor for defense planning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The implications could be significant, but will have to be carefully thought through. The historical foundation for much of our understanding about war requires fresh and creative approaches if we are going to draw out the correct implications. As Dr. John Arquilla of the Naval Postgraduate School has noted, “While history provides some useful examples to stimulate strategic thought about such problems, coping with networks that can fight in so many different ways—*sparkling myriad, hybrid forms of conflict*—is going to require some innovative thinking.”<sup>3</sup>

This paper lays out some distinct areas in which innovative thinking, rigorous experimentation, and constant adaptation are required. These include changes in our approach to operational art, command and control, leadership development, force structure, and training and education.

We believe that the Marine Corps is particularly well suited for this security environment because of its legacy, its expeditionary culture and its approach to warfighting. The Marine Corps has proven to be an innovative organization, and its fundamental warfighting doctrine and its core competencies provide it with the foundation to effectively counter,

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<sup>2</sup> Credit for the first use of the term can be given to Robert G. Walker, “Spec Fi: The U.S. Marine Corps and Special Operations,” unpublished Master's Thesis, Monterey, CA; Naval Post Graduate School, December 1998. Walker described the Marine Expeditionary Unit as “a hybrid force for Hybrid Wars.”

<sup>3</sup> John Arquilla, “The end of war as we knew it: Insurgency, counterinsurgency and lessons from the forgotten history of early terror networks,” *Third World Quarterly*, March 2007, p. 369.

if not thrive, against hybrid challengers. The Marine Corps should exploit its well-founded legacy of warfighting excellence, expeditionary ethos, and institutional agility for this new era.

Because of their perceived success, hybrid challengers will not be a passing fad nor will they remain focused on low tech applications. Future opponents will be dedicated, learn rapidly and adapt quickly to more efficient modes of killing. The ongoing Long War underscores their capacity for incorporating new tactics, techniques and procedures. This diffusion will continue. We can no longer overlook our own vulnerabilities or underestimate the imaginations of our antagonists. In a world of Hybrid Wars, the price for complacency grows steep. This monograph seeks to accelerate our own learning and corresponding institutional adaptation.

## INTRODUCTION

*The state on state conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are being replaced by Hybrid Wars and asymmetric contests in which there is no clear-cut distinction between soldiers and civilians and between organised violence, terror, crime and war.*<sup>4</sup>

The tragic events of September 11, 2001 did not change everything, but they did emphatically punctuate the end of one era of war and awaken us to the dawning of a new one. This new era presents policy makers and military planners with its own method of conflict, one that has made conventional thinkers uncomfortable. This kind of war, as Mao suggested long ago, has several constituent components, and overwhelming military power by itself is insufficient to serve our strategic interests. Regardless of unfounded speculation in some corners, this does not eliminate the utility of the timeless Clausewitz or some 15 centuries of recorded military history before Westphalia. Quite the contrary, the Prussian theorist recognized that every age has its own conception of war. While globalization has made war more dangerous, it remains undeniably consistent with Clausewitz's broad theory.<sup>5</sup> Today's emerging paradigm is reflected by the likes of Osama Bin Laden and our experiences in both Afghanistan and Iraq. These experiences should give pause to strategy makers. Complacency about today's security challenges is unwarranted and highly dangerous.

The so called "unipolar moment" and a spate of unilateral triumphalism went up in smoke on 9/11. Wishful thinking and delusional discussions about the changing nature of human conflict were the principal victims of 9/11, reinforced by subsequent events in Iraq. Rather than Fukuyama's "End of History," our security is challenged by

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<sup>4</sup> Alan Dupont, "Transformation or Stagnation? Rethinking Australia's Defence," *Australian Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Lecture*, Parliament House, Canberra, November 13, 2002. Accessed at [www.mrcld.org.au/uploaded\\_documents/ACF30D.doc](http://www.mrcld.org.au/uploaded_documents/ACF30D.doc) on November 18, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Antulio J. Echevarria, II, "Globalization and the Nature of War," Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College, March 2003. See also Antulio J. Echevarria, II, *Clausewitz and Contemporary War*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007.

a violent reaction generated as a side product of globalization. This reaction is abetted or exploited by the fervently fanatic and faith-based factions within the Middle East.

The future portends an even more lethal strain of perturbation. Other analysts like Dr. Bruce Hoffman point out that Iraq's insurgents and jihadist foreign fighters will benefit from their education in Iraq and Afghanistan, and will soon return home or to alternative battlespaces with greater motivation, lethal skills and credibility.<sup>6</sup> Their Darwinian evolution against America's vaunted military has refined their methods and emboldened their plans, while the clash within Islam continues unabated if not accelerated by America's well intentioned, but poorly executed efforts. So our danger mounts, while the West remains unprepared to provide security against a stateless entity that deliberately targets its weaknesses and refuses to play to its conventional military strength. Others, including large states with interests inimical to our own, will learn from this experience.

Western military thinkers have been reluctant and thus slow to address the implications of the increasingly blurred character of modern wars. Many are inclined to look past the uncomfortable and ambiguous nature of today's generational challenge, and long for traditional opponents who will array themselves in properly uniformed formations and fight the wars we prefer to fight. We have been slow to accept the trend lines that go back as far as Beirut in 1983 and recognize that the most frequent form of war is now "amongst the people," and we have been very slow in shaping our institutional tool set.<sup>7</sup>

For more than two decades, most of us overlooked these trends. Only a few talked of post-Westphalian, non-trinitarian or post-Clausewitzian eras.<sup>8</sup> The American military oriented on its preferred view of its professional scope, at the operational level, and worked to embrace the Information Age. However, much of that effort tried to perfect an

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<sup>6</sup> Statement of Dr. Bruce Hoffman, testimony presented to the HASC Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities on February 16, 2006. Accessed at [www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT255/](http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT255/).

<sup>7</sup> Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, New York, NY: Knopf, 2007.

<sup>8</sup> The most notable being Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, New York, NY: Free Press, 1991.

increasingly infrequent if not outmoded form of war, and made Industrial Age warfare more precise, more predictable and more pristine. We maximized efficiency and the application of ever more modern forms of technology. But we had focused on the wrong set of strategic drivers and indicators. Visions of “unblinking eyes” and information superiority, stand-off attacks and ever faster sensor-to-shooter links drove the defense agenda and the transformation programs of the Department of Defense for more than a decade.<sup>9</sup>

While all of these technologies were beneficial, they were not properly assessed in relation to the ongoing social and political context in which they were to be applied. In effect, we had misidentified the true Revolution in Military Affairs, as Sir Lawrence Freedman has noted. We could not eliminate the “fog of war” with America’s information dominance and magically create a new, long *Pax Americana*. We overlooked what really constituted a threat to our national security interests in key regions of the world, due to an enthusiastic embrace of an idealized and outdated version of warfare, and an under-appreciation of the mobilizing impact of Information Age tools when used to foment disorder and promote hate.

The latest U.S. National Defense Strategy (NDS), published in early 2005, reflects some improved thinking. This white paper explicitly identifies a range of emerging threats and identifies irregular challengers as an increasingly salient problem. It begins to shift American thinking and investments away from merely “fighting and winning the nation’s wars” against its preferred conventional enemies to a range of wars against a wider set of enemies—expanding beyond the traditional to incorporate three other threats or challengers—the irregular, the catastrophic terrorist and the disruptive threat, which seeks to usurp American hegemony and power by displacing it via breakthrough technologies.

The authors of the Pentagon’s 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) can also take a bow. The report recognized the shift, concluding, “In the post-September 11 world, irregular warfare has emerged as the dominant form of warfare confronting the United

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<sup>9</sup> See Frederick W. Kagan, *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy*, New York, NY: Encounter Books, 2006.

States.”<sup>10</sup> The QDR argued that fighting the Long War against terrorism, providing forces for rotational requirements to protracted conflicts, and increasing the capacity of future partners would be the basis for sizing and shaping the military. This policy shift is significant as it begins to broaden the scope of the combat developers inside each Service to sharpen our focus on this increasingly likely form of warfare.

This paper suggests that we still have a ways to go. Instead of the four distinct challengers presented in a two by two matrix chart (known as the Quad chart in the Pentagon) found in the new NDS, future scenarios will more likely present unique combinations and deliberate synergies that are specifically designed to target Western societies in general and American vulnerabilities in particular. The defense strategy created the impression that our portfolio of capabilities would be measured against four distinct kinds of challengers using different approaches. Our take on the future suggests that future adversaries are smarter than that and will rarely limit themselves to a single tool in their tool kit. Conventional, irregular and catastrophic terrorist challenges will not be distinct styles; they will all be present in some form. The blurring of modes of war, the blurring of who fights, and what technologies are brought to bear, produces a wide range of variety and complexity that we call *Hybrid Warfare*.<sup>11</sup>

Hybrid Wars can be conducted by both states and a variety of non-state actors. *Hybrid Wars incorporate a range of different modes of warfare, including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder.* These multi-modal activities can be conducted by separate units, or even by the same unit, but are generally operationally and tactically directed and coordinated within the main battlespace to achieve synergistic effects.

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<sup>10</sup> Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review, Washington D.C., March 2006, p. 36.

<sup>11</sup> In addition to its first public use by General Mattis at the Defense Forum sponsored by the Naval Institute and Marine Corps Association on September 8, 2005, the concept has been presented by LtGen James N. Mattis USMC and Frank Hoffman, “Future Warfare: The Rise of Hybrid Warfare,” *Naval Institute Proceedings*, November 2005, pp. 30-32; F. G. Hoffman. “Complex Irregular War: The Next Revolution in Military Affairs,” *Orbis*, Summer 2006, pp. 413-430; F. G. Hoffman, “How the Marines are Preparing for Hybrid Wars,” *Armed Forces Journal International*, April 2006; and F. G. Hoffman “Preparing for Hybrid Wars,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, March 2007.



This paper captures the progress and insights of a long-term research project undertaken by the Marine Corps that has already yielded innovative approaches to this emerging challenge. In addition to reviewing the literature and analyses that brought us up to this point in time, the paper provides implications for the defense community at large to consider.

Complicating the problem, the battlespace in tomorrow's Hybrid Wars will take place in complex terrain, most likely the burgeoning cities of the developing world. The hybrid challenger realizes that complex terrain affords defenders a number of advantages that offset our conventional superiority. Recent combat operations suggest a shift towards what can be called *contested zones*.<sup>12</sup> These zones include the dense urban jungles and the congested littorals where the majority of the world's population and economic activity is centered.<sup>13</sup> Engaging American forces in the "contested zone" with a range of crude yet effective asymmetric approaches is intended to draw out conflicts, protract their duration and costs, and sap American will. This will come as no news to the veterans of Operation Al Fajr in Fallujah.

As seen in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq, irregular adversaries are adopting tactics and modes of operations to offset our firepower and advantages in intelligence collection, surveillance and reconnaissance. Today, dense urban terrain provides similar safe-havens to the urban guerrilla or terrorist where the density of population, transportation networks, public services and infrastructure, and structures gives him multiple avenues of escape and the ability to hide while planning and rehearsing operations. The density of the urban complex provides sufficient cover and "noise" to mask the adversary's preparation and attack position. We have to take urban encounters seriously, "categorizing urban operations as too difficult and costly must come to an end" as it could become a self-fulfilling prophecy.<sup>14</sup>

Clearly future opponents will avoid fighting the American Way of War, where we optimize our Industrial Age mass or Information Age

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<sup>12</sup> Robert E. Schmidle and F. G. Hoffman, "Commanding the Contested Zones," *Proceedings*, September 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Ralph Peters, "Our Soldiers, Their Cities," *Parameters*, Spring 1996, pp. 43-50.

<sup>14</sup> Vincent J. Goulding, Jr., "Back to the Future with Asymmetric Warfare," *Parameters*, Winter 2000-01, pp. 21-30.

prominence and our preferred rule sets of war. The likeliest opponents on future battlefields accept no rules. Their principal approach will be to avoid predictability and seek advantage in unexpected ways and ruthless modes of attack. We can expect to see a lot of tactical plagiarism, with our opponent learning from us, coupled with wild cards or hybrid adaptation where our adversary has learned how to use high technology in unique and unanticipated ways.

We will also face primitive forms of warfare and criminal activity that long ago were proscribed by Western society. Future enemies will seek their own degree of “shock and awe” with crude barbarity (with video) rather than precision weaponry. What we ironically call “irregular” warfare will become increasingly familiar, but with greater velocity and greater lethality than in the past in part due to the diffusion of advanced military technology. In this paper, we have identified the potentially most dangerous and the increasingly most likely form of conflict as Hybrid Warfare. This form of conflict will challenge longstanding American conceptions about war, and its conventionally oriented force structure and investment patterns. This blurring character of conflict will continue to test and thwart the West’s security interests and world order over the next generation.

## ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYBRID WARFARE

*In warfare and non-military warfare, which is primarily national and supra-national, there is no territory which cannot be surpassed; there is no means which cannot be used in the war; and there is no territory and method which cannot be used in combination.*<sup>15</sup>

The ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan reinforce General Krulak's famous forecast about future conflicts. He predicted that future conflicts would be unlike the large-scale mechanized sweeps of Operation Desert Storm, but more like the "Stepchild of Chechnya."<sup>16</sup> The Chechens employed swarming tactics inside their own cities to thwart Russian domination.<sup>17</sup> That model did not resonate with the mainstream national security community at the time, nor did the evidence from a number of other experiences in Beirut, Mogadishu, or Sarajevo. But now the Long War and the Pentagon's belated interest in stability operations, irregular wars, and counterinsurgency have accelerated a debate about the future character of conflict and the allocation of resources within the U.S. national security architecture.

As part of the Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities' (CETO) ongoing "Changing Character of Conflict" research program, we examined a number of projected models and postulated paradigm changes regarding future conflict. Proposals for "non-trinitarian" wars, 4<sup>th</sup> Generation Warfare, and Compound Wars were prominent in the literature at the time this project commenced. Others have described current conflicts as "New Wars," noting supposedly unique characteristics, in particular extensive refugee flows, sexual violence, and transnational criminal aspects underpinning recent wars.<sup>18</sup> This section

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<sup>15</sup> Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare*, Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1999.

<sup>16</sup> "[O]ur enemies will not allow us to fight the son of Desert Storm, but they will try to draw us into the stepchild of Chechnya." Robert Holzer, "Krulak Warns of Over-Reliance on Technology," *Defense News*, October 7, 1996, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> Timothy L. Thomas, "The Battle of Grozny: Deadly Classroom in Urban Combat," *Parameters*, Summer 1999, pp. 87-102; Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya, Tombstone of Russian Power*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998, pp. 102-140.

<sup>18</sup> The term is usually attributed to Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1999; and more recently, Herfried Munkler, *The New Wars*, Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005, pp. 5-31.

briefly describes a number of theories examined as part of this project and the underlying rationale for developing and refining CETO's own Hybrid Warfare construct.

#### **Fourth Generation Warfare**

We examined the concept of Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW) that appears to be very prophetic.<sup>19</sup> The theory poses significant historical shifts in warfare since 1648. Initially it was dismissed as “elegant irrelevance,” but it is now difficult to dismiss the reality of 4GW.<sup>20</sup> Proponents of this theory accurately identified the blurring nature of future conflict, especially the blurring of war and peace, as well as that between combatants and noncombatants. The core of the concept is that the weakening of the state as an organizing and governing mechanism results in the rise of non-state actors willing and able to challenge the legitimacy of the state. The role of political will and internal social disintegration is central to the construct. The 4GW actor uses a range of conventional and unconventional means, including terrorism and information, to undermine the will of the existing state, to de-legitimize it, and to stimulate an internal social breakdown.<sup>21</sup> The theory is sophisticated but also elusive. Its advocates have been accused of ignoring the history of irregular warfare, a record that is about as long as military history itself.

The theory has numerous advocates, who place emphasis on political will, legitimacy, and culture. Their 4GW adversary exploits societies, adopts an amorphous structure, and utilizes mass mobilization techniques. The novelty of the concept has been challenged. The 4GW notion raised by T. X. Hammes that “superior political will when properly employed can defeat greater economic and military power” was not mysterious to George Washington or to the Continental Congress. Neither was protracted conflict, social and political networks, diasporas, and ideological fervor lost on Michael Collins and the Irish rebels in the period after World War I.

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<sup>19</sup> William S. Lind, Keith Nightengale, John Schmitt and Gary I. Wilson, “The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, November, 2001.

<sup>20</sup> Kenneth F. McKenzie, “Elegant Irrelevance: Fourth Generation Warfare,” *Parameters*, Autumn, 1993, pp. 51-60.

<sup>21</sup> On this point see William S. Lind, “The will doesn’t triumph,” in Terriff, Karp, and Karp, eds., *Global Insurgency and the Future of Armed Conflict*, New York, NY: Routledge Press, 2007, pp. 101-104.

Some prominent historians have been critical of this approach. Dr. Antulio Echevarria finds that “the model of 4GW ... is based on poor history and only obscures what other historians, theorists, and analysts already have worked long and hard to clarify.” His assessment is echoed by others. Professor Lawrence Freedman of King’s College London has noted “...the theory of 4GW suffers from poor use of history and lack of intellectual rigor.”<sup>22</sup> We noted the objections to the historical framework, and concluded that the fourth generation framework hides more than it reveals. The Roman era, the Crusades, Europe’s reformation period, or Britain’s imperial history, which is the basis for Callwell’s treatise *Small Wars*, all contain elements of what is now considered fourth generation warfare. Likewise, historians have to wonder why the Philippine insurgency at the turn of the century, the Marine’s Small Wars era, and T.E. Lawrence’s campaign that occurred during the purported Second Generation, are not relevant as case studies.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, not surprisingly, British, Israeli and Australian analysts take issue with the concept. Professor Ron Thornton believes the concept’s formulation risks excluding a huge corpus of valuable knowledge. Avi Kober finds it “incoherent and eclectic,” and Mike Evans contends that instead of distinct historical generations and the emergence of something entirely new, we need a rigorous evaluation of the apparent merging of existing forms of conflict.<sup>24</sup> That said, the debate stirred up by the theory has been useful as it forced the profession to examine itself, today’s prevailing conventional orthodoxy, and the tendency in the United States to ignore irregular warfare.

Whether this really is something entirely new, “visible and distinctly different from the forms of war that preceded it,” has emerged as challengeable. What has occurred is simply part of war’s evolution, a shift in degree rather than kind, and a return to older and horrific cases. 4GW advocates do not deny the existence of irregular warfare

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<sup>22</sup> Antulio J. Echevarria II, “Deconstructing the Theory of Fourth-Generation War,” *Contemporary Security Policy*, August 2005, pp. 11-20; Lawrence Freedman, “War Evolves into the Fourth Generation,” *Contemporary Security Policy*, August 2005, pp. 1-10.

<sup>23</sup> For further assessment, see the concluding chapter in Terry Terriff, Aaron Karp and Regina Karp, eds., *Global Insurgency and the Future of Armed Conflict: Debating fourth-generation warfare*, *Op. Cit.*

<sup>24</sup> See Rod Thornton, “Fourth Generation: A ‘new form of warfare?’” p. 87; Avi Kober, “The end of Israeli omnipotence?” pp. 147-159; and Mike Evans “Elegant irrelevance revisited: A critique of Fourth Generation Warfare,” p. 72 in Terriff, Karp and Karp, *Global Insurgency*, *Op Cit.*

techniques and the return to medieval warfare. But they do tend to overlook Clausewitz, who noted that war is “more than a chameleon,” with continuous adaptation in character in every age. Very little in what is described as fundamentally different in the 4GW literature is all that inconsistent with a Clausewitzian understanding of war as a contest of human wills.<sup>25</sup> The emphasis on impacting one’s political cohesion or will was a fundamental aspect of Clausewitz’s canon, but the idea of achieving this indirectly rather than via the fielded military forces of the opponent has merit, as does the increasingly blurring character of conflict. While it lacks prescriptions, the 4GW school is certainly relevant.

### Compound Wars

Historians have noted that many if not most wars are characterized by both regular and irregular operations. When a significant degree of strategic coordination between separate regular and irregular forces in conflicts occurs they can be considered “compound wars.” Compound wars are those major wars that had significant regular and irregular components fighting simultaneously under unified direction.<sup>26</sup> The complementary effects of compound warfare are generated by its ability to exploit the advantages of each kind of force, and by its ability to increase the nature of the threat posed by each kind of force. The irregular force attacks weak areas, and forces a conventional opponent to disperse his security forces. The conventional force generally induces the adversary to concentrate for defense or to achieve critical mass for decisive offensive operations.

One can see this in the American Revolution where Washington’s more conventional force stood as a “force in being” for much of the war, while the South Carolina campaign was characterized by militia and some irregular combat.<sup>27</sup> The Napoleonic era is frequently viewed in terms of its massive armies marching back and forth across Europe. But the French invasion of Spain turned into a quagmire with British

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<sup>25</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds. and trans., Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976, p. 77. See also Christopher Daase, “Clausewitz and Small Wars,” in Hew Strachan and Andreas Herberg-Rothe, eds., *Clausewitz in the Twenty-First Century*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Huber, *Compound Wars: The Fatal Knot*, Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff College, 1996.

<sup>27</sup> John Grenier, *First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier*, Cambridge University Press, 2005; Terry Golway, *Washington’s General: Nathanael Green and the Triumph of the American Revolution*, New York, NY: Henry Holt, 2005.

regulars contesting Napoleon's control of the major cities, while the Spanish guerrillas successfully harassed his lines of communication. Here again, strategic coordination was achieved, but overall in different battlespaces.<sup>28</sup> Likewise, the American Civil War is framed by famous battles at Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and Antietam. Yet, partisan warfare and famous units like Mosby's 43<sup>rd</sup> Virginia cavalry provided less conventional capabilities as an economy of force operation.<sup>29</sup> T. E. Lawrence's role as an advisor to the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans is another classic case of Compound War that materially assisted General Allenby's thrusts with the British Expeditionary Force against Jerusalem and Damascus. But here again, Lawrence's raiders did not fight alongside the British, they were strategically directed by the British and supplied with advisors, arms and gold only.<sup>30</sup>

Vietnam is another classic case of the strategic synergy created by compound wars, juxtaposing the irregular tactics of the Viet Cong with the more conventional capabilities of the North Vietnamese Army.<sup>31</sup> The ambiguity between conventional and unconventional approaches vexed military planners for several years. Even years afterwards, Americans debated what kind of war they actually fought and lost.<sup>32</sup>

Upon detailed examination of the case studies presented, this theory did not hold up to its own definition in that we could identify only cases of strategic coordination rather than Huber's claim that forces fought alongside each other. When militia and irregular forces were ever employed with regular forces, as at Cowpens under Morgan's direction, the irregular forces were not employed as such but merely as second-rate conventional forces. This theory offered synergy and combinations at the strategic level, but not the complexity, fusion and simultaneity we foresaw at the operational and even tactical level. Irregular forces in these cases operated largely as a distraction or economy of force measure, in a separate theater or adjacent operating area, including the rear echelon. Because it is based on operationally separate forces, the

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<sup>28</sup> Charles J. Esdaile, *Fighting Napoleon, Guerrillas, Bandits and Adventurers in Spain 1808-1814*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004, pp. 154-155.

<sup>29</sup> Jeffrey D. Wert, *Mosby's Rangers*, New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1991.

<sup>30</sup> B. H. Liddell Hart, *Lawrence of Arabia*, New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 1989.

<sup>31</sup> Harold G. Moore and Joseph L. Galloway, *We Were Soldiers Once...and Young: Ia Drang—The Battle That Changed the War in Vietnam*, New York, NY: Random House, 1992.

<sup>32</sup> The best source on the war is Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army in Vietnam*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

compound concept did not capture the merger or blurring modes of war we had identified in recent case studies or our projections.

### **Unrestricted Warfare**

A pair of Chinese Colonels are notorious for their conception of Unrestricted Warfare—or “war beyond limits.”<sup>33</sup> This pair of Chinese political officers caused quite a stir by suggesting an immoral and potentially violent mutation in human conflict, one that was beyond the pale of most Western military scholars or practitioners. But a closer reading of their text reveals a lot of useful and even obvious conclusions. Well ahead of their time, the authors recognized the potential implications of globalization. Their conception of unrestricted warfare is really best translated as war “beyond limits,” and this translation serves to expand not just the forms that warfare takes, but the boundaries of the domains or dimensions of warfare that most Western military officers might hold.

The two Colonels did not suggest that war was without moral restraints or beyond any limits at all. They sought to expand the definition and understanding of *war beyond just its traditional military domain*. Like many insightful security analysts in Europe and the United States, Colonels Qiao and Wang also understood the strains that the conventional nation-state was under due to globalization. In their words:

The great fusion of technologies is impelling the domains of politics, economics, the military, culture, diplomacy, and religion to overlap each other. The connection points are ready, and the trend towards the merging of the various domains is very clear. All of these things are rendering more and more obsolete the idea of confining warfare to the military domain and of using the number of casualties as a means of the intensity of a war.<sup>34</sup>

Their concept, which they overstated as “a completely new method of warfare” was titled “modified combined war that goes beyond limits” [*“pian zheng shi chao xian zube zhan”*]. This concept exploits the benefits of “combinations” in types of organizations and among the various domains of national power. While in the past, the Great Captains were masters of combinations, these were all achieved within the military

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<sup>33</sup> Liang, *Unrestricted Warfare*.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.



domain. In *Unrestricted Warfare*, future Great Captains must master the ability to “combine” all of the resources of war at their disposal and use them as means to prosecute the war. These resources must include information warfare, financial warfare, trade warfare, and other entirely new forms of war. These distinctions do not appear startling today, given our current efforts to harness all instruments of national power in Iraq. But the idea that “warfare is no longer an activity confined only to the military sphere,” remains outside the orthodoxy of Western military thinking even now.<sup>35</sup>

In terms of the “beyond-limits” thinking, the authors noted that the United States is already effective at “supra-domain combinations,” or the combining of battlefields, or what American analysts call instruments of power. Their text highlights the U.S. mastery of supra-domain combinations against Iraq during Desert Storm by establishing a large coalition, by political actions at the United Nations (UN), by our sweeping military campaign, and the subsequent decade of pressure by the U.S. military coupled with economic sanctions.

### **Essential Principles**

The authors generated a list of new principles appropriate to “beyond-limits combined war.” These include Omni-directionality, Synchrony, and Asymmetry.<sup>36</sup> These are defined below:

**Omni-directionality** – requires that commanders observe a potential battlefield without mental preconditions or blind spots. The designing of plans, employment measures, and combinations must make use of all war resources which can be mobilized. The commander is enjoined to make no distinction between what is or is not the battlefield. All the traditional domains, (ground, seas, air, and outer space) as well as politics, economics, culture, and moral factors are to be considered battlefields.

**Synchrony** – enjoins on commanders to link the disaggregated nature of multiple battlefields in different domains with consideration of the temporal dimension. In other words, “conducting actions in different spaces in the same period of time” to achieve desired effects. Instead of phases, with the accumulated results of multiple battles,

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 204-216.

strategic results can now be attained rapidly by simultaneous action or at designated times.

**Asymmetry** – here the authors recognized that asymmetry manifests itself to some extent in every aspect of warfare. However, asymmetry has been sought in operational terms within traditional military dimensions. In war beyond limits, the spectrum for overlooking the normal rules is much wider.

This concept poses an expansion of thinking about what constitutes war, one that challenges our conventional thinking. The authors rightly identified a number of implications of this concept, including the fact that Western military officers would have difficulty grasping the scope and nature of such a war. As other American authors have now noted, the U.S. focus on the operational level of war was essentially a preoccupation with battles, not the broader nature of war.<sup>37</sup> War “beyond limits,” on the other hand:

...will impose demands which will mean that most of the warriors will be inadequately prepared, or will feel as though they are in the dark: the war will be fought and won in a war beyond the battlefield; the struggle for victory will take place on a battlefield beyond the battlefield.<sup>38</sup>

A pair of Air Force scholars reinforced our own understanding of this conception of future warfare with their discussion of “combinational warfare” based on their interpretation of Chinese strategic thinking.<sup>39</sup> Of course, supra-domain operations are also suggested by American strategists as well, including Yale Professor Paul Bracken, who has written about forms of economic warfare that exploit modern computer networks, banking systems and information operations.<sup>40</sup>

Related to this discussion is the Chinese strategic concept of *shashou jiang* or *shashoujian* most often translated as “Assassin’s Mace.” This

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<sup>37</sup> Antulio J. Echevarria, II, “Towards an American Way of War,” Carlisle, PA: Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, March 2004.

<sup>38</sup> *Unrestricted Warfare*, p. 153.

<sup>39</sup> James Callard and Peter Faber, “An Emerging Synthesis for a New Way of War: Combinational Warfare and Future Innovation,” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, Winter/Spring 2002, pp. 61-68.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Bracken, “Financial Warfare,” *E-Notes*, Philadelphia, PA: Foreign Policy Research Institute, September 2007.

concept relates to a perceived emphasis on advanced weapons and methods to attack identified vulnerabilities in Western military operations by Chinese military research and developmental efforts. U.S. government reports emphasize the development of these purportedly nefarious weapons and methods.<sup>41</sup> Within the Chinese literature, these systems and modes are usually described as the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) trump card to Western military superiority and a necessary response for an inferior force to defeat a superior military power. A number of information warfare and missile development programs have been described as potential Assassin's Mace projects within the PLA. However, most of the PLA literature on this topic focuses on mimicking or offsetting the so-called American "Revolution in Military Affairs" and the exploitation of information technology.

### **The 2005 National Defense Strategy**

Our development of a new warfighting construct to deal with emerging threats was significantly influenced by the publication of the inaugural National Defense Strategy in March 2005. The strategy broadens the scope of military planners to think past traditional threats that conveniently array themselves in open terrain for attack by America's preferred mode of precise stand-off warfare. The NDS acknowledged that America's military predominance influences the behavior of its enemies, and that our preeminence forces adversaries away from *traditional* forms of warfare. Instead these potential adversaries shift from opposing us conventionally and prepare more nontraditional or asymmetric capabilities and methods.

The NDS goes on to frame and define an array of *traditional*, *irregular*, *catastrophic*, and *disruptive* capabilities and methods that could threaten U.S. interests:

- ***Traditional*** challenges are posed by states employing recognized military capabilities and forces in well-understood forms of military competition and conflict.

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<sup>41</sup> See the Department of Defense Annual Report to Congress, Military Power of the People's Republic of China, 2006. Additionally, for a deep cultural exploration of this strategic concept see Jason E. Bruzdinski, "Demystifying *Shashoujian*: China's "Assassin's Mace" Concept," in Larry Wortzel and Andrew Scobell, eds., *Civil-Military Change in China*, Carlisle, PA: Army War College, 2004, pp. 309-364.

- **Irregular** challenges come from those employing “unconventional” methods to counter the *traditional* advantages of stronger opponents.
- **Catastrophic** challenges involve the acquisition, possession, and use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or methods producing WMD-like effects.
- **Disruptive** challenges may come from adversaries who develop and use breakthrough technologies to negate current U.S. advantages in key operational domains.<sup>42</sup>

We found enormous value in the NDS and its commendable approach. The clearest benefits of this framework were highest at the strategic level. The wider set of challenges allowed OSD to examine its investment portfolio to preserve America’s current competitive advantage in conventional operations while also enhancing capabilities in Irregular war, deflecting acts against catastrophic terrorism, and avoiding strategic surprise in the Science and Technology arena.

But operationally, the NDS and the four challenges prospect did not satisfy our understanding of the kinds of threats the Marine Corps would face in the future, and it did not match our assessment of the ongoing merger or blurring of modes of war. The interpretation given to the NDS as the QDR was developed reinforced this assessment, as QDR implementation efforts continued to create very distinct and separate threats. This occurred despite the notion that the challenger categories could and would overlap, and the explicit statement in the NDS that:

[R]ecent experience indicates that the most dangerous circumstances arise when we face a complex of challenges. Finally, in the future, the most capable opponents may seek to combine truly disruptive capacity with *traditional, irregular, or catastrophic* forms of warfare.<sup>43</sup>

Despite the useful framework set forth in the QDR, tomorrow’s conflicts will not be easily categorized into simple classifications of conventional or irregular wars. In fact, some of today’s best thinking acknowledges the blurring of lines between modes of war. Our greatest challenge will not come from a state that selects one approach, but from

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<sup>42</sup> Donald Rumsfeld, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, Washington, D.C., March 2005, pp. 2-4.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

states or groups that select from the whole menu of tactics and technologies to meet its own strategic culture and geography. As Dr. Mike Evans, now of the Australian Defence Academy, wrote well before the QDR:

The possibility of continuous sporadic armed conflict, its engagements blurred together in time and space, waged on several levels by a large array of national and sub-national forces means that war is likely to transcend neat divisions into distinct categories.<sup>44</sup>

Many other analysts have captured these trends, with Russian, Australian, and American authors talking about “multi-modal” and “multi-variants” forms of war. But Dr. Evans was exceptionally insightful, noting:

....that British, French and Russian defense experts now speak of the rise of multi-variant warfare. They speak of a spectrum of conflict marked by unrestrained Mad Max wars in which symmetric and asymmetric wars merge and in which Microsoft coexists with machetes and stealth technology is met by suicide bombers.<sup>45</sup>

Other Australian scholars pointed out the increasingly complex nature of the operating environment, particularly the presence of large numbers of civilians, dense urban environments and complex information activities. The Australian warfighting concept paper *Complex Warfighting* was material to our thinking at the time.<sup>46</sup> The Australian Army’s capstone concept was very forward looking, and captured the complexity of the terrain in future conflicts in terms of physical terrain, human terrain and informational terrain. This concept also captured the diffusion or blurring of conflict types, combatants/noncombatants, and war/peacetime. It also highlighted the

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<sup>44</sup> Michael Evans, “From Kadesh to Kandahar: Military Theory and the Future of War,” *Naval War College Review*, Summer 2003, p. 136. In addition to Dr. Evans, Dr. Steve Blank, a research fellow at the Army’s Strategic Studies Institute, has followed these same trends. See Stephen Blank, “The War That Dare Not Speak its Name,” *Journal of International Security Affairs*, Spring 2005.

<sup>45</sup> Evans, “From Kadesh to Kandahar,” p. 140.

<sup>46</sup> Australian Army, *Complex Warfighting*, Future Land Warfare Branch, 2004. This paper was approved in 2005 as the Australian Army’s official Future Land Operational Concept. The principal author of this paper was LtCol David Kilcullen, Australian Army (now retired) who gave invaluable assistance.

implications of the “virtual theatres” of conflict that have developed from global communications technology.

American insights were also solicited, and the netwar concepts regarding new adversary organizational models were thoroughly reviewed and absorbed into our thinking.<sup>47</sup> Dr. Richard Harknett argued for an increasingly multidimensional character of war, but also greater lethality, based on “the combination of existing and new forms of organization with existing and new forms of destructive capability.”<sup>48</sup> Harknett shares Evans’ concerns for unique combinations, or as the latter put it, “a world of asymmetric and ethnopolitical warfare—in which machetes and Microsoft merge, and apocalyptic millenarians wearing Reeboks and Raybans dream of acquiring weapons of mass destruction.”<sup>49</sup>

### Hybrid Threats and Challengers

Thus, we have to conclude that the future does not portend a suite of distinct challengers with alternative or different methods but their convergence into multi-modal or Hybrid Wars. “Hybrid Wars” blend the lethality of state conflict with the fanatical and protracted fervor of irregular warfare. The term “Hybrid” captures both their organization and their means. Organizationally, they may have a hierarchical political structure, coupled with decentralized cells or networked tactical units. Their means will also be hybrid in form and application. In such conflicts, future adversaries (states, state-sponsored groups, or self-funded actors) will exploit access to modern military capabilities including encrypted command systems, man-portable air to surface missiles, and other modern lethal systems, as well as promote protracted insurgencies that employ ambushes, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and coercive assassinations. This could include states blending high-tech capabilities, like anti-satellite weapons, with terrorism and cyber-warfare directed against financial targets. Conflicts will include hybrid organizations like Hezbollah and Hamas, employing a diverse set of capabilities. Additionally, states can shift their conventional units to irregular formations and adopt new tactics, as Iraq’s *Fedayeen* did in 2003.

In such conflicts we will face major states capable of supporting covert and indirect means of attack, as well as Thomas Friedman’s

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<sup>47</sup> John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, eds., *In Athena’s Camp: Preparing for Conflict in the Information Age*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1997.

<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Blank, p. 32.

<sup>49</sup> Michael Evans, “From Kadesh to Kandahar,” p. 136.

“super-empowered” fanatics capable of highly lethal attacks undercutting the sinews of global order.<sup>50</sup> Cunning savagery, continuous improvisation and rampant organizational adaptation will mark this form of warfare. Such wars will not be conventional, low in intensity or short—and as General Rupert Smith notes in *The Utility of Force*, these conflicts can be timeless.<sup>51</sup>

These Hybrid Wars are polymorphous by their nature as are their antagonists.<sup>52</sup> Hybrid Wars can be conducted by both states and a variety of non-state actors. *Hybrid Wars incorporate a range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder.* These multi-modal activities can be conducted by separate units, or even by the same unit but are generally operationally and tactically directed and coordinated within the main battlespace to achieve synergistic effects. The effects can be gained at all levels of war.

At the strategic level, many wars have had regular and irregular components. However, in most conflicts, these components occurred in different theaters or in distinctly different formations. In Hybrid Wars, these forces become blurred into the same force in the same battlespace. While they are operationally integrated and tactically fused, the irregular component of the force attempts to become operationally decisive rather than just protract the conflict, provoke overreactions or extend the costs of security for the defender.

Unlike in Maoist or compound wars, the purpose of the multi-modal approach is not to facilitate the progression of the opposition force through phases nor is it to help set up a conventional force for decisive battle. Hybrid opponents, in contrast, seek victory by the fusion of irregular tactics and the most lethal means available in order to attack and attain their political objectives. The disruptive component of Hybrid Wars does not come from high-end or revolutionary technology but from criminality. Criminal activity is used to sustain the hybrid force or to facilitate the disorder and disruption of the target nation. The goal may include protracted conflicts with a greatly diffused set of force

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<sup>50</sup> “Super-empowered individuals” is from Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*, New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1999, pp. 14-15.

<sup>51</sup> Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force*, p. 8. General Smith noted “our conflicts tend to be timeless, even unending.”

<sup>52</sup> Christopher Coker, “Cultural Ruthlessness and the War Against Terror,” *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. III, No. 1, 2006 p. 148.

capabilities to wear down resistance, or the actual defeat of a conventionally-oriented government.

This concept draws upon many schools of thought. From the 4GW school, it uses the concept of the blurring nature of conflict and the loss of the State's monopoly of violence. The concepts of omnidimensionality and combinations were crucial ideas adopted from Chinese analysts. From John Arquilla and T.X. Hammes we took in the power of networks. From the proponents of Compound Wars, the concept absorbs the synergistic benefit of mixing conventional and unconventional capabilities, but at lower and more integrated levels. From the Australian experts, we have accepted the growing complexity and disaggregated nature of the operational environment, as well as the opportunistic nature of future adversaries.

Since our initial research, we have gained new insights from a variety of sources, but none more critical than terrorism expert John Robb, whose Open Source Warfare concept points out the increasingly vulnerable nature of modern urban complexes.<sup>53</sup> Equally critical have been insights from Georgetown University professor Bruce Hoffman whose work on terrorism and insurgency has been highly influential over the past several decades, especially on the rising importance of urban insurgency. He has identified the growing tendency of insurgents today to adopt conventional means of greater and greater lethality as part of something he called "stand off insurgency." In such insurgencies, the insurgent exploits modern means including the IED, advanced munitions, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and even precision guided missiles to gain greater stand off against conventional counterinsurgent forces.<sup>54</sup> From both British and American Army theorists we have incorporated the role that criminal behavior, smuggling and narcotics play within today's conflict.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> John Robb espouses Open Source Warfare which aptly captures the entrepreneurial element of today's enemies. John Robb, *Brave New War: The Next Stage of Terrorism and the End of Globalization*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2007.

<sup>54</sup> Bruce Hoffman, "The 'Cult of the Insurgent': its tactical and strategic implications," *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 61, Issue 3, September 2007, pp. 312–329.

<sup>55</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Ross, Royal Marines, "Joint Concept for Disorder, Insurgency, Criminality and Terrorism, J-DICT," Presentation to the Marine Irregular Warfare II Conference, Quantico, VA, July 6, 2005.



### Subsequent Supporting Research

Subsequent to the development of this concept and its publication in 2005, a number of authors and analysts have come to the same conclusions. OSD strategists who worked on the QDR regret not having fully documented and explored the Hybrid Warfare phenomena that they believed to pose the most significant threat to U.S. interests in the future.<sup>56</sup> OSD policy makers are in the process of extrapolating from the last major defense review, and are now gauging the importance of future conflicts in terms of complex irregular wars or hybrid conflicts.<sup>57</sup>

Key scholars are also acknowledging the blending or blurring character of future conflicts. The most historically astute of strategic observers have admitted that while the future is hard to predict, there are clear tendencies and trends that mark tomorrow's path. Professor Colin Gray, of the University of Bristol, has grudgingly admitted that with regard to future conflict in this century, that the one feature "we can predict with confidence is that there is going to be a blurring, a further blurring, of warfare categories."<sup>58</sup>

The American intelligence community has devoted some effort into studying the concept. Numerous studies have been initiated to study the nature of "disruptive challenges" in particular, with CETO asked to provide briefings and insights into these projects. The Director of National Intelligence's long-range conflict team assessed the potential complexity and synergy of hybrid approaches, and published a well received paper about disruptive approaches. Other analysts continue to study the Chinese concept of "unrestricted warfare."<sup>59</sup> Chinese strategists continue to evolve in their study of future conflict, and adopted their People's War thinking to incorporate both low and high

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<sup>56</sup> Nathan Freier, "Strategic Competition & Resistance in the 21st Century: Irregular, Catastrophic, Traditional, & Hybrid Challenges in Context," Carlisle, PA: Army War College, 2007, p. 96.

<sup>57</sup> Dr. Thomas Mahnken, paper delivered to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Global Strategy Review, Geneva Switzerland, September 6, 2007.

<sup>58</sup> Colin S. Gray, *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare*, London, UK: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2006.

<sup>59</sup> Daniel Flynn, *The Changing Character of Conflict—Disrupting the American Way of War (U)*, Langley, VA: NIC 2007; Mathew J. Burrows, "Intelligence Community Perspective On the Maturing URW Threat," in Ronald Luman, ed., *Proceedings of the 2007 Unrestricted Warfare Symposium*, Johns Hopkins University/Applied Physics Lab, 2007.

tech, and have extended the concept and the battlespace into the civilian and non-military realm.<sup>60</sup> These developments bear watching.

British and Australian officers have moved ahead and begun the hard work of drawing out implications and the desired counter-capabilities required to effectively operate against hybrid threats. The British have gone past American and Marine concept writers and already incorporated hybrid threats within their construct for irregular war.<sup>61</sup> Australian security analysts continue to be on the front lines of inquiry in this area.<sup>62</sup>

Theorists responsible for some of the most cutting edge thinking in alternative modes of war and associated organizational implications continue to explore the blurring of conflict types. Dr. John Arquilla, an expert in irregular warfare tactics and networked forms of organization, has concluded that:

Networks have even shown a capacity to wage war toe-to-toe against nation-states—with some success ... The range of choices available to networks thus covers an entire spectrum of conflict, posing the prospect of a significant blurring of the lines between insurgency, terror, and war.<sup>63</sup>

Other American and international scholars at the Naval War College in Newport, RI and at King's College London have endorsed and extended the concept.<sup>64</sup> Max Boot, an Olin Fellow at the Council of Foreign Relations, recently concluded his lengthy study of war and technology with the observation that:

The boundaries between 'regular' and 'irregular' warfare are *blurring*. Even non-state groups are increasingly gaining access to the kinds of weapons that were once the exclusive preserve of states. And even states will increasingly turn to

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<sup>60</sup> See Pen Guangqian and Yao Youzhi, eds., *The Science of Military Strategy* (English version), Beijing: Military Science Publishing House, 2005, p. 117.

<sup>61</sup> Rear Admiral Chris Parry, *Countering Irregular Activity Within A Comprehensive Approach*, Joint Doctrine Note 2/07, United Kingdom, March 2007, p. 1-15.

<sup>62</sup> Brigadier Michael G. Krause, "Square Pegs for Round Holes?," Australian Army, Australian Land Warfare Studies Centre, *Working Paper No. 132*, June 2007.

<sup>63</sup> Arquilla, "The end of war as we knew it," p. 369.

<sup>64</sup> Mackubin Thomas Owens, "Reflections on Future War," *Naval War College Review*, Forthcoming; David Betz, "A Real Revolution in Military Affairs: Online Continuous Learning for the Operational Warfighter," paper delivered at the Marine Training and Education Command Conference, Pedagogy for the Long War, October 29-31, 2007.

unconventional strategies to blunt the impact of American power.<sup>65</sup>

To conclude this chapter, tomorrow's conflicts will not be easily categorized into simple classifications of conventional or irregular. Numerous security analysts have acknowledged the blurring of lines between modes of war. Conventional and irregular forces, combatants and noncombatants, and even the physical/kinetic and virtual dimensions of conflict are blurring. As Dr. Mike Evans has recently noted in his overview of future conflict:

Armed conflict also began to reflect a bewildering mixture of modes—conventional and unconventional activity merged—while many combatants simultaneously employed modern Kalashnikov assault rifles, pre-modern machetes and post-modern cellular phones in their operations.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Max Boot, *War Made New: Technology, Warfare, and the Course of History, 1500 to Today*, New York, NY: Random House, 2006, p. 472.

<sup>66</sup> Michael Evans, "From the Long Peace to the Long War: Armed Conflict and Military Education and Training in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," Australian Defence College, Occasional Paper No. 1, 2007, p. 6.

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## HEZBOLLAH AS PROTOTYPE

*“This war will be studied in all military academies in the world as a new kind of war which requires new and unprecedented definitions of how to fight it and how to win it.”<sup>67</sup>*

We explored a number of historical precedents to illuminate the nature of modern hybrid challengers. The Irish insurgents of 1919-1920 were initially reviewed, as they exploited some conventional or militia units, with terrorism and intelligence penetration operations. They conducted flying columns in the country, urban operations at home and abroad, and leveraged their own Diasporas in England and the United States. We also studied the capabilities of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan in the 1980s, and the experiences of the Chechen rebels in their contest against Russian domination was also explored in some detail.<sup>68</sup>

We also looked at the Balkans experience of the post-Yugoslavia era. This period led to postulations about “new wars” among European theorists. But while the shift from ideology to identity was noted, we did not find much that was truly novel in the so-called “new wars.” In all cases, we found conventional and irregular tactics, terrorism, as well as criminal activity. However, we did not find the multi-dimensionality, operational integration or the exploitation of the information domain to the degree we see today or expect tomorrow. These cases represent—at best—first generation Hybrid Warriors or the earliest prototypes.

Next we began studying current operations in the Middle East. This phase took on a new direction during the Summer 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah. This is the clearest example of a modern Hybrid challenger. Hezbollah, led by Hassan Nassrallah, demonstrated a number of state-like military capabilities, including thousands of short and intermediate-range rockets and missiles. This case demonstrates the ability of nonstate actors to study and deconstruct the vulnerabilities of

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<sup>67</sup> As quoted by Molly Moore, “Israelis Confront ‘New Kind of War,’” *The Washington Post*, August 9, 2006, p. A11.

<sup>68</sup> Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*, New York, NY: Penguin, 2004. On the Chechens see Anatoly S. Kulikov, “The First Battle of Grozny,” in Russell Glenn, ed., *Capital Preservation: Preparing for Urban Operations in the Twenty-first Century*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001. For a comparative assessment, see Olga Oliner, *Russia’s Chechen Wars 1994-2000: Lessons from Urban Combat*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1998.

Western style militaries. Hezbollah, abetted by the adoption of erroneous strategic concepts and some intelligence filters by Israeli officials, devised and implemented appropriate operational and tactical measures for its security objectives. These tactics and the technologies supporting them surprised many, which compounded the shock effect and tilted the battle of perceptions towards Hezbollah. The constant action-reaction cycle of technological advances is age old, but it appears it needs to be relearned the hard way.<sup>69</sup>

Our research program was not alone in pointing to the relevancy of this short and incomplete clash of wills.<sup>70</sup> A number of analysts seized on the same issues, concluding that “Hezbollah’s relative success against Israel in the summer of 2006 is an important case study, worth analyzing in greater detail.”<sup>71</sup>

We agreed that this case study is important and definitely worthy of detailed analysis. The amorphous Hezbollah is representative of the rising hybrid threat. This battle in southern Lebanon reveals significant weaknesses in the posture of the Israeli defense force—but it has implications for American defense planners too. Mixing an organized political movement with decentralized cells employing adaptive tactics in ungoverned zones, Hezbollah showed that it could inflict as well as take punishment. Its highly disciplined, well trained, distributed cells contested ground and wills against a modern conventional force using an admixture of guerrilla tactics and technology in densely packed urban centers.

Hezbollah, like jihadist defenders in the battles in Fallujah in Iraq during April and November of 2004, skillfully exploited the urban terrain to create ambushes and evade detection, and to build strong defensive fortifications in close proximity to noncombatants.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Guy Ben-Ari, “Technological Surprise and Technological Failure in the Current Lebanon Crisis,” Commentary, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., July 25, 2006.

<sup>70</sup> Frank Hoffman, “Hezbollah and Hybrid Wars: U.S. Should Take Hard Lesson from Lebanon,” *Defense News*, August 14, 2006, p. 52.

<sup>71</sup> Ariel Cohen, “Knowing the Enemy: How to Cope with Global Jihad,” *Policy Review*, No. 145, October/November 2007, p. 43. Accessed at [www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/10162676.html](http://www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/10162676.html).

<sup>72</sup> Andrew Exum, “Hizballah at War: A Military Assessment,” Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, *Policy Focus #63*, December 2006, pp. 9-11. On the battles for Fallujah, see Francis “Bing” West, *No True Glory: A Front Line Account of the Battle for Fallujah*, New York, NY: Bantam, 2005.

In the field, Israeli troops grudgingly admitted that the Hezbollah defenders were tenacious and skilled.<sup>73</sup> They were “maddeningly elusive” and deliberately blended into the civilian population and infrastructure. The organized resistance was several orders of magnitude more difficult than their counter-terrorism operations in the West Bank and Gaza strip. The degree of training, fire discipline and technological advancement were much higher. “You can tell Hezbollah has been trained in guerrilla fighting by a real army,” observed one experienced Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) Captain.<sup>74</sup>

The implications are not relevant only to ground forces. Hezbollah’s use of C802 anti-ship cruise missiles and volleys of rockets represents a sample of what “Hybrid Warfare” might look like, which is certainly relevant to naval and airpower analysts as well.<sup>75</sup>

Tactical combinations and novel applications of technology by the defenders were noteworthy. In particular, the anti-armor missile systems employed by Hezbollah, against IDF armor and defensive positions, coupled with decentralized tactics were a surprise. At the battle of Wadi Salouqi a column of Israeli tanks were stopped in their tracks by Hezbollah employing Russian anti-armor missiles with telling precision.<sup>76</sup> Hezbollah’s anti-tank weapons include the Russian made RPG-29, a powerful variation on a standard rocket-propelled grenade, the Russian AT-13 *Metis*, which has a range of one mile; and the Russian-built AT-14 *Kornet*, which has a range of three miles and thermal sights for tracking the heat signatures of tanks. The IDF found the AT-13 and AT-14 to be formidable against their first line Merkava Mark IV tank. A total of 18 Merkavas were damaged, and it is estimated that ATGMs accounted for 40 percent of the IDF’s fatalities.

Hezbollah even managed to launch a few armed UAVs that required the IDF to adapt in order to detect them. These included either the

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<sup>73</sup> Matthew B. Stannard, “Hezbollah wages new generation of warfare,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 6, 2006; Jonathan Finer, “Israeli Soldiers Find a Tenacious Foe in Hezbollah,” *Washington Post*, August 8, 2006, p. 1.

<sup>74</sup> Captain Hanoch Daub quoted in Greg Myre, “Israel’s Wounded Describe Surprisingly Fierce, Well-Organized and Elusive Enemy,” *New York Times*, August 12, 2006, p. A5.

<sup>75</sup> Matt Hilburn, “Hezbollah’s Surprise,” *Seapower*, September 2006, pp. 10-12.

<sup>76</sup> Judith Palmer Harik, *Transnational Actors in Contemporary Conflicts: Hizbullah and its 2006 War with Israel*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, March 2007, p. 14; Exum, pp. 9-14.

Iranian Mirsad-1 or Ababil-3 Swallow.<sup>77</sup> One source reports that more than two dozen of these systems may remain in Hezbollah's possession. These concern Israeli strategists given their GPS-based navigational system, 450-kilometer range, and 50 kg explosive carrying capacity.<sup>78</sup> There is evidence that Hezbollah invested in signals intelligence and monitored IDF cell phone calls for some time, as well as unconfirmed reports that they managed to de-encrypt IDF radio frequency hopping radio traffic based on an algorithm-based system similar to SINCGARS.<sup>79</sup>

The battle for perception dominance was just as critical as the strategic strike competition and the gritty defense of the villages of southern Lebanon. Hezbollah's strategic and operational level information operations were impressive.

Not until this war have networks actually projected in real time the grim reality of the battlefield pictures of advancing or retreating Israeli troops in southern Lebanon, homes and villages being destroyed during bombing runs, old people wandering aimlessly through the debris, some tailed by children hugging tattered dolls, Israeli airplanes attacking Beirut airport, Hezbollah rockets striking northern Israel and Haifa—all conveyed live as though the world had a front row seat on the blood and gore of modern warfare.<sup>80</sup>

Claims about a victory for Nasrallah are a bit dubious in strictly military terms. He later admitted that had he known that Israel would react the way it did, he would not have authorized the initial attack and kidnapping of Israeli soldiers. But one thing is certain, the IDF's credibility has been weakened and Hezbollah arguably came out of the conflict stronger in ideological appeal. Israel failed to rout the Iranian-backed force, and may have lost the strategic battle of perceptions. Hezbollah was able to exploit the political effects of their limited tactical successes, magnified by the media. They lost a significant portion if not

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<sup>77</sup> Anthony Cordesman, "Preliminary Lesson of Israeli-Hezbollah War," Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 17, 2006, p. 16.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5. See also Harik, pp. 19-20.

<sup>79</sup> Mohamad Bazzi, "Hezbollah cracked the code," *Newsday.com*, September 18, 2006. Accessed at [www.newsday.com/news/nationworld/world/ny-wocode184896831sep18,0,4008301818.story?coll=ny-worldnews-print](http://www.newsday.com/news/nationworld/world/ny-wocode184896831sep18,0,4008301818.story?coll=ny-worldnews-print).

<sup>80</sup> Marvin Kalb, "The Israeli-Hezbollah War of 2006: The Media as a Weapon in Asymmetrical Conflict," Faculty Research Working Paper RWP07-012, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, February 2007, p. 4.



all of their operational strike capability in short order, and consumed an equally large proportion of their rocket arsenal. Israel did inflict large losses on the most dedicated and trained portion of the militia's ground force. Most estimates suggest a range of between 500 and 600 guerrilla fighters were killed in the contest. Israeli losses were a quarter of that, partly by relying on high levels of air and artillery support. The IDF launched nearly 19,000 sorties, which delivered almost 20,000 bombs and 2,000 missiles against almost 7,000 targets. In addition, nearly 125,000 artillery and heavy mortar shells were expended. But the IDF's intelligence was clearly faulty, as was their conventional fighting readiness and logistics.<sup>81</sup>

Hezbollah's real advantage lay not in technology but in having the luxury of being able to prepare the terrain and their tactics for a single recognized enemy. They operated as decentralized cells and their training and tenacity paid off. They proved willing to engage the IDF in prepared close encounters, and were willing to absorb great punishment to inflict a cost. Their Katushyas and Kornet missiles extracted a price for Israel's intervention. Hezbollah managed to fire over 4,100 rockets into Israel between 12 July and 13 August, culminating with 250 rockets on the final day, the highest total of the war. Most of these were short range and inaccurate, but they achieved strategic effects in both the physical domain and in the media by forcing the evacuation of many towns in the northern sector of Israel. Retired Army officer Ralph Peters, who visited Lebanon during the fighting, observed that Hezbollah:

...displayed impressive flexibility, relying on the ability of cellular units to combine rapidly for specific operations, or when cut off to operate independently after falling in on pre-positioned stockpiles of weapons and ammunition. Hezbollah's combat cells were *a hybrid of guerrillas and regular troops—a form of opponent that U.S. forces are apt to encounter with increasing frequency.*<sup>82</sup> (emphasis added)

Peters is on the money, as usual. Organizations like Hamas are already emulating Hezbollah. According to *Jane's Defence Weekly*, Hamas

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<sup>81</sup> For an early take on the conflict see David Makovsky and Jeffrey White, "Lessons and Implications of the Israel-Hizballah War: A Preliminary Assessment," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, *Policy Focus* #60, October 2006.

<sup>82</sup> Ralph Peters, "Lessons from Lebanon: The new model terrorist army," *Armed Forces Journal International*, October 2006, p. 39; Thom Shanker, "A New Enemy Gains on the U.S.," *New York Times*, July 30, 2006, p. B1.

has just taken delivery of a supply of AT-5 anti-armor missile systems as well as some SA-7s.<sup>83</sup> Hamas surprised many with the launching of an upgraded Katushya in mid-October 2007 as well. Perhaps Stand Off Insurgency is evolving and cross pollinating as well. Postings on Hamas' websites suggest that they are an active learning organization, with observations about Hezbollah's perceived success. The Israeli Institute for Counter Terrorism translated some of these observations about Hezbollah's operations, noting:

Hizbullah's uniqueness compared to other military organizations using guerrilla tactics is that they are the first resistance movement with traditional army capabilities, within the framework of guerrilla war, and it is the first armed unorganized splinter movement which has strategic weapons.<sup>84</sup>

Of course, Hezbollah benefits from arms and training expertise supplied by Tehran, and perhaps others. This should not be used to discount the threat, and it may actually say a good deal about the relative costs of efforts to intervene in Iran that require using ground forces.<sup>85</sup>

Emulation is not limited to transnational organizations. Syria reportedly finds Hezbollah's success worth studying. Purportedly, it is now investing extensively in tactical missiles and in training its commando division in urban and guerrilla tactics.<sup>86</sup> According to Israeli sources, Syria has established additional commando forces as well. "Syria saw the difficulty the IDF had during the fighting inside the southern Lebanese villages and now the military there wants to draw us - in the event of a war - into battles in built-up areas where they think they will have the upper hand," according to an IDF officer.

The U.S. military would do well to study this prototype of an effective hybrid adversary as Ralph Peters and others have suggested. The IDF attempted a number of American conceptual approaches with little success, which does not bode well for U.S. efforts to laminate technological programs and preferred operational paradigms. This was not simply a guerrilla war with traditional tactics, but a "concocted mix,

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<sup>83</sup> Alon Ben-David, " Hamas Boosts Its Weapon Stocks," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, October 23, 2006, p. 16.

<sup>84</sup> Jonathan Fighel, " Hamas and the Hizbullah experience," Institute for Counter-Terrorism. Accessed at [www.ict.org.il/apage/6957.php](http://www.ict.org.il/apage/6957.php).

<sup>85</sup> An observation made by Cordesman, "Preliminary Lessons of Israeli-Hezbollah War," p. 23.

<sup>86</sup> The Jerusalem Post website, "Israel Officials Warn of "Unprecedented" Military Buildup by Syria," April 13, 2007.

Lebanonized from several models of warfare.”<sup>87</sup> The limitations of existing Western or American doctrine and operating concepts for techno-centric solutions and Stand Off Warfare are quite evident. New concepts and operational art modifications are undoubtedly necessary for this emerging threat.<sup>88</sup>

It is possible to make too much out of Hezbollah’s strength, and fail to note that Israel was a party to this contest too. It is the interaction of the policies and capabilities of the two adversaries, reflected in Clausewitz’s famous duel analogy, which ultimately measures strategic and operational effectiveness. The Winograd Commission reported a number of shortcomings at the political and military levels during the war. Its interim report was a detailed post-mortem on the decision making process and the civil-military interaction throughout the contest. The Commission found flaws in the process, information content, information flow and resulting decisions at the strategic level. That body found that the decision to respond immediately with military air power and artillery was not based on a comprehensive strategic plan or even a thoroughly vetted military plan.<sup>89</sup>

Hezbollah affirms an emerging trend and underscores potential dangers. Highly disciplined, well trained, distributed cells can contest modern conventional forces with an admixture of guerrilla tactics and technology in densely packed urban centers. This case offers a useful live laboratory to future antagonists who will study “how a small-scale jihadist organization managed to face down, through innovative use of guerrilla tactics and advanced weaponry, one of the strongest and most experienced conventional armies in the world.”<sup>90</sup>

Western concepts such as “shock and awe” and Diffused Warfare do not appear to be effective against such threats, and their relevance against any challenger remains suspect.<sup>91</sup> If we can objectively study this

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<sup>87</sup> Elias Hanna, “Lessons Learned from the Recent War in Lebanon,” *Military Review*, September-October 2007, p. 86; Daniel Byman and Steven Simon, “The No-Win Zone: An After-Action Report from Lebanon,” *National Interest*, November/December 2006, pp. 55-61.

<sup>88</sup> Ron Tiras, “Breaking the Amoeba’s Bones,” *Strategic Assessment*, Vol. 9, No. 3, November 2006; Ron Tiras, *The Limitations of Standoff Firepower-Based Operations*, Memoranda No. 89, March 2007.

<sup>89</sup> See the Winograd Commission’s partial report summary provided by the Council on Foreign Relations at [www.cfr.org/publication/13228/](http://www.cfr.org/publication/13228/).

<sup>90</sup> Harik, *Transnational Actors in Contemporary Conflicts*, p. 20.

<sup>91</sup> Yedidia Groll-Yaari and Haim Assa, *Diffused Warfare: The Concept of Virtual Mass*, Tel Aviv, Israel: Yediot Aharonot Press, 2007.

conflict, both Israeli and American planners may find it a blessing in disguise.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Bill Powers, "When War is a Blessing," *American Thinker*, October 30, 2007. Accessed at [www.americanthinker.com/2007/10/when\\_war\\_is\\_a\\_blessing.html](http://www.americanthinker.com/2007/10/when_war_is_a_blessing.html).

## IMPLICATIONS

*[C]onventional, twentieth-century military doctrines aimed at wars against nation-states and industrial-era mass armies are effectively dead. Even the best traditional militaries, such as the U.S. and Israeli armies, face formidable difficulties when confronted with irregular, well-motivated, and foreign-supported forces, which enjoy media battlefield advantages. The Israel-Hezbollah conflict was not so much a defeat of Israel as it was a defeat of the old-style warfare by the new.<sup>93</sup>*

The rise of Hybrid Warfare *does not* represent the defeat or the replacement of “the old-style warfare” or conventional warfare by the new. But it does present a complicating factor for defense planning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Future adversaries will not offer up “tactics of the weak” and operate in distant mountain retreats. They will exploit the tactics of the smart and agile, presenting greater reach and lethality. They may attempt to operate within heavily populated cities, and use the networks of an urban metropolis to maneuver within as well as to sustain themselves. Their operations may seek to defeat the host government or U.S. forces directly and not merely protract a conflict without seeking a decision. States may apply these techniques in order to deter or deny U.S. forces the ability to intervene successfully, rather than employ an anti-access strategy. In any event, they will seek to disrupt our freedom of action, drive up the costs of any American intervention, and finally, deny us our objectives.

The operational implications could be significant, but will have to be carefully thought through. The historical foundation for much of our understanding about war requires fresh and creative approaches if we are going to draw out the correct implications. As one of the nation’s leading scholars in irregular conflict has noted, “While history provides some useful examples to stimulate strategic thought about such problems, coping with networks that can fight in so many different ways—*sparkling myriad, hybrid forms of conflict*—is going to require some innovative thinking.”<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Cohen, p. 53.

<sup>94</sup> Arquilla, “The end of war as we knew it,” p. 369.

We will never begin the journey without letting loose of the conservative blinders and the cultural boundaries that constrain innovative thinking. The strategist Ralph Peters has warned we need to prepare for “governments and organizations willing to wage war in spheres now forbidden or still unimagined.”<sup>95</sup> We, as a nation, remain intellectually and institutionally unprepared for the mutation of war beyond conventional approaches. However, organizationally we have made some progress. Some of the innovative thinking has begun at the strategic level in Washington, D.C. The establishment of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the planning scenarios it has developed, along with efforts to better secure the nation’s critical infrastructure from man-made attack or penetration, are required if Hybrid Warfare evolves as projected in this paper. Much more still needs to be done, as the days when distance and oceans could protect us are now history.

But the focus of this paper is on the mid-range time period, and is oriented on projected Defense missions at the operational and tactical levels. The greatest impediment to successfully adapting America’s national security architecture and enhancing its readiness for more trans-dimensional or multi-modal adversaries is cultural. America’s military culture sees its professional role and status as inextricably linked to traditional modes of war and to maintaining its conventional superiority. Recognition of past history is useful, but it should not blind the national security community to the rising threat of hybrid antagonists. Future contingencies against hybrid challengers *will* engage vital and core U.S. security interests and *will not* be wars of choice.<sup>96</sup>

It is profoundly ironic that America’s military culture has such difficulty with irregular approaches. Viewed over our entire history, so called irregular wars are the historical tradition of the U.S. military, despite the more traditional focus of the post-World War II military. An admixture of European conventional forces supplemented by unconventional auxiliaries characterized conflicts in North America

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<sup>95</sup> Ralph Peters, *Wars of Blood and Faith: The Conflicts That Will Shape the Twenty-First Century*, Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole, 2007, p. 3.

<sup>96</sup> Jeffrey Record, “The American Way of War: Cultural Barriers to Successful Counterinsurgency,” Washington, D.C., CATO Institute, *Policy Analysis*. No. 577, September 1, 2006.

before 1776. General Braddock's debacle on the road to Fort Duquesne was undoubtedly instructive to the colonials who would later seek independence. George Washington's subsequent success as a general owes much to the employment of irregular forces in the American Revolution, most notably in the Carolinas.<sup>97</sup>

Despite its more conventional Civil War experience, the U.S. Army readily adapted to the nature of combating native American Indians on the Plains.<sup>98</sup> This experience served the U.S. Army well in the Philippine insurgency, despite a lack of formal doctrine.<sup>99</sup> Much of this experience was absorbed and reapplied by the Army and Marines in the inter-war era. Post-war occupations after World War II, and work in Africa, Central and Latin America as well as Southeast Asia followed.<sup>100</sup>

However, over the past half-century, American military doctrine and culture has narrowed its perspective about the spectrum of war. Seeking to define and mark out its professional jurisdiction, the U.S. military has sought to maximize its expertise and professionalism within the more conventional confines of state versus state conflict.<sup>101</sup> But the U.S. armed forces cannot just focus on the wars it prefers; it must advance the security interests of the country and it appears likely that it will have to do so within a broader conception of war that goes beyond a Westphalian model and conventional operations. In the words of one strategic analyst, "...we must relearn what modern war is, we must look

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<sup>97</sup> On the southern campaign of 1781 see Don Higginbotham, *The War of American Independence: Military Attitudes, Policies, and Practice 1763-1789*, Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1983, pp. 352-388; Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of the United States Military Strategy and Policy*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1973, pp. 18-39.

<sup>98</sup> Robert M. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue: The U.S. Army and the Indian, 1848-1865*, New York, NY: Macmillan, 1967; Andrew J. Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1998.

<sup>99</sup> The definitive study of this conflict is Brian M. Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989. See also Max Boot, *Savage Wars of Peace, Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*, New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002, pp. 99-128.

<sup>100</sup> Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps*, New York, NY: Macmillan, 1991, pp. 258-265; Boot, *Savage Wars of Peace*, pp. 156-180, 231-252.

<sup>101</sup> Conrad C. Crane, *Avoiding Vietnam: The U.S. Army's Response to Defeat in Southeast Asia*, Carlisle, PA: Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, February 2003.

beyond our own borders and avoid ethnocentric and triumphalist solutions based on technological prowess alone.”<sup>102</sup>

### **Force Planning**

There are many calls today for increased specialization or bifurcation of the U.S. military to improve its ability to conduct non-traditional missions, especially post-conflict stability and reconstruction tasks. This could be a mistake. Hybrid Wars do not allow us the luxury of building single mission forces, unless the armed forces are going to become significantly larger. We do not have the luxury of building separate agencies for each block of a Three Block War world. As Sir Michael Howard once stated at an International Institute for Strategic Studies conference, “In today’s confrontations, warfighting and peacekeeping cannot be separated. They melt into one another, and the conduct of each determines the success of the other.”<sup>103</sup>

To this we can add, reconstruction, international aid, information operations and anything else pertinent to stability operations. These are not successive stages or phases of an operation; they converge in time and space. Military forces will have to be prepared to conduct such operations, with or without aid from civilian agencies with relevant skills, in very arduous conditions. Arguably, much of the work load falls within the realm of military government that has been historically assigned to the jurisdiction of the armed services.<sup>104</sup>

Undoubtedly there are unique enablers (such as civil affairs or information operations) that are not adequately sized or shaped for today’s demand. The proper integration of these enablers into general purpose forces should be our first priority. For Marines, this would represent a modest investment with a large payoff, giving them a modern day synthesis of their expeditionary culture with special aptitudes that the “Soldiers of the Sea” have lacked for some time. In effect, they need to establish a balance between their potent Cold War conventional combat capability and their Small Wars legacy.

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<sup>102</sup> Blank, “The War That Dare Not Speak its Name,” p. 31.

<sup>103</sup> Michael Howard, “A Long War?,” *Survival*, Vol. 48, Issue 4, Winter 2006-07, p. 7.

<sup>104</sup> Nadia Schadlow, “War and the Art of Governance,” *Parameters*, Autumn 2003, pp. 85-94.



Some new tools in the kit bag will suffice to achieve this synthesis and exploit their well deserved reputation for disciplined force application and expeditionary readiness. This new balance should retain the Corps' historical role as the nation's shock troops especially in urban and littoral environments, but also prepare the Marines for more protracted and subtle missions instead of maritime patrolling or brief raids. A robust and integrated combined arms team capable of adapting their mode of operations and tailoring their forces against potent adversaries is needed. This will require military forces that are not merely "general purpose" but professional *multi-purpose* units with flexibility and credible combat power.<sup>105</sup>

### **Intelligence**

The implications for the intelligence community may be the most profound of all, and are beyond the scope of a monograph. A separate examination of this challenge should be undertaken to ensure that future commanders have the requisite insights into adaptive enemies and intelligence processes that exploit available information and can obtain the necessary fusion of data from a wider variety of non-traditional sources.<sup>106</sup>

### **Interagency Approach**

Because of the convergence of missions into one battlespace, it is axiomatic to most national security analysts today that future challenges in this century mandate a better ability to fuse all instruments of national power. Our respective leaders now refer to this as a fully "Joined Up" or "Whole of Government" approach. Some organizational initiatives have been undertaken, but the U.S. government is simply not organized to engage in nation building or what might be better termed contested state building. American investments have focused on the Pentagon and have not been extended to the non-military tools of the nation's arsenal. Yet, there is an emerging consensus on the need to increase the ability of

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<sup>105</sup> David Betz, "Redesigning Land Forces for Wars Amongst the People," *Contemporary Security Policy*, 28:2, August 2007, pp. 221-243.

<sup>106</sup> G.I. Wilson, John P. Sullivan, and Hal Kempfer, "The Changing Nature of Warfare Requires New Intelligence-Gathering Techniques," in Louise I. Gerdes, ed., *Espionage and Intelligence Gathering*, Farmington Hills, MI: Greenhaven Press, 2004.

the non-military instruments of government to be brought to bear to improve the governance, infrastructure, judiciary, commercial and financial foundation, and law enforcement functions within failed states. This will require personnel increases in non-military departments to staff new interagency organizations and to build capacity to operate effectively in under-governed areas.<sup>107</sup> Forward deployed and crisis response forces like the Marines will need to be able to conduct these operations for some time before interagency capabilities can be surged forward, or until such time as the security sector is reformed so that civilian agencies and relief organizations can operate without undue risk.

### **Organizational Culture/Ethos**

Because of its institutional legacy of operational excellence, continuous evolution, and tactical improvisation, the Marines are well suited for this coming age. They will have to extend their efforts and refine their procedures and culture to a degree. They must be capable of shaping themselves to work in civil military task forces, and conduct multiple missions simultaneously. As a premier force-in-readiness, they have historically worked at short-notice “transition” operations, transitioning from peace to crisis response, from ship to shore, and between the blocks of the Three Block War.

A force prepared for this environment would have to possess a unique set of expeditionary characteristics. Its preparedness for close quarters battle would be high, as would its readiness for protecting and controlling a large number of noncombatants in densely populated cities. This force would have to be prepared for protean opponents or known adversaries employing unpredicted tactics or asymmetric technologies. The Corps will need to improve its long-range anticipatory intelligence, as well as its research base into future threats and adversary reasoning. The Marines could also improve its red teaming assets at both its combat development center, and task its

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<sup>107</sup> Stephen D. Krasner and Carlos Pascual, “Addressing State Failure,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 4, July/August 2005, pp. 153-163.

experimentation program to design and test potential irregular and disruptive approaches.<sup>108</sup>

### Doctrine

There has been a belated renaissance in filling in the doctrinal holes left after Vietnam. Writing Service and Joint concepts and doctrine in Irregular Warfare is now a cottage industry. But these efforts still fail to come to grips with the speed of adaptation by our enemies, and too frequently fail to incorporate the most important changes in the security environment that are impacted by *who* we are in conflict with, *how* they are organized, the merging modes of conflict that reflect *how* they fight, and *why* they are fighting.<sup>109</sup>

The Marines already have a doctrinal foundation that reflects a solid grounding in the ever changing character of war and that can be applied to non-traditional conditions. They have the doctrinal basis and organizational flexibility to excel in hybrid conflict. Maneuver Warfare, at least as originally articulated by John Boyd, represents an approach that is as valid in guerrilla operations as it is in high intensity wars of mechanized maneuver.<sup>110</sup> Because of their grasp of the various modes that warfare can adopt, the Marines have been at the cutting edge of much of the irregular warfare effort within the U.S. military.<sup>111</sup>

### Training and Education

Forces that are capable of fighting against hybrid threats will require appropriate training and education. In fact, education may be the long pole in the tent for enhanced readiness. The cognitive demands for this blurred context are extremely high, as it requires an inordinate degree of

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<sup>108</sup> Gregory Fontenot, "Seeing Red: Creating a Red-Team Capability for the Blue Force," *Military Review*, September-October 2005, pp. 4-8.

<sup>109</sup> David J. Kilcullen, "Counter-insurgency Redux," *Survival*, Winter 2006-2007; F. G. Hoffman, "Neo-Classical Counter-insurgency?" *Parameters*, Summer 2006, pp. 71-87; and Colin H. Kahl, "COIN of the Realm: Is There a Future for Counterinsurgency?" *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2007, pp. 169-176.

<sup>110</sup> For a detailed exploration of the intellectual underpinnings of Colonel Boyd, see Frans P.B. Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War: The Strategy Theory of John Boyd*, New York, NY: Routledge, 2007, pp. 128-233.

<sup>111</sup> F. G. Hoffman, "How the Marines are Preparing for Hybrid Wars," *Armed Forces Journal International*, April 2006.

mental agility and a tolerance for ambiguity. Any force prepared to address hybrid threats would have to be built upon a solid professional military foundation, but it would also place a premium on the cognitive skills to recognize or quickly adapt to the unknown.<sup>112</sup>

Success in Hybrid Wars also requires small unit leaders with decision-making skills and tactical cunning to respond to the unknown—and the equipment sets to react or adapt faster than tomorrow’s foe. Organizational learning and adaptation would be at a premium, as would extensive investment in diverse educational experiences.<sup>113</sup>

At the individual level, we need to determine the “sweet spot” to which all Marines must be educated, trained and equipped for them to operate successfully and seamlessly in a complex battlespace with hybrid threats. With their historically global role, the Marines have never had the luxury of focusing on a single opponent, nor do they today have the luxury of deciding to focus on a single quadrant in the Pentagon’s threat matrix either. In short, they need to develop *Hybrid Warriors* capable of seamlessly operating and winning on any type of battlespace, with the proper mix of education and training to enable every Marine to recognize, adapt to and defeat threats not yet known. The Marine Corps has already taken actions to expand its close combat training programs, and is exploring numerous other initiatives.

### **Operational Planning/Campaign Design**

Success will also require new interagency doctrine and new procedures for incorporating military and non-military programs and activities into a seamless whole. The deliberate integration of kinetic and non-kinetic effects is required, as is the discriminate application of force. It requires altered methods of operational art and campaign design. Current military planning remains far too linear (as practiced), and has not yet intellectually incorporated the multidimensional modes

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<sup>112</sup> David C. Gompert, *Heads We Win: The Cognitive Side of Counterinsurgency (COIN)*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, Counterinsurgency Study Occasional Paper 1, 2007.

<sup>113</sup> Michael Evans, “From the Long Peace to the Long War.” See also David Betz, “A Real Revolution in Military Affairs: Online Continuous Learning for the Operational Warfighter,” paper delivered at the Marine Corps Training and Education Command Conference, Pedagogy for the Long War, October 29-31, 2007, Quantico, VA.

of influence essential to combating Hybrid Wars.<sup>114</sup> This will also require new organizational models to deploy interagency planning teams to Coalition commands for operational planning. Defeating the hybrid adversary will require alterations in how military and national security organizations think about strategy and how leaders are educated. It will require commanders throughout the military that can work across organizational boundaries, with coalition members, international organizations, and non-military agencies of government. It will also require changes in the way military organizations acquire and exploit intelligence, and how they leverage, but more importantly, *share* information in their command and control systems. As U.S. forces have found in Iraq, the degree of fusion of intelligence from both military and non-military sources such as law enforcement is critical. It will continue to be so.

Hybrid Wars also require a degree of understanding that must be acquired by a security community imbued with a deep understanding of the historical and cultural context that has generated the conflict from the beginning. This will require an ability to outreach to different sources of expertise, and new ways of fusing diverse insights and perspectives into multi-dimensional campaigns. The planning process and conceptual failures that led to the post-conflict debacle in Iraq are hopefully instructive. Thus, calls for culture-centric warfare should have great resonance in any military challenged by the changing character of warfare.<sup>115</sup>

### **Dueling Narratives**

Another implication is the need to incorporate what may be the most significant change in the character of modern conflict, the exploitation of modern media to reach out to wide masses and mobilize them to support one's cause. We need to learn how to engage in this

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<sup>114</sup> The campaign design chapter in the Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency manual reflects an enormous step forward, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3.33.5 (Field Manual [FM] 3-24 in the U.S. Army), *Counterinsurgency*, Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, December 2006, pp. 4-1 to 4-9.

<sup>115</sup> Robert H. Scales, "Culture-Centric Warfare," *Naval Institute Proceedings*, September 2004, pp. 32-36.

expanding portion of the battlespace, to in effect “maneuver against the mind” of both our opponents and the general population.

T. E. Lawrence was a very early theorist in unconventional war, as well as a pragmatic practitioner. He noted that the cognitive domain is a major consideration in such conflicts. The salience of the cognitive element of modern conflict is clearly rising. In the future, winning “hearts and minds” or what John MacKinlay calls the virtual dimension, may be the most dominant portion of the battlespace. This dimension of the battlespace is being expanded to a more global scale thanks to the ubiquitous nature of modern communication techniques.

While the U.S. military has a demonstrated capacity to use technology and computer software, its performance in Iraq suggests it failed to master the opportunities presented by the Information Age. At the strategic level, the American government has not excelled at employing information effectively in today’s Long War against Islamist extremism.<sup>116</sup> Some of this can be attributed to a mis-conceptualization of the information dimension or battlespace centered on technology and computer networks instead of human software or culture.

Today, many small groups have mastered “armed theater” and promoted “propaganda of the deed” to arouse support and foment discord on a global scale. There are a plethora of outlets now in the Middle East and an exponentially growing number of websites and bloggers promoting a radical vision. These outlets constantly bombard audiences with pictures, videos, DVDs, and sermons. Ironically, in Iraq and in the Long War we are facing a fundamentalist movement that is exploiting very modern and Western technologies to reestablish an anti-Western social and political system.

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<sup>116</sup> Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, Landon Lecture, Kansas State University, November 26, 2007. Accessed at [www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1199](http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1199). Mr. Gates appropriately observed that, “public relations was invented in the United States, yet we are miserable at communicating to the rest of the world what we are about as a society and a culture, about freedom and democracy, about our policies and our goals. It is just plain embarrassing that al-Qaeda is better at communicating its message on the internet than America. As one foreign diplomat asked a couple of years ago, ‘How has one man in a cave managed to out-communicate the world’s greatest communication society?’ Speed, agility, and cultural relevance are not terms that come readily to mind when discussing U.S. strategic communications.”

The evolving character of communications today is altering the patterns of popular mobilization, including both the means of participation and the ends for which wars are fought. It is enabling the recruiting, training, and motivating of individuals. “Today’s mobilization may not be producing masses of soldiers, sweeping across the European continent,” like a modern *Grand Armee* but it has produced a globally distributed uprising with the speed and fervor of a French column in battle. This has profound implications for human conflict in this century, as Dr. Cronin has perceptively warned, “Western nations will persist in ignoring the fundamental changes in popular mobilization at their peril.”<sup>117</sup>

The exploitation of modern information technology will also enhance the learning cycle of potential irregular enemies, improving their ability to transfer lessons learned and techniques from one theater to another. This accelerated learning cycle has already been seen in Iraq and in Afghanistan, as insurgents appeared to acquire and effectively employ tactical techniques or adapt novel detonation devices they found on the internet or that they observed from a different source. These opponents will continue to remain elusive, operate in an extremely distributed manner, and reflect a high degree of opportunistic learning. To conclude this section, the ideological aspects of irregular warfare will continue to influence the conduct of operations in novel ways. We must ultimately learn to maneuver in the virtual dimension to achieve a positional advantage in the population’s collective mind. We must be as effective and precise with our mental munitions as we are with artillery and close air support.<sup>118</sup>

We have to recognize that *perception* matters more than results in the physical battlefield. The Secretary of Defense was perfectly correct in an October 2007 speech when he stated that “Success will be less a matter of imposing one’s will and more a function of shaping behavior of friends, adversaries and most importantly, the people in between.”<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Audrey Kurth Cronin, “Cyber-Mobilization: The New *Levée en Masse*,” *Parameters*, Summer 2006, pp. 77-87.

<sup>118</sup> John MacKinlay, “Defeating Complex Insurgency: Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan” *Whitehall Paper Number 64*, RUSI: London, 2005.

<sup>119</sup> David S. Cloud, “Gates Says Military Faces More Unconventional Wars,” *New York Times*, October 11, 2007.

Clearly future opponents will avoid fighting the American Way of War, where we optimize our Industrial Age mass or Information Age prominence and our preferred rule sets. The likeliest opponents on future battlefields accept no rules. Their principal approach will be to avoid predictability and seek advantage in unexpected ways and ruthless modes of attack. Future enemies will seek their own degree of “shock and awe” with crude barbarity (with video) rather than precision weaponry. What we ironically and perhaps erroneously call “irregular” warfare will become normal, but with greater velocity and lethality than ever before.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Barak Salmoni, “The Fallacy of Irregular Warfare,” *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 152, Issue 4, August 2007, pp. 18-24.



## CONCLUSION

*Increasingly, the dominant mode of conflict in the world will not be force-on-force military engagements guided by traditional principles of warfare. Increasingly, “conflict” will be something vaguer, more interdisciplinary, more to do with psychology and identity than military forces. To be very clear: The form warfare takes could still extend into state-on-state conflict, but it could also include terrorism, insurgency, information war, and much else.<sup>121</sup>*

Good theory should offer three components. The first is a descriptive element, which historically or empirically explains past and present phenomena. Next, a predictive element that projects trends objectively or offers the ability to anticipate future occurrences. Finally, it should present some prescriptive advice to guide policy in the future.<sup>122</sup> This Hybrid War construct is built upon historical experience and ongoing patterns, and we hope that the publication of this paper will further our understanding of the emergence of the latest manifested changes in the character of war. We especially hope that the necessary prescriptions to thwart the success of hybrid challengers are aggressively investigated and refined in the future.

American illusions about our relative invulnerability and a military bias towards conventional battles were the principal victims of 9/11 and the subsequent war in Iraq. Kaplan’s “Coming Anarchy” has arrived with full force, along with the culture and identity-based divisions of Huntington’s “fault line” wars.<sup>123</sup> But the new “anarchy” has a sense of purpose, and its faith-fueled fanaticism is inflamed by a global reach abetted by the connectivity of a global economy and information infrastructure. Today’s security is being challenged by a violent and seemingly irrational force. But it is a politically organized reaction to globalization, and the alienation and fragmentation it fosters. It is not irrational, and it should not be underestimated.

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<sup>121</sup> Michael J. Mazarr, “Extremism, Terror and the Future of Conflict,” *Policy Review*, online. Accessed at [www.policyreview.org/000/mazarr.html](http://www.policyreview.org/000/mazarr.html). David J. Kilcullen, “New Paradigms for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Conflict,” Department of State *eJournal*, June 2007. Accessed at <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/0507/ijpe/kilcullen.htm>.

<sup>122</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Mackubin T. Owens for his guidance in the past and this particular point.

<sup>123</sup> Robert Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post Cold War*, New York, NY: Vintage, 2001.

The West remains unprepared to provide security against a political or ideological opponent who does not share or suffer from our intellectual or institutional boundaries. We face an enemy that deliberately targets our weaknesses and never plays to our military strength.<sup>124</sup> This evolving enemy has not made Clausewitz irrelevant, quite the contrary.<sup>125</sup> Even the world's foremost Clausewitzian scholar has concluded, "*future warfare must be assumed to encompass both regular and irregular combat.*"<sup>126</sup> This will occur, not as distinct threats or wars or even battles, but as a multi-modal form of war.

Al Qaeda and associated movements have evolved in response to the coalition that has taken up the challenge of countering them. Their Darwinian evolution against America's military has refined their methods and emboldened their plans, while the clash within Islam continues unabated. The U.S. military and indeed the armed forces of the West must adapt as well. As one Australian officer put it, unless we adapt to today's protean adversary and the merging modes of human conflict, "we are destined to maintain and upgrade our high-end, industrial age square pegs and be condemned for trying to force them into contemporary and increasingly complex round holes."<sup>127</sup>

The U.S. military is beginning to identify effective counter-measures against irregular and hybrid threats. Too much emphasis has been placed on laminating old case studies from Colonial era wars and rural Maoist insurgencies against today's more lethal threats. There is much to learn from history but it rarely repeats itself, and as the new Army/Marine counterinsurgency manual correctly states, "You cannot fight former Saddamists and Islamic extremists the same way you would have fought the Viet Cong, Moros, or Tupamaros."<sup>128</sup>

Some clear progress is being made. In the Army's call for full spectrum "pentathletes," and in cutting-edge doctrine and education

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<sup>124</sup> Thomas X. Hammes, "4<sup>th</sup> Generation Warfare: Our enemy plays to their strengths," *Armed Forces Journal International*, November 2004, p. 40. See also Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and Stone: On War in the 21st Century*, St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2004.

<sup>125</sup> See Antulio J. Echevarria II, "Clausewitz and the Nature of the War on Terror," pp. 196-218, in Strachan and Herberg-Rothe, eds., *Clausewitz in the Twenty-first Century*, *Op. Cit.*

<sup>126</sup> Colin S. Gray, *Another Bloody Century*, p. 252.

<sup>127</sup> Krause, p. v.

<sup>128</sup> Counterinsurgency FM 3-24, p. 1.

efforts at Fort Leavenworth, one sees great progress. The Marines have built upon their superb educational system to ensure their graduates have the mental wherewithal to thrive in ambiguous contingencies. Their efforts to incorporate cultural intelligence and language training, as well as its Distributed Operations and Combat Hunter tactics, are equally relevant. Persistent contact with local populations to establish security and actionable intelligence, and persistent pressure against an elusive cellular adversary can only be achieved with highly trained forces prepared to “find and fix and finish” nimble guerrillas. The IDF went in a different direction in Lebanon in 2006 but was far from successful, which provides a warning to the Pentagon about what to expect in future contingencies and how to adapt its transformation agenda.

The future cannot be captured with a simple binary choice. The emerging character of conflict is more complicated than that. A binary choice of Big and Conventional versus Small or Irregular is too simplistic. The United States can not imagine all future threats as state-based and completely conventional, nor should we assume that state-based conflict has passed into history’s dustbin. There are many who have made that mistake before, and have been consistently proven badly mistaken. State-based conflict is less likely but it is certainly not extinct. But neither should we assume all state-based warfare is entirely conventional. As the thrust of this paper has suggested, the future poses combinations and mergers of the various methods available to our antagonists.

Tomorrow’s conflicts will not be easily categorized into simple classifications of conventional or irregular. Numerous security analysts have acknowledged the blurring of lines among modes of war. Conventional and irregular forces, combatants and noncombatants, and even the physical/kinetic and virtual dimensions of conflict are blurring.

The National Defense Strategy and the 2006 QDR quite properly recognized that future challengers will avoid our overwhelming military strengths and seek alternative paths. OSD’s senior civilian policy makers sought to shift the Department’s capability investments to meet these challengers. The Pentagon’s strategy and QDR expands the U.S. military’s mission set outside of its comfort zone and beyond its preference for fighting conventional forces. We can no longer focus just

on *battles* against preferred enemies, vice *campaigns* versus thinking opponents.

We may find it increasingly impossible to characterize states as essentially traditional forces, or non-state actors as inherently irregular. Future challenges will present a more complex array of alternative structures and strategies. We will most likely face hybrid challengers capable of conducting Hybrid Wars. *Hybrid Wars can be waged by states or political groups, and incorporate a range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder.* Hybrid Warfare presents a mode of conflict that severely challenges America's conventional military thinking and our operational framework and doctrine. It targets the strategic cultural weaknesses of the American Way of Battle quite effectively. Its chief characteristics—convergence and combinations—occurs in several modes. The convergence of various types of conflict will present us with a complex puzzle until the necessary adaptation occur intellectually and institutionally. This form of conflict challenges longstanding American conceptions about warfighting, and will continue to thwart the West's core interests and world order over the next generation.

Hezbollah clearly demonstrates the ability of non-state actors to study and deconstruct the vulnerabilities of Western style militaries, and devise countermeasures. The lessons learned from this confrontation are already cross-pollinating with other states and non-state actors. With or without state sponsorship, the lethality and capability of organized groups is increasing, while the incentives for states to exploit nontraditional modes of war are on the rise. This will require that we modify our mindsets with respect to the relative frequency and threats of future conflict. It will also require a rethinking of priorities in defense spending, and serious reflection about the role of technology in our strategic culture. An outside perspective from a professor of modern conflict summed up his assessment of current thinking by concluding that "Our tendency to want to believe that there must be technological solutions to our problems has proven to be the costliest and most self-

defeating mental habit of Western armed forces since the cult of the offensive in the First World War.”<sup>129</sup>

Because of their perceived success, hybrid challengers will not be a passing fad nor will they remain low tech warriors. Future opponents are dedicated, learn rapidly and adapt quickly to more efficient modes of killing. We can no longer overlook our own vulnerabilities as societies, focus on preferred capability sets, or underestimate the imaginations of our antagonists. In a world of Hybrid Wars, the price for mental rigidity or complacency only grows steeper.

The future poses a more diverse set of challengers, with a more varied set of approaches than the past. In Hybrid Wars, the adversary will exploit the modern technologies of a global economy, and present us with asymmetric modes of operations and unanticipated tactics. They will exploit military systems in novel ways, potentially with state or conventional force combat power. They will not remain static or subject to predictive analysis, but will continuously evolve and exploit the diffusion of innovative tactics, techniques and procedures that offer the greatest return on investment. This assessment suggests an increasingly complex environment for future irregular conflicts that will require institutional adaptation and significantly more attention than it receives today.

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<sup>129</sup> David Betz, “A Real Revolution in Military Affairs,” p. 2.

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Frank Hoffman serves as a Research Fellow at the Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities (CETO) at the Marine Corps Combat Development Command as an employee of the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies. He has been with CETO since 2002, and is responsible for leading and conducting assessments and developing strategic and advanced concept papers on future challenges and emerging opportunities for the U.S. Marine Corps. In this position, he participates in numerous Joint concept development and experimentation activities, and evaluates long-term strategic issues.

He has served on the staffs of two National Commissions, including the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Services, and the U.S. National Security Commission/21<sup>st</sup> Century (Hart-Rudman Commission). On the latter, he specialized in future military and security environment projections and was the principal analyst for the Commission's homeland security recommendations. He also served on three Defense Science Boards, including the 2004 Defense Science Board for Post-Conflict Stability Operations.

Mr. Hoffman's military career includes almost ten years of active service as a Marine infantry officer. Commissioned in 1978 via the NROTC program, he retired in 2001 from the Marine Corps Reserve at the grade of Lieutenant Colonel. In addition to his military service, he has worked at the Pentagon as a management and force structure analyst.

In addition to several government Commission reports, he has authored *Decisive Force: The New American Way of War*, (Praeger, 1996) and edited the Marine Corps' publication—*Concepts and Issues* for seven years. He is a frequent contributor to professional military journals, and has published over 200 articles and reviews on national security strategy, defense economics, and military history including essays in the *Journal of Strategic Studies*, *Orbis*, *Marine Corps Gazette*, *Naval Institute Proceedings*, and *Parameters*.

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Mr. Hoffman holds a B.S. in Economics from the Wharton Business School, University of Pennsylvania, and graduate degrees from George Mason University and the U.S. Naval War College. He is a member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies and a non-resident fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, Philadelphia, PA.



## ACRONYMS

4GW	Fourth Generation Warfare
ATGM	Anti-Tank Guided Missile
CETO	Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COIN	Counterinsurgency
DARPA	Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FM	Field Manual
GPS	Global Positioning System
HASC	House Armed Services Committee
IDF	Israeli Defense Forces
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
NDS	National Defense Strategy
ONR	Office of Naval Research
OSD	Office of the Secretary Defense
PLA	Chinese People's Liberation Army
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
SINCGARS	Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
UN	United Nations
URW	Unrestricted Warfare
US	United States
USCG	United States Coast Guard
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USN	United States Navy
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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# 11η Συνάντηση

## «Πόλεμος, Προπαγάνδα και Ψυχολογικές Επιχειρήσεις: Η Διάσταση της Νομιμοποίησης του Πολέμου σε Ενδοκρατικό Επίπεδο.»

Στην 11<sup>η</sup> συνάντηση θα αναλυθεί η σχέση που αναπτύσσεται μεταξύ των ψυχολογικών επιχειρήσεων και της διεξαγωγής πολέμου αναφορικά με τη διάσταση της εσωτερικής νομιμοποίησης. Οι κεντρικές ερωτήσεις είναι:

Ποιες οι διαφορές μεταξύ ψυχολογικών επιχειρήσεων στο εσωτερικό ενός κράτους και οι ψυχολογικές επιχειρήσεις προς τον αντίπαλο; Εξαιτίας ποιων λόγων καθίσταται απαραίτητη η νομιμοποίηση ενός πολέμου στο εσωτερικό ενός κράτους;

### **Θέμα Εργασίας:**

*«Παρουσιάστε με αναλυτικό πνεύμα τις ενέργειες ενδοκρατικής νομιμοποίησης της έναρξης του πολέμου των ΗΠΑ εναντίον του Ιράκ το 2003. Ποια θεωρητικά συμπεράσματα εξάγονται;»*

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# THE WAR OVER IRAQ: SELLING WAR TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC

JON WESTERN

*How, in the absence of any link between Iraq and the events of September 11, 2001, was the Bush administration able to go to war against Iraq with widespread political support? Well before the terrorist attacks of September 11, the public was concerned about terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and Iraq. In the immediate months after the attacks, the public was supportive, at least hypothetically, of military action to remove Saddam Hussein from power. Nonetheless, the Bush administration concluded that such support would be difficult to sustain without an aggressive domestic mobilization campaign. This article examines the influence of four critical factors that enabled the administration to frame the case for war in Iraq: (1) executive-branch information and propaganda advantages, (2) executive cohesion, (3) oppositional fragmentation, and (4) the nature and history of the Iraqi regime.*

**B**ETWEEN THE 12th and the 17th of September 2001 President George W. Bush and his chief national security advisers met daily to consider the range of options for how to respond to the September 11 attacks. In those sessions, the discussions frequently turned to whether Saddam Hussein had any role in the attacks and whether the United States should include an attack on Iraq as part of its response. By 17 September, with intelligence reports concluding that “there was no evidence that Iraq was responsible for Sept. 11,” Bush concluded that neither the American public nor the international community would support action against Iraq.<sup>1</sup> He told his National Security Council that day, “I believe Iraq was involved, but I’m not going to strike them now. I don’t have evidence at this point.”<sup>2</sup>

Yet, less than a year later, with no new evidence of a link between Iraq and the events of September 11, the administration received the backing of nearly three-fourths of both the House and the Senate for a resolution authorizing

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1. Condoleezza Rice, “9/11 for the Record,” *Washington Post*, 22 March 2004, A21.
2. Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003), 99.

Bush to use force to remove Saddam Hussein from power. Six months after that, with widespread public support, Bush ordered a preventive war to oust Saddam Hussein.

This article examines how, in the absence of any link between Iraq and the events of September 11, Bush was able to go to war against Iraq with such widespread public and political support. How was he able to build and sustain broad public and political support for military action against Saddam Hussein as part of the war on terror despite no factual link between Iraq and the September 11 attacks and despite the existence of counterarguments on the anticipated consequences of postwar occupation?

This article begins with a brief discussion of the theoretical literature on the role of public opinion and the use of force, followed by an overview of the main points to be made. Next follows a case study of the Bush administration's mobilization strategy that explores the influence of four variables: (1) executive-branch information and propaganda resources and agenda-setting advantages; (2) executive cohesion; (3) oppositional fragmentation; and (4) the nature and history of the Iraqi regime and behavior, and ultimately, the plausibility of the administration's arguments in support of war. The analysis herein relies on firsthand public accounts and secondary-source material to illustrate the influence of these variables; a more comprehensive test will have to wait until more direct access to interview data and other primary-source material becomes available to scholars.

#### PUBLIC OPINION AND THE USE OF FORCE: PREDISPOSITIONS AND INFORMATION

ONE OF THE basic features of democratic politics is that military force is not used without some consideration of the will of the public. Although elites do not make decisions on the use of force by referendum, the literature has long recognized that elites are sensitive to public opinion on matters related to the use of force. Scholars have found several consistent trends in public predispositions toward the use of force.<sup>3</sup> First, when Americans believe their security is threatened—real or perceived—they will back the use of force. Second, in a run-up to war, Americans consistently prefer diplomacy and multilateral efforts—including through the United Nations—over unilateral action.<sup>4</sup> Third, Americans are sensitive to costs and casualties, but they will

3. See Louis Klarevas, "The 'Essential Domino' of Military Operations: American Public Opinion and the Use of Force," *International Studies Perspectives* 3, no. 4 (November 2002): 417–37.

4. Steven Kull and I. M. Destler, *Misreading the Public: The Myth of a New Isolationism* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), 77–80.

remain committed to the use of force once it is engaged as long as they believe there is a clear theory of victory and that the costs are necessary to achieve the stated objectives.<sup>5</sup> Fourth, although the public frequently supports the use of force to restrain threatening foreign-policy behavior by an adversary, it is less likely, on balance, to support the use of force to engineer internal political change.<sup>6</sup> Finally, especially in the past decade, Americans have been willing to contemplate the use of force to respond to terrorism and threats posed by the illicit proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>7</sup>

Despite these broad predispositions, however, public support for or opposition to going to war is not simply a reflection of underlying predispositions. Public opinion is also highly dependent on the information the public receives. Even in a thriving democracy, information can be shaped to frame the public's understanding and interpretation of events. Because most citizens rarely have the time, inclination, or expertise to form independent opinions on national security matters, their perceptions of the costs and stakes involved in a particular crisis are routinely influenced principally by the information presented to them. Elites such as the president, senior administration officials, congressional leaders, and representatives of the national media organizations play a significant role in the transmission of information about foreign events to the public.

Of these conveyors of information, however, presidents are particularly important and influential. More than two decades ago, Richard Brody found that, especially early in crises, presidents often hold information monopolies that give them an edge in establishing the initial framing of a crisis.<sup>8</sup> Others have since demonstrated that presidents often have advantages in early analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of regional and civil conflicts. The vast resources of official overseas missions, intelligence-collection assets, and privileged stature in international diplomatic channels allow the president to write the first draft of what a conflict means for the United States. Because much of this information is processed through a closed national-security apparatus that does not allow for open public debate, opportunities for mobilized opposition against a governing group's position may be significantly disadvantaged

5. Peter Feaver and Christopher Gelpi, *Choosing Your Battles: American Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 7, 136.

6. Bruce Jentleson, "The Pretty Prudent Public: Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Force," *International Studies Quarterly* 36 (March 1992): 49–74; and Bruce Jentleson and Rebecca L. Britton, "Still Pretty Prudent: Post–Cold War American Public Opinion on the Use of Military Force," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42 (August 1998): 395–417.

7. Jentleson and Britton, "Still Pretty Prudent."

8. Richard Brody, "International Crises: A Rallying Point for the President?" *Public Opinion* 6 (December/January 1983–84): 41.

without some independent ability to confirm or refute the veracity of executive information. Presidents, especially popular ones, frequently are given wide latitude and deference on national-security issues.

These information advantages are most notable when there is strong consensus among elites—especially within the executive branch. John Zaller, Eric Larson, and Louis Klarevas, for example, all found in independent studies that elite consensus within the executive branch significantly influences public support.<sup>9</sup> Conversely, when elites are divided, the “dissensus” exposes the public to alternative arguments and analytical narratives and often leads to the polarization of public views.

In short, public support for or against the use of force is a function of both the public’s general predispositions and the information it receives. The public will not accept arguments for war willy-nilly; there must be some plausible connection to long-standing beliefs and experiences. Nonetheless, a cohesive administration intent on framing and selling the need for war can frequently influence and mobilize public support by controlling, managing, and even distorting information.<sup>10</sup> When information is controlled and manipulated, and when counterarguments are suppressed, co-opted, or delegitimized, even rational publics may end up endorsing policies that later seem irrational.<sup>11</sup>

#### THE ARGUMENT IN BRIEF

THE ARGUMENT presented in this article suggests in the months immediately following September 11, the public was overwhelmingly supportive, at least hypothetically, of military action to remove Saddam Hussein from power. Polling by the Gallup organization in mid-November 2001 following the collapse of the Taliban in Afghanistan revealed that more than three-fourths of those polled expressed support for U.S. military action to remove Saddam Hussein from power. Within the Bush administration at the time, however, concern was expressed that although the public was eager to lash out in response to the events of September 11, no one knew how long that

9. John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Erik Larson, *Casualties and Consensus: The Historical Role of Casualties in Domestic Support for U.S. Military Operations* (Santa Monica: Rand, 1996); and Louis Klarevas, “American Public Opinion on Peace Operations: The Cases of Somalia, Rwanda, and Haiti,” Ph.D. diss., American University, 1999.

10. See, for example, Theodore Lowi, “Making Democracy Safe for the World: On Fighting the Next War,” in *American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays*, ed. G. John Ikenberry (Glenview: Scott, Foresman, 1989), 268–73.

11. See Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans’ Policy Preferences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), esp. chaps. 4 and 5.



anger would be sustained or if that support for war would transfer from a hypothetical question to a real military deployment. Launching a preventive war in Iraq would involve months of planning, extensive logistical preparations, and major deployments of combat troops. Given such a time frame, the Bush administration worried that support might evaporate and alternatives to war would be presented by liberal Democrats and others most likely to balk at military action. In short, Bush and his advisers had support for war in Iraq in the months immediately after September 11. The question was, Could they keep it?

With this time frame as the basic political constraint, the Bush administration began in November 2001 to work and rework efforts to sustain public support for war in Iraq. As anticipated, over the next fifteen months, public support did recede. Nonetheless, the administration was successful in keeping the majority of Americans behind it, and when Bush made the decision to go to war in March 2003, he had a solid base of support.

Several factors contributed to the administration's success in maintaining mobilized public support for war in Iraq. First, following the terrorist attacks, the administration consolidated the national-security apparatus and enhanced the executive branch's information advantages. Throughout the war in Afghanistan, the administration tightened its control over the dissemination of national-security information. As early as November 2001, senior officials began selectively releasing classified national-security and intelligence information to strengthen their case for war in Iraq. In addition, the president's popular approval skyrocketed to levels well above 80 percent, thereby greatly enhancing the administration's ability to use the presidential bully pulpit. The information advantages were strengthened by the fact that, because Iraq was a closed society and because Saddam Hussein had expelled weapons inspectors in 1998, liberals and the media were almost entirely beholden to U.S. government officials or Iraqi exiles and dissidents—most of whom had a clear interest in overthrowing Saddam's regime—for information on the nature of the threat and the potential costs of war.

Second, by the end of September 2002, the administration was largely united and cohesive in its views on the need to remove Saddam Hussein from power. The widespread reporting of divisions and rivalries between Secretary of State Colin Powell and the senior civilian leadership at the Pentagon on the need for war had abated; reports of subsequent disputes between them centered on postwar planning. Powell and the hard-liners at the Pentagon were largely unified in their views of the nature of the threat and their assessments of how quickly Saddam's government would fall.

Third, by controlling the agenda and the timing of the debate, the hard-liners gradually introduced the concept of regime change and pre-emptive war over a period of several months and then timed the escalation of their campaign to coincide with the highly emotional first anniversary of the September 11 attacks, to maximize its appeal.

The administration also framed its campaign so as to co-opt the arguments of its leading opponents. In addressing the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, Bush shifted the debate from whether or not the United States should launch a pre-emptive war to whether or not the UN Security Council would enforce its own resolutions. In doing so, the hard-liners rhetorically neutralized the principal complaint of selective engagers, reluctant warriors, and liberals by placing the issue before the United Nations. The administration also effectively disrupted political opposition by timing the debate on the congressional resolution authorizing the use of force so that it fell during the run-up to the November 2002 midterm elections and by framing the need for the resolution as an instrument to enhance diplomatic efforts to avert war.

Finally, the administration made arguments that it knew the public was willing to accept. The September 11 assault and the subsequent anthrax attacks exposed American vulnerabilities and generated intense national anxiety. The nature of Saddam Hussein's regime—including a decade of Iraqi noncompliance with international arms inspections and its open support for Palestinian suicide bombers—enabled the hard-liners to paint a potential relationship between Saddam Hussein and international terrorist organizations such as al Qaeda as a credible threat. In addition, the quick U.S. military successes in the 1991 Persian Gulf war and in Afghanistan allowed the administration to present a plausible theory of quick victory and in doing so nullified any concerns that war in Iraq might be a distraction or an impediment to the broader war on terrorism. Americans believed the threat to be real, and they believed they could effectively do something about it.

All of these factors in combination enabled the Bush administration to frame the case for war in Iraq not as a war of choice, but as one of necessity to meet a “grave and growing threat.”

#### PREDISPOSITIONS ON TERRORISM AND IRAQ BEFORE AND IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF SEPTEMBER 11

AS BUSH AND his advisers began their initial efforts to mobilize the public for war in Iraq, they found that the American public already was largely predisposed to a focus on Iraq as the logical second phase in the war on terror.

Table 1  
AMERICANS' PERCEPTION OF CRITICAL SECURITY THREATS

Year	Percentage of Americans Who Believe Threat to Be Critical	
	Terrorism	Possibility of unfriendly countries' becoming nuclear powers
1994	69	72
1998	84	75
2002	91	85

Source: "U.S. General Population Topline Report," *World Views 2002*, Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and the German Marshall Fund of the United States, October 2002, 89–100, [http://www.worldviews.org/detailreports/usreport/public\\_topline\\_report.pdf](http://www.worldviews.org/detailreports/usreport/public_topline_report.pdf), accessed 10 April 2005.

Note: After these two issues, the next-highest consistent "critical threat" between 1994 and 2002 was the development of China as a world power. Fifty-seven percent of Americans believed the rise of China to be a critical threat in 1994 and 1998, and 56 percent believed it to be a critical threat in 2002.

Over the past decade, extensive polling data had revealed that Americans had shifted their concerns from traditional cold war threats to a new set of dangers. According to time-series data compiled by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and the German Marshall Fund of the United States, by overwhelming and increasing numbers throughout the 1990s, Americans believed that two issues posed the most critical threats to U.S. security: the illicit proliferation of weapons of mass destruction—particularly nuclear weapons—and terrorism (see Table 1).<sup>12</sup> In addition, during this same time period, Gallup polling data revealed that a majority of Americans consistently favored taking military action against Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power (see Table 2).<sup>13</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the events of September 11, most Americans already had strong concerns about terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, which, when coupled with their long-standing views that Saddam Hussein was intent on harming the United States, meant that most Americans were willing to

12. "U.S. General Population Topline Report," *World Views 2002* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and the German Marshall Fund of the United States, October 2002), 89–100.

13. David W. Moore, "Americans Believe U.S. Participation in Gulf War a Decade Ago Worthwhile: Small Majority Favor New War to Remove Saddam Hussein from Power," 26 February 2001, at <http://www.gallup.com/content/default.aspx?ci=1963&pg=1>, accessed 1 June 2004.

Table 2  
PUBLIC OPINION ON GOING TO WAR WITH IRAQ

	Do you favor sending American troops back to the Persian Gulf to remove Saddam Hussein from power? (percentage responding)		
	Yes	No	No opinion
March/April 1992	55	40	5
June 1993	70	27	3
February 2001	52	42	6

Source: David W. Moore, "Americans Believe U.S. Participation in Gulf War a Decade Ago Worthwhile," Gallup News Service, 21 February 2001, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/content/default.aspx?ci=1963>, accessed 1 October 2004.

Note: In 1998, during the crisis over inspections, Gallup found, in a slightly differently worded question, that 76 percent of Americans supported "using military power to remove Saddam Hussein," while 19 percent were opposed. See David W. Moore, "Public Ready for War with Iraq, Support Waivers if Substantial U.S. Military Casualties," 18 February 1998, at <http://www.gallup.com/content/default.aspx?ci=4252&pg=1>, accessed 1 June 2004.

assume Iraq's complicity—directly or indirectly—in those attacks even absent compelling evidence.

Nonetheless, as evidenced by Bush's initial reluctance to pursue a war with Iraq, the administration was well aware of the limitations of those opinions. Despite the consistent majorities in favor of removing Saddam Hussein from power, that support was tempered by a number of conditions. First, a decade of polling data revealed a strong preference for giving diplomacy time to run its course before military action.<sup>14</sup> Second, Americans were willing to countenance regime change but generally only within the context of multilateral action and with explicit UN support. Finally, the attitudes on Iraq were expressed in response to hypothetical questions on the use of force, not in the context of an actual troop mobilization and deployment. In short, the public might have been predisposed to consider war in Iraq, but it was not a slam-dunk case that the public would support war without concerted effort by the administration.

14. David W. Moore, "Support Increasing for Military Action with Iraq: Men in Favor, Women Opposed," 5 February 1998, at <http://www.gallup.com/content/default.aspx?ci=4252&pg=1>, accessed 1 June 2004.

SELLING THE WAR IN IRAQ: INFORMATION ADVANTAGES AND THE  
MOBILIZATION CAMPAIGN FOR WAR

LESS THAN twelve hours after the September 11 attacks, Bush told the nation that his administration would “make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them.”<sup>15</sup> Although most accounts suggest that Bush’s focus that evening was on the Taliban regime’s harboring of al Qaeda, the hard-liners at the Pentagon immediately concluded that Iraq should be on the table. During a National Security Council (NSC) session the next day, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld proposed that the administration consider taking direct action against Iraq. Powell immediately responded that there was no direct link between Iraq and al Qaeda. Powell told the NSC, “Any action needs public support. It’s not just what the international coalition supports; it’s what the American people want to support. The American people want us to do something about Al Qaeda.”<sup>16</sup>

During the weekend of 15–16 September, however, Bush encouraged discussion within his “war council” at Camp David on the subject of Iraq. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz argued that Iraq presented the United States with a better opportunity than Afghanistan for a quick military victory and that if the United States were to be taken seriously in the war on terrorism, it would have to go after Saddam Hussein.

On 17 September, Bush and his top aides agreed that attacking Iraq would not be politically acceptable at that moment. Along with Vice President Dick Cheney, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card, and Powell, Bush concluded that the public was focused on Afghanistan and would not be prepared to support action in Iraq.<sup>17</sup> They believed Iraq would have to be dealt with, but they concluded that they could not take action against Iraq without direct evidence.

Two months later, however, in mid-November, Taliban forces fell at Mazar-e-Sharif in northern Afghanistan, precipitating the rapid collapse of the Taliban regime throughout Afghanistan. This dramatic turn of events sparked a flurry of commentary and speculation that the administration would, or should, turn its attention to Iraq as the second phase of the war on terror.<sup>18</sup> A Gallup poll conducted on 25–26 November 2001 revealed that 74 percent of Americans

15. George W. Bush, “Statement by the President in His Address to the Nation,” 11 September 2001, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010911-16.html>, accessed 1 June 2004.

16. Woodward, *Bush at War*, 49.

17. Woodward, *Bush at War*, 83–92.

18. Eliot A. Cohen, “World War IV,” *Wall Street Journal*, 20 November 2001, A18.

expressed support for “invading Iraq with U.S. ground troops in an attempt to remove Saddam Hussein from power.”<sup>19</sup>

Amid this increased speculation on Iraq, Bush instructed Rumsfeld to step up the development of military plans for Iraq. As the internal focus began to shift to Iraq, however, Bush and his advisers all recognized that public and political support would be vital if war in Iraq were to be a viable option. They also concluded that building and maintaining that support would require strong and concerted effort by the administration. As early as 12 September, Rumsfeld had expressed concern about the role of public opinion and the use of force after September 11, and he asserted that sustaining public support for the war on terror would require new and creative ways of controlling information and selling the administration’s strategies. He advocated that the administration consider “waging the war on terror . . . like a political campaign with daily talking points.”<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, despite all the rhetoric holding that September 11 had fundamentally changed everything for the United States, Bush and his senior advisers were well aware of the fate that befell President Lyndon Johnson and the nation during the war in Vietnam. The constraining influence of the Vietnam experience is not only well established in the academic literature but remains a highly salient concern among policymakers in Washington.<sup>21</sup> In explaining his concern for the relationship between public relations and war, Bush later told journalist Bob Woodward, “I am a product of the Vietnam era. I remember presidents trying to wage wars that were very unpopular, and the nation split.”<sup>22</sup> During the military actions in Afghanistan, Bush repeatedly told his staff that it was imperative that he control how issues related to the war on terror were framed.<sup>23</sup>

In addition, any action in Iraq would require the support of Powell, who in his prior government and military positions had established several pre-conditions for the use of force—commonly referred to as the “Powell Doctrine”—which included among other conditions firm backing from Congress and the public before American forces were deployed.<sup>24</sup> Powell had learned from the U.S. experiences in Vietnam that public opinion could

19. Gallup Poll, “Iraq,” Tuesday Briefing, at <http://www.gallup.com/content/default.aspx?ci=1633&pg=3>, accessed 30 June 2004.

20. Woodward, *Bush at War*, 88, 94–97.

21. See, for example, John Mueller, *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion* (New York: Wiley, 1972); and Richard Sobel, *The Impact of Public Opinion on Foreign Policy since Vietnam: Constraining the Colossus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

22. Woodward, *Bush at War*, 95.

23. Woodward, *Bush at War*, 227.

24. Colin L. Powell, “U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead,” *Foreign Affairs* 71, no. 5 (winter 1992–93): 38–41.

be swayed by strong and coherent congressional and media opposition. Even though the public was clearly moved in the weeks immediately after September 11, Powell's initial opposition to war in Iraq appeared to be premised on a belief that such widespread support likely was an angry initial response and most certainly would diminish as the shock and anger over September 11 receded.<sup>25</sup>

#### LESSONS FROM AFGHANISTAN

While the administration was sensitive to the need for developing a sophisticated information campaign, the war in Afghanistan provided valuable insights into the domestic response the administration might expect as it turned its attention to Iraq. First, almost no political opposition to or criticism of the war in Afghanistan emanated from the Democrats or from the media. After September 11, Bush's approval ratings soared and then hovered around 90 percent. Bush's team understood and appreciated the advantages that came from their position.<sup>26</sup>

Second, what criticism there was came from highly motivated sectors of the political right. When the military progress in Afghanistan seemed to slow during the last two weeks of October 2001, conservatives and neoconservatives criticized the Bush administration for not deploying more troops. They were also concerned that Bush had prioritized the maintenance of an international coalition (a position supported by Powell) over what they perceived as the necessity for "absolute victory." In short, there was a vocal segment of American society ready to lend help in mobilizing and sustaining support for war in Iraq.

Finally, the administration was aware of a new media context. If the United States launched a war against Iraq, it would be fought in an environment of competitive twenty-four-hour news channels. During the war in Afghanistan, Fox News and MSNBC had emerged as viable competitors to CNN, and both were likely to be more editorially predisposed to supporting the administration than CNN would be. This new media context gave the administration much broader access that could be used to mobilize its base of support if it developed an effective communications strategy.

25. President Bush expressed his concern on sustaining public support to Woodward. See Woodward, *Bush at War*, 95. This view was shared by Gallup polling analysts. See Ben Klima, "American Opinion: Should Saddam Be Worried?" Gallup Poll Tuesday Briefing, 15 January 2002, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/content/?ci=5176>, accessed 1 October 2004.

26. James Moore and Wayne Slater, *Bush's Brain: How Karl Rove Made George W. Bush Presidential* (New York: Wiley, 2003), 288–91.

All of these lessons conveyed to Bush and his staff a sense that, with a carefully crafted and executed public-relations campaign, they could mobilize and sustain the public support necessary for taking on Saddam Hussein.

#### EXECUTIVE INFORMATION, FRAMING, AND AGENDA-SETTING ADVANTAGES

The first order of business for the administration in the campaign for public opinion was to attack the two principal arguments against regime change in Iraq: first, ten years of containment strategies had effectively boxed in Saddam Hussein; and second, the public would not sustain its support for war in Iraq because there was no direct link between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda.

With these two arguments in mind, Bush's advisers concluded that they needed to develop the link between Iraq and al Qaeda and demonstrate that containment would not work.<sup>27</sup> Bush's two top speechwriters, David Frum and Michael Gerson, invented a term, "axis of evil," that was consciously intended to convey three things. First, "axis" implied that, directly or indirectly, al Qaeda and Iraq were linked. If not directly connected regarding September 11, they were most certainly linked (and hence allied) in their desire to harm the United States. Second, "evil" was designed to convey that Iraq and groups like al Qaeda were irrational. Given the core assumption of rationality in deterrence theory, this was meant to suggest that containment could not work against either of them.<sup>28</sup> Finally, the term alluded to the Second World War—that is, total war—and the need for massive commitment.

Bush used his first State of the Union speech to introduce the phrase. Tying all the themes together, Bush proclaimed, "The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade." He added that Iraq, along with North Korea and Iran—all of whom, he said, were intent on acquiring nuclear weapons—and their "terrorist allies, constitute an *axis of evil*, arming to threaten the peace of the world."<sup>29</sup> The speech triggered immediate reactions. Critical editorial boards chastised the "belligerent" tone of the speech while others wondered if this signaled that the administration was preparing to fight simultaneous wars in Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. Despite criticism, the speech did trigger a flurry of news media coverage on Iraq

27. According to Bush's speechwriter at the time, David Frum, Bush "needed something to assert, something that made clear that September 11 and Saddam Hussein were linked after all and that for the safety of the world, Saddam Hussein must be defeated rather than deterred." David Frum, *The Right Man* (New York: Random House, 2003), 233.

28. Karen DeYoung and Dana Millbank, "U.S. Repeats Warnings on Terrorism; Bush Urges Other Nations To 'Get Their House in Order,'" *Washington Post*, 1 February 2002, A1.

29. George W. Bush, "State of the Union Address," 29 January 2002, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/iraq/20020129-11.html> (emphasis added).



and on Saddam Hussein's historical efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction. The *Washington Post*, for example, warned that "Iraq, busy rebuilding its weapons of mass destruction in the absence of U.N. inspectors, represents the most immediate threat, and the . . . tool of forcible regime change—of military action—must also be considered."<sup>30</sup> Meanwhile, leading members of Congress endorsed Bush's position. Senators John McCain and Joseph Lieberman, among others, warned that the threat from Saddam was growing each day and that "time is not on our side."<sup>31</sup>

Throughout the spring of 2002, as Bush's popular approval continued to hover between 70 percent and 80 percent, giving him widespread credibility and legitimacy to set the agenda on Iraq, he and his aides continued to frame the biggest threat to the United States as that posed by Saddam Hussein and "his terrorist allies"—including the threat that they would obtain weapons of mass destruction. On 1 June 2002, Bush used his commencement speech at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point to argue that the traditional notions of defense—containment and deterrence—did not make sense in a world in which rogue regimes could acquire and use weapons of mass destruction or hand them off to sinister terrorist organizations. As a result, Bush proclaimed, "Our security will require all Americans to be forward-looking and resolute, to be ready for pre-emptive action, when necessary, to defend our liberty and to defend our lives."<sup>32</sup> His message was clear: new threats required new thinking.

Amid this effort, however, and as anticipated, the public and political discourse on Iraq began to shift from a largely theoretical discussion of a future attack on Iraq to a more realistic assessment of the likely costs and benefits of actually doing so. As this occurred, public support for invading Iraq began to drop: from the peak of 74 percent in November 2001 to 61 percent in June 2002 (see Figure 1).<sup>33</sup>

Despite this slippage, the administration was effective in setting the agenda and framing the debate. By June 2002, the troika of threats—the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; terrorism, and Iraq—far outpaced all other threats in the international system as the most critical to Americans. Eighty-six percent of Americans polled believed that the threat of Iraq's developing weapons of mass destruction was a "critical" threat to the vital interests of

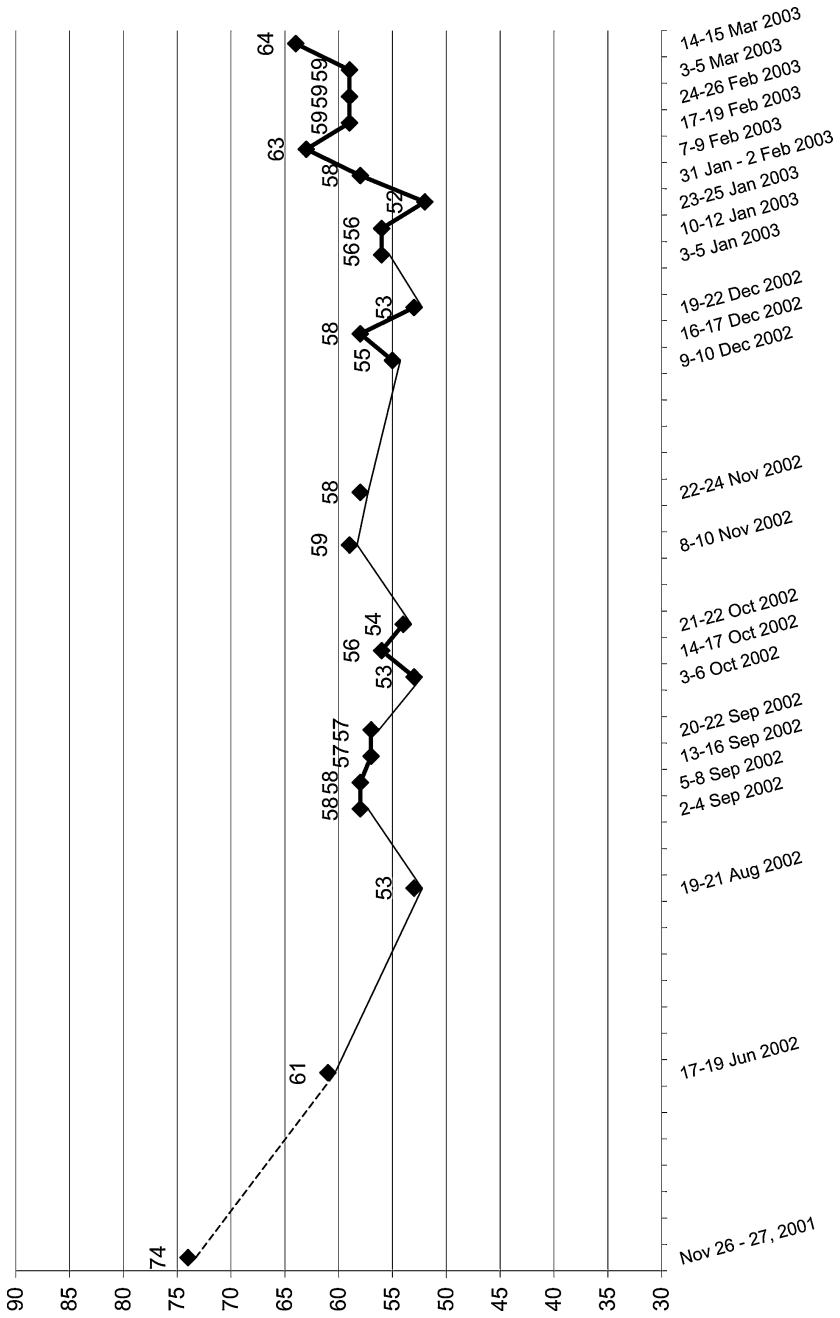
30. "Yes They Are Evil," *Washington Post*, 3 February 2002, B7.

31. Daniel Rubin, "U.S. Warns NATO on Iraq; Allies Urged to Join New War on Terrorism, or America Will Go It Alone," *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, 3 February 2002, A1.

32. George W. Bush, "Remarks by the President at 2002 Graduation Exercise of the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York," 1 June 2002, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html>.

33. Gallup Poll, "Iraq," Tuesday Briefing, at <http://www.gallup.com/content/default.aspx?ci=1633&pg=3>, accessed 14 April 2004.

Figure 1  
PERCENTAGE OF AMERICANS FAVORING INVADING IRAQ WITH U.S. GROUND TROOPS IN AN ATTEMPT TO REMOVE SADDAM HUSSEIN FROM POWER.



the United States.<sup>34</sup> In addition, the president's framing of the debate had put political opponents in an awkward position. Saddam Hussein's record demonstrated a willingness to use chemical weapons against civilian populations; he had invaded Iran in 1980 and Kuwait in 1990; and he had a record of seeking nuclear capabilities. Those potentially opposed to regime change were left to argue why, in the face of extensive evidence of brutality and potential danger, they supported the continuation of Saddam's rule. Furthermore, the administration continued to refer to regime change as nothing new—senior officials argued that President Bill Clinton had first developed the policy of regime change with his signature on the Iraq Liberation Act of 1998.

As a result, by mid-summer 2002 many selective engagers and liberals ultimately accepted the concept of regime change. Senate majority leader Tom Daschle, for example, who had long been critical of the administration's "unilateralist" foreign policy, summed up the position of most liberals: "There is broad support for a regime change in Iraq. The question is, how do we do it and when do we do it?"<sup>35</sup> The hard-liners had framed the analytical narrative on Iraq so as to convey a sense of urgency and threat. They had launched their campaign in January and, less than six months later, even liberals were accepting the broad concept as an appropriate next step in Bush's war on terror. The question seemed to be not whether the Bush administration was going to move forward with an effort to remove Saddam Hussein, but how.<sup>36</sup>

#### ELITE DISSENSUS: SELECTIVE ENGAGERS AND LIBERALS WEIGH IN

By early August, several prominent Democrats and Republicans sensed that the hard-liners within the administration, and the president himself, were increasingly intent on unilateral military action against Iraq. Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Joseph Biden argued that the administration needed to line up allies, and he warned of the dangers, the long-term implications, and the costs of unilateral action. Republican senators Richard Lugar and Chuck Hegel both warned the administration not to press ahead on Iraq without international support and a carefully crafted plan for "winning the peace." Furthermore, in what was almost certainly an organized campaign, Powell and two of former president George H.W. Bush's chief advisers, former national security adviser Brent Scowcroft and former secretary of state James A. Baker

34. "U.S. General Population Topline Report," 89–100.

35. Morton M. Kondracke, "Congress Should Hold Great Debate over Policy on Iraq," *Roll Call*, 27 June 2002.

36. David E. Sanger and Thom Shanker, "Exploring Baghdad Strike as Iraq Option," *New York Times*, 29 July 2002, A1.

III, weighed in to slow the move toward war. On 5 August, Powell, in a private dinner with President Bush, warned that if the United States acted without broader international support, “Bush would look like a bully, like he didn’t care, like the administration was only interested in getting its own way, was not interested in what the rest of the world had to say.”<sup>37</sup> After the meeting, a series of op-ed commentaries from Scowcroft and Baker appeared, warning that the hard-liners were dismissing the costs of war. On 15 August, Scowcroft wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* that Saddam Hussein did not pose an imminent threat and that war in Iraq would divert resources and international goodwill from the war on terrorism.<sup>38</sup> Former secretary of state Lawrence Eagleburger was even more alarmist in expressing his concern. Speaking on Fox News about the influence of Wolfowitz, Defense Policy Board chairman Richard Perle, and other neoconservatives, he said, “I must tell you, I think they’re devious. . . . I am scared to death that they are going to convince the president that they can do this overthrow of Saddam on the cheap, and we’ll find ourselves in the middle of a swamp because we didn’t plan to do it in the right way.”<sup>39</sup> Four days later, Baker wrote in the *New York Times* that regime change “cannot be done on the cheap. . . . If we are to change the regime in Iraq, we will have to occupy the country militarily. The costs of doing so, politically, economically and in terms of casualties, could be great.”<sup>40</sup> He concluded that it was imperative to develop a broad international coalition for the action.

Stung by the criticism, Vice President Cheney used his speech before the annual convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) to respond. He warned that the costs of inaction would be much higher than the costs of action: “Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt that he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us.” He also stressed that Iraq was intent on acquiring nuclear weapons and would likely use those weapons against the United States: “Just how soon, we cannot really gauge. Intelligence is an uncertain business. . . . Let me give you just one example of what I mean. Prior to the Gulf War, America’s top intelligence analysts would come to my office in the Defense Department and tell me that Saddam Hussein was at least five or perhaps even 10 years away from having a nuclear weapon. After the war

37. “The Long Road,” *Frontline* (PBS), transcript at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/longroad/etc/script.html>, accessed 1 June 2004.

38. Brent Scowcroft, “Don’t Attack Saddam,” *Wall Street Journal*, 15 August 2002, A12.

39. Lawrence Eagleburger, interview on Fox News, transcript at <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,60704,00.html>, accessed 1 June 2004.

40. James A. Baker III “The Right Way to Change a Regime,” *New York Times*, 25 August 2002, sec. 4, p. 9.

we learned that he had been much closer than that, perhaps within a year of acquiring such a weapon.” He then postulated that Saddam was likely to acquire nuclear weapons “fairly soon.”<sup>41</sup>

The overall effect of this open feuding within the Republican Party led to a noticeable shift in public opinion. By late August, Gallup polling data revealed that those supporting invading Iraq with ground troops had dropped to 53 percent while those opposed rose to 41 percent (see Figure 1). In addition, even though a majority still backed invading Iraq, additional polling data revealed that by significant margins most Americans felt that Bush had not done enough to “explain why the U.S. might take action in Iraq.”<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, significant majorities also expressed their view that the United States should wait and give the United Nations more time to get weapons inspectors back into Iraq.<sup>43</sup>

Amid the disarray, Bush returned to Washington in early September intending to tighten and refocus his campaign. He had three priorities: first, to restore consensus within his administration; second, to develop a comprehensive strategy to sell the administration’s case for war; and third, to develop a strategy that would effectively accommodate and ultimately co-opt opposition to American action in Iraq.

#### RESTORING CONSENSUS

The first order of business was to get his advisers unified in support of the effort to remove Saddam Hussein. Throughout August, Powell had advocated that the president use his speech before the UN General Assembly slated for 12 September to focus on Iraq and to develop broader international support. Cheney and Rumsfeld remained not only skeptical of the UN but convinced that deference to an international coalition, and to the UN in particular, would ultimately harm American interests.<sup>44</sup> Upon his return to Washington, Bush resolved the dispute by agreeing to go to the UN—but he announced that he would shift the focus of the debate to the UN Security Council and its failure to enforce its own resolutions on Iraq.

41. Dick Cheney, “Vice President Speaks at 103rd National Convention,” at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/08/iraq/20020826.html>, accessed 1 June 2004.

42. CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll, 5 September 2002, Polling the Nations Database, <http://poll.orspub.com/poll/lpext.dll?f=templates&fn=main-h.htm>, accessed 2 October 2004.

43. CBS/New York Times Poll, 7 September 2002, Polling the Nations Database, accessed 2 October 2004.

44. *Time*, for example, reported that Powell was so “frustrated” that he told his aides he would leave the administration at the end of the current term. See Massimo Calibrisi, “Colin Powell: Planning for an Exit,” *Time*, 9 September 2002, 14.

In addition, on 7 and 8 September, British prime minister Tony Blair traveled to Washington and Camp David to encourage Bush to proceed via the UN. Bush assured Blair that he would go to the UN. In exchange, he obtained a private assurance from Blair that regardless of what happened at the UN, the United Kingdom would join in the military action with the United States—Bush would have a partner.<sup>45</sup> The British position seemed to seal the deal. Bush would accept the Security Council process—as long as any resolution was backed with firm teeth. Cheney and Rumsfeld reluctantly acquiesced to the UN process for the time being.

#### CO-OPTING OPPOSITION

Second, Bush and his advisers were intent on reclaiming the agenda and reframing the discourse on Iraq. The administration quickly decided to press Congress for a formal vote authorizing the president to use force. According to Woodward's account, Cheney in particular was eager for a vote before the November midterm elections, so that "voters would know before the election where every congressman and senator stood on Saddam Hussein and his dangerous regime."<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, by pledging to go to the UN, Bush not only tempered congressional opponents but also argued that his efforts at the UN would be strengthened if he could demonstrate firm American support for action. In short, he framed the need for a congressional resolution as the last, best hope for building international consensus and ultimately, peace, rather than as a blank check for war.

#### MARKETING STRATEGY AND MESSAGE DISCIPLINE

Finally, President Bush also tasked his key communications staff with developing a comprehensive strategy to sell the administration's case for war. Chief of Staff Card said in a candid comment that later would be widely criticized, "From a marketing point of view you don't introduce new products in August."<sup>47</sup> Despite the criticism, Card's strategy and timing were effective. He and his staff created the White House Iraq Group to coordinate the "daily message on Iraq."<sup>48</sup> The team produced a website titled "Iraq: A Decade of

45. "Blair's War," *Frontline* (PBS), transcript at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/blair/etc/script.html>, accessed 1 June 2004.

46. Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 168.

47. Elisabeth Buhmiller, "Bush Aides Set Strategy to Sell Policy on Iraq," *New York Times*, 7 September 2002, A1.

48. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 172.

Deception and Defiance” that was unveiled during Bush’s UN speech. The team also monitored much of the public comments of senior administration officials and worked to keep them in line with the daily message. For example, they pressed Rumsfeld to withdraw a 2,300-word article he had submitted to the *Washington Post’s* Outlook section. The piece made a pointed case for the right of the United States to conduct a unilateral, pre-emptive strike against an adversary intent on developing weapons of mass destruction—a line that deviated from the focused message in the run-up to the president’s speech to the UN General Assembly.<sup>49</sup>

Card’s team also coordinated public appearances by the president’s senior advisers. On Sunday, 8 September, Cheney, Rice, Powell, and Rumsfeld were all dispatched to the Sunday morning talk shows. Their message was clear and disciplined: Saddam Hussein’s regime was aggressively pursuing weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons; it had links to international terrorism, and to al Qaeda in particular; and Iraq, along with al Qaeda, was intent on inflicting harm on the United States.<sup>50</sup> Cheney and Rice also reiterated the inherent ambiguity of intelligence analysis by repeating the analogy with 1991—when the intelligence community had failed to assess correctly Saddam’s nuclear program. In addition, to add greater urgency to the case, Rumsfeld warned, “Imagine a Sept. 11 with weapons of mass destruction. It’s not 3,000; it’s tens of thousands of innocent men, women and children.”<sup>51</sup>

The mobilization campaign was carefully timed to coincide with the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks. On the evening of 11 September 2002, the president addressed the nation from Ellis Island, with the Statue of Liberty lit in the background. The next morning, he delivered his speech to the UN General Assembly. He warned that Saddam Hussein was defying the Security Council and that Iraq was intent on developing nuclear weapons. To mollify critics among liberals and selective engagers in Congress, Bush added, “We will work with the U.N. Security Council for the necessary resolutions.” He issued a warning, however: “We want the United Nations to be effective. We want the resolutions of the world’s most important multilateral body to be enforced. And right now those resolutions are being unilaterally subverted by the Iraqi

49. Karen DeYoung and Mike Allen, “Disarm Iraq Quickly, Bush to Urge UN; Failure to Move May Lead to U.S. Action,” *Washington Post*, 7 September 2002, A1; and David E. Sanger, “Blair, Meeting with Bush, Fully Endorses U.S. Plans for Ending Iraqi Threat,” *New York Times*, 8 September 2002, 23.

50. “With Few Variations, Top Bush Advisers Present Their Case against Iraq,” *New York Times*, 9 September 2002, A8.

51. Todd S. Purdam, “Bush Officials Say Time Has Come for Action on Iraq,” *New York Times*, 9 September 2002, A1.

regime.”<sup>52</sup> He concluded by threatening that if the United Nations did not protect international security, the United States would.

The speech produced its intended effect. Many of those previously skeptical of the administration’s position concluded that the pressure was on the UN to enforce its existing resolutions. For example, Baker wrote in the *Washington Post* that the speech had made the case against Iraq: “The question is no longer why the United States believes force is necessary to implement resolutions involving Iraq, but why the United Nations, after years of inaction, does not now agree. . . . The administration’s challenge now is to persuade the United Nations to act on its principles.”<sup>53</sup>

The combined effect of the efforts of the first two weeks in September was to slow and reverse the downward trend in support for invading Iraq. Gallup poll results, which had revealed that public support for war had fallen to 53 percent in late August, rebounded five percentage points to 58 percent (see Figure 1). A CBS News poll revealed even stronger support, with 68 percent saying they would approve taking military action against Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein from power.<sup>54</sup>

In addition, the residual effect of Cheney’s emphatic declaration about Saddam Hussein’s military capabilities at the VFW convention in August had triggered extensive news commentary and analysis during the last week in August and the first week in September and precipitated a shift in the number of Americans who believed Saddam Hussein actually possessed weapons of mass destruction. In mid-August, before Cheney’s speech, a CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll found that 55 percent of those polled believed Iraq “currently possessed” weapons of mass destruction, while 39 percent thought Saddam was trying to develop them.<sup>55</sup> By early September, a CBS/New York Times poll reported that 79 percent of Americans believed Iraq “currently possessed” such weapons.<sup>56</sup> Perhaps most notable, in a survey of registered voters, Fox News reported that 69 percent of those surveyed believed Saddam Hussein already possessed nuclear weapons.<sup>57</sup>

52. George W. Bush, “President’s Remarks at the United Nations General Assembly,” 12 September 2002, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020912-1.html>, accessed 31 May 2004.

53. James A. Baker III, “The U.N. Route,” *Washington Post*, 15 September 2002, B7.

54. CBS News, 24 September 2002, Polling the Nations Database, accessed 2 October 2004.

55. CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll, 23 August 2002, Polling the Nations Database, accessed 2 October 2004.

56. CBS/New York Times poll, 7 September 2002, Polling the Nations Database, accessed 2 October 2004.

57. Fox News/Opinion Dynamics Poll, 12 September 2002, Polling the Nations Database, accessed 2 October 2004.



## AL QAEDA AND IRAQ: CONSTRUCTING THE LINK

Still, the polling data continued to reflect two concerns on the part of the public. On the one hand, the public expressed significant concern over the threat posed by Iraq: 62 percent thought that Iraq was planning to use weapons of mass destruction against the United States.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, the polling data continued to reflect that the public wanted the administration not only to secure a congressional resolution authorizing the use of force, but also to gain support from its allies and the United Nations.

Over the next week, the hard-liners sought to add a sense of urgency to American and international action. On 18 September, Rumsfeld told the House Armed Services Committee, “No terrorist state poses a greater and more immediate threat to the security of our people and the stability of the world than the regime of Saddam Hussein.”<sup>59</sup> That was followed the next day by a draft war resolution sent by the president to Congress. It stated specifically that the events of September 11 underscored the “threat that Iraq will transfer weapons of mass destruction to international terrorist organizations,” and it cited the “high risk that the current Iraqi regime will either employ those weapons to launch a surprise attack against the United States or its armed forces or provide them to international terrorists who would do so.”<sup>60</sup>

Perhaps even more significant was the fact that Powell was now fully on board with the overall effort. Although Powell was widely reported to be waging a constant battle with the hard-liners at the Pentagon, after Bush’s pledge at the United Nations to secure a Security Council resolution and after Prime Minister Blair announced his firm backing of Bush’s position, Powell consistently participated in the effort to sell the administration’s policy on Iraq (except for an occasional critical extemporaneous remark). On 20 September, Powell appeared before the House International Relations Committee and urged lawmakers to pass the resolution by arguing that it was imperative that the United States present a unified face to the world in order to enlist the support of other countries in a showdown with Iraq. Powell was still the most respected figure in the Bush administration: his own popular approval rating (88 percent in September 2002) routinely exceeded that of Bush (78 percent).<sup>61</sup> Powell used this stature to counteract the concerns of some of the moderate

58. CBS/New York Times poll, 7 September 2002.

59. Jim Vandehei and Karen DeYoung, “Bush to Seek Broad Power on Iraq,” *Washington Post*, 19 September 2002, A1.

60. “Text of Proposed Resolution,” *Washington Post*, 20 September 2002, A20.

61. David W. Moore, “Powell Remains Most Popular Political Figure in America,” *Gallup News Service*, 30 September 2002, at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/content/?ci=6886>, accessed 1 June 2004.

Republicans and Democrats who believed that the president was rushing too quickly into a confrontation with Iraq. Powell reassured the lawmakers that he had long been “known as a reluctant warrior” and he believed that in order for diplomacy to have a chance, “the threat of war has to be there.”<sup>62</sup>

Paralleling the administration’s blitz was the mobilization of dozens of think tanks and ad hoc collections of commentators supportive of invading Iraq. The Committee for the Liberation of Iraq, the Project for the New American Century, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, the Hudson Institute, the Middle East Forum, and the American Enterprise Institute either endorsed en masse or included key individuals who supported U.S. military action to remove Saddam Hussein from power. Neoconservative intellectuals from these organizations, in particular, enjoyed privileged access to senior Pentagon officials. Many served on the Defense Policy Board Advisory Committee, an ostensibly independent entity created to provide additional analysis and advice to the secretary of defense. Throughout 2002 and 2003, the neoconservatives were extensively involved in the campaign to “sell” the war in Iraq to the American people. Most of their communications activities were coordinated by a public relations firm headed by Eleana Benador, whose clients included Defense Policy Board members Richard Perle, R. James Woolsey, and Ruth Wedgwood. Benador’s client list also included commentators and supporters of the war Max Boot, Michael Ledeen, Alexander Haig, Frank Gaffney, Charles Krauthammer, and Richard Pipes, among others.<sup>63</sup> She aggressively pitched her clients to the major news organizations around the country; most of them made routine media appearances on all the major news channels in the prelude to the war in Iraq. The editor of the *Wall Street Journal* noted that Benador called the paper almost daily: “I think it’s safe to say we’ve used everyone on her list.”<sup>64</sup>

#### THE MEDIA AS NOT-SO-INDEPENDENT BROKERS

Not only did the news organizations provide ample opportunity for Benador’s clients to promote their views, the media frequently deferred to the White House’s overall portrayal of the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. To cite one example, on 8 September the *New York Times* ran a story on page one titled “U.S. Says Hussein Intensifies Quest for A-Bomb Part,” written by David Sanger

62. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 187.

63. Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, *Weapons of Mass Deception: The Uses of Propaganda in Bush’s War on Iraq* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2003), 56–60.

64. *Ibid.*; and Joe Hagan, “She’s Richard Perle’s Oyster,” *New York Observer*, 7 April 2003.

and Judith Miller, which cited administration sources that Iraq had sought to acquire aluminum tubes to use in centrifuges in its effort to enrich uranium and build nuclear weapons. The headline and the first several paragraphs conveyed a sense of urgency in the reports. Only much deeper in the story did the reporters reveal the existence of an ongoing debate within the intelligence community about whether the aluminum tubes could in fact be used to aid in building nuclear weapons. Follow-up stories reiterated the main claims and continued to give less attention to the discussion of internal debate.

More broadly, media critic Michael Massing found consistent and systematic biases, errors, and distortions in the news media's reporting in the run-up to the war. Massing concluded that several factors conspired to create these problems: many journalists relied extensively on their inside sources within the administration and were reluctant to jeopardize their access by publishing critical stories; several leading journalists had personal or long-standing ties to Iraqi dissidents and exiles, many of whom had clear agendas and biases that were not fully disclosed; and editors frequently deferred to the judgments of their journalists concerning the integrity of their sources.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, many journalists, publishers, and broadcasters were caught up in the wave of patriotism that followed September 11 and were more deferential to the president and his representations of the threats facing the United States.

#### OPPOSITION DISSENSUS: THE DEMOCRATS' DILEMMA

Meanwhile, as Congress began debate on a resolution authorizing the president to use force to remove Saddam Hussein, the pressure of election-year politics put many liberals on the defensive. Democrats were well aware that Republicans had a significant advantage over them in the eyes of Americans on national security matters. Thirty years earlier, Richard Nixon had launched a massive campaign against George McGovern and the "New Left" of the Democratic Party portraying them as weak on defense and national security. Since then, Republicans have routinely campaigned as the party most able to defend American security. In addition, corresponding to Bush's dramatic jump in approval ratings following September 11, polling data also revealed that most Americans believed Republicans were more able to protect national security than Democrats.<sup>66</sup> Within this politicized context, according to a

65. Michael Massing, *Now They Tell Us: The American Press and Iraq* (New York: New York Review of Books, 2004).

66. "Support for Potential Military Action Slips to 55%: Party Images Unchanged with a Week to Go," Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 30 October 2002, <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=163>, accessed 12 July 2004.

*Washington Post* report, more than a dozen Democrats who opposed the resolution nonetheless concluded that it was better to support the resolution than face a “backlash from voters.”<sup>67</sup> Senior Democratic strategists also pointed out that every Democrat facing a tough race in the House of Representative had lined up in support of the resolution.

Still, some liberals were less compliant. Several Democrats increasingly concluded that the war talk was motivated principally by election politics. On 25 September, the issue erupted when the *Washington Post* reported, “Four times in the past two days, Bush has suggested that Democrats do not care about national security.” The article further suggested, “As Bush continues his record-setting fundraising effort, he has shown an eagerness to discuss the topic in political venues as polls show the effort is aiding Republican candidates.”<sup>68</sup>

The article generated a fiery response from Senate majority leader Tom Daschle, who demanded that the president apologize. The immediate concern at the White House was that Daschle’s anger would stall negotiations on the language for the Iraq resolution in the Senate. Daschle hinted that it would be difficult to patch up differences over language with the White House prior to the October congressional adjournment. Further complicating the picture for the hard-liners was the stock market setback on 24 September, when the Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 189 points (2.4 percent) in trading—the fourth triple-digit loss in six sessions and its lowest closing level since 1 October 1998.<sup>69</sup>

Both the *Washington Post* story and the stock market drop fueled criticism that the timing of the war resolution was designed to distract the public from the economic situation in the run-up to the November elections. Senators Robert Byrd and Ted Kennedy both delivered speeches seeking to reframe the Iraq situation as a crisis fabricated by a shrewd political machine seeking electoral advantage in the midterm elections by distracting public attention from the economy and the recently revealed Enron scandal and other corporate wrongdoing.

Daschle’s speech and the strong reaction by a few Democratic voices put the administration’s Iraq campaign on the defensive. In response, however, the administration intensified its campaign. Just hours after Daschle’s speech on the Senate floor, Rice introduced, for first time, the claim that “high-ranking

67. Jim Vandehei, “Daschle Angered by Bush Statement; President ‘Politicizing’ Security Issue, He Says,” *Washington Post*, 26 September 2002, A1.

68. Dana Milbank, “In President’s Speeches, Iraq Dominates, Economy Fades,” *Washington Post*, 25 September 2002, A1.

69. “Dow Drops 189; Hits 4 Year Low,” *Washington Post*, 25 September 2002, E3.

detainees” at the U.S. Naval Station in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, had told investigators that al Qaeda had received training by Iraqi officials in developing chemical weapons. Rice concluded, “There clearly are contacts between al-Qaida and Iraq that can be documented.”<sup>70</sup> Rumsfeld, speaking to reporters that evening, said that he had “very reliable” and “credible” reporting that Iraq and al Qaeda had “discussed safe haven opportunities in Iraq, reciprocal nonaggression discussions, . . . and that al Qaeda leaders have sought contacts in Iraq who could help them acquire weapons of mass destruction capabilities.”<sup>71</sup> The evidence, he declared, was “bullet-proof.”

Over the next week, administration officials continued to stress those links. The administration’s case also received a boost from Prime Minister Blair, who on 28 September released a “white paper” that cited new information “that Iraq could quickly launch a chemical or biological warhead and that it had sought to acquire uranium in Africa that could be used to make nuclear weapons.”<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, to step up the pressure on the Democrats, Bush’s communication team concluded that the president needed once again to talk directly to the nation. Bush delivered a major presidential address before a live audience in Cincinnati, Ohio, on 7 October. Although the speech was not carried by the three major broadcast networks, more than 17 million people tuned into the cable news networks to watch it.<sup>73</sup> At no point did he cite an explicit link between Saddam Hussein and the events of September 11—there was none—but the speech carefully and skillfully developed the message that Saddam was intent on forging a direct relationship with al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations to attack the United States. Bush warned that the Iraqi regime could “have a nuclear weapon in less than a year” and would be “in a position to pass nuclear technology to terrorists.” To add greater imagery to the threat, Bush added, “Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof, the smoking gun that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.”<sup>74</sup>

Ultimately, liberals were also hampered in their opposition to war by the widespread view that Saddam Hussein already possessed weapons of mass

70. Margaret Warner interview with Condoleezza Rice, *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, transcript no. 7463, 25 September 2002.

71. Eric Schmitt, “Rumsfeld Says U.S. Has ‘Bulletproof’ Evidence of Iraq’s Links to Al Qaeda,” *New York Times*, 27 September 2002, A9.

72. Warren Hoge, “Blair Says Iraqis Could Launch Chemical Warheads in Minutes,” *New York Times*, 25 September 2002, A1.

73. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 202.

74. George W. Bush, “President Bush Outlines Iraqi Threat, Remarks by the President on Iraq,” Cincinnati, Ohio, 7 October 2002, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/iraq/20021007-8.html>, accessed 1 June 2004.

destruction. Throughout the fall the administration was able to centralize control over information to ensure message discipline. The intelligence community had concluded that Saddam Hussein probably had chemical and biological weapons, but they were much less certain of the status of Iraq's nuclear research program. As a result, the administration's firm and confident portrayal of the threat from Iraq was difficult to counter publicly. The administration had long communicated the message to the intelligence community that any ambiguity in intelligence would be presented as a worst-case scenario. In fact, several intelligence officials expressed their concerns to the media that Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and others were intensively scrutinizing analyses that did not conform to their views and apparently felt pressures to "cook the books," but no one was willing to go on record or put a public face on these charges.<sup>75</sup>

For their part, the Democrats were also hindered by their own internal splits in their response to the administration. Senator Joseph Lieberman and House minority leader Richard Gephardt, who at the time were both Democratic presidential hopefuls, each publicly endorsed Bush's resolution and applauded his handling of Iraq. Tom Daschle, Joseph Biden, and Democratic presidential hopefuls John Kerry, John Edwards, and Bob Graham all signaled that they would endorse the resolution, although each prefaced this support with stronger appeals to the president to develop a broad coalition before war. Meanwhile Senators Robert Byrd, Carl Levin, and Ted Kennedy, among others, warned that the president had not made the case and should not receive congressional support.

This split and the ensuing internal debates among Democrats not only weakened the arguments against the administration's position but also triggered a new round of references to traditional stereotypes that the Democratic Party did not have a coherent plan to enhance American security and were otherwise weak on defense. Former Democratic senator Gary Hart lamented in an op-ed in the *New York Times*, for example, that the Democrats were once again on the defensive on the issue of American national security policy.<sup>76</sup>

The campaign that had begun in earnest in early September ultimately paid off. Public opinion polls continued to reveal overwhelming support for the president. By early October, the Pew Research Center for the People and the

75. See discussion in Chaim Kaufmann, "Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War," *International Security* 29, no. 1 (summer 2004): 40.

76. Gary Hart, "Note to Democrats: Get a Defense Policy," *New York Times*, 3 October 2002, A27.

Press reported that two-thirds of the American public believed that Saddam Hussein was involved in the September 11 attacks. Seventy-nine percent of Americans believed that Iraq either possessed or was on the verge of acquiring nuclear weapons.<sup>77</sup>

On 10 and 11 October, the House of Representatives and then the Senate passed resolutions authorizing the president to use force if necessary. In just over ten months, the administration had effectively employed executive-branch information, framing, and mobilization advantages to weigh in on the debate and shift and shape the political discourse.

#### DECIDING ON A MILITARY PLAN AND MOLLIFYING THE CRITICS

Following passage of the congressional resolutions, Bush tentatively decided in mid-October on a military plan prepared by General Tommy Franks.<sup>78</sup> Because of the logistical requirements of the plan, it would be early February, at the earliest, before an invasion could begin.

Meanwhile, the administration had committed itself to seeking a new Security Council resolution. Over the course of the next three weeks, Powell pressed the international community for such a resolution.<sup>79</sup> On 8 November, the Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1441, which proclaimed that Iraq was in material breach of its disarmament obligations under a series of previous resolutions, called for the immediate and unrestricted access by UN inspectors to facilities in Iraq, and warned the Iraqi government that it would “face serious consequences” if it obstructed inspectors or in any way violated its obligations. The resolution also set up a sixty-day time period for preparation of an initial inspections report to the Security Council and set 27 January 2003 as the due date for that report.

Bush immediately declared that the international community was in complete agreement that Saddam Hussein’s “cooperation must be prompt and unconditional or he will face the severest consequences.”<sup>80</sup> In an op-ed piece in the *Washington Post* two days later, Powell likewise asserted that the UN resolution revealed that most of the world was unified in its demands on Iraq.<sup>81</sup>

77. “Americans Thinking about Iraq, but Focused on the Economy,” Midterm Election Preview, Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 10 October 2002, at <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=162>, accessed 1 June 2004.

78. David E. Sanger, Eric Schmitt, and Thom Shanker, “War Plan for Iraq Calls for Big Force and Quick Strike,” *New York Times*, 10 November 2002, 1.

79. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 220–27.

80. Colum Lynch, “Security Council Resolution Tells Iraq It Must Disarm; Baghdad Ordered to Admit Inspectors or Face Consequences,” *Washington Post*, 10 November 2002, A26.

81. Colin L. Powell, “Baghdad’s Moment of Truth,” *Washington Post*, 10 November 2002, B7.

The effort seemed to resonate with the public: support for invading Iraq with ground troops rose from 54 percent to 59 percent (see Figure 1).

Despite the rhetoric, however, Resolution 1441 did not reflect or produce an international consensus. For example, Hans Blix, the chief weapons inspector for the UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission, sent his advance team to Iraq on 18 November, but he believed he was to submit only an interim report by 27 January and that then he would conduct further inspections under the auspices of UN Security Council Resolution 1284 before submitting a report on 27 March that would identify the “key remaining disarmament tasks.”<sup>82</sup> In addition, France, Germany, and Russia demanded that no action be taken in Iraq until the inspectors issued their report and the Security Council passed a second resolution.

#### WAVERING PUBLIC OPINION?

The inspections process and the conflicting positions among Security Council members triggered their own dynamic with respect to American public opinion. On the one hand, most Americans wanted the inspections process to proceed because they hoped it would avert war. They also desired that the administration continue to work through the UN. On the other hand, a majority of Americans highly approved of Bush’s handling of the situation and expressed confidence in his leadership. Several polls also suggested that, while a majority of Americans wanted the Bush administration to pursue a second UN resolution before undertaking military action, they also would support Bush if he chose to go to war without a second resolution.

For his part, by early January, Bush had become increasingly frustrated with the inspections process and concerned about the sustainability of his public and political support. American troops were now shipping out in large numbers to wait at the ready in the middle of the Kuwaiti desert or on offshore naval vessels. Their morale and that of their families and neighbors certainly required that they not be stationed there merely to contain Saddam. In a meeting with Rice in mid-January, Bush observed, “Time is not on our side here. Probably going to have to, we’re going to have to go to war.”<sup>83</sup>

As the military finalized its war plans and neared completion of the deployment of the forces needed for a military offensive, the administration launched a final campaign to rally the country. Bush and his advisers still

82. Karen DeYoung and Walter Pincus, “Iraq Hunt to Extend to March, Blix Says; Arms Search Timetable Complicates U.S. Plans,” *Washington Post*, 14 January 2003, A1.

83. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 254.



worried that the public case needed to be strengthened. A briefing by Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) officials on 21 December had left him concerned that the available evidence on Saddam Hussein's weapons capabilities contained significant gaps and might not withstand public scrutiny. The CIA sent its follow-up case to the White House on 22 January, and on 23 January, Rice wrote an op-ed in the *New York Times* titled "Why We Know Iraq Is Lying," which argued that it was "clear and resounding" that Iraq was not voluntarily disarming and that it was treating the UN weapons inspections process as a "game."<sup>84</sup> On 25 January, three days before Bush was scheduled to deliver the State of the Union speech, several senior deputies—Cheney's chief of staff Lewis "Scooter" Libby, Rice and her deputy Stephen Hadley, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, Wolfowitz, and the White House political and communication team, which included Dan Bartlett, Michael Gerson, Karen Hughes, and Karl Rove—sembled to go through the CIA information and package it to sell it to the public.<sup>85</sup>

They assembled the evidence presented in Bush's State of the Union address, in which he again repeated the long list of dangers that he and the hard-liners saw in Iraq. He again declared that Saddam Hussein was aggressively pursuing nuclear weapons. As part of this presentation, he included the now infamous sixteen words—"the British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa." (Those reports had been deemed unreliable three months earlier by the CIA, which had requested that they be dropped from Bush's speech in Cincinnati). Bush also stressed that secret intelligence evidence revealed that Saddam Hussein was aiding and protecting terrorists, including members of al Qaeda, and that he could provide weapons of mass destruction to terrorists without detection. Bush concluded, "If this threat is permitted to fully and suddenly emerge, all actions, all words, and all recriminations would come too late."<sup>86</sup>

Bush's speech was followed by Powell's presentation to the United Nations on 5 February. Bush's senior political advisers had suggested that Powell be the one to take the evidence to the UN and sell the case to anyone still sitting on the fence. Powell's reputation as a moderate—indeed a reluctant warrior—would bring further credibility among those with doubts.<sup>87</sup> In a

84. Condoleezza Rice, "Why We Know Iraq Is Lying," *New York Times*, 23 January 2003, 25.

85. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 288–92.

86. George W. Bush, "State of the Union Address," 28 January 2003, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/iraq/20030128-19.html>, accessed 1 June 2004.

87. Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 291.

carefully orchestrated one-hour presentation, with Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet seated directly behind him, Powell presented what he claimed was conclusive evidence of Iraqi intransigence and violations regarding compliance with the UN resolutions. He presented satellite imagery and communications intercepts of what he reported were secret mobile biological laboratories and Iraqi efforts to relocate banned chemical and biological munitions.

Bush's State of the Union speech and Powell's presentation had their intended effect. The *Washington Post* titled its editorial the day after Powell's presentation "Irrefutable" and pronounced, "It is hard to imagine how anyone could doubt that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction"; and further added that Powell's efforts would "stand as a worthy last effort to engage the United Nations."<sup>88</sup> The *New York Times*, long a skeptic of military action in Iraq, concluded that Powell "may not have produced a 'smoking gun,' but he left little question that Mr. Hussein had tried hard to conceal one."<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, following the two major presentations, polls showed that more than two-thirds of Americans believed that Bush had made a "convincing case."<sup>90</sup> Most notably, a CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll conducted in early February revealed that 87 percent of Americans were convinced or thought it likely that Iraq had direct ties to al Qaeda.<sup>91</sup> The numbers also confirmed that there would likely be no major political backlash for war. Polling data, which had shown a softening of public support for war in December and January during the inspections process, increased eleven points, from 52 percent to 63 percent, in the two-week period that included Bush's State of the Union address and Powell's presentation (see Figure 1).

As the administration made the case for war, however, neither Bush nor Powell discussed the potential costs of war or the risks that could follow the defeat of Saddam Hussein's regime. In January, the National Intelligence Council (NIC) prepared two analyses for Bush that predicted that toppling Saddam Hussein's regime would trigger broader Iraqi and Arab support for Islamic fundamentalism and that there was a real possibility of the development of a coordinated insurgency and guerilla warfare aimed at American troops.<sup>92</sup>

88. "Irrefutable," *Washington Post*, 6 February 2003, A36.

89. "The Case against Iraq," *New York Times*, 6 February 2003, A38.

90. CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll, 31 January 2003, Polling the Nations Database, accessed 2 October 2004.

91. CNN/USA Today/Gallup Poll, 5 February 2003, Polling the Nations Database, accessed 2 October 2004.

92. Douglas Jehl and David E. Sanger, "Prewar Assessment on Iraq Saw Chance of Strong Divisions," *New York Times*, 28 September 2004, 1.

Because of the highly classified nature of the documents, however, their circulation within the administration was tightly controlled and war opponents and skeptics in Congress and the media were unaware of the NIC's conclusions.

Further bolstering the administration's case was the fact that the media remained largely hamstrung by its inability independently to confirm or refute much of what the administration reported. Journalists in Iraq were under strict control by the Iraqi government and unable to collect information independently. Meanwhile, those reporting from Washington and New York continued to rely extensively on either U.S. government sources or on members of the Iraqi exile and dissident community, all of whom had significant biases in favor of overthrowing Saddam Hussein. Furthermore, as the *New York Times's* ombudsman reported fifteen months after the war began (and following a scathing criticism of the media's role by Michael Massing in the *New York Review of Books*), much of the *Times* reporting during the prewar period—especially in January 2003—was flawed because it was premised on unsubstantiated claims by parties with “vested interests” and because reporters were frequently writing with an eye toward “coddling sources” and maintaining access.<sup>93</sup> Even the *Times* editors themselves conceded that several articles published between fall 2001 and 2003 had been based on information that was “controversial” and “insufficiently qualified or allowed to stand unchallenged.”<sup>94</sup>

The Bush administration had so effectively controlled information and sold its agenda that when the antiwar movement did gain momentum in the United States and around the globe, and even after an unprecedented global demonstration in hundreds of cities in dozens of countries on 16 February, there was no significant shift in American public or political support for military action. The protest actions came nearly six months after the hard-liners in the Bush administration had stepped up their mobilization campaign and directed the political debate in Washington.

#### WINNING THE PEACE, DISCOUNTING THE COSTS

The only lingering question on the eve of the war remained the potential costs. The Army chief of staff, General Eric K. Shinseki, told a congressional panel in late February that he believed it would take several hundred thousand troops to shore up the security situation in Iraq after the war. The hard-liners

93. Daniel Okrent, “Weapons of Mass Destruction? Or Mass Distraction?” *New York Times*, 30 May 2004, sec. 4, p. 2. See also Michael Massing, “Now They Tell Us,” *New York Review of Books*, 26 February 2004, 43–49.

94. “The Times and Iraq,” *New York Times*, 26 May 2004, 6.

responded immediately by arguing that such estimates were “wildly off the mark.”<sup>95</sup> Wolfowitz, for example, told a congressional hearing that the \$95 billion price tag predicted in published reports was certainly too high and did not reflect several facts: (1) that the Iraqis would welcome the Americans and greatly assist in Iraq’s rebuilding; (2) that those nations opposing the war would certainly sign up to help with the rebuilding, and (3) that Iraq’s oil revenues would help defray any costs. He concluded by stating, “To assume we’re going to pay for it all is just wrong.”<sup>96</sup>

By late February, however, this debate had largely become insignificant. The political space for military action was well established. With nearly two hundred thousand American troops amassed in the deserts of Kuwait, the prevailing view among the public and in Congress was essentially, “Let’s get on with it already.” Throughout February public support remained steady at 59 percent; there was no discernable shift in public or political support sufficient to raise dramatically the political costs of launching a preventive war (see Figure 1). Public opinion polls still revealed that most Americans wanted Bush to secure strong UN approval for any military action, but those polls also suggested that the public would ultimately support the president.

In early March, General Franks reported that his military preparations were complete and that he was ready to launch his plan. On 17 March, Bush issued a final ultimatum to Saddam Hussein to leave the country or face military attack. Two days later, Bush gave the order for American forces to begin the war.

#### THE IMPLICATIONS OF SELLING WAR IN IRAQ

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 tragedy, large numbers of Americans already believed that Iraq was a probable threat to the United States. Saddam Hussein had routinely been identified by Republicans and Democrats over the past decade as a menace and a threat to regional and international security. In addition, Iraq had increasingly become intertwined in the national discourse of the two other major threats—terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction—that had emerged within the consciousness of the American public in the past decade. The Bush administration nonetheless concluded that transforming general predispositions into overt support for war would require a carefully constructed campaign to control and manipulate

95. Eric Schmitt, “Pentagon Contradicts General on Iraq Occupation Force’s Size,” *New York Times*, 28 February 2003, A1.

96. *Ibid.*

the flow of information—both to convince the public of the necessity of military action and to delegitimize any political opposition. The administration relied on executive privileges in information collection, analysis, and dissemination to emphasize the threat posed by Iraq and to discount the potential costs. It also took full advantage of the fact that after September 11, President Bush's popular approval had skyrocketed to levels well above 80 percent. The public, the media, and even political opponents gave him wide latitude to respond to the terrorist attacks. He relied on that public trust and political capital to sell the case for war in Iraq.

The evidence presented here suggests, however, that not only did Bush rely on that public trust, he may also have abused it. The post-invasion evidence now reveals that much of the information and many of the assessments of threat used by the Bush administration in its prewar public relations campaign were inflated, distorted, or selectively disclosed to the public. The administration did not simply rely on rhetorical devices—such as invoking rhetorical images of mushroom clouds and the like—it deliberately and selectively used its executive advantages on intelligence collection and analysis to frame a particular version of the threat in order to influence public opinion. When the intelligence reports supported their positions, the hard-liners routinely proclaimed them to be “highly credible” or, in the case of Rumsfeld's portrayal of interview data provided by detainees at Guantánamo Bay, as “bullet-proof.” When intelligence reports contradicted or weakened the president's case for war, however, the administration waged a systematic campaign to discount the integrity of intelligence analysis and evidence. This was evident in the administration's portrayal of intelligence analyses that concluded that Iraq was several years away from developing its own nuclear capacity; in response to those assessments, first Cheney and then Bush, Rice, and Rumsfeld all stressed the inherent limitations and “uncertainty” of intelligence analysis.

Bush and his advisers also released intelligence when it suited them to bolster their case for war. Powell's presentation to the UN Security Council in February 2003 included audiotape of highly classified electronic intercepts—an unprecedented disclosure by the United States of its signal intelligence sources and methods. Yet the NIC's predictions on the likely postwar violence and insurgency or other internal analysis of the potential costs were tightly restricted and unknown to the public and to most of Congress.

A second notable element of the sales campaign was the manner in which the administration's campaign was coordinated with, and supported by, efforts of neoconservative intellectuals outside of the administration. Many of these intellectuals had a direct line to the Office of the Secretary of Defense through Rumsfeld's Defense Policy Review Board. Several of that board's members,

such as Kenneth Adelman, Eliot Cohen, Newt Gingrich, Richard Perle, Ruth Wedgwood, and James Woolsey, were particularly vocal advocates for war. In the age of twenty-four-hour news channels and the corresponding insatiable demand for content in programming, cable news producers routinely called on these Washington insiders to provide “authoritative” commentary and analysis of the situation in Iraq.

Ultimately, the disconnect between the prewar rhetoric and the post-invasion reality and the ensuing difficulties facing American troops in Iraq almost certainly has eroded the long-term political viability of the “Bush Doctrine” on pre-emption. Despite categorical statements by the administration and its pro-war allies in the prelude to the war, the United States has found no weapons of mass destruction and no evidence of direct ties between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda before the war. American troops have not, by and large, been greeted as liberators; instead the first eighteen months following the invasion witnessed the emergence of a significant insurgency with more than a thousand Americans soldiers killed. During the summer of 2004, several polls revealed that a majority of Americans believed the war to have been a mistake—a sentiment reminiscent of the public’s eventual reaction to the war in Vietnam amid the persistent claims by Presidents Johnson and Nixon that the United States would prevail.<sup>97</sup> Short of further future direct attacks on the United States, it is not clear that advocates for the next pre-emptive war will be able to replicate these strategies to develop and ensure public and political support. Iraq may not ultimately prove to be another Vietnam, but it may have produced a resurrection of the “Vietnam syndrome” and greater public aversion to the use of force in the future.

97. On public opinion in 2004, see Joseph Carroll, “American Public Opinion about the Situation in Iraq,” 29 June 2004, at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/focus/sr030610.asp>, accessed 30 June 2004. On Vietnam-era public opinion, see Mueller, *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion*; and Sobel, *Impact of Public Opinion on Foreign Policy*.

## 12<sup>η</sup> Συνάντηση «Περιορισμένος Πόλεμος»

Στη 12<sup>η</sup> συνάντηση θα αναλυθεί η έννοια του περιορισμένου πολέμου. Οι κεντρικές ερωτήσεις που θα τεθούν προς απάντηση είναι:

Τι είναι ο Περιορισμένος Πόλεμος; Ποιες οι θεωρητικές διαστάσεις του περιορισμένου πολέμου; Υπό ποιες προϋποθέσεις ο περιορισμένος πόλεμος μπορεί να προκαλέσει τα αντίθετα αποτελέσματα από το προσχεδιασμένο πλαίσιο ανάπτυξης;

### **Θέμα Εργασίας:**

*«Ο περιορισμένος πόλεμος αποτελεί το θεωρητικό θεμέλιο λίθο της έξυπνης άμυνας [Smart Defense]. Αναλύστε την άποψη σας»*

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## JUST WARS AND LIMITED WARS:

### Restraints on the Use of the Soviet Armed Forces

By CHRISTOPHER D. JONES

**D**URING the cold war, the Soviets have been extremely cautious about sending their troops into the frequent limited wars of the era. No Soviet troops ever found themselves in military quagmires like Vietnam, Algeria, or Korea. Only twice—in Hungary and Czechoslovakia—have Soviet leaders exposed their troops to the trials of a limited war. In both cases the U.S.S.R. intervened after very great hesitation. In these two East European sorties, the Soviet forces did not encounter any resistance from the regular army of either country and did not hear even verbal threats from the West. The Hungarian intervention was over in a matter of days; the Czechoslovak action in a matter of hours.

Soviet military theory offers some insights as to why the Soviets have been so cautious about entering limited wars, and have steadfastly avoided being drawn into the kinds of limited conflicts that have shaken and sometimes toppled governments in the United States, France, and Great Britain. At first glance, Soviet military theory is not a particularly valuable guide to Soviet practice. It is full of prolix ideological formulas and citations of Lenin, who is given credit for formulating its basic premises. Lenin did write the passages frequently cited by Soviet military theorists, but he never presented his ideas on war in a systematic framework. Lenin's observations on military affairs were confined to his polemics against the European socialists who supported their governments during the first World War, and to the directives he issued during the Civil War in Russia. Many of Lenin's observations do support the conceptual framework of post-World War II Soviet military theory, but later political and military figures deserve the credit for synthesizing this doctrine and finding the quotations from Lenin that buttress their theoretical structure.

For all their ideological incantations, Soviet military writers do present the conclusions the Soviet Communist Party has drawn from its two monumental military triumphs—the defeat of the White and Allied forces during the Civil War, and the annihilation of the principal armies of Nazi Germany during World War II. The writers also hint at the conclusions the Party has drawn from its unsuccessful wars against Poland in 1920 and Finland in 1939. Soviet military doctrine

may also reveal what political considerations kept the leaders of the U.S.S.R. from military interventions they may have contemplated against Yugoslavia in 1948, Poland in 1956, and Albania and Rumania during the 1960's.

If the published doctrine is not the operational policy of the military, it at least indicates the political restraints the Party attempts to impose on military theory and practice. Because this doctrine has been ceaselessly drummed into Soviet soldiers and civilians, it also requires Soviet leaders at least to consider the risks of publicly violating their own canon. Finally, on close inspection some of the political considerations emphasized in Soviet military thought which have been overlooked by Western theorists seem to have a considerable degree of intrinsic merit. The Western analysts who have commented on the Soviet discussion of the political restraints on the use of the Soviet military did so just before and just after Stalin's death, when the discussion consisted of a few rote formulas, most of which were coined by Josef Vissarionovich himself.<sup>1</sup> Later works on Soviet military doctrine have concentrated on the questions of nuclear strategy, Soviet policy in various areas of the world, and party-military relations.<sup>2</sup> Since 1960 the breadth and depth of Soviet writing on the political restraints on the use of military power has increased considerably, but Western observers have virtually ignored recent Soviet thinking on this topic.

### THE SOVIET VIEW OF WAR AND POLITICS

Soviet theoreticians wholeheartedly endorse Clausewitz's dictum that war is the pursuit of political policy by other means. As Colonels Fedorov and Morozov observe "Without a political aim even the fiercest struggle . . . will not be a war but simply a fight."<sup>3</sup> But the Soviets view war as a more profoundly political phenomenon than even Clausewitz did. For them, war is not just the pursuit of political objectives by violent means, but a life-and-death trial of a nation's political system as a whole. In his formulation of the Soviet Union's post-World War II military doctrine, Stalin placed the main emphasis on domestic political considerations. He proclaimed that the outcome of war was determined by five "permanently operating factors": the stability of the

<sup>1</sup> See Raymond L. Garthoff, *Soviet Military Doctrine* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press 1953), 230-32; H. S. Dinerstein, *War and the Soviet Union* (New York: Praeger 1959), chap. 2.

<sup>2</sup> See the numerous studies by Raymond Garthoff, Thomas W. Wolfe, John Erickson, and Roman Kolkowicz.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Morozov and G. A. Fedorov in S. A. Tiushkevich, ed., *Markšizm-leninizm o voine i armii* [Marxism-Leninism on War and the Military] (Moscow: Voenizdat 1968), 14. All translations in this article are the author's.

rear; the morale of the army; the quantity and quality of army divisions; the quality of military armament; and the skills of military commanders.

After Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in 1956, Soviet military writers abruptly abandoned these categories, but they preserved the essence of Stalin's view of war, a view they have presented in an increasingly complex and detailed analytical framework. Even the most recent Soviet writing shares with Stalin the conviction that the political situation on the home front and the morale of the army are as important to military victory as weaponry, economic strength, and diplomatic alignments. This view of war is considerably different from that presented by American strategic theorists of the 1960's and 1970's, who rarely, if ever, raise the questions of domestic politics or army morale.

All Soviet writers on war declare that war is a severe test of all the political, economic, and spiritual resources of a nation. They frequently cite Lenin's observation that modern warfare, because of the vast economic resources it requires, pulls the entire population into the conflict. It is this testing of the society as a whole that makes war so profoundly political. War is not merely a conflict between governments, but a question of whether governments can mobilize their populations to fight. As Colonel Medvedev declares in the 1968 edition of *Marxism-Leninism on War and the Military*, modern wars make every person an active participant and force every person to adopt "a conscious attitude toward a war."<sup>4</sup> Soviet writers often quote Lenin's observation that "In every war, victory in the last analysis is determined by the situation of the masses who spill their blood on the field of battle."<sup>5</sup>

Contrary to some Western theorists, the Soviets argue that technology does not reduce the importance of man in war but actually heightens the importance of the human factor, because advanced technology demands greater skills. They assert that such skills can be acquired only through superior political organization. In 1961, Colonel Belyi argued that the principal effect of the new missile technology was to increase the extent of human casualties enormously. Carrying on the battle in the aftermath of mass devastation was, in his view, as much a matter of morale as of technology.<sup>6</sup> Because of the importance of the human factor, Soviet strategists emphasize that the political attitude of

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>5</sup> N. P. Prokop'ev, *O voine i armii* [On War and the Military] (Moscow: Voenizdat 1965), 232.

<sup>6</sup> B. A. Belyi in G. A. Fedorov, ed., *Maršizizm-leninizm o voine i armii* (Moscow: Voenizdat 1961), 329.

the masses toward a war is absolutely crucial to victory. They argue that in war a government places its maximum demands on its citizens: it asks them to sacrifice their material comforts and even their lives for the sake of the state's political objectives.

According to Soviet theorists, no government in its right mind makes such demands without exercising extreme caution: they maintain that when a government goes to war, it is in effect calling for a spontaneous popular referendum on the regime. Lyndon Johnson provoked such a referendum when he asked draft-age Americans to risk their lives for the sake of his political objectives in Vietnam. Many of them told the President, "Hell No! We Won't Go!" and eventually drove him out of office. Lenin argued that if a government sends its soldiers to war against their wishes, the government is in effect asking its soldiers to bring about the military defeat of their own country.<sup>7</sup> In his 1965 textbook, Prokop'ev echoed Lenin in declaring that "armies which do not believe in the legitimacy of their mission and are not supported by the people will suffer defeat."<sup>8</sup> N. V. Pukhovskii, a leading Soviet military theorist, stresses that the "political consciousness" of the masses is a critical element in military policy. According to Pukhovskii, political consciousness "is defined in one case by the readiness of the people to give up their lives for the political objectives of the war and in the other case by an unwillingness to fight. Political consciousness can demand from the soldier and the whole population the will to victory and it can demand a striving for the defeat of one's own government."<sup>9</sup>

The emphasis Soviet writers place on the importance of mass enthusiasm is not just a peculiarity of the U.S.S.R.'s soldiers; it is part of the political style of the CPSU. When Soviet leaders mobilize their citizens to achieve some urgent task, they rely not only on material incentives and reorganizations of the bureaucracy, as do Western regimes, but make great use of psychological incentives. The Party has found that "political consciousness" played an important role in many of the decisive moments of the Soviet regime: the Civil War, the First and Second Five-Year Plans, and the defeat of the Nazis. Khrushchev, who helped build the Moscow subway during the 1930's and who served as a political officer at the battle of Stalingrad, instinctively resorted to

<sup>7</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Defeat of One's Own Government in the Imperialist War," in *Collected Works*, XXI (Moscow: Progress Publishers 1964), 315.

<sup>8</sup> Prokop'ev (fn. 5), 91.

<sup>9</sup> N. V. Pukhovskii, *O mire i voine* [*On Peace and War*] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Mysl' 1965), 38. This book was published under the auspices of the CPSU CC Higher Party School.

the tactics of "agitation and propaganda" when he undertook any major task, such as the Virgin Lands program. Brezhnev, too, has served as a political officer. He fought on the front lines during World War II and was deputy chief of the Main Political Administration of the Soviet armed forces from 1953 to 1954.

For all his denunciations of the Chinese Communists for "voluntarism" (relying on psychological incentives in the absence of material and technical resources), Brezhnev has not abandoned the traditional Soviet emphasis on the "subjective factor." In his report to the 24th Party Congress he declared that the cultivation of a "Communist consciousness" among the masses was vital to the achievement of continued economic growth.<sup>10</sup> Throughout the 1960's and 1970's the Soviets have continued to talk about the ideologically motivated worker of the future, the "new Soviet man," whose appearance is imminently expected and, apparently, urgently needed. Recognition of the subjective factor is recognition not only of the positive role of psychological incentives, but of the fact that the CPSU has always had to deal with the problems of passive resistance, low productivity, shoddy workmanship, and "internal emigration" on the part of citizens at all levels of Soviet society. These problems have proven to be real obstacles to the realization of the Party's policies.

#### THE MORAL-POLITICAL FACTOR

The technical name the Soviets have for political consciousness in military affairs is "the moral-political factor." Soviet writers frequently quote Lenin to the effect that the Bolsheviks owed their victory in the Civil War to the fact that the morale of their soldiers was higher than that of their opponents, who enjoyed advantages in numbers and equipment. Soviet writers also maintain that the allegedly superior morale of Soviet soldiers during World War II was a crucial factor in defeating the Nazis. The observations of Allied personnel in the U.S.S.R. during the war confirm the existence of high morale and great personal heroism among Soviet soldiers, and also testify to the importance of these factors to the war effort. Observers usually concluded that the source of this morale was Russian nationalism.<sup>11</sup> Major General Il'in quotes Goering at his trial in Nuremberg as saying that the German General

<sup>10</sup> See pp. 82-91 of Brezhnev's report to the 24th CPSU Congress in *Materialy XXIV s'ezda KPSS* [Materials of the 24th Congress of the CPSU] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury 1971).

<sup>11</sup> Garthoff (fn. 1), 225-27; Alexander Werth, *Russia at War* (New York: Dutton 1964), *passim*.

Staff did not err in its estimates of Soviet technological and economic capabilities, but was fatally wrong in its estimate of the morale of the Red Army.<sup>12</sup>

The emphasis placed by the Soviets on the morale of their soldiers may in part be a continuation of the traditional view of morale in the tsarist army. It may also be in part a justification for the existence of the party control system in the military, for mobilizing morale is the principal duty of the lower-level political officers. But it is also a recognition of the fact that morale has played a major role in the victories of the Red Army. Soviet writers maintain that morale has played a major role in the victories of other armies, such as the republican armies of the French Revolution. Belyi argues that the collapse of the French army in 1940 was due to the fact that the ruling classes of France could not mobilize "the spiritual energy of the nation."<sup>13</sup> Many Western historians would agree with him.

The Soviets define the moral-political factor in a straightforward manner. It is "readiness by the people to endure the extremely heavy trials of modern warfare and not to lose the will to fight and to defeat the enemy."<sup>14</sup> But specifying the components of the moral-political factor is a "very complicated matter."<sup>15</sup> Soviet writers refer to the "confidence" of the population in its civilian and military leadership, the "real unity" of the citizenry, and the "depth of patriotic feeling." The moral-political factor is also conditioned by "the character of the social and state order" and the "national and historical peculiarities" of a people.<sup>16</sup> Belyi distinguishes between two sets of components. The first includes popular political attitudes toward the social system and toward the specific policies being pursued by the state; the second includes technical military considerations: does the soldier believe that his army has skillful commanders, adequate supplies, and advanced weaponry?<sup>17</sup> V. D. Sokolovskii's *Soviet Military Strategy* emphasizes that the moral-political factor includes not only the political component, but the ability of the state to provide its soldiers with all the material and technological support necessary for victory.<sup>18</sup> Several Soviet writers add elements that

<sup>12</sup> S. K. Il'in, *Moral'ny faktor v sovremennoi voine* [The Moral Factor in Modern War] (Moscow: Voenizdat 1967), 6.

<sup>13</sup> Belyi (fn. 6), 295.

<sup>14</sup> Belyi in Tiushkevich (fn. 3), 275. Every Soviet text repeats this definition in one form or another.

<sup>15</sup> Prokop'ev (fn. 5), 230.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 230-31.

<sup>17</sup> Belyi (fn. 6), 324-26.

<sup>18</sup> V. D. Sokolovskii, ed., *Soviet Military Strategy*, trans. by H. S. Dinerstein, L. Gouré, and T. W. Wolfe (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corp. 1963), 125.

are usually regarded as the basis of morale in the West: socio-psychological and individual psychological characteristics which affect a soldier's view of himself as a military man.

Soviet writers on military affairs warn that it is impossible to specify beforehand just how great a role the moral-political factor will play in a war. They caution that the importance of this factor varies enormously from war to war and exists in a rather elusive dependence on the whole complex of elements which they have identified as components of the moral-political factor. Perhaps the reason they are so vague on this point is that they hesitate to say directly what all their definitions imply: the moral-political factor is the popular legitimacy of a government as it goes to war. In practice, as Colonel General Lomov explains, "The moral-political potential of a country . . . is expressed in the relation of a people to a war, in the degree of their unity around the ruling party and its government."<sup>19</sup>

#### JUST AND UNJUST WARS

When a government is faced with the prospect of war, it is not in a position to bring about abrupt changes in the degree of its popular legitimacy. But it is in a position to choose war aims which its citizens can endorse or reject. Soviet experts on military theory emphasize that the choice of war aims is a conscious political act; that is, unlike historical traditions or popular confidence in the government, it is a factor over which the government exercises some immediate control. These experts furthermore emphasize that the choice of war aims has a decisive effect on the moral-political factor. As Marshal Voroshilov said on the occasion of Stalin's seventieth birthday, "The morale of the army, as Stalin teaches, depends in the first place and above all on the nature of the political aims of the war, that is, what the state is fighting for. . . ."<sup>20</sup>

The assertion that the political aims of a war determine the domestic political base for the war effort has survived de-Stalinization and has appeared in every Soviet discussion of war. In his examination of the moral-political factor in bourgeois societies, Belyi notes that although the class antagonisms of such societies have an effect on morale, bourgeois armies can have high morale if the soldiers and civilians of a

<sup>19</sup> N. A. Lomov, "O sovetskoi voennoi doktrine" [On Soviet Military Doctrine] in *Problemy revoliutsii v voennom dele* [Problems of the Revolution in Military Affairs] (Moscow: Voenizdat 1965), 47.

<sup>20</sup> K. Voroshilov, "Genial'nyi polkovodets velikoi otechestvennoi voiny" [The Genius Commander of the Great Patriotic War], *Bol'shevik*, No. 24 (December 1949), 40.

capitalist state believe that they are fighting for a just cause. Bourgeois morale, according to Belyi, will be low only if the masses do not endorse the war aims.<sup>21</sup>

In Soviet military theory, a positive moral-political attitude on the part of the masses depends on whether or not the war is "just." Soviet writers credit Lenin with establishing the just/unjust categorization of war, which they consider the most important political distinction to make in evaluating a war. They emphasize that this distinction is not made on the basis of the technical military aspects of the war. Prokop'ev states that it does not matter "who began the military action and on whose territory the war is being fought. The character of a war is defined by the question of why it is being fought. . . ."<sup>22</sup> Pukhovskii maintains that those Marxist-Leninists who have distinguished among world wars, local wars, and wars of national liberation have made false distinctions. The size or scale of a war does not determine its significance. The important question is that of the war's political objectives.<sup>23</sup> What the Soviets really mean by a "just war" is a war whose political objectives are supported by the Soviet population. In a recent article, Colonel Kondratkov in effect says that the "masses" decide if a war is just, independently of the party.<sup>24</sup> The significance of a just war lies in the fact that such a war, according to Colonel Tiushkevich, "promotes a widening of the political base which is necessary for victory."<sup>25</sup>

Soviet writers obscure the working definition of a just war as one that the population regards as just by using two other definitions. One of these says that a just war is one that complements the Marxist theory of history. The most recent edition of *Marxism-Leninism on War and the Military* tells us that just wars can easily be distinguished from unjust wars by virtue of the fact that the former are progressive and the latter reactionary.<sup>26</sup> The most frequently cited example of a just and progressive war is the campaign of the French revolutionary armies in 1793. The other definition of a just war is strategic. Prokop'ev holds that a war is just or unjust according to "whether it serves the interests of

<sup>21</sup> Belyi (fn. 6), 296.

<sup>22</sup> Prokop'ev (fn. 5), 64.

<sup>23</sup> Pukhovskii (fn. 9), 72.

<sup>24</sup> T. Kondratkov, "Problema klassifikatsii vojn i ee otrazhenie v ideologicheskoi bor'be" (The Problem of the Classification of Wars and its Reflection in the Ideological Struggle), *Kommunist vooruzhennikh sil* [Communist of the Armed Forces] No. 11 (June 1974), 20; T. Kondratkov, "Sotsial'ny kharakter sovremennoi voiny" [The Social Character of Modern War], *Kommunist vooruzhennikh sil*, No. 12 (November 1972), 11.

<sup>25</sup> S. Tiushkevich, "Politicheskie tseli i kharakter voiny" [Political Objectives and the Character of a War], *Kommunist vooruzhennikh sil*, No. 7 (April 1969), 34.

<sup>26</sup> E. A. Khomenko in Tiushkevich (fn. 3), 76.



the class struggle of the proletariat, or better yet, the interests of the international movement of the proletariat."<sup>27</sup> Or even better yet, the interests of the U.S.S.R. Pukhovskii explains the difference between those national liberation wars and civil wars which are just and those which are not: if such a war, in the opinion of the Soviet leadership, might involve the U.S.S.R. in a world war, then the war is unjust. If the Soviet leaders conclude that such a conflict does not risk dragging the U.S.S.R. into a larger conflict, then the war is just. In such a just struggle, the righteous side can count on fraternal assistance from the Soviet Union.<sup>28</sup>

The definition of a just war that applies to the use of Soviet troops is the definition that says a just war is one in which the government can count on the support of its soldiers and citizens. Prokop'ev observes, "The characteristic of a just war is that its objectives coincide with the basic interests of the people. The popular masses support such a war, actively participating in it."<sup>29</sup> According to the Sokolovskii text, in an unjust war the broad masses do not share the war aims of the government; as a consequence "the extent of their participation in the war is sharply reduced."<sup>30</sup> The greater the popular support for the war effort, the more "just" the war. Soviet military writers declare that a war in defense of the socialist fatherland, such as the struggle against the Nazi invaders, is "a special kind of war" which has an "unconditionally just character." Colonel Dziuba adds, "The most important feature of wars in defense of the socialist fatherland is that they are genuinely people's wars in all respects. Owing to the just aims and tasks of such a war, which fully correspond to the working people's interests, the masses take an active part in it, support and implement the policy of the Marxist-Leninist party and the government and rally even more closely around them."<sup>31</sup>

According to the Soviet texts, these three definitions of a just war yield four kinds of just wars: wars in defense of the socialist fatherland; national liberation wars against imperialist aggressors; proletarian insurrections directed against a bourgeoisie; and uprisings of any group of the exploited against their oppressors. Inter-imperialist wars are classified as unjust; boundary wars between newly independent states are described as neither just nor unjust, but simply another regrettable legacy of colonialism. The Soviets do not say that an army

<sup>27</sup> Prokop'ev (fn. 5), 45.

<sup>28</sup> Pukhovskii (fn. 9), 85-86.

<sup>29</sup> Prokop'ev (fn. 5), 35.

<sup>30</sup> Sokolovskii (fn. 18), 99. The same argument is made in the 1963 and 1968 Soviet editions.

<sup>31</sup> Ia. S. Dziuba in Tiushkevich (fn. 3), 139.

fighting a just war will necessarily be victorious; they say only that it will put up a good fight. Soviet texts assign equal importance to other factors affecting war: the diplomatic alignments that develop before and during the course of a war, and relative advantages in economic productivity and technological sophistication. These topics receive as much attention from Soviet military theorists as does the moral-political factor.

But the Soviets maintain that all these considerations are so inter-related that they do not exist independently of each other. They argue that any one factor, such as the moral-political, is inseparably linked to a war in all its ramifications. What links all of the factors together is the political aim of the war. The war aim is not only the principal determinant of the moral-political factor, but also the principal determinant of the scope of a war and the methods of conducting it, the choice of enemies and allies, the timing and scale of the overall campaign, and even the battlefield tactics.<sup>32</sup> Pukhovskii asserts that the political objectives of a war take precedence over the specific demands of military strategy. As examples of the primacy of politics in determining strategy, he cites the politically inspired decision of Napoleon III to fight at Sedan, and the decisions of the French and German generals of 1871 to overlook their recent differences and collaborate in a joint offensive against the Paris Commune.<sup>33</sup>

#### “THE REVERSE INFLUENCE OF WAR ON POLITICS”

The war aims are also directly tied to the regime's domestic policies. Soviet authors insist that war cannot be understood apart from domestic policy because it is the same political party or ruling clique which makes both foreign and domestic policy. Lenin and his successors reject the assumption of Clausewitz (and of most American strategic theorists) that a country's war aims are those of a broad national consensus. On the contrary, Soviet writers assert, the war aims are picked by political parties which are representative only of their own particular constituencies. Pukhovskii writes that war breaks out “when the party desiring war is victorious in the struggle with its opponents—other political parties.”<sup>34</sup> The Soviet texts frequently cite Lenin to the effect that foreign and domestic policy are inseparably linked, and that the masses

<sup>32</sup> Sokolovskii (fn. 18), 99-103; 1963 Soviet edition, 25-29; 1968 Soviet edition, 26-30. G. A. Fedorov in I. N. Levanov, ed., *Maršizm-leninizm o voine i armii* (Moscow: Voenizdat 1957), 42-47; Fedorov in Fedorov (fn. 6), 43-46.

<sup>33</sup> Pukhovskii (fn. 9), 158, 163-64.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 21, 54.

perceive this link much more clearly in wartime. It was on the link between foreign and domestic policy that Lenin based his appeal to the soldiers of the first World War to transform the imperialist war into an international civil war. Pukhovskii notes that the unity of foreign and domestic policy in the U.S.S.R. "is achieved consciously by the Party and the Soviet Government."<sup>35</sup>

Because of the link between foreign and domestic policy, war can exacerbate whatever antagonisms are present in domestic politics. Colonel Rybkin notes that the influence of war on domestic politics can vary greatly. He points out that while the Vietnam and Algerian wars destroyed a series of French governments and one French constitution, the British bourgeoisie managed to fight its colonial campaigns without provoking domestic political crises. America's war in Vietnam, he notes in 1970, was "a powerful factor of political action on American society." He concludes his analysis with the recommendation that a Communist party determine its attitude toward wars according to the probable influence of such wars "on the life of [its own] society."<sup>36</sup>

According to Soviet writers, the influence of war on the domestic political situation is greatly increased if the state's armies suffer defeats in individual battles. They frequently cite Lenin's prophecy of 1904: "The capitulation of Port Arthur," he wrote, "is a prologue to the capitulation of tsarism."<sup>37</sup> The connection between military defeats and domestic disorders that the Romanovs witnessed in 1856, 1904, and 1917 has not escaped their successors. One of the chapters in the early editions of *Marxism-Leninism on War and the Military* is entitled "The Reverse Influence of War on Politics." In a discussion of this topic, Fedorov observes that once states are drawn into the "whirlpool of war," they are frequently forced to alter both foreign and domestic policies.<sup>38</sup> Pukhovskii later adds the qualification that a government will restrict such changes so that they do not entail changes in the nature of the social system.<sup>39</sup> Of course, if a government loses a war, there may be drastic changes in the domestic policies of the defeated state. Major General Sushko observes that "defeat in war is

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>36</sup> E. Rybkin, "Voiny sovremennoi epokhi i ikh vlianie na sotsialnye protsessy" (Wars of the Contemporary Epoch and Their Influence on Social Processes), *Kommunist vooruzhennikh sil*, No. 11 (June 1970), 16.

<sup>37</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Padenie Port-Artura" [The Fall of Port Arthur] in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, IX [Complete Collected Works] (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury 1967), 158. "A military defeat can . . . be the beginning of a deep political crisis" (p. 156).

<sup>38</sup> Fedorov in Fedorov (fn. 6), 52.

<sup>39</sup> Pukhovskii (fn. 9), 186.

not only a military, economic, and political defeat, but also an ideological defeat."<sup>40</sup> Since the CPSU bases its legitimacy on its ideology, Sushko is saying, perhaps unintentionally, that military reverses suffered by Soviet armies threaten the legitimacy of the Soviet regime. Because the Soviet Union has no genuine constitutional procedure for responding to public pressure, any concession by the regime during a military crisis raises the possibility of popular pressure for yet more concessions in both foreign and domestic policy.

As Major General Il'in of the Main Political Administration of the Soviet armed forces has observed, "Classes and governments, which strive to unite the broad popular masses around their political slogans and their objectives, have their basic interests affected and their fates decided in wars."<sup>41</sup>

It is difficult to know what risks the Soviets run on the home front when they send their troops into battle; only the KGB and the top Party leaders have access to reliable information about domestic tensions in the U.S.S.R. The fact that Soviet leaders have almost always repressed public manifestations of dissent would seem to indicate that the rulers of the Soviet Union do not care to test the political reliability of the broad popular masses. The present leadership, in quoting Lenin so frequently, may share with him the conviction that the masses, if left to decide things on their own, will probably make the wrong decisions. The Soviet government has demonstrated a profound fear of the phenomenon that Solzhenitsyn calls "the truth": the truth is that the government is not telling the truth and has lost its legitimacy. This is why revelations of historical or political "truth" in other Communist societies, such as Hungary and Poland in 1956, shook these regimes to their foundations. The special danger of war is that in war Soviet citizens themselves will decide what is the truth: as Soviet military writers have declared, it is up to soldiers and civilians to decide whether a war is just and whether they will support the policies of their government.

#### WAR AND THE QUESTION OF NATIONALITY

The Soviet military press is not a particularly good source for information about domestic political tensions in the U.S.S.R., but it does give a hint of one domestic problem that might affect the performance of Soviet armies: the nationality question. Sometimes the Soviet press seems to protest too much about the fraternal unity of the Soviet peoples

<sup>40</sup> N. Ia. Sushko in Tiushkevich (fn. 3), 48.

<sup>41</sup> Il'in (fn. 12), 9-10.

and about the absence of “great-power chauvinism” on the part of unnamed large national groups in the U.S.S.R. and of “narrow-mindedness” on the part of the smaller nationalities. Along with these protestations are perpetual exhortations to the officer corps to show sensitivity to the ethnic differences among Soviet soldiers. There are even occasional muted discussions of the nationality problem. The brief but explicit discussions of the nationality question by the Soviet military press since the late 1960’s coincide with similar discussions in the underground *samizdat* publications about the development of cultural and political nationalism among Ukrainians, Jews, Crimean Tatars, and Baltic peoples.<sup>42</sup>

In June of 1969, a writer in *Communist of the Armed Forces* noted that remnants of nationalism can appear even in countries which have begun socialist construction and can exercise a baneful influence on the progress of socialism. As examples of such influence, he cited the activity of emigré organizations of “Ukrainians, Balts and others” in organizing Captive Nations Week in the United States.<sup>43</sup> In a later article, another author noted that the multinational nature of the armed forces of some unnamed bourgeois states undermined the “moral strength” of these armies. In his opinion, this was due to the exploitative nature of such states and the dominance of one nationality over others. However, he noted that bourgeois multinational armies have demonstrated high morale and military reliability in one particular circumstance: the defense of their country against a foreign aggressor bent on enslaving all the national groups of the state under attack.<sup>44</sup> In the editorial of its issue devoted to the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the U.S.S.R., *Communist of the Armed Forces* presented the same argument about the conditions under which bourgeois multinational armies were reliable military forces. Noting that such armies were composed of soldiers of national groups that had been forcibly incorporated into the state, the editorial declared:

These armies were impressive in numerical strength, but they quickly dissolved in a conflict with a serious opponent and this had the effect of destroying the [multinational] states themselves.

<sup>42</sup> For the *samizdat* literature on the nationality issue in the U.S.S.R., see Albert Boiter, *Five Years of Samizdat: A Bibliography* (Munich: Radio Liberty 1971); Nos. 13, 17, 18, 26, 27, *The Chronicle of Current Events* (London: Amnesty International), and No. 31 of the same journal in Russian, *Khronika tekyshechikh sobytii* (New York: Khronika Publishers).

<sup>43</sup> N. Cherniak, “Burzhuaznyi natsionalizm—otravlennoe oruzhie reaktivnosti” [Bourgeois Nationalism—The Poisonous Weapon of Reaction], *Kommunist vooruzhennikh sil*, No. 12 (June 1969), 18.

<sup>44</sup> V. Samoilenko, “Mnogonatsional’nost i moral’nyi faktor” [Multinationality and the Moral Factor], *Kommunist vooruzhennikh sil*, No. 3 (February 1970), 19.

The fragility of such armies was dependent on the unjust aims in whose name they made war and on class and nationality antagonisms.<sup>45</sup>

*Communist of the Armed Forces* assured its readers that Soviet armies fought only just wars. Presumably, the armies of the Ottoman, Hapsburg, and Romanov Empires did not.

### THE RISKS OF WAR

Soviet writers on military affairs emphasize that war is always an uncertain and risky affair. In going to war, the leaders of a country have staked their foreign policy, their domestic policy, and perhaps even the fate of the regime itself on the performance of their soldiers. Once the war has begun, the politicians no longer enjoy the degree of control over events that they do in peacetime. Soviet military texts frequently cite the maxim that once war has begun, "politics exchanges the pen for the sword." The texts also cite Engels' observation that once military operations have begun, they proceed according to their own dynamic. Furthermore, victory or defeat on the battlefield "decisively" affects the morale of the army and the people.<sup>46</sup> Soviet theorists also observe that setbacks during a war, particularly a long war, can affect the popular perception of whether or not the war is just. (The Johnson Administration witnessed this phenomenon during the war in Vietnam.)

The explanation, according to the Soviets, lies in the fact that in long, drawn-out conflicts the political objectives of the war are often changed, and the war accordingly mutates from just to unjust or vice versa. The explanation may also lie in the likelihood that, during a long war, soldiers and civilians have a greater opportunity to decide for themselves the truth of the government's justification for the war. As an example of the transformation of a just war into an unjust war, Prokop'ev cites the just campaigns of the French republican armies which developed into the unjust war of the Napoleonic Empire against Russia. An example which he could have cited but chose not to was the victorious and presumably just war the Bolsheviks fought against the Poles in the Ukraine in 1920, which became an unsuccessful and presumably unjust war when the Red Army tried to carry its counter-offensive into Poland in the hope of inciting a revolutionary insurrection by Polish workers. Instead of a warm welcome from its class brothers, the Red Army encountered staunch resistance from the in-

<sup>45</sup> "Armiia druzhby i bratstva narodov" [Army of the Friendship and Brotherhood of Peoples], *Kommunist vooruzhennikh sil*, No. 23 (December 1972), 3.

<sup>46</sup> Sokolovskii (fn. 18), 126-27.

tensely patriotic Poles. As an example of an unjust war which became just, Prokop'ev might have cited the disastrous Winter War against Finland, which took on a more successful and presumably just character when the Soviet army counterattacked the Finns in 1944 as part of their final campaign against the Nazis.

The Soviets imply that one of the reasons for the large element of risk in war is that even capitalist armies are able to fight a just war if the war appears to them as a patriotic one against a hated foreign aggressor. After noting that military morale is of course highest in a society with no class antagonisms, Sokolovskii cautions that "high steadfastness of army morale can be attained even without such [class] unity." He explains that "such a situation arises when a belligerent country is united by a feeling of national solidarity and when the class contradictions are temporarily less pronounced than the ideas of national independence and sovereignty."<sup>47</sup>

Perhaps this conclusion reflects Soviet experience with the Poles in 1920 and the Finns in 1939-40. Soviet military writers assert that the desire for national sovereignty is what makes the national liberation wars of the Third World inevitably victorious in the long run. Prokop'ev warns his readers not to underestimate the steadfastness of an imperialist army engaged in an unjust war. As an example, he cites the Nazi forces that invaded the Soviet Union. He explains that imperialist armies can cultivate high morale by using such devices as propaganda and indoctrination, the discipline inculcated by military training, and repression of domestic political forces opposed to a war. He also explains the possibility of high morale in a bourgeois army by noting that a bourgeois state may not necessarily suffer from sharp class antagonisms. This is possible because a colonial empire may support a loyal "labor aristocracy," and the armament industries may employ a section of the working class that endorses militarism.<sup>48</sup>

#### THE SOVIET VIEW OF LIMITED WAR

The Soviets contemplate limited war from a perspective that is considerably different from that of American academic theorists. For Americans, limited war is a matter of battlefield symmetries and controlled applications of force that keep the war from escalating into a general nuclear conflict. Thomas Schelling compares the conduct of limited war to a dice game in which there are four possible outcomes:

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>48</sup> Prokop'ev (fn. 5), 89-91.

win, lose, draw, and disaster (general nuclear war).<sup>49</sup> The Soviets add two other possible outcomes: a collapse of army morale and a domestic political crisis.

For the Soviets, limited war like any other war is a test of the popular legitimacy of foreign and domestic policies and ultimately a test of the legitimacy of the regime itself. According to Sokolovskii, the purpose of the American theories of limited war is to persuade the public in the United States that war is a politically acceptable policy. The essence of the American theories, according to Sokolovskii, is the argument that "war is 'not so terrible' even when nuclear weapons are employed."<sup>50</sup> In the Soviet view, the relative performances of the contending armies in a limited war depend in the last analysis on the political objectives and political complexities of the war itself.

Implicit in Soviet writing is the recognition that it is extremely difficult to explain to one's soldiers and civilians that a war can be both just and limited at the same time. People do not willingly sacrifice their lives or the lives of their fellows for a cause which is of limited significance. As the most recent edition of Sokolovskii notes, "the demand for success in limited war does not correspond with the demand for the limiting of the extent of military actions. . . ."<sup>51</sup> It is implicit in Soviet military doctrine that the Soviets would not care to hazard the risks of a limited and protracted war which the enemy viewed as a just war in defense of national sovereignty. The military experts of the U.S.S.R. come close to stating that in going to war, Soviet leaders run the risk of a domestic political crisis if Soviet citizens come to view the war as an unjust, aggressive campaign.

Perhaps these are some of the reasons why the Soviets have virtually refused to discuss the limited-war theories which were once so fashionable in the United States. In their view, such abstract discussions can only contribute to the likelihood of such conflicts. When it is a question of going to war, the Soviet texts stress that Marxism-Leninism demands an exhaustive and meticulous *political* analysis of a given war in its specific historical context. In their brief comments on the theory and practice of limited war, Soviet military writers classify all Western participation in such conflicts as political aggression. Furthermore, they condemn all limited wars because they run the risk of escalating into nuclear world wars. They argue that local wars led to the first and second World Wars and that the system of cold-war alliances entails

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1966), 101-3.

<sup>50</sup> Sokolovskii (fn. 18); 1963 Soviet edition, 61.

<sup>51</sup> Sokolovskii (fn. 18); 1968 Soviet edition, 88.



the threat that contemporary local wars will become world conflicts. The 1963 edition of the Sokolovskii text distinguishes among three types of limited wars that could become world wars: imperialist aggression against a proletarian uprising; imperialist aggression against individual Communist countries; and imperialist aggression against a national liberation movement.<sup>52</sup> The possibility of a proletarian revolution remains a rather distant prospect, barely mentioned even in the Soviet texts. According to the 1968 edition, the West has ruled out limited wars against European Communist states for fear of nuclear escalation. But the possibility that the U.S.S.R. might be dragged into a war involving an Asian Communist state or into the third type of limited war, a national liberation struggle, apparently remains real to the Soviets. So far they have kept their troops out of such conflicts and have limited themselves to supplying matériel to indigenous anti-Western forces.

This does not mean that the Soviets have ignored the West's experience with such conflicts. The Soviet military press shows familiarity with Western academic writing on limited war.<sup>53</sup> The Soviets' *Military-Historical Journal* has published one brief but detailed examination of the types of troops, weapons, and battlefield tactics employed by Western states in limited wars since 1946. This article paid particular attention to the military technicalities of the American campaign in Vietnam.<sup>54</sup> But the theme sounded again and again in the Soviet military press is that it is erroneous to examine such wars primarily from the standpoint of the number of troops and types of weapons employed. According to Colonel Kondratkov, the essential questions in such conflicts are the moral-political content of the war and the interaction of political issues and military means.<sup>55</sup> Soviet military writers recognize that military means cannot always be used effectively to achieve certain kinds of political objectives as, for instance, "winning the hearts and minds" of the Vietnamese people. Colonel Tiuskevich observes that in Viet-

<sup>52</sup> Sokolovskii (fn. 18); 1963 Soviet edition, 94.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 82-98; 1968 Soviet edition, 82-88; T. Kondratkov, "Ogranichennaia voina—orudie imperialisticheskoi agresii" [Limited War—The Weapon of Imperialist Aggression] *Kommunist vooruzhennikh sil*, No. 8 (April 1969); V. Kulakov, "Poiskhozhdenie i sushnost' strategii 'gibkogo reagirovania'" [The Origins and Essence of the Strategy of "Flexible Response"], *Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 3 (1968); Leon Goure, "Notes on the Second Edition of Marshal V. D. Sokolovskii's *Military Strategy*, Memorandum RM 3972-PR (Santa Monica, Cal.: Rand 1964), 37-48; Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Strategy at the Crossroads* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1964), chap. 10.

<sup>54</sup> V. Matsulenko, "Lokal'nye voiny imperializma, 1946—1968 gg." [The Local Wars of Imperialism, 1946—1968], *Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 9 (1968).

<sup>55</sup> Kondratkov (fn. 24), 20.

nam the United States pursued “‘a political objective which exceeded the limits of its military capabilities’ and, on the other hand, its military objectives exceeded the limits of the political capabilities of the USA and its armed forces.”<sup>56</sup>

America’s experience in Vietnam does confirm many of the Soviets’ military theories. During the war, sections of the American public, including some military officers, chafed at the limits imposed by the politicians and called for either an all-out war or no war at all. At the same time, other sections of the American public came to believe that the Vietnamese Communists were fighting a just war in defense of their national sovereignty. American critics of the war proceeded to an indictment of U.S. foreign policy and then of U.S. domestic policy. This spontaneous referendum on the war led to a deep division between the protesters who linked the war with imperialism, racism, and social injustice, and the “establishment” which linked the war with the preservation of the domestic status quo. Because of the domestic political crisis, the American Government had to withdraw most of its military forces from Vietnam.

When it is a question of leading their nation to war, the Soviet leaders may in fact try to heed the advice of their military textbooks and fight only defensive wars that are “unconditionally just” in the eyes of their citizens. When they do send their troops into politically embarrassing battles, they do so only when they are reasonably confident, as in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, that they will encounter no resistance from the enemy’s regular army and that the war will be over in a matter of days.

### THE JUST WAR THAT BECAME AN UNSUCCESSFUL MILITARY INTERVENTION

#### A SOVIET CASE STUDY OF LENIN’S LIMITED WAR WITH POLAND

In 1930 the Military Section of the USSR State Publishing House published a remarkable work, P. V. Suslov’s *Securing Political Support in the Soviet-Polish Campaign of 1920*.<sup>57</sup> In this book Suslov examined a war which began as a “just war in defense of the socialist fatherland” but ended as an unsuccessful military intervention by Soviet Russia. Suslov’s study offers hard documentation for the somewhat vague

<sup>56</sup> Tiushkevich (fn. 25), 37. Tiushkevich does not indicate the source of the quotation.

<sup>57</sup> Suslov, *Politicheskoe obespechenie sovetsko-pol’skoi kampanii 1920 goda* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo, Otdel voennoi literatury 1930).

formulas of later Soviet military texts about the interaction of war and politics, the importance of the moral-political factor, and the role of nationalism in forming the moral-political factor.

In this work, written under the auspices of the Tolmachev (now Lenin) Military-Political Academy, Suslov does not hesitate to present analyses which are embarrassing to the Soviets. He criticizes the Ninth Party Congress (and, by implication, Lenin himself) for the decision to demobilize the Red Army in 1920. He puts most of the blame for the Soviets' political failure in Poland on the body Lenin appointed to be the provisional government in the areas of Poland that were occupied by the Red Army. Suslov also castigates the Red Army's political officers for their work inside Poland (and by implication, Josef Stalin, chief political commissar for the Soviet forces in southern Poland).

The Polish-Soviet war began in early March of 1920, when the Polish army under General Pilsudski invaded the Ukraine with the objective of setting up independent states in the Ukraine, Galicia, Belorussia, and Lithuania, and of restoring Poland's eastern borders of 1772. Polish troops captured Kiev in May, but in late July the Red Army pushed the Poles back into their own country. According to Suslov, the rapid Soviet counteroffensive was due partly to an upsurge of nationalism among the Russian population of the Soviet republics. He reports that workers, intellectuals, peasants, military deserters, and even prominent former officers of the tsarist army enthusiastically volunteered for the war against Russia's traditional enemy.

This was one of Soviet Russia's first experiences with the mass support its leaders could count on in what later military writers call a war in defense of the socialist fatherland. According to Suslov, the burst of Russian nationalism generated by the Polish invasion "was often transformed into pure manifestations of great-power chauvinism." The Bolsheviks, he writes, had to conduct an ideological struggle against this sentiment and educate Red Army soldiers about the true class content of the war: Polish landlords and capitalists, in collusion with the West, were trying to destroy the first socialist state in the world.<sup>58</sup> Suslov also explains the success of the Soviet counterattack as partly the result of popular opposition in Poland to the war and of desertion within the disaffected ranks of Pilsudski's forces.<sup>59</sup> Pilsudski's account of the war offers partial confirmation for Suslov's explanation of the collapse of the Polish offensive.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>60</sup> Jozef Pilsudski, *Year 1920* (New York: Pilsudski Institute of New York 1972), 83, 137, 138, 143, 148.

As the Poles retreated, Lenin decided to continue the war into Poland itself. His objective was not to seize territory or to establish a military dictatorship over the Poles; he planned to fight a limited war for a specific political objective. Lenin believed that the presence of the Red Army in Poland would inspire a proletarian revolution which he hoped would spread from Warsaw to Berlin. Lenin expected that the Polish working class would greet the Red Army as its liberator. Western historians have noted that Lenin made the decision to invade Poland against the advice of a number of his colleagues, including Trotsky, Stalin, and Karl Radek, a Bolshevik born in Poland who was one of Soviet Russia's leading experts on European affairs.<sup>61</sup> The political commissars of the Red Army explained to their troops that they were on a revolutionary mission in Poland and told them to expect a fraternal welcome from their class brethren. To supervise the anticipated Polish revolution, Lenin created the Provisional Revolutionary Council of Poland, whose two principal members were prominent Bolsheviks of Polish descent—Julian Markhlewski, the chairman of the council, and Felix Dzerzhinsky, head of the Soviet secret police. The council operated behind the Soviet lines; the Polish Communist Party operated behind the Polish lines. Suslov criticizes the Provisional Revolutionary Council and the Polish Communist Party for two fundamental political errors: their position on Polish sovereignty and their domestic program.

Suslov notes that the Polish Communist Party, from its inception in 1919, had adopted Rosa Luxembourg's policy on the question of a Polish state: the Poles were to merge economically and politically with the larger Russian proletariat. The Polish Communist Party and the Provisional Revolutionary Council viewed the existence of small national states as incompatible with socialism.<sup>62</sup> The fact that the prospective leaders of a socialist Poland were also officials of the Soviet Government left little doubt as to the imminence of the union of the Polish and Russian proletariats. Suslov contends that the position of the Provisional Revolutionary Council and the Polish Communist Party on the question of Polish sovereignty was the main reason the Communists failed to win popular support in Poland for their attempted revolution.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> See Louis Fischer, *The Life of Lenin* (New York: Harper and Row 1964), 392-93.

<sup>62</sup> Suslov (fn. 57), 17.

<sup>63</sup> Suslov cites a statement by Dzerzhinsky in 1925 to support his judgment: "Our mistake [in 1920] was the negation of the independence of Poland . . ." *Ibid.*, 18. Suslov quotes Dzerzhinsky to the effect that he and his comrades on the Council erred because they did not understand that between the eras of capitalism and socialism there would be a transition period during which vestiges of capitalism, including small national states, would continue to exist.

Suslov believes that the other major error of the Provisional Revolutionary Council was its decision to oppose the distribution of landed estates to the Polish peasantry. The Council and the Polish Communist Party considered these large farms economically advanced forms of agriculture and wanted to transfer them to state ownership.<sup>64</sup> This program did not win the support of the Polish peasantry. (Suslov does not say so, but this was the same agrarian program that Lenin had advocated in Russia during the spring and summer months of 1917.) The political officers of the Red Army, who were charged with setting up local Polish revolutionary committees in the areas they occupied, compounded the mistakes of the Provisional Revolutionary Council and the Polish Communist Party. According to a Red Army study cited by Suslov, the political commissars were able to persuade only a handful of Poles to join the committees, and resorted to staffing them with Red Army men. The local revolutionary committees failed to win the support of the peasantry, failed to adopt a correct policy toward the Catholic clergy, and offended the Poles under their supervision by issuing directives in the Russian language.<sup>65</sup> But Suslov concludes that the failure of the local revolutionary committees to win popular support was in the last analysis due to the policies of the Provisional Revolutionary Council and the Polish Communist Party on the national and agrarian questions. To support his conclusion, he cites Dzerzhinsky's assessment of the failure of the Polish Communists:

The peasantry and petit-bourgeois masses and a significant part of the workers (more accurately—a majority) did not come out for a proletarian revolution, for the Polish Communist Party, because they saw in our party an opponent of the slogan "land for the peasants" and an opponent of the slogan of the independence of Poland.

But they did come out for the Polish Socialist Party, for liberation, etc., for the parties which promised the peasants land and which struggled in the name of the slogan of the independence of Poland. . . .<sup>66</sup>

The attempted export of revolution by the Red Army failed to win the support not only of the peasantry, the petit-bourgeois masses, and most of the workers, but even of many members of the Polish Communist Party. Before the war began, a group of Polish Communists issued a declaration in which they said that if the Red Army intervened to support a Polish revolution, the Soviets would succeed only in provoking a nationalist opposition to the uprising. This group warned

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 141-44.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 145. Suslov attributes this quotation to *Komintern*, No. 16-17 (1929), 32. Dzerzhinsky's view is shared by Adam Bromke, a Western historian: see *Poland's Politics: Idealism vs. Realism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1967), 54.

that intervention by the Red Army would be “‘a trump card in the hands of the Polish bourgeoisie.’”<sup>67</sup> When the Red Army crossed the Polish border, the adherents of this group “dropped out of sight.” Suslov chides them for “a lack of understanding . . . of the revolutionary role of the Red Army. . . .”<sup>68</sup>

Suslov observes that, as the Soviet forces approached Warsaw, they had to contend with a phenomenon that Lenin had not anticipated: Polish “chauvinism.” The Poles, who had been deeply divided among themselves over social and economic issues, forgot their differences and rallied to fight the Red Army in the name of Poland’s independence. The Polish Socialist Party under Ignacy Daszynski and the Polish Peasant Party under Wincenty Witos formed a coalition government and created a Council of National Defense, headed by General Pilsudski. Volunteer military units were formed throughout Poland “at a furious pace.” The Warsaw area was quickly reinforced and the “revolutionary organizations” behind the Polish lines were subjected to “persecution and terror.”<sup>69</sup> The new Polish Government “poisoned the socio-proletarian and peasant consciousness with nationalist demagoguery in an amazingly proficient manner.” Suslov continues, “The nationalist propaganda and social demagoguery took its effect. Our units had to contend with a *qualitatively* different enemy. A nationalist fog in front of them hid the class-liberation banner of the Red Army.”<sup>70</sup>

Suslov’s opinion that the national upsurge in Poland had produced a qualitatively different enemy for the Red Army is shared by Captain Adam Przybylski, the author of a study of the Polish-Soviet war published under the auspices of the Bureau of Military History of the Polish Government. According to this account, the Soviet victories in the Ukraine and Belorussia and the initial advances of the Red Army into Poland at first produced a severe crisis of morale in the Polish army. The deep political divisions in the country compounded the crisis. Przybylski writes that, as the Red Army approached Warsaw, his countrymen came to the support of the newly created State Defense Council. He maintains that the 80,000 volunteers who rushed to the defense of the Polish capital were important not only for their numbers, but also for the fact that they provided “an element of moral force, an idealistic expression of the obligation to defend the threatened independence of the state, the free existence of the nation. . . .”<sup>71</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Suslov (fn. 57), 18.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 88-89; Suslov’s emphasis.

<sup>71</sup> Przybylski, *La Pologne en lutte pour ses frontières, 1918-1920* (Paris: Gebethner et Wolff 1929), 136, 137.

The surge of Polish nationalism and hatred for the Russians had a bad effect on the morale of the Red Army men, who had been told to expect a rather different reception. Suslov observes that political work among the Soviet troops was not sufficiently "Leninist" to counteract the spread of "growing pessimism in regard to the revolutionary fervor of the Polish worker and especially of the Polish peasant. . . ."<sup>72</sup> This pessimism must have intensified during the retreat from Warsaw, for Suslov notes that many Red Army soldiers complained of savage guerilla attacks by Polish peasants.<sup>73</sup> Pilsudski not only forced the Soviet army under Tukhachevsky to retreat from Warsaw, but drove a second Soviet army under Yegorov and Budenny out of the south of Poland. Lenin had to choose between mobilizing the exhausted Soviet state for yet another military campaign and abandoning his hopes for a Communist regime in Warsaw. He chose to sign a treaty with Pilsudski that gave the Poles generous territorial concessions.

In his conclusion Suslov notes that there was still debate in the U.S.S.R. over whether the failure of the Polish campaign was due primarily to political or to military errors. He cites Marshal Tukhachevsky's assertion that the Soviets did not make any political miscalculations but committed some serious military mistakes.<sup>74</sup> Suslov does not elaborate on Tukhachevsky's argument—that Generals Yegorov and Budenny were responsible for the Soviet defeat because they did not send reinforcements to Warsaw, as Tukhachevsky had requested.<sup>75</sup> Suslov does note that Antonov-Ovseenko, head of the political administration of the Soviet armed forces during the early 1920's, did not share Tukhachevsky's view. He quotes Antonov-Ovseenko as saying, "We overestimated the disintegration of the Polish Army and we also overestimated the revolutionary preparedness of the Polish proletariat and we did not reckon with the possibility of a nationalist upsurge of the broad Polish masses, particularly the peasantry."<sup>76</sup>

At the 1921 party congress, Lenin declared that he would leave to fu-

<sup>72</sup> Suslov (fn. 57), 89.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 141-42.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>75</sup> Tukhachevsky's account of the war, "The March Beyond the Vistula," is reprinted in Pilsudski's *Year 1920* (fn. 60). Tukhachevsky does not refer to Yegorov and Budenny by name but does mention their armies (pp. 259-62). His analysis of the war is open to some doubt. He claims that the Poles did welcome the Red Army enthusiastically, and that if the Provisional Revolutionary Council had been installed in Warsaw, all of Western Europe would have erupted in revolution (pp. 242-44). Louis Fischer questions the validity of Tukhachevsky's assessment of Polish and European politics on pp. 395 and 397 of *The Life of Lenin* (fn. 61).

<sup>76</sup> Suslov (fn. 57), 155-56.

ture historians the question of whether political or military errors were responsible for the defeat of the Red Army in Poland.<sup>77</sup> Suslov himself chose not to take up Lenin's invitation. He does not express an opinion on whether the political mistakes committed by the Soviets cost them victory. He confines himself to pointing out the political errors of the Red Army and analyzing their origins.

There is some evidence that Lenin privately believed that the Soviet defeat was due to political errors. Clara Zetkin, a German Communist, quotes Lenin in 1920 as saying that nationalism had inspired the successful Polish resistance to the Red Army. Lenin also said that he would not ask his soldiers and civilians to wage another difficult and bitter war in Poland unless he could offer a moral-political argument that would be persuasive with the armies on both sides of the battlefield. According to Zetkin, Lenin declared:

... in the Red Army the Poles saw enemies, not brothers and liberators. They [the Poles] felt, thought and acted not in a social, revolutionary way, but as nationalists, as imperialists.

The revolution in Poland on which we counted did not take place. The workers and peasants, deceived by the adherents of Pilsudski and Daszynski, defended their class enemy, let our brave Red Army soldiers starve, ambushed them and beat them to death. . . .

I myself believe that our position did not force us to make peace at any price. We could have held out over the winter. But I thought it wiser, from a political standpoint, to come to terms with the enemy; and the temporary sacrifice of a hard peace appeared to me preferable to a continuation of the war. . . .

In the present situation Soviet Russia can win only if it shows by its attitude that it carries on war only to defend itself, to protect the revolution; that it is the only great country of peace in the world; that it has no intention whatever to seize land, suppress nations, or enter upon an imperialist adventure.

But above all, ought we, unless absolutely and literally compelled, to have exposed the Russian people to the terror and suffering of another winter of war? Our heroic Red soldiers at the fronts, our workers and peasants, who have suffered so much!

Another winter of war, after the years of the imperialist war and of the civil war, when millions would starve, would freeze, and die, desperately silent. Food and clothes are already scarce.

The workers are complaining, the peasants murmuring that we are only taking away from them and giving them nothing. . . . No; the thought of the agonies of another winter of war was unbearable. We had to make peace.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>78</sup> Zetkin, *Reminiscences of Lenin* (New York: International Publishers 1934), 18-20.



Suslov does not take up the question of whether or not Soviet Russia had the military capacity to overwhelm the Poles in a second engagement. What Suslov offers is a demonstration of the propositions of Soviet military theory that war is the pursuit of specific political objectives; that the political objectives of a war determine the moral-political factor on both sides of the battlefield; that this factor has a great impact on the success of military operations; that nationalism is one of the most important components of the moral-political factor; and that Soviet leaders will not pursue a war that appears to be "unjust" if they are worried about the stability of the home front.

# **13<sup>η</sup> Συνάντηση**

**Γενικά Συμπεράσματα μαθήματος –  
Επανάληψη βασικών εννοιών**