INTERPRETING THE ENEMY

A GAME THEORETIC MODEL OF CONFLICT WITH APPLICATIONS TO THE KOREAN AND IRAQ WARS

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Abstract

This report presents a game theoretic model of conflict and applies it to the Korean and Iraq Wars.

The model segments international conflict into impasse, event, interpretation, challenge, and counterinterpretation phases. If a nation's leaders are frustrated in their efforts to mobilize resources against a perceived security menace, they will interpret an unexpected security event to resolve the impasse in their favor, even if the evidence linking the menace with the agent causing the event is weak. The leaders are likely to challenge the menace in an effort to validate their interpretation. The challenge will be widely counterinterpreted as a belligerant act, mobilizing support against the challenging nation. The agent should provoke the security event if it believes that the leaders will issue the challenge, and if it stands to gain enough from the mobilization of support.

In Korea, the Truman administration was frustrated in its efforts to obtain resources to rearm the United States against the Soviet menace. When North Korea invaded South Korea, the administration linked the event to the Soviets, effectively resolving the impasse in its favor. It then went on to challenge the Soviets, protecting the Chinese Nationalists on Taiwan from attack by the Soviet-allied Communist Chinese, and leading a multinational force that drove the North Koreans out of South Korea and invaded North Korea itself. The intervention and invasion were seen as belligerent acts, and the Communist Chinese mobilized to North Korea's support, driving the U.S.-led forces essentially back to the original border between North and South Korea, where the war stagnated. The Truman administration managed to triple the defense budget, while the North Koreans won a crucial ally, gains that arguably outweighed the costs of carnage.

In Iraq, the Bush administration desired to simultaneously cut taxes and increase military spending. When the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 occurred, the administration was quick to impute a linkage between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, and to argue that the Iraqis had advanced in a program to produce weapons of mass destruction, which might slip into the terrorists' hands. The Bush administration challenged Saddam Hussein to either disarm or be invaded. The ultimatum was partially supported by the United Nations Security Council, but the U.S. and a "coalition of the willing" eventually invaded Iraq without a U.N. mandate. The decision, compounded by the subsequent failure to find weapons of mass destruction or al Qaeda linkage, has caused much of the world to counterinterpret the U.S. as a belligerent power, eroding its international legitimacy and increasing sympathy for bin Laden among Muslims. The Bush administration had its cake and ate it too—a tax cut and a massive increase in defense spending—while from bin Laden's perspective, Muslims fighters have engaged U.S. troops in bloody and prolonged insurgencies, particularly in Iraq, and al Qaeda's support base among networked, radical Muslims has broadened and deepened.

INTRODUCTION

War-triggering events tend to be inherently ambiguous. The leadership of the aggrieved power must fit the event within its extant security paradigm, political agenda, and policy initiatives. These will condition its assessment of the threat behind the event, and the need to confirm its interpretation will tend to drive its response. Its efforts to confirm, however, will likely be counterinterpreted as belligerancy by those with competing paradigms and agendas. The consequences are explosive. This is the nature of war.

The foregoing argument can be rendered in game-theoretic terms as a situation with incomplete information (the triggering event) giving rise, in sequence, to an interpretation (by which the protagonist relates the event to prior context), a screening game (by which it tests its interpretation), and a signaling game (by which, from the contrary viewpoint, the screening game is reinterpreted as an indication of the protagonist's nature). The composite game can be solved with the concept of Bayesian Nash Equilibrium. War is likely to result when the protagonist and antagonist both stand to make large net gains, the former from interpreting the event aggressively and the latter from rendering the protagonist as a belligerant.

This model is a powerful tool for conflict analysis. On the one hand, it sheds a sharp, new light on the Korean War and the Iraq War, two seminal conflicts with a similarity deserving more attention than it has thus far received. On the other hand, the model may be applied to analyze future events as they unfold, to more rigorously discern the biases, costs, benefits, and risks of alternative paths of action. Future wars will not necessarily be avoided, but some international crises may be preempted, and some feckless and unnecessary wars sidestepped.

THE MODEL

The abstraction of game theory lends it theoretical rigor, analytical strength, and adaptability. Like a strong medicine, it should not be taken on an empty stomach. The abstract discussion is thus preceeded with a brief illustration and schematic diagram, and followed, in subsequent sections, with in-depth studies of Korea and Iraq.

The illustration is from the *Iliad of Homer*. Agamemnon, according to Homer, is the greatest king among the Greeks, brave, arrogant, and yet uncertain of his position. The handsome but cowardly Paris visits Agamemnon's brother, Menelaos, and carries away Menelaos' willing wife, Helen. Agamemnon leads a vast armada to Troy, and the Greeks demand Helen's return. Even while recognizing Paris' wrongdoing, the Trojan leaders refuse to yield before the ultimatum. This confirms the affront in the minds of the Greeks, and a decade of war ensues. In a completely rational world, the Greeks would not fight a war over Helen's abandonment of Menelaos for Paris, or the Trojans would return Helen over Paris' objections. Possibly Homer would have attributed these lapses to human Destiny. Game theory suggests that they resulted from the ambiguity of the events, private information, and cost-benefit calculations on each side. Was the seduction an isolated indiscretion or a calculated insult between the kingdoms? Were the Greeks attempting merely to secure Helen's return or to subjugate the Trojans? Neither side was sure of the other's nature. The Greeks employed a screening game to force the Trojans to reveal themselves. The Trojans then reinterpreted the screening device as a signal of Greek belligerance. Agamemnon's calculation of his likely gains from leading the Greeks to war, and—once the challenge was issued—Hector and Priam's estimate of their benefits from rallying the Trojans against the Greeks, outweighed the expected costs of the conflict in each side's mind, with gains and losses reckoned in prestige as well as treasure. War was the equilibrium, until it

was finally broken by the deception of the wooden horse. For his part, Paris should only have provoked the event in the first place if he stood to gain from Hector and Priam's unyielding stance against the Greek challenge, and of course he did, at least in his own mind. Helen was his treasure, and he willingly risked everything to enjoy her. Whether or not his priorities were appropriate is a subjective judgment.[1]

The schematic view of the game theoretic model follows.

Figure 1: Interpretation Model

Impasse	Event	Interpretation	Challenge	Counter-Interpre-tation
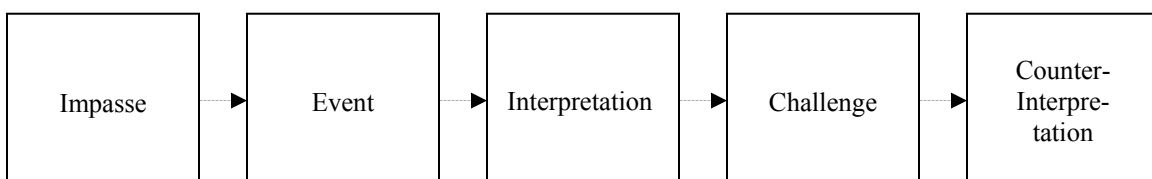
The diagram depicts an international conflict in five phases: an impasse (Agamemnon's frustrated urge to confirm his power), an event (Paris' seduction), an interpretation (the Trojan affront to the Greeks), a challenge (the ultimatum to Troy), and a counterinterpretation (the Trojans' rallying against Greek aggression). One side (Agamemnon) benefits from the interpretation and challenge, while the other (Hector and Priam, once the challenge was made, and Paris from the start) benefits from the counterinterpretation. Since both benefit the conflict is not irrational, but neither is it wholly rational.

The model involves six players, which will be subsequently referred to by their initials: the leadership (L), the opposing domestic leadership (D), the electorate (E), the Menace (M) against which the leadership wishes to direct national resources, the external actor (A) causing the international security event, and A's broader constituency (C). The key assumption for the

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[1] Richmond Lattimore, introduction to *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 12-13, 45-9.

equilibrium concept is that the players are rational within the limits of information and preference imposed by the game.

The model begins with an impasse between L and D. L seeks resources to support its preferred policy against M, while D resists assigning it those resources, whether because it views M differently, disagrees with L's specific policy proposals, or simply caters to a different segment of E. L needs to overcome D's opposition in order to secure the resources. Conversely, D needs L to implement its policy preferences. L and D can insist on their position, capitulate, or seek a compromise.

It is easiest to think of the impasse as a budget battle, but the dilemma exists whenever there is disagreement over policy, or sometimes for purely partisan reasons.

Normally L and D work out a compromise, but the compromise is inherently unstable, since each wants the lion's share of the benefit, and experiences some regret at the outcome. There is a tendency towards brinksmanship. In the U.S., government budgets at both the national and state levels are often approved at the eleventh hour. Impasses can and do happen, sometimes causing a partial shutdown of government.

The paradigmatic impasse in game theory is the Battle of the Sexes Game. The man wants to go to a ball game, the woman to the opera, but neither one wants to go without the other. If each knows the other's preferences, and in the absence of further communication between them, one equilibrium outcome is for the players to apply a mixed strategy. The man will go to the ball game with some probability x and the opera with $(1 - x)$. The woman's corresponding probabilities are y and $(1 - y)$ respectively. The implication is that the couple will end up going to separate events some of the time, even though neither one enjoys it. Of course, it is always possible that the man or the woman will prevail, so that they will always go to one or the other

event only. In a repeated game they also might communicate and achieve a compromise, whereby they both go to the ball game together some percentage of the time between x and y and the opera some percentage between (1 – x) and (1 – y), but such compromises are often fragile.[2]

By way of illustration, assume that L is the Executive Branch of the U.S. government and D is the Congress, and that they are trying to choose between two alternative budgets denominated E and C. For a budget to pass the Executive must present it and Congress must approve it, thus giving each an effective veto power. Each one gets some satisfaction from the other's preferred budget, but not as much satisfaction as from its own budget. The payoff matrix can be represented as follows:

Figure 2: Hypothetical Payoff Matrix for Budget Game

		Executive	
		E	C
Con-gress	E	1, 2	0, 0
	C	0, 0	2, 1

Payoffs: Relative Satisfaction (Congress, Executive)

In this example, if Congress agrees to the Executive's proposed budget, it has only half the satisfaction it would get if the Executive agrees to Congress's proposed budget. Both {E,E} and {C,C} are pure-strategy Nash equilibria to the game. There is also a mixed strategy whereby both players randomize between supporting E and supporting C. In a mixed strategy, given the particular symmetrical payoffs used here, the Executive and Congress would each choose its preferred option two-thirds of the time and the other's preferred option one-third of the time.

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[2] H. Scott Bierman and Luis Fernandez, *Game Theory with Economic Applications*, 2nd ed. (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1998), 279-82.

The mixed equilibrium also bounds the area of mutual benefit from compromise between the two branches. Each is better off with a budget that gives the Executive between one-third and two-thirds of the additional funding that it wishes.

The second phase in Figure 1 is an international security event. Ostensibly A caused the event, but it is possible that M, acting behind the scenes, was co-author or prime mover. It is unclear exactly what to make of it. In particular, the event could a) have no impact on the threat from M, or b) be a sign that the threat from M has worsened, whether in severity or immediacy.

The event together with its ambiguity regarding M's threat can be modeled by inserting a fictitious seventh player, Nature (N), into the game. N determines the relationship between A's action and M's threat: depending on N's choice, an event either signifies that the threat from M is unchanged (hereinafter "= M-threat") or stronger ("+ M-threat"). N goes first, and A then decides whether or not to cause the event. A knows what N has chosen, but L, D and E do not.

The third phase is the interpretation of the event. This is problematic for L, D, and E alike given the paucity of available information. L almost inevitably will construe the event as a sign that the threat from M has worsened significantly in order to resolve the impasse in its favor. Ex post facto, if it turns out that L was right, historians will deem that it was prescient, and if it was wrong, they may see it as Machiavellian. Although Machiavellian calculations on L's part cannot be discounted, to view the situation in these terms may be an oversimplification. L's biases are generally a reflection of its view of the world, and it seems unrealistic to expect it to interpret the extraordinary outcome other than by its worldview. However imperfect, the association of L's prior position and the event at hand may be an improvement in sophistication over remoter historical analogies. Given the crisis, L's ability for analytical thinking may be impaired, because it feels an urgent requirement to respond, because it is under stress, and

because, as mentioned, there is not much new information to go on. The temptation to fit the event to a prepackaged analysis is very great.[3] Finally, if it does not use the outcome to resolve the impasse in its favor, its position in the original impasse will likely worsen because the new threat will draw away resources and attention.

At a more detailed level, L's critical decisions concern the framing of the event. L can characterize the outcome as either a one-off event or a round in an ongoing game, and future action as either loss-avoidance or gain-realization. These choices can have a substantial impact on subsequent risk-taking, moving the nation on balance from risk-adverseness to risk-neutrality or -affinity. Kahneman and Tversky found that people tend to have convex value functions for losses, which means that they are likely to choose a possible large loss over a sure smaller loss, even when the value of the large loss multiplied by its chance of occurrence exceeds the value of the sure loss.[4] Whether a gamble is framed as a loss or a gain thus exercises a strong influence on behavior:

> A physician, and perhaps a presidential advisor as well, could influence the decision made by the patient or by the President, without distorting or suppressing information, merely by framing the outcomes and contingencies. Formulation effects can occur fortuitously, without anyone being aware of the impact of the frame on the ultimate decision. They can also be exploited deliberately to manipulate the relative attractiveness of options. For example, Thaler (1980) noted that lobbyists for the credit card industry insisted that any price difference between cash and credit card purchases be labeled a cash discount rather than a credit card surcharge. The two labels frame the price difference as a gain or as a loss by implicitly designating either the lower or the higher price as normal. Because losses loom larger than gains, customers are less likely to accept a surcharge than to forego a discount. As is to be expected, attempts to influence framing are common in the marketplace and in the global arena.[5]

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[3] Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. and John A. Sawicki, *Perception and Misperception: Implications for Denial and Deception, A Literature Survey and Analysis*. Unpublished.
[4] Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, "Choices, Values, and Frames," in *Choices, Values, and Frames*, eds. Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4.
[5] Ibid., 10.

Kahneman and Tversky also note that the tendency for individuals to engage in risk-taking behavior increases when they perceive themselves to winning back prior losses.[6] This explains why many investors continue to hold underperforming stocks in the hope that they will recover to the price at which they were bought as well as the difficulty many gamblers experience in quitting while they are behind.

E will tend to rely on L for a more authoritative interpretation of the event, since L has privileged information, greater expertise, and the primary responsibility in international affairs. E also will tend to discount L's biases, particularly as reflected in the impasse discussed above. L thus may acquire an extraordinary, if transient, legitimacy. This legitimacy, of course, is not uniformly or monolithically accorded to the leadership. Some members of E may be skeptical, others more susceptible to L's view. Nevertheless, for E as a whole, the assessed probability that L's view is correct increases substantially.

D is less likely than E to accept L's interpretation, but with E now on L's side it may have little choice. For potentially dissenting members of D an important bandwagon effect can also come into play. If they go along with L and L turns out to be wrong, they will be among the many and will have L to blame. If they dissent and turn out to be wrong they will have no one to blame but themselves. This does not entirely preclude D from extracting some important concessions from E, but the initiative in their relationship will have swung in L's favor.

L's ability to lead E under these circumstances, even if the case for linking A to M is tenuous, seems almost mysterious. Thomas Schelling describes it as a triumph of contrived conspicuousness in his 1960 classic *The Strategy of Conflict*:

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[6] Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, "Prospect Theory, An Analysis of Decision Under Risk," in *Choices, Values, and Frames*, eds. Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), 40-43.

The 'obvious' place to compromise frequently seems to win by some kind of default, as though there is simply no rationale for settling anywhere else. Or, if the 'natural' outcome is taken to reflect the relative skills of the parties to the bargain, it may be important to identify that skill as the ability to set the stage in such a way as to give prominence to some particular outcome that would be favorable. The outcome may not be so much conspicuously fair or conspicuously in balance with estimated bargaining powers as just plain 'conspicuous.'... The 'obvious' outcome depends greatly on how the problem is formulated, on what analogies or precedents the definition of the bargaining issue calls to mind, on the kinds of data that may be available to bear on the question in dispute.[7]

The game thus far may be diagrammed as per in Figure 3 below, with the end points shown in parentheses.

Figure 3: Preliminary Game Tree
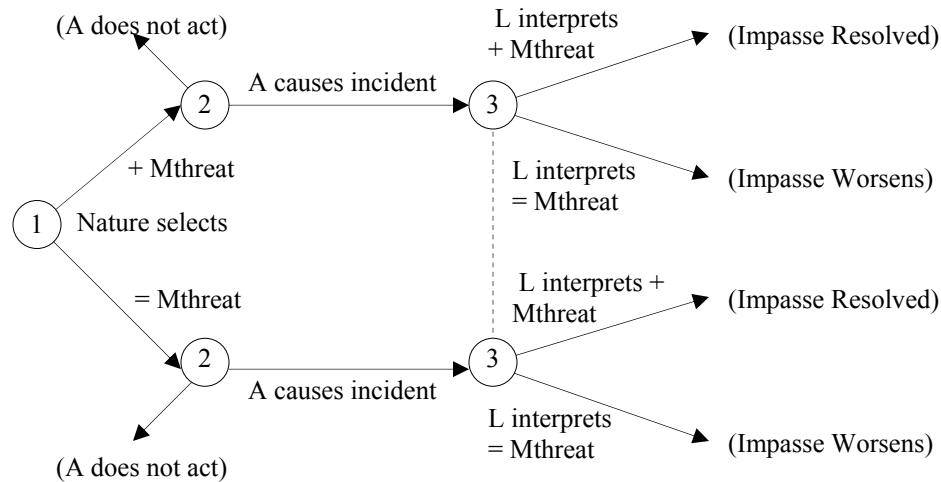
N moves first (node 1) and selects the significance of the event in terms of M's threat. A then decides whether or not to cause the event (node 2). If it decides not to, the impasse continues. If A does act, L must interpret the significance in terms of the Mthreat (node 3). If L interprets that the Mthreat has increased, the impasse is resolved in L's favor, but if L interprets that the Mthreat is unchanged, the impasse worsens. However, L interprets without really knowing which alternative N has chosen (the significance of the vertical dotted line).

If an event happens, in principle L will choose "+ M-threat," since a favorable resolution is preferable to a worsened impasse. However, A's payoffs are as yet unknown, and therefore the

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[7] Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1960), 68-9.

equilibrium outcome cannot be determined yet. Is it rational for A to precipitate the outcome knowing that L will likely use it to resolve the impasse in its favor?

It is possible for matters to end here, in which case the situation is unlikely to lead to war. If it does end, however, L's victory is incomplete, since it remains in the dark as to whether the Mthreat really has increased. It has only exchanged one type of disequilibrium—the impasse—for another—the uncertainty as to the significance of the event. What can it do? If L believes that M will not risk a confrontation at its prior threat level, but may do so if its threat has increased, then L may challenge M over the event (the fourth phase in Figure 1), in what is known in game theory as a screening game.[8] If M accepts the challenge, then L has grounds to believe that its threat has indeed increased (i.e., N chose + Mthreat). M conceivably might also accept L's challenge even if M's threat has not increased, through miscalculation or in an effort to postpone humiliation. In this case M is likely to suffer defeat. On the other hand, if M fails to accept L's challenge, then is likely that M's threat has not changed, or at least not to the point where it can face L directly. M may, however, fail to accept the challenge in order to dissimulate its gathering strength, in order to engage L when it is stronger still. For this reason, L is likely to pose its challenge quite aggressively, to make the cost of dissimulation for M as high as possible.

L has three further reasons to challenge M. First, the challenge will be issued as part of its response to the event, allowing it to mask the inherent aggression within its other actions. Second, L has now forcefully taken the position that the event demonstrated an increased threat from M, since that was how L broke the budget impasse. Third, regardless of what has happened to the Mthreat, L's ability to confront M is poised to increase, since L has the funds to pursue its policy.

L's challenge is diagrammed on the following page, picking up from node three in Figure 3.

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[8] Bierman and Fernandez, 336-7.

Figure 4: Game Tree, Continued
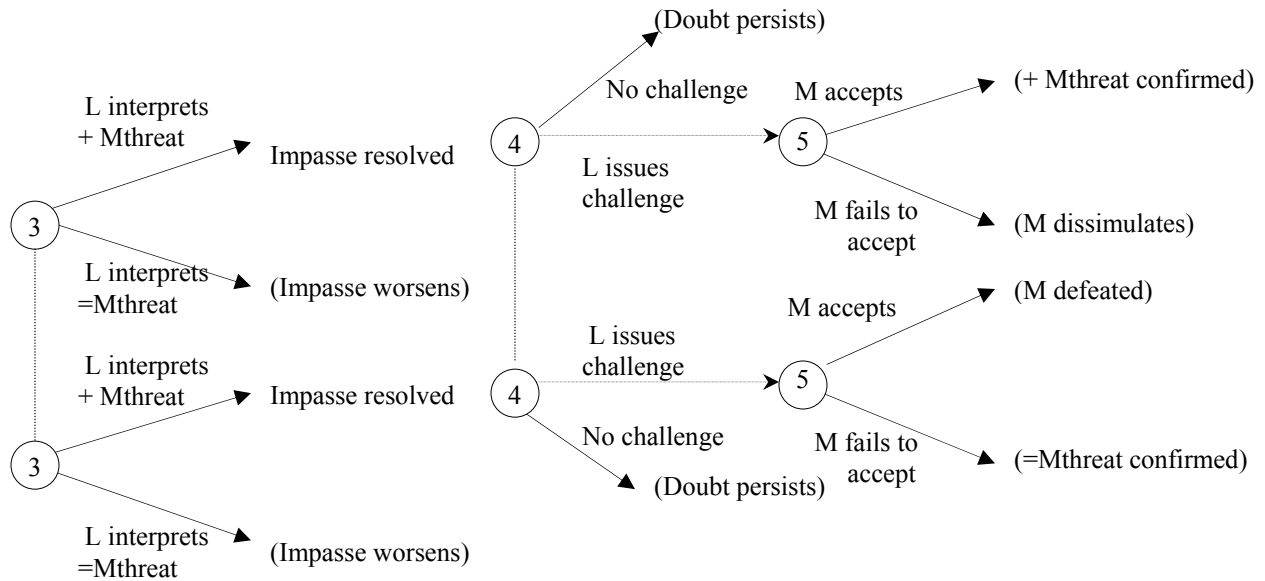
Player A may have surmised that its action would lead to the challenge, and factored this eventuality into its calculations in deciding to act. If so, the challenge is likely to be beneficial to it. Why? This is because, as per the fifth phase of Figure 1, C—A's broader constituency—will interpret the challenge as a signal revealing L's type.[9] If the threat from M has in fact worsened and M nonetheless backs down from the challenge, L will seem resolute and powerful. If M accepts the challenge and a war ensues, L will seem aggressive, particularly to the extent that the war causes collateral damage or leads it to commit excesses. War against a powerful adversary holds out the further possibility that L will suffer defeat, which will make it seem not only aggressive but unexpectedly weak as well. If, on the other hand, the threat from M is unchanged and M backs down from the challenge, L will be typed as overbearing, while if M accepts the challenge and is routed, L will be seen as brutal.

The ironic alchemy is that L's challenge, which departed from its uncertainty, is taken by C as the blazon of the enduring attributes of the nation L represents. The reversal has to do with

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9 Ibid., 329-36.

the perceived assymmetry of information in international conflict. Each side invariably tends to discount its own knowledge while attributing extraordinary sapience to the other. As the challenge plays out, L becomes better informed. It is almost an automatic step for C to impute that L was also informed before it issued the challenge, at which point the challenge becomes a device whereby L communicates its type to an imperfectly informed audience.

The reversal is facilitated by additional traits in the situation beyond the inherent ambiguity of ignorance. L has at best only limited legitimacy beyond E. Outside observers, even friendly ones, will almost inevitably have less faith in L's decisions, and may not share the urgency of achieving a coordinated national position that, as Schelling noted, can determine the outcome almost by default. They also are likely to have greater exposure to different ways of framing the event, and these frames will probably assume risk aversion, even to the point of confusing risk-seeking behavior, which is a matter of subjective preference, with irrationality. Finally, outsiders may lack a strong awareness of the impasse that provided the context for the crisis. L's conflation of the event and the impasse may seem far-fetched and possibly disingenuous.

Most of the interpretations of L are helpful to A in mobilizing C to its cause. In some cases, A must weigh its benefits against the possible loss in assistance from M, but the sacrifice on balance may be justified. The benefit to A will be even greater if all along it has been claiming that L is aggressive, overbearing and brutal. The counterinterpretation will make it seem prescient and its role in triggering the event may be seen as heroic.

The ex post facto reinterpretation of the challenge into a signaling game to reveal L's type may be diagrammed by modifying the endpoints in Figure 4 to show the results of each branch for L and M, as in Figure 5 below. The outcome sans the challenge (previously labeled "doubt persists") now becomes a combination of an ambiguous L with a stronger or an unchanged M.

At the far right of Figure 5, the prior outcome "+ Mthreat confirmed" becomes a combination of an aggressive L and a threatening M, "M dissimulates" becomes a powerful L and a cowed M, "M defeated" becomes a brutal L and a vanquished M, and "=Mthreat confirmed" becomes a bullying L and a humiliated M.

Figure 5: Counterinterpretation of L
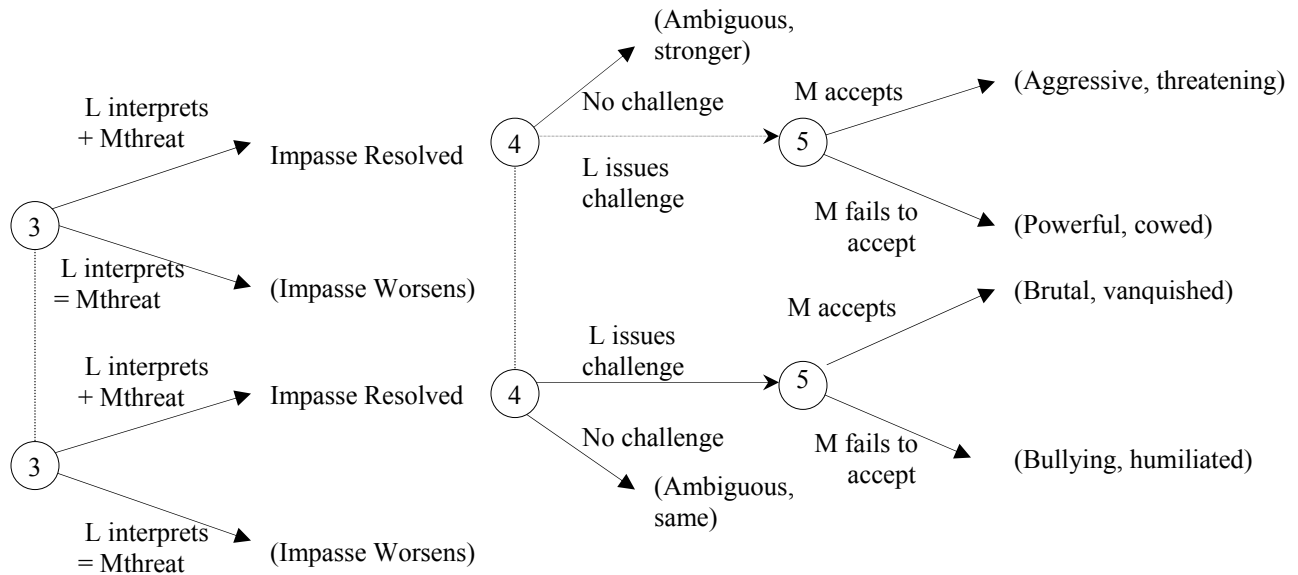
The initial conclusion of the analysis is straightforward enough: A should precipitate the outcome only if it feels that the support gained from C outweighs the cost that A incurs as a result of the event and challenge, or conversely if A believes that M will accept the challenge and prevail. Generally speaking, given the prospect of a significant benefit from C's support, A is more likely to precipitate an event if M is weak than if it is strong. Under all cases, A is more likely to precipitate the event if M is unsupportive and uninvolved. These observations highlight a further instability in the game, however, since if L understands the implications it is likely to interpret the act itself as evidence against a strong role for M in the event, which in turn would dissuade L from conflating and issuing the ultimatum. This means that under most conditions the equilibrium outcome of the game is for A to abstain from precipitating the event. It should

precipitate only if most of the following conditions are met: a) L's desire to resolve the impasse in its favor is very strong, b) L's prospects to resolve the impasse in its favor without conflation are weak, c) M is either very strong or weak, d) A stands to realize a large gain by mobilizing resources from C, e) A does not depend on M, and f) A feels itself to be secure against direct retaliation by L.   Fortunately enough, there is an inherent tendency toward stability in the international system. Wars occur when the tendency fails.

Conditions a) and b) seem most likely to exist when there is discontinuous change in world power structure and/or military technology; when the leaders are politically weak because of ideological or party divisions, a small electoral majority and/or other legitimacy problems; and when traditional threats are in abeyance. The relative importance of d) and f) depends on A's risk profile. If A is risk-seeking, the most important factor is likely to be d), the amount of resources it stands to gain if its gamble pays off. If A is risk adverse, f), the threat to its own security, is paramount. Risk-seeking is probably most consistent with the model.

The summary model in Figure 1 can now be shown as a complete game tree. N moves first to determine the significance of the event in terms of the Mthreat. Player A chooses whether or not to precipitate the event. If it chooses to precipitate, L then decides how to interpret it, and whether or not to issue the challenge. If it issues the challenge, M must choose to accept or not. Overall, the potential outcomes for L are to resolve, sustain or worsen the impasse and to be branded in the C's eyes as aggressive, powerful, bullying or brutal. A, for its part, stands to gain from any resources that it mobilizes from C as a result of the branding. M is either threatening, cowed, defeated or humiliated.

The game tree is presented in Figure 6 below. The endpoints are in the order (L, A, M).

Figure 6: Game Tree, Full Version
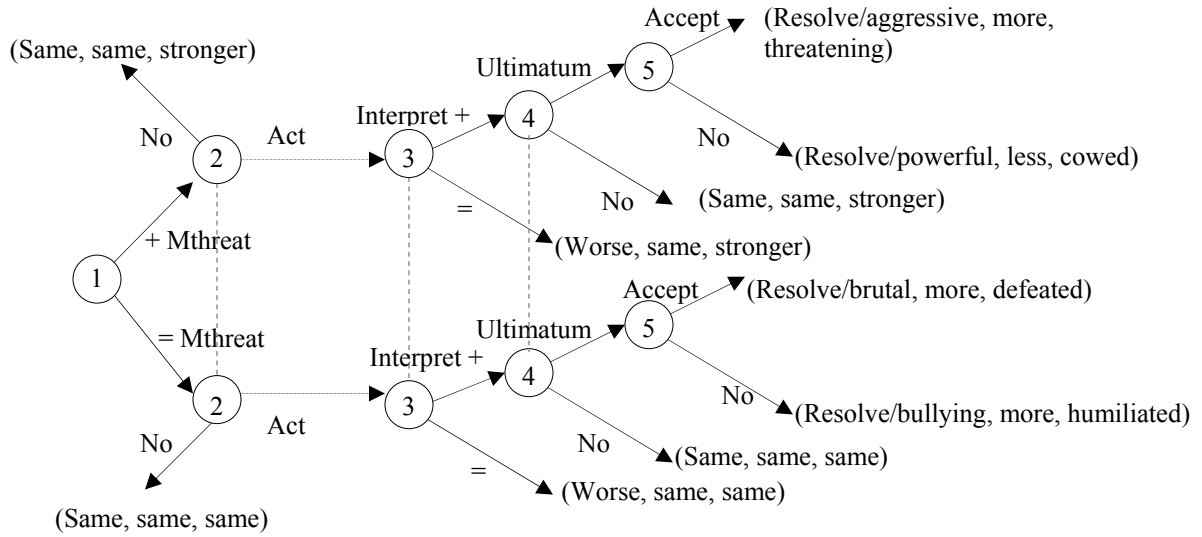
This tree can be solved using backward induction, starting from the far right. If M is strong and L's challenge is effective, it will accept the challenge unless it thinks it can succeed in dissimulating and stands to gain an extraordinary advantage from doing so. If it is weak it should avoid defeat by not accepting the challenge. If L feels that the benefit of clarifying the nature of M's threat exceeds the costs of the challenge including the possible war, then it should issue the challenge; if not, not. Interestingly, the payoffs if L declines to issue the challenge are essentially the same as the status quo shown at the far left. To interpret an increase in the threat from M without the challenge thus amounts to a decision by L to opt out of the game. For reasons previously discussed, however, this is not easy for L to do; it may become captive to its own rhetoric, caught up by its own framing, or, at a minimum, by a desire to be consistent. In a similar vein—to work back yet another step in the game tree—L should interpret the event to indicate no change in the Mthreat only if it feels that, given the available information as to how events will subsequently unfold, worsening the impasse is preferable to conflating. Finally, A should precipitate the extreme outcome only if it feels that, on balance, it is likely to be better off

as a result of the branding of L after the challenge. Its reasoning may best be shown by pruning the game tree to eliminate the branches that are unlikely, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Game Tree, Pruned
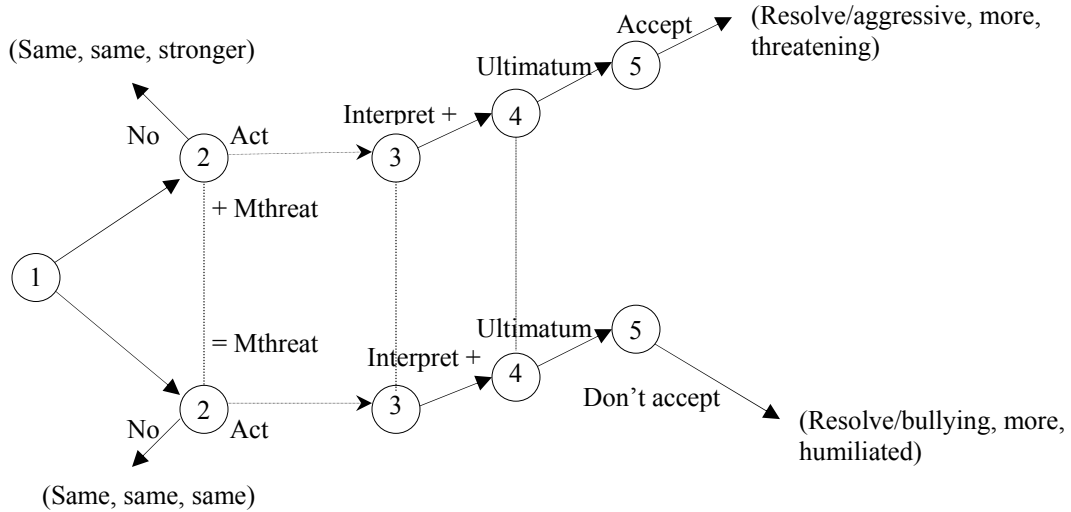
The pruned game tree shows the Bayesian Nash equilibria: events will occur only if both A and L stand to gain from L's challenge to M, with M choosing a response depending on its assessment of its strength against the L's nation. Absent mutual gain to L and A, the latter will refrain from triggering the event. This equilibrium, as mentioned, assumes that all players will act rationally within the limits of the situation, which of course does not always happen. In particular, it is likely to be difficult for L to foresee the conversion of its challenge into a signal, and it may underestimate the adverse consequences that the subsequent branding may bring. It is also possible that M may not respond rationally to L's ultimatum. Brinksmanship is risky business.

The idea that both L and A are likely to benefit when A triggers an international security event is a counterintuitive notion, and warrants some reflection. It implies that a nation's international security is systemic. This effectively means that security relationships between any two actors within the system are not a zero-sum game: both can simultaneously improve their

position within the system as a whole even while, ostensibly, they are competing strategically against each other. The gains simply come at the expense of a third party.

The idea also implies that a gain for L is not necessarily a gain for the nation it represents. As Professor Fordham notes, there is an unfortunate tendency in international relations theory to identify a leader's calculation of expected gains and losses with the national interest, when in fact

> the nature of the interests and threats a state confronts in the international system is unclear and can be interpreted differently by observers with different interests and values. International events rarely affect an entire society in the same way or evoke a single, universal response. Nation-states, divided as they are by class, region, economic sector, and many other factors, cannot be realistically depicted as responding to events in the international system like a unified leviathan. The assertion that the national interest forms the basis for policy begs the question of how it was identified from among the welter of conflicting interests in society. Individuals and groups in the state and society may believe that their understanding of the national interest is genuinely 'national', but, however sincere this belief, it is unlikely to have much basis in the perceptions of differently situated individuals and groups.[10]

Fordham points out important theoretical limitations with the unified national-interest concept, citing in particular Arrow's work on the difficulties that preclude the aggregation of social preferences into a single, rationally ordered set.[11]

Such is the model, in all its abstract rigor and illustrated by a brief discussion of the *Iliad*. Modern times do not lack their Agamemnons, Parises, Hectors and Helens.

THE KOREAN WAR

In the context of the Korean War, the players are as follows: the leadership (L) is the Truman administration; the opposing domestic leadership (D) is its opposition in Congress, notably the Nationalist Republicans; the electorate (E) is the American electorate; the menace (M) is the

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[10] Benjamin O. Fordham, *Building the Cold War Consensus: The Political Economy of U.S. Security Policy, 1949-51* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), 13.
[11] Ibid.

Soviet Union; the external actor (A) is the dictator of North Korea, Kim Il-sung; and A's constituency (C) is the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Mao Zedong in particular.

In Interpretation Model terms, the Korean War began with a budget impasse. The Truman administration was faced with the challenge of mobilizing the resources necessary for a major increase in peacetime security expenditures, both directly for U.S. military rearmament and indirectly to support NATO allies. However, there was domestic opposition to implementing this policy. The barriers included the public desire for a post-World War II demobilization of troops; the assumption that, with the war ended, Britain would be able to return to policing the eastern Mediterranean;[12] fear of inflation and budget deficits; the high level of government debt inherited from World War II; the desire to cut taxes to prewar levels; the confidence deposited in the new United Nations as the organization responsible for managing international order and preventing international conflict; the temptation to adopt a relatively inexpensive "Fortress America" strategy whereby the U.S. would rely on home-based, long-range bombers with nuclear bombs for its defense; and the unprecedented and therefore controversial nature of a peacetime buildup and military and non-military aid to other countries, primarily in Europe.[13]

The Truman administration garnered support from Congressmen in states that had financial and commercial interests in Europe and few import-competing industries. Many other Congressmen, however, came from regions with little stake at all in building an international order, while others came from areas that were oriented toward natural resource extraction and favored a more imperialistic world order focused on the Americas.[14] Still others came from

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[12] Thomas L. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 34.
[13] Ibid., 39-49.
[14] Fordham, 76.

states that stood to lose from international competition, or had important financial or commercial interests in Asia.[15] Fordham concludes:

> Congressional opposition to administration foreign policy... reflected systematic and lasting features of the American political economy. The problem facing the administration in its efforts to secure broad support for its foreign policy was not simply overcoming the misperceptions or myopia of its political opponents. It had to persuade them to accept a policy that simply did not serve their interests.[16]

Based on statistical analysis of voting records, Fordham divides the Senate into groups. The Democratic Liberals and the Republican Internationalists, together comprising 43 percent of total, generally favored the administration's policy. The Democratic Southerners, another 20 percent, varied widely in their positions, while the Democratic Westerners (8 percent) and Republican Nationalists (29 percent) opposed it. This largely accounts for the shrillness of the ideological debate. Congress was narrowly divided, as were the parties themselves. It also explains the importance of carrying the "China bloc," a group of ten senators who strongly supported Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese Nationalists. Seven of the ten senators were Nationalist Republicans.[17]

The full context for the impasse at the time of the Korean War included both national security and social welfare spending under the rubric of the Fair Deal. The Truman administration wanted both, and the Nationalist Republicans opposed both. Fordham's matrix of the respective bargaining positions and possible outcomes is included as Figure 8 on the following page.

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[15] Ibid., 100.
[16] Ibid., 75.
[17] Ibid., 85.

Figure 8: Policy Preferences and Trade-offs[18]

	More military spending	Less military spending
More social welfare spending; maintain power of labor movement	**Administration's preference** Losers: Labor-sensitive sectors Domestically oriented sectors Winners: Internationally oriented sectors Labor movement	**Demilitarized welfare state** Losers: Labor-sensitive sectors Internationally oriented sectors Winners: Domestically oriented sectors Labor movement
Less social welfare spending; reduce power of labor movement	**Actual outcome** Losers: Domestically oriented sectors Labor movement Winners: Internationally oriented sectors Labor-sensitive sectors	**Nationalist Republicans** Losers: Internationally oriented sectors Labor movement Winners: Domestically oriented sectors Labor-sensitive sectors

Until the Korean War broke out, the Truman administration managed to obtain military funding levels that were high by pre-war standards, although well below the levels requested by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[19] From August 1949 on, however, the administration started to lose control of foreign policy. The State Department released a white paper in that month to explain the communist triumph in China. It was meant to prepare the ground for recognition of the Chinese Communist government, but backfired disastrously, strengthening the hand of the supporters of the Chinese Nationalists in Congress and exposing State Department employees to charges of harboring communist sympathies.[20]

In January 1950, a bill supported by the administration for $60 million in aid to South Korea failed to pass Congress. Dean Acheson, the Secretary of State, was shocked by what he characterized as "a bitter and unexpected blow," and met with the Republican head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Arthur Vandenberg, to "work something out." As a result of the meeting the aid was coupled with an extension of "economic" assistance to the Chinese

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[18] Ibid., 11.
[19] Christensen, 45.
[20] Fordham, 111.

Nationalists through June 30. The amount of the assistance, $106 million, significantly exceeded the Korea aid, and Chiang apparently used it to buy arms—all this at a time when Acheson was searching for a way to recognize the People's Republic of China (PRC) in order to avoid driving it into a tighter relationship with the Soviets.[21]

The Truman administration's proposed budget for the 1951 fiscal year contemplated a reduction in military spending. Nevertheless, in April 1950 the House Appropriations Committee cut $1 billion from the administration's proposal, and the news media reported that Democratic legislators were preparing alternative budgets that would cut the Democratic administration's proposal by $3 billion or more. Support for continued spending was also dropping in the Republican party. The Internationalist Republicans were leaderless due to Vandenberg's absence for health reasons, while the anti-rearmament Nationalist branch of the Republicans had gained key leadership positions.[22]

Concurrently, personnel changes within the Truman administration caused higher military spending to become the top policy priority. Edwin G. Nourse, the chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors and a strong advocate of fiscal probity, resigned largely over differences with other members who were sympathetic to increased military spending and foreign aid. George Kennan, the head of policy planning at the State Department, was replaced by Paul Nitze, who viewed containment of the Soviet Union in more militaristic terms and favored more foreign aid. The director of the Bureau of the Budget, Frank Pace, who was a key Nourse ally, became secretary of the army, apparently at the State Department's suggestion.[23] Two staunch anticommunists joined the Truman administration: Dean Rusk, a "hard line cold warrior," as Assistant Secretary of State for the Far East, and the Republican John Foster Dulles as advisor to

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[21] Christensen, 116.
[22] Fordham, 110-11.
[23] Ibid., 51-3.

Truman.[24] Finally, in June Averell Harriman was moved from Special Ambassador coordinating the Marshall Plan[25] to special assistant to the president, once again at State Department prompting.[26]

Rusk, Dulles, Nitze, and other key members of the administration drafted NSC 68, a policy directive calling for much higher military expenditures, in April 1950—just as Congress was paring down the administration's already reduced proposal. Although conventional accounts of the genesis of NSC 68 emphasize the importance of events such as the Soviet acquisition of the atomic bomb and the victory of the Chinese Communists,[27] these events were not prominent in the authors' thoughts. They had long foreseen the Chinese Communist victory, while—as Nitz's successor Kennan had put it—the fact that the U.S. monopoly on atomic weapons ended a few years sooner than expected added "no new fundamental element to the picture."[28] Nitze, the principal author,[29] instead recalled that a primary concern in drafting NSC 68 was the persistent balance of payments surplus with Europe and the risk that the end of the Marshall Plan would destabilize Europe, with "serious repercussions" for the U.S. domestic economy. This concern had special resonance with the European-oriented elite centered on the East Coast from which the State Department's leadership, including Nitze, was drawn. More than 90 percent of the $4 billion committed under the Marshall Plan to August 10, 1950, went to 13 banks, all but one of which were based in New York.[30] The financial concerns fused with the goal of developing the capability to stop the Soviet army at the Rhine.

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[24] Callum A. MacDonald, *Korea: The War Before Vietnam* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 25.
[25] Fordham, 67.
[26] Ibid., 60-1.
[27] Ibid., 28-9.
[28] Ibid., 37-8.
[29] Christensen, 126-8.
[30] Fordham, 95-6.

The team that developed NSC 68 outmaneuvered opponents of higher spending in the Truman administration, including Secretary of Defense Johnson, who was allied with Republican Nationalist elements in Congress and harbored broader political ambitions. Johnson, Nitze recalled, "knew virtually nothing" of the NSC 68 deliberations. Johnson initially reacted furiously when he was given the document as a *fait accompli,* but then adopted a more ambiguous attitude, seeking to keep his options open in the coming political battle.[31]

Truman delayed endorsing NSC 68 for several months[32] to explore ways to secure Congressional approval for an increased budget.[33] He began to back away from the "Fair Deal" domestic legislation initiative, preparing for a trade-off.

The second phase in the Interpretation Model is an international security event. As early as March 1950 Acheson foresaw that an international crisis might provide a means to push a higher military budget through Congress. The North Korean invasion in June 1950 offered such a lever—if the Truman administration chose to conflate Kim Il-Sung's action with the Soviet threat to Europe. Fordham asserts: "There is at least as much reason to believe that NSC 68 led to the Korean War as there is to believe the usual argument that Korea led to rearmament."[34]

As summarized by historian Chen Jian:

> The Korean War... was, first of all, North Korean leader Kim Il-sung's war, which he initiated on the basis of his judgment (or misjudgment) of the revolutionary situation existing on the Korean peninsula. Stalin feared that such a war could result in direct military conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States, and he did not endorse Kim's plans of unifying his country by military means. At the end of January 1950, however, U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson's statement indicating that Korea would be excluded from America's western Pacific defense perimeter appears to have convinced him that direct U.S. military intervention in the peninsula was unlikely. In the months prior to the outbreak of the Korean War, the Soviet Union provided large amounts of military aid to the Korean Communists, but Stalin never made the commitment to use Soviet military force in Korea, and he insisted that Kim travel to Beijing to consult with

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[31] Ibid., 43-9.
[32] Ibid., 54-5.
[33] Ibid., 56.
[34] Ibid., 65-8.

Mao Zedong, so that the Chinese Communists would share responsibility for Kim's war preparation.[35]

Acheson's comments, which were made in a speech to the National Press Club, will be further discussed below.

Kim had come to power after the Japanese defeat in World War II through Soviet intervention. The Soviets installed Soviet citizens of Korean descent throughout the new North Korean government, maintained a massive "mission" in the country with advisors at all levels,[36] and supported the North Korean army with copious armaments. When the 120,000-man Soviet 25th Army withdrew from Korea it handed its weapons over to the Korean People's Army, along with those that had been captured from the Japanese.[37] Yet Kim was a nationalist as well—a negative term in Stalin's lexicon, meaning a potentially recalcitrant chess piece in his geopolitical game with the Americans.[38]

The direct antecedents to the war began when Kim met with Stalin in the spring of 1949. Kim complained of the continuous border clashes with Syngman Rhee's regime in South Korea, and Stalin responded by offering him arms to "strike the southerners in the teeth." However, as Goncharov et al point out, "their conversation was not about an all-out offensive against the South, and Stalin did not give Kim the go-ahead for one." Kim instead infiltrated guerrilla forces into South Korea in the hopes of provoking a general uprising. By the winter of 1949-50, the initiative had failed, and Kim had exhausted options short of war. He saw that Syngman Rhee's government was strengthening, but nevertheless convinced the Soviets, and in particular the Soviet ambassador, Terentii Shtykov, that South Korea was ripe to fall. Stalin did not order the

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[35] Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 54.
[36] Allen S. Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), 42.
[37] Sergei N. Goncharov and others, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao and the Korean War* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 133.
[38] Ibid., 105.

invasion so much as allow it to occur.[39] Kim's decision to invade South Korea may be fairly

considered as an act of desperation and a gamble.

For his part Mao could hardly veto the invasion, in view of the CCP's ideology and close

historical ties to Kim,[40] particularly since Kim disingenuously told him that Stalin had already

approved the invasion.[41] Mao urged Kim to delay his plans until the Chinese Communists had

taken Taiwan, but sent up to 70,000 ethnic Korean soldiers back to Korea in the months

preceding the war.[42]

The third phase of the Interpretation Model is interpretation. When the invasion occurred,

Truman, who was vacationing in Missouri, flew back to Washington immediately, vowing on the

way to the White House, "By God, I'm going to let them have it."[43] There was little doubt that

the "them" he had in mind was the Soviet Union. Stalin's controlling hand in the situation

nevertheless could be questioned for several reasons. The first was South Korean belligerence.

Rhee was no less determined than Kim to unite North and South Korea by military means.

Kim's complaints to Stalin were justified: the South caused most of the border incidents

preceding the invasion. Both the Soviets and the U.S. feared a South Korean invasion, leading

the U.S. to limit its deliveries of tanks, artillery and planes to Rhee's forces prior to the war.[44]

North Korea's response had elements not just of preemption but of a response to aggression that

had already occurred. The North Korean invasion only opened the conventional phase of the

conflict.

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[39] Ibid., 133-7.
[40] Ibid., 105.
[41] James I. Matray, *Revisiting Korea: Exposing Myths of the Forgotten War* (2002). Accessed on December 10,
2004. Available at www.truman.library.org/korea/matray1.htm.
[42] Chen Jian, 55.
[43] MacDonald, 30.
[44] Matray.

A second reason was that the invasion occurred while the Soviets were boycotting the UN Security Council in an attempt to force the other powers to give the Chinese seat, which was still held by Chiang Kai-shek's rump government, to the CCP. It was odd that the Soviets would choose to invade South Korea while the boycott was underway, since the Soviet absence from the Security Council allowed the U.S. to elicit its condemnation of the invasion and organize a response to the invasion under UN auspices.[45]

Third, the Soviets distanced themselves from the invasion. On June 29, Gromyko informed the U.S. ambassador that the official Soviet position was non-intervention in the Korean conflict, leading Truman to surmise, accurately, "This means that the Soviets are going to let the Chinese and the North Koreans do their fighting for them."[46]

Fourth, it was not at all clear what Stalin sought to achieve by invading South Korea at a time when it was trying to promote dissention among U.S. allies in Western Europe, in particular by playing on the French fear of a rearmed Germany integrated into NATO. Significantly, earlier that year the Soviet Union had delayed recognition of the communist government in North Vietnam in order to avoid jeopardizing its friendship treaty with the French.[47]

The meaning of the invasion thus might run the gamut from Kim Il-sung acting on his own to his acting on direct Soviet orders. If Kim was a loose cannon, the invasion was not a signal of a heightened Soviet threat. If he was Stalin's puppet, it was likely to set a pattern unless it was blocked. Given the information available to the Americans, the uncertainty was irreducible.

Truman's analogies construed Korea as the leading edge of a serious new threat. In his own account:

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[45] MacDonald, 28.
[46] Ibid., 34.
[47] Goncharov, 106-9.

I recalled some earlier instances: Manchuria, Ethiopia, Australia. I remembered how each time that the democracies failed to act it had encouraged the aggressors to keep going ahead. Communism was acting in Korea just as Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese had acted ten, fifteen, and twenty years earlier. I felt certain that if South Korea was allowed to fall, Communist leaders would be emboldened to override nations closer to our own shores. If the Communists were permitted to force their way into the Republic of Korea without opposition from the free world, no small nation would have the courage to resist threats and aggression by stronger Communist neighbors. If this was allowed to go unchallenged, it would mean a third world war, just as smaller incidents had brought on the second world war.[48]

Acheson's January 1950 speech to the National Press Club had evoked other analogies. Acheson had described an island "defensive perimeter" that the U.S. was committed to defending, running from the Aleutians through Japan and the Ryukus to the Philippines. Beyond the perimeter, people threatened by communist subversion were to rely first on themselves and then on the United Nations, "which so far has not proved a weak reed to lean on by any people who are determined to protect their independence against outside aggression."[49] But the problem did not lend itself to a military solution. Acheson went on to envision a day

in which the Asian peoples are on their own, and know it, and intend to continue on their own. It is a day in which the old relationships between east and west are gone, relationships which at their worst were exploitation and at their best were paternalism. That relationship is over, and the relationship of east and west must now be in the Far East one of mutual respect and mutual helpfulness.[50]

The implicit metaphors in Acheson's speech are nonalignment, on the model of Tito's Yugoslavia, and spheres of influence. The corollary was that Korea was outside the American sphere. The reed of the UN under normal conditions depended on the Security Council, where the Soviets held veto power. The distance between Acheson's comments and Truman's subsequent extrapolation to World War III could not be greater.

The conflation of the Soviet threat to Europe and the Korean invasion nevertheless proved to be irresistible to both the Truman administration and the Congress—particularly, for the

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[48] Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 36.

[49] *Excerpts from Acheson's Speech to the National Press Club*. Accessed on December 9, 2004. Available at web.mala.bc.cala/davies/H323/Vietnam/Acheson.htm.

[50] Ibid.

Republicans, when the Truman administration retreated from the Fair Deal initiative and began to repress radicals in the domestic labor movement.[51] Inside the Administration—Johnston and Pace apart—the issues blended into one amorphous construct as work began on a supplemental expenditure request. Charles Murphy, a presidential speechwriter, recalled that

> from then on we explained it in terms of the Korean problem... It got kind of muddied, but we had in mind, I think, a clear belief that the general necessities, so far as defense was concerned, required a large increase in our defense strength as well as the Korea fighting.[52]

Lacking firm estimates from the Defense Department, Murphy used the biggest number he'd heard mentioned for Truman's speech to Congress. Military funding jumped from $14 billion to $25 billion, and after the massive Chinese counteroffensive in December 1950 it increased by $17 billion more.[53] Only a small portion of the increase was spent on the Korean War itself.[54] The war was the catalyst for pervasive rearmament.

With the conflation of the Korean invasion and the Soviet threat, the Truman administration had effectively solved its budget difficulties, but its doubts persisted as to the true underlying nature of the threat it faced. These doubts led the Truman administration to challenge the Soviet Union in order to reveal the true nature of its threat, the fourth phase of the Interpretation Model.

On September 15 MacArthur began the counterattack with an amphibious flanking maneuver, landing at Inchon in the middle of the peninsula. His forces cut Kim's overstretched supply lines, and the North Korean army was soon in full, disorderly retreat. Contrary to popular belief, Truman's decision to press on past the 38th parallel predated the success at Inchon. That summer, Acheson had made a losing argument to limit the war aims to reestablishing the status quo prior to the North Korean invasion. By mid-August Truman decided to pursue forced

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[51] Fordham, 126.
[52] Ibid., 119.
[53] Christensen, 169-70.
[54] Fordham, 1.

reunification.   He approved plans for the conquest of North Korea on September 1.[55]

MacArthur's orders were to cross the 38th parallel "provided that at the time of such operation

there has been no entry into North Korea by major Soviet or Chinese forces, no announcement of

intended entry, nor a threat to counter our operations militarily in North Korea."   The limiting

conditions failed to materialize, and on September 27 MacArthur was given final authorization to

continue with the invasion.[56]

The advance into North Korea was accompanied by shows of American willingness, if need

be, to conduct nuclear strikes against the Soviets. Already in late June the Air Force had begun

to develop contingency plans to use atomic bombs against Soviet air bases in Siberia.[57] In July

1950 the U.S. deployed SAC bombers to British bases, ostensibly on a training mission.[58] On

August 25, the Secretary of the Navy publicly advocated preemptive war against the Soviets, and

on September 1, the Commander of the Air War College announced that the U.S. could "break

up Russia's five A-bomb nests in a week."   The former incident led to Secretary of Defense

Johnson's resignation on September 12, while the Air War College commander was suspended.[59]

The American nuclear menace was meant to deter, not provoke, the Soviets.

The administration also challenged the Soviets in words.   On August 17, the U.S.

Ambassador to the UN, Warren Austin, declared in a speech to the Security Council:

> This [peace] objective [in Korea] must be pursued in such a manner that no opportunity is
> provided for another attempt at invasion.... The United Nations must see that the people of Korea
> attain complete individual and political freedom... Shall only a part of this country be assured this
> freedom? I think not... Korea's prospects would be dark if any action of the United Nations were
> to condemn it to exist indefinitely as half-slave and half-free, or even one-third slave and two-
> thirds free.[60]

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[55] Matray.
[56] MacDonald, 48-9.
[57] Ibid., 33.
[58] Ibid., 38.
[59] Whiting, 92-6.
[60] Ibid., 78-9.

The administration's challenge was geographically specific. On September 1 Truman warned:

> We do not want the fighting in Korea to spread to a more general war; it will not spread unless Communist imperialism draws other armies and governments into the fight of the aggressors against the United Nations. We hope in particular that the people of China will not be misled or forced into fighting against the United Nations and against the American people who have always been and still are their friends.[61]

And on September 30, Austin declared again:

> The opportunities for new acts of aggression should be removed... The aggressor's forces should not be permitted to have refuge behind an imaginary line... The artificial barrier which had divided North and South Korea has no basis for existence either in law or in reason."[62]

MacArthur advised the North Koreans on October 1 that the "early and total defeat and complete destruction of your armed forces and war-making potential is now inevitable"[63] and ordered them "forthwith to lay down your arms and cease hostilities under such military supervision as I may direct."[64] On October 7, the U.S. First Cavalry Division crossed the 38th parallel while the UN General Assembly endorsed "all appropriate steps to ensure conditions of stability throughout Korea,"[65] disregarding Zhou En-lai's belated public warning that the Chinese would not "supinely tolerate seeing their neighbors being savagely invaded by the imperialists."[66]

The Soviets were in fact weak. Stalin was determined to avoid war, and after Inchon, in Khrushchev's recollection, accepted North Korea's defeat:

> Stalin became resigned to the idea that North Korea would be annihilated, and that the Americans would reach [the North Korean-Soviet] border. I remember quite well that in connection with the exchange of opinions on the Korea question Stalin said: 'So what? Let the United States of America be our neighbors in the Far East. They will come there, but we shall not fight them now. We are not ready to fight.'"[67]

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[61] Ibid., 97-8.
[62] Ibid., 112.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., 93.
[65] Whiting, 94.
[66] Goncharov, 175.
[67] Ibid., 191.

Stalin finally sent jet fighters to assist in the war effort, and deployed tank regiments to provide a rear guard in the Chinese homeland in November. He ordered the fighters not undertake offensive missions and stay well to the north of the front lines.[68] Had the game ended here, the Korean War would have resulted in the overthrow of Kim's government, the humiliation of the Soviets, and the confirmation of America's power.

Inevitably, however, the CCP took the American actions as a signal of broader ambitions, the fifth and final stage of the Interpretation Model. Stalin encouraged this counterinterpretation, introducing what Chen Jian calls "the Communist version of the domino theory,"[69] whereby Korea would be followed by northeastern China, China as a whole, and revolutionary governments across the world. Peng Dehuai, who commanded the Chinese troops in Korea,[70] expressed the dilemma viscerally: "The tiger wanted to eat human beings; when it would do so would depend on its appetite. No concession could stop it."[71]

The Chinese leaders could point to concrete evidence that the war was already spreading beyond the peninsula. The domestic Chinese political situation threatened to spin out of control in areas where CCP control was recent, fragile or incomplete. Rumors circulated of imminent U.S. landings along the coast and the start of Chiang's counterrevolution. Guerrillas assassinated CCP officials and attacked communications and transportation infrastructure. From July 12 to August 11 the railroad in the once-calm northeast was sabotaged 150 times. Mao's assessment, reasonably enough, was, "If we do not send troops [to Korea], the reactionaries at home and abroad will be swollen with arrogance when the enemy troops press to the Yalu River border."[72]

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[68] Ibid., 199-200.
[69] Chen Jian, 56.
[70] Goncharov, 176.
[71] Ibid., 180.
[72] Ibid., 181.

Truman also ordered the U.S. Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait, blocking the Communist Chinese from taking the remaining Chinese Nationalist stronghold. Zhou charged that the naval cordon was part of a premeditated U.S. plan, and that the Korean attack was instigated "to create a pretext for the United States to invade Taiwan, Korea, Viet Nam, and the Philippines."[73]

Even so, it was a close thing. On October 10, Zhou En-lai negotiated an agreement with Stalin whereby the Chinese would send troops to North Korea in support of Kim while the Soviets would meet the Chinese needs for artillery, tanks and matériel. On the next day Molotov told Zhou that the Soviets no longer agreed with the Chinese decision to go to war and would not supply its army. Stalin's change of heart forced Mao to reconsider his decision. He ordered the suspension of troop movements and went 70 hours without sleeping while he pondered. Then the inevitability of conflict with the U.S. reasserted itself in his mind and he ordered the Chinese to proceed.[74]

The intervention was accompanied by a major effort to control the mainland Chinese population and mobilize its support. The Communist leaders ordered a campaign against counterrevolutionaries, with mass arrests and executions.[75] A concurrent propaganda campaign exhorted Chinese to "resist America and aid Korea." Further campaigns were undertaken against corrupt party members, the bourgeoisie, and the intellectuals in 1951 and 1952, with forced confessions and mass trials.[76] Mao's subsequent success in pushing the American-led forces back from North Korea led to an upsurge in national pride and consolidated the CCP's prestige both domestically and in its relations with the Soviet Union, which it thereafter conducted on a much more equal footing.

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[73] Whiting, 58.
[74] Goncharov, 190-5.
[75] Ibid., 185.
[76] Frederick C. Teiwes, "The Establishment and Consolidation of the New Regime, 1949-57," in *The Politics of China, 1949-1989*, ed. Roderick MacFarquar (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 37-8.

The CCP was Kim's constituency, although Kim himself perhaps failed to understand this fully when he initiated the war. Barring direct Soviet-U.S. conflict, only Chinese involvement could save North Korea, as Stalin himself argued to Zhou: "For you [Chinese] it is possible to help the Korean people, but for us it is impossible because as you know the Second World War ended not long ago, and we are not ready for the Third World War."[77] Mao took care not to trigger the mutual-defense provisions of the Chinese-Soviet treaty that would drag in the Soviets as full participants. The Chinese troops fighting in Korea were simply "volunteers."[78]

The mobilization of the Communist Chinese to the North Korean cause saved Kim's regime. The Korean War continued until 1953 before an armistice was finally put in place that essentially reiterated the division along the 38th parallel. The U.S. general rearmament proceeded at the vastly increased levels, but public dissatisfaction over the bitter and inconclusive struggle paved the way for the election of a Republican president.

Did the desire to break the budget impasse prevent the Truman administration from pursuing initiatives that might have limited the intensity and duration of the Korean War? It surely played a role, but not the only or even necessarily the most important one. It seems likely that the nature of the U.S. interest in Korea was transformed, even for Acheson, after the U.S. had actively engaged the Chinese Communists. Part of this transformation might have been attributable simply to national pride. Also, the line between military and political strategy was blurred after major resources were committed, making Korea the arena for the larger conflict, regardless of its deemed ex ante importance. Still another element was the knowledge, whether explicitly formulated or not, that Korea would set a precedent for the subsequent conflicts that would characterize the long history of the Cold War. The lessons of Korea were that a) both the

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[77] Goncharov, 189.
[78] Ibid., 175.

U.S. and the Communists were willing to fight; b) both were willing to exercise restraint, since the U.S. did not use nuclear weapons, while the Soviets played only a supporting role, and war was not formally declared; c) both sides were willing to compromise, since effectively the war ended with reestablishment of the status quo ante; d) the U.S. was willing to maintain a huge military force not directly involved in an active conflict; e) the struggle would be on the periphery rather than in the heartland; and e) the Soviets would rely largely on proxies. All this was not just revealed in Korea. It was, by and large, forged in Korea. Deterrence is a game of established rules, not establishing rules.

As per Kahneman and Tversky, deterrence is also a game of risk-adverseness on gains and risk-taking on losses: hence there is a natural bias against aggression. Once the initial balance is broken, however, as occurred in the Korean War, the calculation of gains and losses becomes problematic. It gets mixed up with the signaling of capabilities, with ideas of retribution and punishment, with territorial gains, and with considerations of military strategy concerning the defensibility or vulnerability of positions. From this standpoint, it is unremarkable that the US would refuse to quit while it was behind, or having advanced into North Korean territory, would be content with its fallback position after the massive Chinese counter-attack. It is also unsurprising that, after a great deal of difficult negotiating, the final solution, in Korea, was essentially to revert to the status quo ante. Somewhat more surprising is the fact that the war is seen as a victory for the Communist Chinese and a stalemate for the U.S., even though the former got the worst of it: casualties an order of magnitude larger than those of its opponent, frustration for the foreseeable future of its plans to capture Taiwan, continued exclusion from the United Nations and non-recognition by the U.S., and consolidation of a powerful enemy close to its main industrial areas and capital city. China's 'victory' is explainable only if one assumes

that the Chinese ought to have been routed by the U.S.-led forces, but, in light of what occurred, it is hard to say why one would assume this to be the case.

Should Truman have foreseen that the CCP would mobilize to support North Korea? He cannot be criticized too sharply here, for he did perceive that possibility, and factored it into MacArthur's orders concerning the crossing of the 38th parallel. The CCP issued its warnings only at a late date and largely through channels that the U.S. discounted, and its intervention did not come until months after the U.S.-led forces had pushed into North Korea. Truman probably failed to foresee that a massive Chinese counterattack would so effectively retake the captured territory, yet he can hardly be faulted for pressing his advantage when the North Koreans were in disarray and the Chinese were not yet on the horizon.

In retrospect, it is easy to say that the Truman administration should have given more careful consideration to the evidence against interpreting North Korea's invasion as proof of an increased Soviet menace, and stopped short of issuing its challenge. This criticism is fair, but it is unclear to what extent further pondering would have led Truman to act differently. To have opted out of the game, allowing the uncertainty to persist, also entailed serious risks.

If Mao had decided not to counterattack, the nature of U.S. military force and the economic topography of the world might have been very different. The weakness of the Communist threat would have been revealed. This revelation might have reduced rearmament efforts and military aid to Europe, with both economic and military consequences. The Chinese Communists (assuming they successfully consolidated their control over the Chinese territory) would have remained deeply suspicious of U.S. motives, but the lines of conflict would not have been drawn so sharply. U.S. constraint and Soviet weakness together might have led China to assume, as Acheson had hoped, a position along the lines of Tito's Yugoslavia, making the Communist

threat less severe in the minds of U.S. policy makers. This in turn might have allowed the U.S. to avoid its involvement in Vietnam, and conceivably could have hastened the end of the Cold War. As it was, Kim's regime survived and two decades of Sino-U.S. animosity followed.

Was Kim astute or foolish? Given the Soviet weakness, the logic of the Interpretation Model argues that he should have invaded South Korea only if, on balance, he felt that he was likely to perceive a net benefit as a result of China's branding of the U.S. following the challenge. Furthermore, Kim should have had grounds to believe most of the following: the Truman administration strongly desired to resolve the impasse and had few prospects of doing so without conflating it with the event; the Soviets would not accept the challenge; and North Korea did not depend on the Soviets, would secure a large benefit from CCP support, and was secure against U.S. retaliation. Many of these conditions were in place, but what Kim perceived and factored into his calculations is unclear. Though a sophisticated understanding of U.S. internal politics was likely beyond him, Marxist-Leninist theory may have filled the gap. The mobilization of the CCP was tardy, and for a time Kim's survival was in doubt. His regime nevertheless was consolidated, and remains today, on the one hand an anachronism in a post-communist world, on the other a budding nuclear power, more dangerous than ever, and as likely as not to profoundly alter world history once again in the coming years.

THE IRAQ WAR

The phases of the model by now are familiar: impasse, event, interpretation, challenge, and counterinterpretation. The impasse in this case was the Bush administration's desire to simultaneously cut taxes and increase military spending. The event was the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York and Washington. The interpretation was the imputed al

Qaeda-Saddam Hussein linkage and, more generally, the threat of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists. The challenge was the Bush administration's ultimatum to Saddam Hussein, partially mediated through the United Nations, to either disarm or be invaded. The counter-interpretation is the rendering of the U.S. as an belligerant and overbearing power, particularly by Muslims.

The first phase—the budget impasse—dates to the Clinton administration. Following the end of the Cold War and the successful completion of the Persian Gulf War, the Clinton years saw reductions in military expenditures and personnel. In real (inflation-adjusted terms) the defense budget reached a 20-year low in 1997 of $282 billion, 28 percent below the 1989 budget of $391 billion. Active duty and civilian manpower declined by 35 percent and 36 percent respectively from 1989 to 1998, while reserve personnel dropped by 26 percent.[79]

Notwithstanding these reductions, the Clinton administration did not neglect the military. It continued to project military force, most notably in Somalia early on, and then in the former Yugoslavia and in frequent air strikes against Iraq. It also came very close to striking North Korean nuclear facilities, risking a major conventional war, and it answered Chinese military threats against Taiwan with a massive, if brief, concentration of naval power in the vicinity of that island.

Military technology also advanced under the Clinton administration, particularly the development of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), tactical missile defense systems, precision-guided munitions, and information and communication technologies. The time required for target selection fell from a few days in the Persian Gulf War to hours in Kosovo and minutes in

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[79] Congressional Budget Office, *Budgeting for Defense: Maintaining Today's Forces*, 2000, 2.

Afghanistan. The rate of battlefield data transfer increased by a factor of five between Desert Storm and Afghanistan.[80]

The major shortcomings of the Clinton administration's military record were in the areas of troop morale (which declined as a result of the downsizing)[81] and elimination of excess infrastructure. During the early 1990s three rounds of military base and depot closures were achieved under the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) procedure championed by Richard Cheney during his tenure as Secretary of Defense under George H. W. Bush. In 1995, however, Congress failed to reauthorize the process amid charges that the White House was using it for political advantage.[82] As a result, about a fifth of the base and depot infrastructure was redundant by the end of the decade, generating an enormous wastage of taxpayer money.[83]

By the late 1990s there was a growing consensus among defense analysts that the post-Cold War "procurement holiday" was over: military expenditures needed to rise significantly to replace aging stocks of armaments acquired during the Reagan years. Starting in 1999 the Clinton administration began to increase the budget. Its proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2002 (the last one it worked on) totaled $310 billion, a 10 percent increase over 1998.[84] The amount was still well short of the funding needed to sustain the U.S. military force at a constant level. In September 2000 the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) completed a study estimating that average funding of $340 billion would be needed to maintain existing capabilities,[85] excluding any savings from further base closures or other such initiatives. The CBO study also included

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[80] Michael O'Hanlon, "Clinton's Strong Defense Legacy," *Foreign Affairs* 82:6 (November/December 2003). Available from www.foreignaffairs.org. Accessed on January 6, 2004.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ashton B. Carter, "Keeping America's Military Edge," *Foreign Affairs* 81:1 (January/February 2001). Available from www.foreignaffairs.org. Accessed on January 6, 2004.

[83] Congress, House, Appropriations Committee, *Testimony Before the House Appropriations Committee: Fiscal Year 2002 Defense Budget Request*, July 16, 2001. Available from www.defenselink.mil. Accessed on January 5, 2005.

[84] James Kitfield, "A Small Study Carries a Heavy Burden," *National Journal* 33:9 (March 3, 2001).

[85] Congressional Budget Office, xi.

estimates for the constant-level funding requirements under "alternative strategic priorities," i.e., emphasizing peace operations at the expense of major theater wars or visa versa. Under these scenarios around $325 billion per annum would be required.[86]

The end of the procurement holiday coincided with a growing recognition that the U.S. faced a new strategic challenge from "rogue" states, terrorism, and "weapons of mass destruction" or WMD, a catch-all term that included nuclear, biological, chemical, and radiological weapons as well as ballistic missiles.[87] Strategists warned that the U.S.'s overwhelming conventional superiority might make WMD the only realistic option for its foes, and thus their weapon of choice. It was feared that lax security at Russian arms depots might permit nuclear weapons to slip into the hands of belligerent governments or terrorist groups, or that hostile governments might supply terrorist groups with WMD to foment clandestine strikes against U.S. cities. Retaliation would not work if responsibility could not be attributed or if the perpetrators could not be located. Concepts of strategic deterrence inherited from the Cold War seemed increasingly outdated and irrelevant.[88]

The risk that WMD might be used by terrorists against the United States led to sharp divisions between counterterrorism officials in the Clinton government, in particular pitting Richard Clarke of the National Security Council against Paul Pillar of the CIA, with the former focusing heavily on the dire threat and the latter emphasizing less catastrophic, but more likely, scenarios. For Clarke and his aides, Pillar was jaded and lacked a sense of urgency, while for

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[86] Ibid., 24-8.
[87] John Mueller and Karl Mueller, "Sanctions of Mass Destruction," *Foreign Affairs* 78:3 (May 1999). Available from www.foreignaffairs.org. Accessed on September 23, 2004.
[88] Richard K. Betts, "The New Threat of Mass Destruction," *Foreign Affairs* 77:1 (January/February 1998). Available from www.foreignaffairs.org. Accessed on September 23, 2004.

Pillar, Clarke's obsession with unlikely scenarios diverted resources away from more productive uses.[89]

It was unclear what role the U.S. military could play in dealing with such threats, other than by developing ways to prevent adversaries from using WMD against U.S. troops in a war and protecting troops against chemical and biological attacks if they occurred. The most important policy recommendations were largely nonmilitary in nature: improve intelligence collection and analysis, reorganize the bureaucracy, enhance domestic preparedness, help the Russians to control their stockpiles, and limit trade in materials and equipment that might be used to develop WMD.[90] The proposed system to defend the homeland against ballistic missile strikes—one area that clearly fell within the Pentagon's purview—seemed to suffer from conceptual flaws that would render it largely ineffective.[91]

George W. Bush campaigned for the presidency on a platform of tax cuts, increased medical spending, protection of Social Security and Medicare entitlements, and the creation of a prescription drug benefit. He also promised to transform the military, in particular by developing a strategic missile defense system, and to improve military readiness, but promised to accomplish these aims with essentially flat military spending. His secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld, reportedly went to the first cabinet meeting in January 2001 with a request for increased defense spending to around the levels estimated by the CBO. He "got the cold shoulder" from the Office of Management and Budget,[92] which advised him that the Pentagon would have to restrain its spending in order to allow the administration to pursue its tax and

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[89] Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004), 431.
[90] Gideon Rose, "It Could Happen Here: Facing the New Terrorism," *Foreign Affairs* 78:2 (March/April 1999). Available from www.foreignaffairs.org. Accessed on September 23, 2004.
[91] Richard L. Garwin, "A Defense that Will Not Defend," *The Washington Quarterly* 23:3 (Summer 2000), 109-123.
[92] Kitfield.

education initiatives. This directive caused an outraged response from hawkish congressmen and a rash of unfavorable publicity as disgruntled senior military officers leaked their views to the press. Rumsfeld attempted to seize the moment by initiating a crash strategic review led by the 79-year-old Andrew Marshall, who directed the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment, but the secretive and exclusionary nature of the review, coupled with Rumsfeld's acerbic personal style, increased discontent among congressmen and officers alike. In February 2001, the administration proposed a Fiscal Year 2002 budget of $310 billion, essentially maintaining the Clinton administration's budget.[93] In June 2001, however, it requested a supplemental authorization of $18.4 billion, which was only about half of what Rumsfeld reportedly wanted, and still short of the CBO estimated constant funding rate. The additional funds were almost entirely to address deficiencies in the existing force structure, and managed to please neither pro-defense congressmen nor fiscal conservatives.[94] The U.S. economy was teetering on recession, and the fiscal projections that the Bush administration had used to justify its tax cut looked increasingly unrealistic.[95] It seemed less and less likely that future years would bring further increases in military spending.[96] Senator Carl Levin, the ranking Democrat in the Senate Committee on Armed Services, summarized the situation on June 28 as follows:

> The bottom line is this: the administration strategy of first laying out a banquet of tax cuts leaves other programs, including our national security programs, in an extremely and unnecessarily precarious position. In order to avoid dangerous instability in the defense budget in the future, the administration needs to address this situation and provide a clear plan for meeting and sustaining our defense needs.[97]

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[93] Ibid.

[94] Greg Jaffe and John D. McKinnon, "Defense-Budget Increase of $18.4 Billion Draws Fire for Being Too Much or Little," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 25, 2001. Available from ProQuest. Accessed on January 5, 2005.

[95] Michael E. O'Hanlon, "What Price Military Readiness?" *The New York Times*, June 27, 2001. Available from www.brookings.edu. Accessed on January 7, 2005.

[96] Greg Jaffe, "Defense Plan Could Hit Budget Wall—Rumsfeld Will Face Cabinet Competition for Funds After 2002," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 5, 2001. Available from ProQuest. Accessed on January 5, 2001.

[97] Congress, Senate, Armed Services Committee, *Testimony Before the Senate Armed Services Committee: Fiscal Year 2002 National Defense Authorization Budget Request*, June 28, 2001. Available from www.defenselink.mil. Accessed on January 5, 2005.

Rumsfeld and Marshall were searching for ways to cut expenditures on existing forces and procurement of developed weapons in order to pay for the research and development of new weapons development programs: not only the strategic missile defense system, but also satellite defenses, directed energy (laser) weapons, and a host of other "transformational" technologies.[98]

In short, the Bush administration found itself in a position not unlike that of the Truman administration before the Korean War: caught between its domestic and defense agendas, divided within as with Congress, and constrained by political considerations. Under the circumstances, the best that it could hope for, and increasingly all that it aspired to, was a modest increase in defense spending, some hard choices, and slow progress.[99]

By the beginning of August Rumsfeld had zeroed in on war planning as a way to coalesce, solidify, and drive forward his ideas of military transformation. He found the existing war plans hopelessly out of date. The assumptions on which they were based were not explicit, and they allowed for no intermediate options short of all-out war. They focused heavily on the logistics of moving vast quantities of men and materials into the area of conflict over a period of months. In contrast, Rumsfeld envisioned an armed force with a demonstrated capacity to defeat attacks swiftly, or if necessary strike preemptively.[100]

Then came the terrorist attacks of the morning of September 11, 2001. Using knives, box cutters, pepper spray and bomb threats, a total of 19 al Qaeda operatives hijacked four commercial jets—two from Boston, one from Washington Dulles, and one from Newark—over a period of about an hour and fifteen minutes. The hijackers of the Boston flights crashed the jets into the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center in New York. The North Tower

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[98] Eliot A. Cohen, "A Tale of Two Secretaries," *Foreign Affairs* 81:3 (May/June 2002). Available from www.foreignaffairs.org. June 28, 2001. Accessed on January 6, 2004.
[99] "Military Reform: Is the Opening Slipping Away?" *The Wall Street Journal*, July 11, 2001. Available from ProQuest. Accessed on January 5, 2005.
[100] Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 31-5.

was hit at 8:46 a.m. and collapsed at 10:29, while the South Tower was hit at 9:03 and fell at 9:59. The flight from Washington hit the west wall of the Pentagon at 9:37. The passengers on the Newark flight, which was the last to be hijacked, learned of the other attacks and realized that their jet would be used as a guided missile. They attacked the hijackers, who crashed the plane into an empty field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania at 10:02. It was the world's first multiple hijacking in 30 years, and the first ever in the United States. Almost 3,000 people died, most of them in New York.[101]

The literature attempting to explain this event is vast. At a basic level, however, it resulted from the confluence of al Qaeda's founder and leader, Osama bin Laden, with an Islam in crisis and an unprepared U.S. government.

Bin Laden was born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 1957, the seventeenth of 57 children born to Muhammad bin Laden, one of Saudi Arabia's wealthiest construction magnates. He studied public administration at King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, graduating in 1981. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1919, bin Laden became active in channeling funds and materials to the Afghan resistance. In 1984 he established a guesthouse in Peshawar, Pakistan for Arabs on their way to fight in Afghanistan, and around 1986 he established "the Base"—al Qaeda—to organize the flow of personnel and materials into Afghanistan. His efforts were lauded by the Saudi government, which along with the U.S. government was heavily committed to supporting the anti-Soviet resistance. In 1989 the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, and the Soviet Union itself soon disintegrated. Bin Laden returned to Saudi Arabia and began to work in his father's business.

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[101] The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), 4-14, 285-315.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, bin Laden offered to bring Arab Afghan fighters to protect Saudi Arabia, which was feared to be Saddam's next target. The Saudi government ignored his offer and turned to the United States instead, allowing the U.S. troops to remain even after the Persian Gulf War ended. Bin Laden forcefully criticized this alliance, and the Saudi government began to restrict his movements. In 1991 he returned to Afghanistan, but he was frustrated by the infighting between the tribal factions and moved to Sudan a year later, where he invested in construction projects, farms and other businesses.

In 1993, terrorists exploded a car bomb in the parking garage of the World Trade Center. Also militiamen shot down two U.S. Black Hawk helicopters in Somalia, leading to the withdrawal of U.S. forces from that country in early 1994. Bin Laden's involvement in these events, however, is uncertain.

The Saudi government revoked bin Laden's citizenship and froze his assets in 1994. During that year bin Laden and the other radicals created the Advice and Reform Committee, dedicated to criticizing the Saudi government. The committee was founded in Saudi Arabia but soon moved to London. The Taliban, or Students, movement also began in Afghanistan that year. It would receive support from both Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

Sudan, under pressure from both the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, expelled bin Laden in May 1996. The Sudanese offered to extradite him, but neither country accepted their offer. Bin Laden returned to Afghanistan, where the Taliban was capturing Kabul and beginning to impose its harsh version of Islam on the population. In June a truck bomb killed 19 U.S. soldiers at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, but bin Ladin denied involvement and the U.S. indicted members of Saudi Hizbollah, a radical Shiite group. In August bin Laden issued a Declaration of Jihad, or holy war. The announced goals were to drive the U.S. from the Arabian Peninsula,

overthrow the Saudi government, liberate Mecca and Medina, and support other revolutionary groups around the world.[102]

Bin Laden and the Egyptian Ayman al Zawahiri published a fatwa, or private legal opinion under Islamic law, in an Arabic newspaper in London in February 1998. The fatwa claimed that it was the "individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in every country in which it is possible to do it" to kill Americans,[103] and announced the formation of an umbrella group for radical Islamist movements, the World Islamic Front for the Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders.[104] In August nearly simultaneous truck bombings occurred at the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. The Nairobi bombing killed 213, including 12 Americans, and wounded about 5,000. In Dar es Salaam 11 were killed, none of them Americans.[105] The U.S. responded two weeks later with missile strikes on bin Laden's training camps in Afghanistan, killing around 25 people but missing bin Laden. The U.S. also destroyed a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan that was suspected of manufacturing precursors for nerve gas with bin Laden's support.[106]

An al Qaeda operative was captured bringing a carload of explosives into the United States from Vancouver in December 1999. The intended target was Los Angeles International Airport. In October 2000 al-Qaeda operatives in Yemen mounted a suicide attack on a U.S. destroyer, the *USS Cole*. The ship was disabled and 17 crew members were killed.

Michael Scheuer, the ex-CIA officer who wrote *Imperial Hubris*, points out that al Qaeda is an insurgent, rather than a terrorist, organization, with a double goal:

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[102] John L. Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3-21.
[103] The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 47.
[104] Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, vol. II: *The Power of Identity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 111.
[105] The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 69-70.
[106] Ibid., 116-7.

to provide quality insurgent training to Muslims from around the world, and to build an ample cadre of veteran fighters who can be sent foreign legion-like to serve as combat leaders, trainers, engineers, logisticians, financial advisors, or administrators wherever militant Islam needs them... [T]errorist or urban warfare training was only a small subset of the camp's primary training regimen; the men who got such training are, in effect, the special forces of al Qaeda, the Taliban, and the foreign Islamist groups that send men to the camps.[107]

The organization model of al Qaeda makes it especially difficult to speak meaningfully about its numerical force, since it is a nebulous mix of members, alumni, affiliates and clients. It also suggests that one of al Qaeda's strategic dilemmas was how to bring its main combat force against its principal enemy, the United States.

Much of the Muslim world, in retrospect, was primed for bin Laden's message, if not to the point of actively supporting al Qaeda, then at least to the point of tolerance and sometimes admiration. Professor Humphries begins his portrait of the Middle East by zeroing in on the "hard realities" of population growth and economic stagnation, leading to "too many people chasing too few jobs."[108] Of the former, he points out, "When two-thirds of the population is less than twenty-five, the search for meaning and alienation from the stifling established order inevitably become a defining element of the whole society."[109] Of the latter he signals the "rational paranoia" of many Middle Eastern governments with little political legitimacy, which has led them to spend exorbitantly on arms and social welfare, meaningless government jobs and Pharaonic investments.[110] Add to this brew the ongoing frustration of the Arab defeats against Israel, the persistence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the enormous investment by the Saudis in exporting their fundamentalist version of Islam to other nations through the financing

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[107] Anonymous, *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, Inc., 2004), 63.
[108] R. Stephen Humphries, *Between Memory and Desire: The Middle East in a Troubled Age* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 1.
[109] Ibid., 4.
[110] Ibid., 10-11.

of *madrasah* schools, and the pool of individuals from which Islamist terrorism can draw becomes large indeed.

Professor Richard Bulliet notes that many prominent Muslims have fallen short in condemning bin Laden's acts and theology, allowing bin Laden to profile as a spokesman for Muslims. Bulliet attributes the silence to a "crisis of authority that has been building within Islam for a century." The crisis is due in part to an innate weakness, namely Islam's lack of hierarchy and institutional structure, which has caused it to undergo periodic crises throughout history. It also reflects the marginalization of the traditional authorities, which have largely been co-opted by the ruling governments, and the evident skill of new voices in exploiting the technologies of mass communication: first the printing press, then cassette recordings, and most recently the Internet. Finally, it reflects the widespread disenchantment of the Muslims masses with nationalism, which raised but then failed to fulfill their expectations, opening the door for radical critiques of the existing order and impelling anti-imperialist scapegoating. The traditional religious authorities are thus "caught in a three-way squeeze between government interests, their religious training, and the popular teachings of their rivals," the last of which they often hesitate to criticize for fear of losing still more influence. Faced with this example, the Muslim middle is progressively denied a way to condemn terrorism without appearing to kowtow to the U.S.[111]

September 11 also occurred because the U.S. government was incapable of taking effective action to stop the terrorists. The bipartisan 9/11 Commission found that "[t]he terrorists exploited deep institutional failings" within government, largely due to a lack of coordination between the agencies that share responsibility for security. Notwithstanding the prior attacks and attempts and an unprecedented level of threat reporting in the months leading up to 9/11,

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[111] Richard Bulliet, "The Crisis Within Islam," *The Wilson Quarterly* 26:1 (Winter 2002).

the domestic agencies never mobilized in response to the threat. They did not have direction, and did not have a plan to institute. The borders were not hardened. Transportation systems were not fortified. Electronic surveillance was not targeted against a domestic threat. State and local law enforcement were not marshaled to augment the FBI's efforts. The public was not warned.[112]

Serious lapses also occurred within the main responsible agencies. The 9/11 Commission found that the CIA and/or FBI missed four opportunities in 2001 to refocus and intensify the search for the operatives who would execute the attacks.[113] Journalist Steve Coll's painstaking history of the events leading up to 9/11 finds a still more basic "unforced error" in 2000: the CIA's failure to include known al Qaeda operatives with U.S. entry visas on international travel watch lists.[114]

The government's leadership, particularly under President George W. Bush, also failed. The new administration was slow in making the transition to its new responsibilities, in part because the controversy surrounding the electoral ballot count in Florida cut the transition period to half its normal length.[115] The administration gave its first priority to tax cuts and education reform, and its international efforts were focused on the collapse of the Middle East peace process and an April 2001 diplomatic crisis caused by the downing of a U.S. spy plane in China.[116] Key administration members for foreign affairs—Vice President Cheney, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld, National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz—were preoccupied with missile defense, military reforms, China, and Iraq, the latter of which was seen, particularly by Cheney, as unfinished business from the Gulf War.[117] Warnings on the seriousness of the bin Laden threat from the outgoing National Security Advisor, Sandy Berger, and from Clarke, the national counterterrorism coordinator, failed to

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[112] The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 265.
[113] Ibid., 277.
[114] Coll, 572.
[115] The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 198.
[116] Ibid., 202.
[117] Woodward, 9.

register.[118] When the administration finally focused on the *Cole* attack in March 2003 it tacitly decided that no direct response would be made, apparently on the grounds that too much time had elapsed.[119] In May President Bush named Cheney to lead a task force on preparedness for an attack on the homeland, but it was just getting underway by 9/11.[120] At the deputy level, the National Security Council eventually turned to consider the Taliban and particularly how to end its support for bin Laden, but plans were still being finalized on September 10.[121] Rice did not get involved in disseminating threat information to domestic agencies when terrorist threat reports spiked in June and July of 2001. In the 9/11 Comission's paraphrase, the Deputy National Security Advisor, Stephen Hadley, and Rice "did not feel they had the job of coordinating domestic agencies. They felt that Clarke and the CSG [Counterterrorism Security Group] (part of the NSC) were the NSC's bridge between foreign and domestic threats.[122] CIA director George Tenant, a holdover from the Clinton administration, by his own admission did not allocate a level of resources to the counterterrorism effort that reflected his characterization of the threat.[123]

The 9/11 attacks caused the electorate and, to a lesser extent, the Democrat leadership in Congress to rally around the Bush administration. The administration interpreted the attacks as evidence that the threat from rogue states and WMD, as well as terrorists, had worsened significantly, and framed 9/11 as the first round in a long struggle. This nexus was not intuitively obvious: the 9/11 hijackers used knives and pepper gas, not radiation bombs or sarin, and while the Taliban certainly gave sanctuary to al Qaeda, it did not provide the terrorist

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[118] Coll, 541.
[119] The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 201-2.
[120] Ibid., 204.
[121] Ibid., 214.
[122] Ibid., 263.
[123] Coll, 573.

organization with weapons or training. On balance, al Qaeda seemed at least as much a terrorist sponsor of states as the Taliban was a state sponsor of terrorism.

The U.S. issued an ultimatum to the Taliban to hand over bin Laden; the Taliban did not comply, and the U.S. began air strikes and Special Operations attacks in Afghanistan on October 7, 2001. The CIA successfully allied the U.S. with anti-Taliban elements within Afghanistan, and Special Forces soldiers collaborated innovatively with air power to target and attack Taliban forces. Kabul fell on December 13 and an interim government was installed a week later. In March 2002 the U.S and its Afghan supporters fought a three-week battle against al Qaeda jihadists. It was largely a victory for the U.S. side. Most of al Qaeda's remaining contingent— bin Laden and al Zawahiri included—escaped to the remote and mountainous areas of northern Pakistan.[124]

The Bush administration built on their success in Afghanistan with a broad effort to position the nexus of rogue states, WMD, and terrorism as the key threat to American security. The pillars of this effort are the President's first State of the Union speech on January 29, 2002, his speech at West Point on June 1, 2002, the National Security Strategy of September 2002, and the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism issued on February 14, 2003.

In the State of the Union Address, Bush declared the goal of preventing "terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world." He continued:

> By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States... We'll be deliberate, yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons.[125]

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[124] The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 337-8.
[125] *The President's State of the Union Address*, 2002. Accessed on November 5, 2004. Available from www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01.

The State of the Union Address is most remembered for charging that North Korea, Iran, and Iraq constituted an "axis of evil." Early drafts of the speech focused only on Iraq. The other members of the axis were added on the recommendation of Rice and Hadley to mask the Iraq war planning and maintain a broad risk.[126]

In the West Point speech, Bush announced a national security strategy of early preemption, the so-called Bush Doctrine. The doctrine was a response to the nexus of WMD, rogue states, and terrorism:

> The gravest danger to freedom lies at the perilous crossroads of radicalism and technology. When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology -- when that occurs, even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations. Our enemies have declared this very intention, and have been caught seeking these terrible weapons. They want the capability to blackmail us, or to harm us, or to harm our friends -- and we will oppose them with all our power.

Against these new threats, deterrence and containment are often powerless:

> Deterrence—the promise of massive retaliation against nations—means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies.

Instead, early preemption is essential to security:

> [T]he war on terror will not be won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge. In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action. And this nation will act.... [O]ur security will require all Americans to be forward-looking and resolute, to be ready for preemptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives.[127]

Chapter V of the NSS discusses the Bush Doctrine in detail under the rubric entitled "Prevent Our Enemies From Threatening Us, Our Allies, and Our Friends with Weapons of Mass Destruction." The current threat from rogue states and terrorists, it argues, is worse than the Cold War.

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[126] Woodward, 87.

[127] *Remarks by the President at 2002 Graduation Exercise of the United States Military Academy*, 2002. Accessed on November 5, 2004. Available from www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06.

[N]ew deadly challenges have emerged from rogue states and terrorists. None of these contemporary threats rival the sheer destructive power that was arrayed against us by the Soviet Union. However, the nature and motivations of these new adversaries, their determination to obtain destructive powers hitherto available only to the world's strongest states, and the greater likelihood that they will use weapons of mass destruction against us, make today's security environment more complex and dangerous. [128]

The common attributes of rogue states are: brutality toward their people and profiteering by their rulers, disregard for international law and treaties and threats to their neighbors, determination to acquire weapons of mass destruction, sponsorship of international terrorism, rejection of basic human values and hatred for the U.S. The U.S.'s "comprehensive strategy to combat WMD" includes counterproliferation ("to prevail in any conflict with WMD-armed adversaries"), nonproliferation (to prevent them from acquiring WMD), and "consequence management" in the event WMD are used against the nation.[129]

The NSS presents early preemption as a replacement for deterrence, and gives three reasons to abandon deterrence as a means to security against rogue states. First, unlike the Soviets, leaders of rogue states are not risk adverse and do not wish generally to preserve the status quo. Second, WMD are weapons of choice for rogue states, not weapons of last resort. Finally, rogue states sponsor undeterable terrorists, who seek martyrdom, take refuge in statelessness, and target innocents with wanton destruction.

The NSS notes that preemption is a long-established and recognized figure under international law. In the past, however, the legitimacy of preemption was conditioned on the imminence of the threat—"most often a visible mobilization of armies, navies, and air forces preparing to attack." That concept, it argues, must be updated to reflect today's threat

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[128] *National Security Strategy*, 2002, 13. Available from www.whitehouse.gov. Accessed on January 13, 2005.
[129] Ibid., 14.

environment. Nowadays, there is a compelling case for "anticipatory action... even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack."[130]

The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (NSCT) combines counterterrorism with an overarching vision of world order. Its stated intent is "to stop terrorist attacks against the United States, its citizens, its interests, and our friends and allies around the world and ultimately, to create an international environment inhospitable to terrorists and all those who support them."[131] The elusiveness and mobility of the terrorists require a worldwide effort: "As our enemies exploit the benefits of our global environment to operate around the world, our approach must be global as well."[132]

Defeating terrorism is "our nation's primary and immediate priority," even "'our calling,' as President Bush has said,"[133] because of the nexus of terrorism and WMD:

> Weapons of mass destruction pose a direct and serious threat to the United States and the entire international community. The probability of a terrorist organization using a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapon, or high-yield explosives, has increased significantly during the past decade... We know that some terrorist organizations have sought to develop the capability to use WMD to attack the United States and our friends and allies. Motivated by extreme, even apocalyptic ideologies, some terrorists' ambitions to inflict mayhem seem unlimited.... The threat of terrorists acquiring and using WMD is a clear and present danger.[134]

A comprehensive response is needed, directed against "terrorist networks, and all those who support their efforts to spread fear around the world" and using "every instrument of national power."[135] This involves a "4D strategy" to defeat terrorists and their organizations, deny sponsorship and sanctuary, diminish the underlying conditions terrorists seek to exploit, and defend U.S. citizens and interests at home and abroad.[136]

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[130] Ibid., 15.
[131] *National Strategy for Combatting Terrorism*, 2003, 11. Available from www.whitehouse.gov. Accessed on January 13, 2005.
[132] Ibid., 29.
[133] Ibid, 19.
[134] Ibid., 9-10.
[135] Ibid., 1.
[136] Ibid., 14-28.

In the NSCT's vision, combating terrorism, defeating rogue nations, promoting civil liberties, human rights, economic policies, and even nation-building coalesce under the umbrella of America's mission and leadership. The war on terrorism is "a clash between civilization and those who would destroy it,"[137] and terrorism is an evil "intent on threatening and destroying our basic freedoms and our way of life."[138] The enemy was not al Qaeda but the underlying ism: "The enemy is not one person. It is not a single political regime. Certainly it is not a religion. The enemy is terrorism—premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents." Consequently no ordinary victory in war would suffice. Rather, the war would end "when Americans and other civilized people around the world can lead their lives free of fear from terrorist attacks."[139] The document concludes with an overarching vision:

> We strive to build an international order where more countries and peoples are integrated into a world consistent with the interests and values we share with our partners—values such as human dignity, rule of law, respect for individual liberties, open and free economies, and religious tolerance. We understand that a world in which these values are embraced as standards, not exceptions, will be the best antidote to the spread of terrorism. This is the world we must build today.[140]

From the beginning, the Bush administration focused on the specific threat of Iraqi WMD and a Saddam-al Qaeda link. On September 11, the very day of the attacks, Rumsfeld raised the possibility of simultaneous strikes against Saddam Hussein and bin Ladin, and asked Wolfowitz to check into an Iraq-bin Ladin connection. The next day Rumsfeld asked the other senior Bush administration officials if the 9/11 attacks did not present an "opportunity" to attack Iraq. The other officials opposed the idea, even as Wolfowitz offered his assessment that there was a

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[137] Ibid., 29.
[138] Ibid., 1.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid., 30.

probability of between 10 and 50 percent that Saddam was involved in the terrorist attacks. A few days later President Bush confirmed that no immediate action would be taken against Iraq.[141]

On November 21, however, Bush instructed Rumsfeld to begin updating the Iraq war plan.[142] Five days later, in response to a reporter's query, Bush issued a vague and precocious ultimatum that Saddam should let the UN inspectors back into Iraq to prove he was not developing WMD or face the consequences. This was followed by a December 1st lead article in the *New York Times* reporting comments by Assistant Secretary of State Armitage that the Bush administration was using the momentum from Afghanistan to force Saddam to readmit WMD inspectors. Three days later Rumsfeld met with the Central Command Combatant Commander, Tommy Franks, to review the initial efforts to update the Iraq war plan. In that meeting Rumsfeld began what would become a continued push to shorten the time to mobilize forces to the vicinity of Iraq, make deployment less visible, and decrease the number of troops needed for the war. Bush received his first briefing on the war plan on December 28. Rumsfeld's push toward less visibility and fewer conventional forces was billed as a new concept that could be used for preemption.[143]

On February 16, Bush formally directed the CIA to support the military in toppling Saddam. The CIA was allocated $189 million for the first year of this effort. Four days later a CIA team entered northern Iraq.[144]

Bush told UK television in early April that he had made up his mind "that Saddam needs to go."[145] Later that month the *New York Times* ran a front-page story headlined, "U.S. Envisions Blueprint on Iraq Including Big Invasion Next Year."[146]

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[141] Woodward, 24-6.
[142] Ibid., 1-2.
[143] Ibid., 53-4.
[144] Ibid., 108-9.

In August 2002 the NSC principals agreed on a National Security Presidential Directive on Iraq. It stated that the U.S. goals were:

> Free Iraq in order to eliminate Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and associated programs, to prevent Iraq from breaking out of containment and becoming a more dangerous threat to the region and beyond.
> End Iraqi threats to its neighbors, to stop the Iraqi government's tyrannizing of its own population, to cut Iraqi links to and sponsorship of international terrorism, to maintain Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. And liberate the Iraqi people from tyranny, and assist them in creating a society based on moderation, pluralism and democracy.[147]

There were indications, however, that the Bush administration would stop short of war. On August 5, Secretary of State Powell met with Bush and argued for internationalizing the administration's efforts, whether through a coalition or the UN. Powell pointed out that UN involvement implied the possibility of a peaceful resolution. Brent Snowcroft, who had been National Security Advisor to Bush's father, wrote an article for *The Wall Street Journal* that denied a link between Saddam and 9/11 or al Qaeda, and in *The Washington Post* former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger warned of the need for public and international support. Cheney attempted to retake the initiative with a speech at the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Nashville on August 26, in which he suggested that weapons inspections were futile, claimed that "there is no doubt" that Saddam was amassing WMD, and argued that the risks of inaction far outweighed those of action.[148] On September 4, however, Rumsfeld made a poor showing in a closed-door briefing on Iraq to the Senate, failing to present new or convincing evidence of an imminent Iraqi threat, and triggering Democratic reluctance to support the war. A few days later, White House Chief of Staff Card made comments in an interview with *The New York Times* that suggested that the Bush administration was approaching the war effort like a company trying to market a new product. His comments understandably generated a

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[145] Ibid., 119.
[146] Ibid., 130.
[147] Ibid., 154-5.
[148] Ibid., 160-4.

negative reaction. A classified Defense Intelligence Agency study in September stated (in Senator Edward Kennedy's paraphrase), "There's no reliable information... whether Iraq is producing, stockpiling chemical weapons, or where Iraq has or will establish its chemical warfare agent production facilities."[149] Concurrently, Franks advised Bush in a briefing on targets in Iraq that the U.S. military could not find Scud missile or other WMD sites to bomb, an admission that might have raised a warning flag in Bush's mind.[150]

To convert the response to al Qaeda's attacks into an effort to eradicate terrorism from the world and to substitute Saddam for bin Laden as the primary focus of U.S. security efforts appear, prima facie, to be serious errors. Professor Jeffrey Record charges that such interpretations violate "the fundamental strategic principles of discrimination and concentration."[151] The "nature and parameters" of the Global War on Terror are "frustratingly unclear." The multiple objectives of the GWOT "condemn the United States to a hopeless quest for absolute security," and "are also politically, fiscally and militarily unsustainable."[152]

Record finds a double fallacy at the heart of the problem. On the one hand, it is futile to declare war on an ism: "to the extent that the GWOT is directed at the phenomenon of terrorism, as opposed to flesh-and-blood terrorist organizations, it sets itself up for strategic failure."[153] Terrorism cannot be clearly defined and attempts to do so "are mired in a semantic swamp," with literature surveys encountering 100 definitions or more with only meager consensus. The inevitable result is that the word is used polemically: the "terrorists" are those who subvert or

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[149] Congress, Senate, Armed Services Committee, *FY 2005 Defense Budget Testimony (Senate Armed Services Committee Transcript)*, February 4, 2004. Available from www.defenselink.mil. Accessed on January 5, 2005.
[150] Woodward, 171-3.
[151] Jeffrey Record, *Bounding the Global War on Terrorism* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2003), vi. Available from www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/. Accessed on January 19, 2005.
[152] Ibid., v.
[153] Ibid., 1-2.

support the established order, depending on which side the labeler favors, and often on when and in what contexts she is speaking.[154]

On the other hand, military force should support rather than lead efforts to combat terrorist organizations:

> [T]he key to their defeat lies in the realms of intelligence and police work, with military forces playing an important but nonetheless supporting role. Beyond the military destruction of al-Qaeda's training and planning base in Afghanistan, good intelligence—and luck—has formed the basis of virtually every other U.S. success against al-Qaeda.[155]

Record finds no evidence to support the Bush administration's judgment that rogue regimes such as Iraq are not susceptible to deterrence. To the contrary:

> the record for rogue states is clear: none has ever used WMD against an adversary capable of inflicting unacceptable retaliatory damage. Saddam Hussein did use chemical weapons in the 1980s against helpless Kurds and Iranian infantry; however, he refrained from employing such weapons against either U.S. forces or Israel during the Gulf War in 1991, and he apparently abandoned even possession of such weapons later in the decade. For its part, North Korea, far better armed with WMD than Saddam Hussein's Iraq, has for decades repeatedly threatened war against South Korea and the United States but has yet to initiate one.[156]

Consequently, the replacement of deterrence with preventive war against rogue states is unwarranted, and, insofar as Iran and North Korea are concerned, even counterproductive, since it apparently has caused them to accelerate their nuclear weapons programs.[157]

Record largely skirts the key question of why the Bush administration chose to interpret 9/11 as it did. He suggests that it subordinated strategic to moral clarity,[158] and that the conflation of threats may have been primarily "for the purposes of mobilizing and sustaining domestic political support."[159] He speculates that the 9/11 attacks "afforded an already predisposed administration the political opportunity to shift to a new counter-proliferation policy based on

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[154] Ibid., 6-7.
[155] Ibid., 3.
[156] Ibid., 17.
[157] Ibid., 30.
[158] Ibid., v.
[159] Ibid., 1.

threatened and actual preventive military action."[160] Bob Woodward's detailed history of the decision to go to war with Iraq indicates that the interpretation was driven by an authentic possibility, however remote, of a WMD terrorist attack against the United States, and by the pre-existing objective of military transformation. The chief proponent of the first driver within the administration was Cheney, who has steadfastly maintained, Woodward writes, that "given the intelligence reporting about Iraq-al Qaeda links over so many years and the intelligence evidence on WMD, no one in his right mind... could have ignored it."[161] Bush implicitly supported Cheney's position in arguing that Iraq's actual weapons stores mattered less than its capabilities: "And so therefore, given that, even if that's the very minimum you had, how could you not act on Saddam Hussein? That's my answer." The 9/11 attacks were a moral watershed, making the Iraq invasion fundamentally different from the Persian Gulf War fought during the presidency of Bush's father: "[T]his decision is not like all of a sudden there is a threat to Kuwait. And boom. This is part of a larger obligation that came to be on September the 11th, 2001. This is part of a larger and a different kind of war. It's like a front."[162]

The champion of the second driver was Rumsfeld. As Bush later told Woodward, Rumsfeld was intent on developing a plan for a precision war that targeted the enemy's leadership and centers of coercive power while largely sparing the lives of the average citizens. The plan would serve as a blueprint for other leaders and future wars. Bush said that this was one of the main reasons he had agreed to be interviewed for Woodward's book, and had urged others in his administration to do likewise: "To me the big news is America has changed how you fight and

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[160] Ibid., 21.
[161] Woodward, 428.
[162] Ibid., 421-4.

win war, and therefore made it easier to keep the peace in the long run. And that's the historical significance of this book as far as I'm concerned."[163]

The interpretative dilemma facing the Bush administration in the aftermath of 9/11 can be modeled as a binary choice: to conflate al Qaeda with its preexisting security agenda or to treat them as separate issues. If it conflated, it could use 9/11 as a way to drive its agenda forward. If it separated them, its prior agenda would inevitably be pushed aside by the requirements of a stand-alone al Qaeda threat: human intelligence, improved international and domestic law enforcement, financial controls, infrastructure protection, port and border control, embassy and overseas military base protection, strike forces for attacks on terrorist leaders and cells, and initiatives to undermine the foundations of al Qaeda's support such as a revitalized Arab-Israeli peace process and the removal of troops from areas with strong anti-American sentiments. The Bush administration has not ignored these latter initiatives, but the resourcing and attention they have received pale in comparison to the amount spent on military efforts. The decision to conflate the 9/11 attacks into a global war on terror and the application of the Bush doctrine to force regime change in Iraq are thus essential to the administration's accomplishments in strengthening the military, which include, by its account, a one-third increase in overall defense spending, double the investment in a missile defense system, an increase of over 50 percent in military research and development, and a comprehensive restructuring of military forces overseas.[164]

It is revealing that Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz had both considered the virtues of crisis as a way to resolve the defense impasse before the 9/11 attacks occurred. When Rumsfeld testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on June 28, 2001, Senator Warner, a Republican from

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[163] Ibid., 425.
[164] *Strengthening Our Military, Supporting Our Veterans: The Accomplishments.* Available from www.whitehouse.gov. Accessed on January 5, 2005.

Virginia, prodded him as to where the funds for military transformation would come from. Rumsfeld responded that the options were not limited to cost-savings measures and trade-offs between risks:

> The third way that it normally happens in our country, let's be honest, is there's a crisis. A major new threat is suddenly on us, there's a conflict, North Korea invades South Korea. And what did we do? We said we couldn't afford an $18 billion budget when it was a $15 billion budget; that Omar Bradley was asking for $18 billion, they said they couldn't afford it; and the next you knew, we had $48 billion and we could afford it just fine because we were in a war.
>   Unfortunately, there is a natural tendency on the part of people to not recognize how critically important to prosperity and to peace in this world the United States armed forces are. They underpin that prosperity and that peace. And we're down to 3 percent of gross national product going to defense. If there were a crisis, we'd be right up to 8 or 10 [percent] in a minute, and we could afford it just fine.[165]

On July 18, Wolfowitz again made the Korean War analogy before the Senate Budget Committee, adding:

> But it is reckless to press our luck or gamble with our children's future. To think we can't afford an insurance policy of roughly 3.5% of GDP today to deter the adversaries of tomorrow and underpin our prosperity, and by extension, peace and stability around the globe, is simply wrong.... President Truman's bottom-line figure of $15 billion represented 32 percent of the federal budget, or just 5 percent of GDP. The jump in spending to $48 billion the war necessitated represented more than 15 percent of the GDP. If history is our guide, it suggests strongly that we are much wiser to pay the premium now than pay it in blood and treasure later.[166]

From this perspective, to have the crisis and then not get the funding would be irresponsible.

Rumsfeld ably used 9/11 to resolve the defense budget impasse. In his February 5 testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee he asked for an extra $48 billion over 2002, arguing that the challenge was to simultaneously win the war on terrorism, catch up on long-delayed investments in procurement, infrastructure, modernization and personnel, and transform the armed forces to prepare for future conflicts. The latter goal included six "transformational goals," accounting for around 20 percent of total expenditures for the next five years: protecting the homeland and overseas bases, projecting power abroad, denying sanctuary to enemies,

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[165] *Testimony Before the Senate Armed Services Committee: Fiscal Year 2002 National Defense Authorization Budget Request*.

[166] Department of Defense, *Testimony Prepared for Delivery to the Senate Budget Committee on the 2002 Defense Budget*, July 18, 2001. Available from www.defenselink.mil. Accessed on January 5, 2005.

protecting information networks, integrating forces through information technology, and protecting space capabilities. The funding increases in the budget for these objectives ranged from 21 percent for power projection to 157 percent for denial of sanctuary. The commitment was to be sustained, with total expenditures for the 2003-07 quinquennium a full $400 billion above the Clinton administration's projection. In the conclusion of his remarks he returned to the Korean War analogy and added:

> In this time of crisis, let us work together to make the investments necessary to win this war—and to prevent the next one. Let us do so chastened by our experiences on September 11th, and with a renewed commitment to ensure that, once the fires burned out, the war ends, and the nation rebuilds, we won't forget the lessons learned at the cost of so many innocent lives; that we won't go back to our old ways of doing things. The lives of our children and grandchildren depend on it.[167]

Rumsfeld followed up with an article in *Foreign Affairs*, in which he argued, "The events of September 11 powerfully make the case for action.... September 11 taught us that the future holds many unknown dangers, and that we fail to prepare for them at our peril." He appealed to a combination of gratitude and enlightened self-interest. "[T]he best way we can show our appreciation" to the men and women in uniform "is to make sure that they have the resources, the capabilities, and the innovative culture not only to win today's war, but to deter and, if necessary, defeat the aggressors we will surely face in the dangerous century ahead."[168] Professor Eliot Cohen noted in the same issue that "money was suddenly no object."[169]

The conflation of 9/11 and Iraq might conceivably have stabilized in September 2002, short of war, but the indeterminacy of the conflation led the Bush administration to attempt to force Saddam's regime to reveal itself. Bush told reporters categorically on September 6 that Saddam had WMD, and key members of the administration followed up with appearances on Sunday

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[167] Department of Defense, *Fiscal Year 2003 Defense Budget Testimony—Senate Armed Services Committee*, February 5, 2002. Available from www.defenselink.mil. Accessed on January 5, 2005.
[168] Donald H. Rumsfeld, "Transforming the Military," *Foreign Affairs* 81:3 (May/June 2002). Available from www.foreignaffairs.com. Accessed on January 6, 2005.
[169] Cohen.

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morning talk shows on TV.[170] On September 12 Bush addressed the United Nations, promising to "work with the U.N. Security Council for the necessary resolutions" to disarm Iraq, but making it clear that he was committed to removing Saddam from power and eliminating Iraqi WMD.[171] During the following week he advised members of the House of Representatives that Saddam and WMD was the biggest threat facing the U.S., and Franks and White House spokesman Ari Fleisher acknowledged that the war plans were ready.[172] On September 19 Rumsfeld publicly stated that Saddam had "amassed large clandestine stockpiles of chemical weapons" that he hid by moving once or twice a day.[173]

On October 2, the CIA released a National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq's WMD capability. The Executive Summary judged that it had chemical and biological weapons, but the body of the document was much more tentative on this conclusion. The CIA had only circumstantial evidence. Of the Saddam-al Qaeda linkage it would say only the following:

> Saddam, if sufficiently desperate, might decide that only an organization such as al Qaeda...would perpetrate the type of terrorist attack that he would hope to conduct. In such circumstances, he might decide that the extreme step of assisting the Islamist terrorists in conducting a [chemical and biological weapons] attack against the United States would be his last chance to exact vengeance by taking a large number of victims with him.[174]

It estimated that Iraq could develop a nuclear weapon by 2007.[175]

Bush gave a prime-time speech on October 7, arguing that to act against Iraq "we cannot wait for the final proof, the smoking gun, that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud." Shortly thereafter the House and Senate passed resolutions by wide margins authorizing Bush to use armed force in Iraq "as he deems to be necessary and appropriate."[176]

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[170] Woodward, 178-9.
[171] Ibid., 180-4.
[172] Ibid., 188.
[173] Congress, Senate, Armed Services Committee, *FY 2005 Defense Budget Testimony (Senate Armed Services Committee Transcript)*.
[174] Woodward, 199.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid., 202-3.

The UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1441 on November 8. It recognized Iraq's non-compliance with UNSC resolutions as a threat to international peace and security, and deplored its nondisclosure of programs and holdings, obstruction of international inspectors, shirking of obligations against terrorism, repression of citizens, and failure to meet obligations for Gulf War restitutions. The resolution afforded Iraq "a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations" under prior resolutions, setting a deadline of 30 days for full declaration of WMD programs. It also demanded unrestricted access for inspectors to all Iraqi installations, records, and personnel. Any failure to comply was to "be reported to the Council for assessment," and continued violations would bring "serious consequences."[177]

Rumsfeld ordered the first major troop deployment on December 6. Two days later the Iraqi government submitted an 11,807-page report to the UN purporting to prove that it had no WMD.[178] Two weeks later the CIA presented its case for Iraq's continued possession of WMD to Bush. The weak evidence disquieted the audience, leading CIA Director Tenant to rectify that the intelligence case against Iraq was "a slam dunk!"[179]

Following a UN Security Council meeting, on January 20, 2003, French Foreign Minister de Villepin told reporters, "Nothing! Nothing!" justified war. On January 24, Franks delivered the final war plan to Rumsfeld, and a day later the Chief of the Vice President's Staff, Libby, made a second and also unconvincing effort to present the intelligence case against Iraq.[180] On January 27, the head of the UN arms inspectors, Han Blix, gave his first report to the Security Council, judging that "Iraq appears not to have come to a genuine acceptance—not even today—of the disarmament which was demanded of it," and noting indications of continued inventories of

[177] United Nations, *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441*, November 8, 2002. Available from www.un.org/documents. Accessed on November 9, 2004.
[178] Woodward, 234.
[179] Ibid., 247-9.
[180] Ibid., 285-9.

anthrax and nerve gas precursors. Bush gave his State of the Union address the next day. He stressed that prior-year inventories of Iraqi chemical and biological weapons and materials were unaccounted for.[181]

On January 31 UK Prime Minister Blair told Bush that he needed a second UN Resolution to garner domestic support for the war, and Bush agreed to try to get it. Powell addressed the Security Council on February 5, making the case that Iraqi had WMD,[182] but five days later French President Chirac, Russian President Putin, and German Chancellor Schroeder called for more arms inspections and peaceful disarmament, with Chirac reiterating, "Nothing justifies war." A few days later Blix gave his second report to the Security Council. It took issue with some of Powell's evidence and refrained from supporting his conclusions. [183]

On March 15, Kurdish insurgents using CIA explosives began a wave of sabotage attacks against Saddam's regime.[184] The next day Bush, Blair, Spanish President Aznar, and Portuguese Prime Minister Durão Barroso met in the Azores Islands, where Bush announced that the Security Council had one day left in which to act.[185] Fleischer announced on March 17 that "the diplomatic window" with the UNSC was shut, and that evening Bush addressed the American people, announcing that Saddam and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours or face military conflict.[186] Blair addressed Parliament on the following day, winning a strong majority vote in favor of the war.[187] On March 19, Bush gave the order to execute Operation Iraqi Freedom.[188]

That same day U.S. forces launched a "decapitation strike" on the Dora Farm complex, southeast of Baghdad, acting on CIA human intelligence that strongly indicated Saddam and his

[181] Ibid., 293-4.
[182] Ibid., 309-12.
[183] Ibid., 315-7.
[184] Ibid., 349-51.
[185] Ibid., 359-60.
[186] Ibid., 365-6.
[187] Ibid., 373-5.
[188] Ibid., 379.

sons were there. They survived the attack.[189] The 1st Marine Division and the Army's 3rd

Infantry Division crossed into Iraq from Kuwait on March 20, and on March 21 an intensive

bombing campaign began.[190] U.S. troops occupied Baghdad on April 9, symbolically toppling a

20-foot tall statue of Saddam, and thousands of Iraqis celebrated in the streets.[191] On May 1,

Bush landed on the aircraft carrier *USS Abraham Lincoln* and addressed the troops under a

banner that read "Mission Accomplished." He announced the end of major combat operations in

Iraq,[192] declaring:

> [The] battle of Iraq is one victory in the war on terror that began on September 11, 2001—and still goes on. That terrible morning, 19 evil men—the shock troops of a hateful ideology—gave America and the civilized world a glimpse of their ambitions... The liberation of Iraq is a crucial advance in the campaign against terror. We've removed an ally of al Qaeda, and cut off a source of terrorist funding. And this much is certain: No terrorist network will gain weapons of mass destruction from the Iraqi regime, because the regime is no more.[193]

Subsequent events tainted the triumph. No weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq,

thus casting doubt on the legitimacy of the war and revealing the inadequacy of U.S. intelligence

concerning Iraq's WMD threat. Within Iraq, a bloody insurgency developed, led by elements

from the former regime, radical Iraqi Islamists, and a small number of foreign fighters, often

with al Qaeda ties.[194] It hampered reconstruction efforts, caused a steady accumulation of U.S.

casualties particularly from roadside explosive devices, and burdened the treasury with an

expenditure of around $4 billion per month. The number of troops killed from May through

August exceeded the death count for the period of major combat operations,[195] and more than

100 officials of the new government were killed. Terrorists succeeded in blowing up the UN

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[189] Ibid., 397-8.
[190] Ibid., 401-3.
[191] Ibid., 408.
[192] Ibid., 413.
[193] Record, 15.
[194] Bruce Hoffman, "Plan of Attack: Insurgents in Iraq Are Forging Improbable Alliances to Fight What Some Analysts Call a 'Netwar," *The Atlantic Monthly* 294:1 (June-July 2004), 42.
[195] Record, 35-6.

headquarters, killing the head of the mission and a dozen others and causing the UN to leave the country.

The violence, the stunted recovery that resulted from the insecurity, and the counterinsurgency measures turned many Iraqis against the U.S. The administration failed to foresee that most Iraqis would receive the coalition forces with suspicion, and that the foreign presence would evoke painful memories of European imperialism. The Bush administration also did not understand that the Sunni minority, some 20 percent of the total population, saw Saddam's overthrow as a grave threat to their privileges, and were prepared to resist the consolidation of a democratic order in which they stood to loose in relative and perhaps absolute terms.[196] Despite the presence of some 300 CIA case officers in Baghdad, the U.S. was unable to obtain effective counterinsurgency intelligence or even reliably estimate the size of the enemy, leading Rumsfeld to comment: "We know we're killing a lot, capturing a lot, collecting arrests. We just don't know yet whether that's the same as winning."[197]

The force required to prevent the looting and sabotage of Iraqi infrastructure and secure and pacify the country proved far greater than the number required to depose Saddam Hussein, yet the Bush administration was loathe to increase the number of troops deployed. Instead, it relied increasingly on non-professional soldiers with weak guidance and supervision.[198] National Guardsmen and reservists came to account for 40 percent of the U.S. force in Iraq.[199] These deficiencies together with the frustration at the undefeated insurgency and dearth of actionable intelligence led to the mistreatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison, compounding the anti-

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[196] Larry Diamond, "What Went Wrong in Iraq" *Foreign Affairs* 83:5 (September/October 2004). Available from www.foreignaffairs.org. Accessed on January 6, 2004.
[197] Hoffman.
[198] Diamond.
[199] Congress, Senate, Armed Services Committee, *FY 2005 Defense Budget Testimony (Senate Armed Services Committee Transcript)*.

American sentiment. The Iraqi army itself collapsed, forestalling the possibility of using the rank-and-file to control the population. Iraqi policemen were put on the job with little training and inadequate equipment, and often were easy prey to the enemies of the coalition. Heavily armed militia, including the 50,000-strong Kurdish Pesh Merga, the private armies of the major Shiite parties, and the Madhi army of the radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr were permitted to exist. Sadr openly defied the occupying forces, and as coalition authorities vacillated and improvised Sadr's militia grew and he began to impose a Talibanesque rule within his area of influence. The coalition then found itself in a position of relying on the other militia to control him.[200]

U.S. defense spending has continued to grow. The Defense Department's budget authority reached $442 billion in 2004—a 37 percent increase in real terms over the 2000 authorization, with about half of the increase related to the ongoing costs of the Iraq occupation. The original 2005 authorization contemplated an 11 percent reduction in real terms, apparently reflecting an assumption of lower costs following the January 2005 Iraqi elections,[201] but in January 2005 the Bush administration requested $80 billion more for Iraq and Afghanistan, implying a total increase of almost 50 percent in real terms since 2000.[202] The war-related expenditures, of course, have effects well beyond the borders of that country. Already in May 2003 Rumsfeld was stressing the need to "apply the lessons from the experience in Iraq" to the process of transformation. The preliminary lessons included the importance of speed to prevent the opponent from developing a coherent defense, intelligence and the ability to respond quickly to

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[200] Diamond.

[201] Department of Defense, *National Defense Budget for the Year 2005*. Available from www.dod.mil/comptroller/defbudget. Accessed on January 19, 2005.

[202] Alan Fram, "Bush Wants $80B More for Iraq, Afghan Wars," *Comcast News*, January 25, 2005. Available from www.comcast.net. Accessed on February 5, 2005.

time sensitive targets, precision to protect lives and avoid refugee problems, joint operations, and special forces.[203]

Outside the U.S., the invasion was interpreted as a signal of the belligerent and imperialistic character of the U.S. itself. The 9/11 Report cited 2002 polls showing that in Egypt, which has been the largest Muslim recipient of U.S. aid over the past 20 years, only 15 percent of the population viewed the United States favorably, while in Saudi Arabia, another key ally, only 12 percent had a favorable opinion. In Indonesia and Muslim Nigeria, favorable ratings of the United States fell from 61 percent to 15 percent and 71 percent to 38 percent respectively from 2002 to 2003. Across the Muslim world—including the NATO ally, Turkey—two-thirds of respondents feared that the U.S. would attack them.[204] Meanwhile, Europeans saw the war as a potential paradigm for a world system in which the U.S. acts unilaterally, relying on its enormous military strength. The inclination to criticise the U.S. is strengthened by the difficult aftermath of the war.[205]

The counterinterpretation hinders U.S. efforts to secure cooperation from other countries in counterterrorism and other initiatives. Scheuer is characteristically bleak in *Imperial Hubris*, asserting, "The military is now America's only tool and will remain so while current policies are in place."[206] Joseph Nye's more cautious observation is probably closer to the mark. "The United States cannot confront the new threat of terrorism without the cooperation of other countries," but "the extent of their cooperation often depends on the attractiveness of the United States," he notes. "When the United States become so unpopular that being pro-American is a

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[203] Department of Defense, *Prepared Statement for the Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee: 2004 Defense Bill Request*, May 14, 2003. Available from www.defenselink.mil. Accessed on January 5, 2005.
[204] The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 375.
[205] Robert Kagan, "America's Crisis of Legitimacy," *Foreign Affairs* 83:2 (March/April 2004). Available from www.foreignaffairs.org. Accessed on January 6, 2004.
[206] Anonymous, x.

kiss of death in other countries' domestic politics, foreign political leaders are unlikely to make helpful concessions." [207]

Bin Laden is the clear winner in this reinterpretation. His popularity waxed as support for the U.S. plummeted, showing, in Richard Holbrooke's words, that "a man in a cave [can] outcommunicate the world's leading communications society."[208] Al Qaeda and its sympathizers also have catalyzed the development of a large Internet communication network among radical Muslims.   Since 2002 al Qaeda supporters, principally Saudi, Yemeni, and Egyptian intelligentsia, have placed dozens of articles on Islamist websites and in on-line magazines. Islamist web sites and chat rooms have multiplied, and military, security, and intelligence training is now available on line to would-be terrorists.[209] Al Qaeda has been frustrated in its efforts to attack the U.S. homeland, but it has shown its ability to inflict mass casualties in countries ranging from Indonesia (over 200 killed by a suicide car bomb in a Bali nightclub in October 2002[210]) to Spain (191 killed by ten nearly simultaneous bombs on the subway in March 2004[211]). As of early 2004, 65 percent of Pakistanis, 55 percent of Jordanians, and 45 percent of Moroccans viewed bin Laden favorably.[212]

Record reserves his strongest criticism for the Iraq War, charging that it was "a strategic error of the first order," leading to "an unnecessary preventive war of choice against a deterred Iraq that has created a new front in the Middle East for Islamic terrorism and diverted attention and resources away from securing the American homeland against further assault... The war against

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[207] Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "The Decline of America's Soft Power," *Foreign Affairs* 83:3 (May/June 2004). Available from www.foreignaffairs.org. Accessed on January 6, 2004.
[208] The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, 377.
[209] Anonymous, 80-1.
[210] Ibid., 94.
[211] Ibid., 100.
[212] The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, *A Year After Iraq War: Mistrust of America in Europe Even Higher, Muslim Anger Persists*, March 16, 2004. Available from www.people-press.org. Accessed on January 30, 2005.

Iraq was not integral to the GWOT, but rather a detour from it."[213] It "saddled the U.S. armed forces, especially the U.S. Army, with costly and open-ended imperial policing and nation-building responsibilities outside the professional military's traditional mission portfolio." Most U.S. ground forces "are not properly trained" for counterinsurgency. Unlike traditional European wars, the Iraq insurgency is unlikely to have a clear end since its members cannot be decisively defeated, have no immediate territorial objectives of note, and eschew decisive combat.[214]

Given the chance to do it over again, one can only hope that the Bush administration would be less feckless in its occupation of Iraq. Even in retrospect, however, it is unsurprising that the Bush administration chose to go to war, given its genuine fears and moral and ideological inclinations, the allure of conflation as a means to break the budget impasse on military transformation, and the rankling of inconclusiveness concerning the nature of the Saddam menace. The most surprising aspect of the war was Saddam's failure, given Iraq's true dearth of WMD, to preempt invasion through greater cooperation with the UN inspectors. Rumsfeld put it well in defending the administration's assessment of Iraq's WMD stores before the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 2004:

> [H]e continued to give up tens of billions of dollars in oil revenues under U.N. sanctions when he could have had the sanctions lifted and received those billions of dollars simply by demonstrating that he'd disarmed, if in fact he had. Why did he do this? His regime filed with the United Nations what almost everyone agreed was a fraudulent declaration, and ignored the final opportunity afforded him by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441. Why?[215]

It may be that Saddam gambled that Iraq's actions following Resolution 1441 were sufficient to forestall the U.S.-led invasion. Saddam also may have concluded that the U.S. would invade no matter what, or perhaps he himself erroneously thought that Iraq still had stores of WMD. As it

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[213] Record, v.
[214] Ibid., 3-4.
[215] Congress, Senate, Armed Services Committee, *FY 2005 Defense Budget Testimony (Senate Armed Services Committee Transcript)*.

was, Iraq neither defied the U.S. nor accepted its conditions. Blix's assessment of Iraq's underlying attitude in his first report to the Security Council was deemed sufficient warrant for the U.S. to proceed. Regardless of where Saddam's error lay, the Iraq War illustrates the hazards of assuming that an opponent will behave rationally when confronted with an ultimatum.

The second great unknown is the extent to which al Qaeda foresaw how events would unfold after 9/11. By December 2001, Bin Laden's lieutenant Al-Zawahiri was arguing that the provoked U.S. would "personally wage the battle against the Muslims," offering an opportunity for "a clear-cut jihad against infidels."[216] The excessive U.S. response—at least in Muslim eyes—and the consequent polarization and insurgency are proceeding apace.

At the minimum, the widely held belief must be debunked that the 9/11 terrorists were, and al Qaeda's leaders are, irrational fanatics. Terrorism is "a thinking man's game," in the words of George Habash, who co-founded the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Terrorist organizations with blundering leaders generally do not survive. Some, such as Habash himself and al Qaeda's chief strategist al Zawahiri, are renowned physicians. Omar Saeed Sheikh, the al Qaeda operative who kidnapped journalist Daniel Pearl in Pakistan, is a former British chess champion who studied mathematics at the London School of Economics.[217]

Iraq, like the Korean War, illustrates the game theoretic model presented at the beginning of this report. All phases are present: the initial impasse caused by the irreconcilability of tax cuts and budget increases, the shock of 9/11, the interpretation of that event in terms of a WMD threat from Iraq, the challenge to Saddam to test the interpretation, and the counterinterpretation by the rest of the world, and Muslims in particular, as a sign of the true nature of the aggressor. The model offers little guidance for how to correct situations that already exist. In considering its

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[216] Coll, 383.
[217] Gordon Woo, *Understanding Terrorism Risk*. Available from www.rms.com. Accessed on June 17, 2004.

options with regard to Iraq, the Bush administration would do well to consult "Rumsfeld's Rules," the miscellaneous set of maxims, aphorisms and guidelines that Rumsfeld first compiled in 1974, and revised in February 2001. The rule that best applies to the current situation is on the first page, under the rubric of Serving in the White House: "It is easier to get into something than it is to get out of it."[218] The U.S. still seems to lack a coherent and realistic plan to bring the insurgency under control. Moving forward with the elections and consolidating a new Iraqi government is clearly the right direction.

Meanwhile the defense transformation strategy suffers from a troubling myopia, despite the talk of lessons learned for future conflicts. First, the debate about purported intelligence failures leading to the erroneous assumption of Iraqi WMD stores is off the mark. The failure was not in intelligence but rather in the Bush administration's use of the intelligence in service of its judgment that deterrence in the post-9/11 world is obsolete. The nation's strategists should develop a revitalized concept of deterrence appropriate to the realities of the era and rebuild the National Security Strategy around it. The debate on deterrence, however, has yet to be joined.

Secondly, military victory should be redefined in light of Iraq to include not only the swift defeat of the enemy regimes with minimal destruction of non-military property and civilian casualties and displacement, but also the securing of military depots and property from looting, the closure of borders against external agents, the enforcement of civil peace, the early and decisive response to budding insurgencies, firm and effective response to open defiance, and the maintenance of international legitimacy. Future war plans should be based on this broader and more realistic definition of victory, and fully address how it will be achieved. A substantial portion of future budgetary expenditures should be directed to developing the capability to avoid

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[218] Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Rumsfeld's Rules*, 2001. Available from www.library.villanova.edu. Accessed on January 17, 2005.

or stiffle guerrilla "netwars"[219] after major combat operations have concluded. These capabilities include controlling insurgent communications within postwar areas and thwarting car bombs, roadside mines, and suicide attacks. The training of national guardsmen and reservists also needs to be refocused and enhanced to prepare them for the work of occupation.

CONCLUSION

The main benefit of this study lies not in the insight that it offers into the Korean and Iraq Wars or in the recommendations that it stimulates concerning the national security strategy. Rather, it lies in the utility of the model in analyzing and responding to future events as they unfold. At best, security strategists and policy makers, legislators and analysts will apply the game theoretic model presented herein explicitly to diagnose situations: identifying biases toward conflation when interpreting the events, recognizing screening games for what they are, highlighting possibly erroneous assumptions of the other's rationality, fully considering and to the extent possible avoiding the reinterpretation of screening challenges as signals, and analyzing the possibility that an agent has precipitated an event to mobilize resources from a target constituency. It is not too much to demand that those who lead the nation into war, and those who bear the responsibility for checks and balances on the exercise of power, will deliberate thoroughly, carefully, and as objectively as they can before they choose the path of war or allow it to be chosen. Nor is it unreasonable to demand that wars be waged with the full scope and range of contingencies and outcomes in mind.

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[219] Hoffman.

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