Editorial

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Editorial

  This issue of *Air and Space Power Journal–Africa and Francophonie* offers perceptive articles on a variety of subjects ranging from speculation about the future of airpower to an examination of the problem of collapsed states in Africa. Specifically, in "Thinking about Air and Space Power in 2025," Lt Gen Denis Mercier of the French Air Force suggests five guiding principles that could shape tomorrow's airpower, affirming that "the flight toward 2025 will take place in the air and space environment." Next, Prof. James Wood Forsyth Jr. believes that realism is in our future. As we discover in his article "The Past as Prologue: Realist Thought and the Future of American Security Policy," contemporary international events give weight to that assertion. Professor Forsyth points out that because states have no universal principles to guide them, they must remain aware of other states' actions and use a pragmatic approach to resolve problems as they arise. In the same vein, Dr. Cheryl Graham, in "To Deter or Not to Deter: Applying Historical Lessons to the Iranian Nuclear Challenge," exhorts us to consider what we learned from China's push to join the nuclear club and apply that knowledge to Iran. Another piece debates the effectiveness of state building, particularly whether such an endeavor influences Iraqis' support of the occupation. In "Assessing the Claims of State-Building Skeptics: Occupation and Counterinsurgency in Iraq," Dr. Alana Querze tentatively affirms the utility of state building as part of a sound counterinsurgency strategy. Finally, Prof. Nikolas Emmanuel's article "Self-Help and Africa's Collapsed States: The Critical Role of Subregional Hegemons" explores the part played by Africa's subregional core states in confronting the problem presented by the continent's failed states. His research addresses the policy question of how major international powers may be able to help these essential players in developing the capacity and legitimacy to tackle this difficult issue.

Rémy M. Mauduit, Editor
Air and Space Power Journal–Africa and Francophonie
Maxwell AFB, Alabama

Thinking about Air and Space Power in 2025

Five Guiding Principles

Lt Gen Denis Mercier, French Air Force*

The year 2025 is not far away. However, the coming years will doubtless surprise us since geostrategic or technological developments are so unpredictable. The air and space environment will certainly feature major breakthroughs that we must be ready to face. This article does not claim to treat this topic comprehensively; rather, it suggests a few principles that one can apply to support a view of the stakes for tomorrow's airpower.

Preparing for the future is difficult. One must select the time frame in order to build an innovative but realistic and reachable vision. Economist Peter Drucker used to argue that "the essence of planning is to make present decisions with knowledge of their futurity."[1] Indeed, the years between now and 2025 have already been defined by a program of orders and deliveries

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that scales the format of military forces until 2020, within a given financial framework influenced by military forces. Consequently, any modification remains subject to the law of interconnectedness, whereby a new program must replace another one, or several, in order to avoid budgetary problems. Because such planning freezes capabilities until 2020, it takes on a budgetary character and limits strategic thinking to the time frame in question. Consequently, if we wish to go outside this framework, we must look beyond. The 2025 time frame is significant because it gives strategic thinking a renewed scope, keeping in mind the objective of shedding light on the future so we can better assess today's decisions.

Various approaches present themselves and numerous parameters require assessment as we seek to plan air and space power for the year 2025. Given the difficulty of creating a definite vision of the future that will not be misunderstood, this article offers five principles that allow us to avoid the dual pitfalls of a vision that is too futuristic and disconnected from reality, or an approach that lacks innovativeness because of constraints imposed by current projects and studies.

First Principle:
Overcoming Current Thinking, Which Can Bind Future Ideas

Although we must open up our thinking in a spirit of operational and technical innovation, Air Marshal Sir John C. Slessor reminds us that the lessons of the past still represent a tremendous source of data and experiments that we can revisit in anticipation of tomorrow's stakes.[2] Neither the visions of the future nor the lessons of the past, but the tyranny of today's commitments imposes constraints on our thinking. It is very tempting to scrutinize operations in Afghanistan as a way of imagining models of future forces, but the present is hazardous in that it has a strong legitimacy in countries where the news and coverage by the media exert much influence on public opinion. Airpower plays a significant role in Afghanistan but remains insufficiently promoted. On the one hand, its appreciation comes from successes that were as continuous as discreet; on the other hand, the visibility of its action is reflected in the land engagement. Airpower thus provides continuous surveillance, makes possible the stealthy designation of targets in a country with a number of natural or man-made vertical obstacles, offers a wide range of kinetic or nonkinetic effects, and frees itself

from land constraints for the transportation of personnel and equipment, all the while minimizing losses among both allied troops and civilians.

Several incorrect lessons drawn from that engagement involved air-power. Given the very nature of the operation and fighting, we employed airpower in a wide range of missions, leveraging its variety of networked, interacting capabilities that combine their effects to benefit the tactical level. This situation reflects both the magic and perversity of networked operations. That is, integrating ever more versatile capabilities that cooperate in open operating modes, regardless of the level of use to which they belong, increases the effectiveness of tactical actions conducted in the field. However, we forget that under other circumstances, some of the capabilities offer courses of action that produce a substantial range of effects at the strategic level.

Thus, using a new-generation reconnaissance pad on a modern plat-form such as the Rafale or F-22 will supply the theater commander with highly significant images, but it raises the question of whether employing such platforms for this task constitutes overkill. However, these platforms equipped with that sensor, having taken off from the homeland and operating stealthily thousands of kilometers from their base, will give decision makers essential information on very short notice—a major strategic role.

The relevance of strategic platforms does not necessarily lie in high-intensity operations. The termination of the Mirage IV in 2005 after 41 years of service made France neglect, for a while, long-range missions, whether reconnaissance or stealthy strikes against highly valued targets. Recent operations, including the conflict in Afghanistan, generated tactical lessons that ignored this ability—important for any powerful nation—to take advantage of airspace fluidity to conduct strategic missions against distant targets. The lack of such capabilities may have led us to consider them useless. In such instances, past engagements can enlighten us. The pre-positioning of forces has hidden the benefits of immediate projection. However, more distant, new areas of interest—along with the need for certain stealthy missions—renew the relevance of capabilities whose ubiquity allows them to gather intelligence or strike with very short notice, including targets at great distances.

Operations in Libya offer a good illustration. Falling within the frame-work of Resolution 1973, passed on 17 March 2011 by the United Nations Security Council following a Franco-British initiative, the engagement of

air forces (first from France as early as 19 March [Operation Harmattan] and then from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, starting on 24 March [Operation Unified Protector]) demonstrated the strategic advantages provided by the air arm in terms of reach, adaptability, or long-distance strikes. The first bombs used during those air operations were dropped by French Air Force Rafales and Mirage 2000Ds that had taken off a few hours earlier from their bases (Saint Dizier and Nancy), located more than 3,000 kilometers from the intervention area. The interdiction, reconnaissance, and ground attack operations conducted in Libya's airspace also show the diversity of missions in which air forces can participate, including those in an environment less permissive than a theater such as Afghanistan due to the existence, admittedly limited, of surface-to-air threats. Those operations over Libya, which officially ended on 31 October 2011, remind us of the importance of not focusing our thinking only on counterinsurgency operations even though the latter seem to characterize the modern era.

Using lessons from current operations is easy and free of risk because they give legitimacy to investments. As far as airpower is concerned, if the last decade involved tactical operations, everything suggests that the future will entail strategic actions or a combination of both—the first aspect influencing quantities and the second, clarity and identity. Ultimately, strategic missions—as illustrated by the operations over Libya, among others—differentiate pure airpower from an air force that operates for the sole benefit of ground forces. As a matter of fact, these missions might represent a kind of transition between this tactical decade and the future that airpower will have to confront. We might as well consider them a warning about the potential risk of reducing airpower to a tactical dimension. To think of the air arm this way would strain its capabilities and harm the know-how that shapes its engagement.

Second Principle:
Distinguishing among Effectors, Systems, and Platforms

Tomorrow's airpower probably will rely less on complete platform-based systems, as is the case today. A platform is nothing in itself. Distinguishing among effectors, systems, and platforms allows greater flexibility and certainly better adaptability.

Effectors Produce Effects

The mission's effectiveness depends on the effectors (e.g., air-to-air or air-to-ground weapons, cameras, data-collection pods, cannons, or other devices). Different platforms can use the same effector. The effectors will become more varied in order to adapt to the power, lethality, use, and accuracy of the force. The credibility of airpower will rest on the most complete mix of effectors handling all types of missions. By 2025 new effectors that enable better control of force and engagement of stealthier targets will join the mix. Later on, new effectors will appear as we develop nonkinetic effects, smart weapons, and directed-energy weapons. Furthermore, a combination of sensors able to collect information in a wide range of frequencies will enhance the accuracy of intelligence and surveillance.

Systems Provide Interoperability and Determine the Level of Network Integration

The system makes an effector more or less effective. Technology permits a sophisticated system to adapt to unsophisticated platforms—take, for instance, the Americans' use of older aircraft such as the A-10 in Afghanistan. Having proven its survivability, this aircraft carries out its air support missions perfectly, certainly better in this environment than would a new-generation platform. The A-10's system underwent complete updating to take into account the complexity of engagements, but its effectors remained very similar to those of the most modern aircraft. The system's open architecture and capacity to communicate with other systems determine integration into complex operations. The worldwide proliferation of airpower largely depends upon the integration of systems into a vast range of platforms.

The system causes effectors and platforms to cooperate. By 2025 we may begin to conduct continuous area surveillance with great accuracy and a proper refresh rate from satellites. If the accuracy of intelligence obtained through satellites becomes widespread, transmitting from space in real time over a given area would represent a true breakthrough in terms of surveillance capabilities.

Lastly, systems are associated with norms on which interoperability depends. Those norms will continue to lie at the center of major issues in the future. Given the development of networks and cooperative capabilities,

systems will become the object of power struggles that weigh as much on industry as on the ability to operate within a coalition.

Platforms Determine Missions

Very long range strategic platforms offer reach and omnipresence, whether for strikes, reconnaissance, or transport missions. The United States divides its platforms, distinguishing between strategic and tactical. For a country such as France, which has chosen versatility, the lessons from recent conflicts show the need for thinking about this principle in the design as well as the use of platforms. Any such analysis necessitates drawing on all lessons learned from the operational use of the Rafale, the A400M transport aircraft, and the multirole tanker and transport aircraft. The flexibility of certain capabilities and the integration of a substantial range of equipment and effectors (so long as they have an interoperable architecture) allow us to contemplate true operational advancements. However, even if the versatility of platforms permits multiple uses at different levels, this feature may create redundancy issues at the tactical level. As such, excessive versatility may hinder the understanding and visibility of a capability's strategic character.

Recognizing that their fleets could become one of a kind and continue to operate for the next 30 to 40 years, most countries have engaged in a modernization process. Air forces must be able to react to the speed and unpredictability of strategic and technological developments that emerge in 2025 and beyond. Although current capabilities are intended to be evolutionary, one should nevertheless pursue the analysis of operational interest of new platforms, such as long-range heavy airlifters, possibly combining combat and support functions; manned, remotely piloted, or even optionally manned delivery systems; airships; and miniature systems able to operate in swarms.

In preparing airpower for its flight toward 2025, one must do more than remove concerns about preserving the necessary flexibility to migrate toward innovative capabilities while avoiding unique fleet pitfalls. More than likely, budgets and maintenance costs will not allow significant fleet enlargement, but keeping certain fleets in service beyond 2025 may create a new window of modernization different than the midlife updates of platforms designed to last for 30 or 40 years, which hinders innovation.

This situation applies to combat as well as transport capabilities. That is, transported resources, covered distances, and deployment bases may favor the development of platforms with more or less tactical capabilities that can operate from various environments. Aircraft capable of conducting operations from makeshift airfields (e.g., heavy or light air-mobility vehicles) will complement transport fleets, and new platforms such as heavy or fast helicopters—even airships—may appear.

Wherever possible, one must emphasize simplicity through solutions that are pragmatic, affordable, and appropriate to the operational context and geographic environment. The year 2025 and beyond will feature many dual platforms whose onboard systems will differentiate their military capability.

Surveillance depends upon the sensor, which guides thinking and provides broad or narrow coverage as well as accuracy. The system creates interoperability, integration, and data transmission within the required time frame. The platform, which determines use, compromising among vulnerability, speed, and persistence, may function in different environments and may be interchangeable.

A primitive platform dedicated to a specific environment and possibly derived from existing equipment will carry out targeted tasks better than a multipurpose generic delivery system. A good-quality electro-optical turret installed on a tactical transport or light aircraft may prove quite effective in certain environments and conditions of use. A drone will offer persistence, a transport aircraft interchangeability and horizontal reach, and a satellite near invulnerability and vertical extension. Combat aircraft would prove more suitable for reconnaissance.

Surveillance and reconnaissance missions become more effective through a broad combination of platforms such as manned or remotely piloted aircraft, drones, and satellites, each complementing the others. An important differentiation lies in the ability to operate inside or outside sovereign spaces. However, these considerations must not make us forget that platforms give airpower its identity and that they remain the most important element of missions executed in the core of the air and space power domain.

Globalization extends the area of strategic interest worldwide, making air and space power all the more relevant. The ability to reach any point in the world through the air and outer space heightens the importance of commanding the endo- and exoatmospheric spaces. This struggle for command

of air spaces involves open confrontation between opponents, unlike the situation in land or ocean spaces, where asymmetric courses of action undermine the equilibrium. In the realm of air and space power, however, the strongest prevails. Confrontations on land may combine primitive and modern capabilities effectively, but air war requires force and domination since the opponent is never asymmetric. (Granted, a number of nonstate actors [e.g., the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Tigers) and Hezbollah] operate in the third dimension either by engaging platforms, including remotely controlled ones, or by trying to challenge traditional air and space powers for use of the third dimension.) The current air arms race and the proliferation of sophisticated combat aircraft or surface-to-air systems offer the best illustration of the force and domination that air war demands. A platform is a most important and obvious component of domination.

Long-range conventional or unconventional strategic missions also rely on platforms. These missions, along with airspace control, will characterize tomorrow's airpower. However, combat support, reconnaissance, in-theater air mobility, or ground attack—all of them less strategic in nature, depending on the level of space control—can make do with primitive platforms.

Air and space capabilities often attract criticism because they are expensive. Thus, more flexible capabilities would better meet our needs while keeping costs under control. This approach must guide air and space power as it adjusts to future circumstances and resists overreliance on versatile effectors, systems, and platforms. Although they do not determine quantities, platforms related to space control and strategic missions will give airpower its clarity and condition its identity, as they did in the past. By this logic, distinguishing among effectors, systems, and platforms will shape the development of tomorrow's industrial landscape as well as national or international cooperation.

Third Principle:
Discriminating Personnel for Future Systems

A capability consists of effectors, a system, and a platform. The operator, the most important link, whether inside or outside the platform, produces the effect. With new delivery systems such as drones, the main operator controls the sensor since all or part of the flying can be automated. This arrangement closely links the operator to the effector, whereas the mission's success

previously depended more on flying the platform. This new role for operators leads to a thorough rethinking of their skills and training.

Airpower will become more dependent upon the cooperation of several capabilities. Air refueling, for example, strengthens the strategic nature of a delivery system by giving it extra reach. The same tanker can act as a picture- or video-transmission relay, thus offering real-time operation. Data links increase mission effectiveness, whether by controlling spaces or cooperating with ground or naval forces. Surveillance systems feed combat capabilities, providing them with updated situations.

These examples will only multiply, allowing any air capability to fit better in more environments, to manage its data, and to create the appropriate effect with the right pacing. This cooperation among capabilities, the result of networking actors who operate in all environments, will have no bounds, as satellites explode the boundaries of visual range. Limitations will become increasingly human; for instance, airpower's handling of information will depend on the ability of men and women to do so. In 2025 and beyond, the coexistence of different platforms and their communication capabilities both in-theater and worldwide will multiply their effectiveness tenfold. Technology makes that possible.

Although today's technology levels the playing field—unlike the situation during previous generations, when pilots' combat skills differentiated between them—the ability to integrate and fit into complex networks will likely become defining. Airmen will not have an equal understanding of complex systems. Some will have the capacity and training to devise networks and understand their place in uncertain environments in which they can determine their perimeter of responsibility; others will be destined to act only in a limited number of bounded networks. These differences will prove fundamental in planning as well as in command and control and operations, inevitably creating expansive disparities. We must prepare for this eventuality, analyze the related skills, and fit them into training. Thus, the current military reform in France may produce a beneficial side effect. That is, by understanding their place in the new complex organizations and networks involving many actors, individuals will have indirectly prepared themselves for future operational environments.

Fourth Principle:
Acknowledging Joint Integration's Dependence upon Airpower

The airspace is a shared environment. All of the world's forces include airmen who contribute to airpower development. Airmen will continue their association with all types of engagement, one way or the other, through transport, strike, ground attack, support, surveillance, or intelligence missions.

The airman will become indispensable. The infantryman in Afghanistan does not see the airman, yet the latter is present everywhere—flying drones remotely; embedding with commandos; controlling close air support missions; flying combat or transport aircraft; or operating in command and conrol structures, merging information and providing updated data to in-theater commanders. By having airmen operate in any environment, we guarantee freedom of movement. The networking and coordinating of all air capabilities will allow airmen to fit even better into operations in their entirety.

Even though joint work within staffs has existed for a long time, we need improvements in the field. Understanding airpower's role in all aspects of an operation's execution will facilitate true joint integration, permitting more integrated courses of action. We can do this only if all airpower components interconnect in common networks that are not partitioned into environmental segments, such as air-land or air-sea segments. The full integration of air capabilities of different environments and services will enhance joint cooperation at the tactical level.

Fifth Principle:
Airpower Will Move Higher and Drive Future Industrial Challenges

The year 2025 will likely see such innovations as the more flexible use of outer space and the commonplace employment of medium- and high-altitude drones. The self-deployment of drones and their integration into air traffic will give these platforms a strategic character, putting them at the core of airpower and allowing more interdepartmental use. In the more distant future, technical advances will lead to the development of stratospheric drones (high-altitude platforms), adding the benefits of increased persistence and space observation without suffering the drawbacks of the air and space environments. When the technology becomes available, the use of the stratosphere—a space still free today—will become an important issue for

civil and military traffic. The first vehicles to use it will likely be long-endurance drones. Once access to this realm becomes widespread, the nature of its first use, civilian or military, will determine the weight in the development of future regulations.

By 2025 we may witness such space missions as satellite de-orbiting as well as the interception or destruction of space vehicles. Clearly some countries are positioning themselves for these developments, having learned that investing in this field is not as costly as commonly thought. Any country that wishes to become a major actor in space must find a strategy which encourages evolution of the requisite know-how and technologies. For example, launching a supply module to the international space station and then controlling it from the ground demonstrates real skills in this field. Despite budgetary constraints, the continuation of studies such as those designed to develop reactive space interception modules will prove essential to controlling freedom of action in space during the future.

The flight toward 2025 also involves industrial stakes. With regard to progressive areas such as space or drones, the armed forces will continue to act as a driving force and partner in industrial development. These stakes will depend upon the military's accommodation of existing or future regulations and its investment in the human and financial resources necessary to guarantee the freedom of use and movement in shared environments.

Conclusion

Only the decisions made in the appropriate window of opportunity will prove correct. To be right too early is as useless as letting opportunities go by. Planning the future involves foreseeing the consequences of today's decisions, taking into consideration lessons from the past. Airpower suffers from a major constraint as it attempts to imagine the future: more than any other force, it is subject to technological developments. Although certain areas draw their inspiration from yesterday's great battles and established principles of war, technological breakthroughs modify the evolution of air strategy. This dimension overlaps the others and complicates thinking.

In 2025 and beyond, a complex reality will combine manned and remotely piloted—or even optionally manned—vehicles. The continuity of endo- and exoatmospheric spaces will become more obvious. More or less sophisticated platforms will operate side by side, overlapping civil and

military applications. And the third dimension will witness all manner of confrontations. This complexity will continue to encounter criticism because that which is hard to understand tends to intimidate. A new dimension, communication, will become a priority in order to explain how actors in various environments will benefit from these developments, giving rise to challenges involving training, the integration of air and space power in the future, and, as a consequence, the identity of those who control air and space capabilities.

Air-land operations will remain tied to the land environment, as will air-sea actions to the maritime environment. The full spectrum of strategic missions and air command and control missions lies at the core of the air and space airman's identity, unbounded and encompassing all environments. By 2025 those missions will have regained all of their meaning. The flight toward 2025 will take place in the air and space environment. More than ever, we must shed light on the future in order to make the right decisions today regarding our people and capabilities.

Notes

1. Peter F. Drucker, *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices* (Oxford, UK : Butterworth-Heinemann, 1974), 121.

2. J. C. Slessor, *Air Power and Armies* (1936; repr., New York: AMS Press, [1982]), x.

The Past as Prologue

Realist Thought and the Future of American Security Policy

JAMES WOOD FORSYTH JR., PHD*

Realism is dead, or so we are told. Indeed, events over the past 20 years tend to confirm the popular adage that "we are living in a whole new world." And although some individuals have proclaimed the death of power politics, it is worth remembering that we have heard all this before. Over the past 60-plus years, realism has enjoyed its time in the sun. Within the United States, realism initially arose during the interwar period in response to the perceived failures of Pres. Woodrow Wilson's internationalism. By 1954, with the publication of the second edition of Hans Morgenthau's *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, those ideas had been discredited. During the 1970s, with gasoline shortages and a long, unsuccessful war in Vietnam tearing at America, the inadequacies of policy makers to properly frame world events led many people to pursue other alternatives. Economic, political, and social changes occasioned the rise of topics such as transnational politics, international interdependence, and political economy, each of which allowed nonrealist perspectives to carve out a substantial space for themselves.

The dramatic ending of the Cold War—combined with the inability of policy makers to adequately explain, anticipate, or even imagine peaceful global change—ushered in a new round of thinking. Today many decision makers frame their policies around democracy, seeing it as the historical force driving the apparent peace among the world's leading powers. Once an arcane argument among academics, democratization moved to the fore during the Clinton years and has defined America's role in the world ever

*The author currently serves as professor of national security studies at the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. He earned his PhD at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver. Professor Forsyth has written on great-power war, intervention, and nuclear issues

since. That "America believes in democracy" is more than a slogan. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq marked the beginning of a democratization project of gargantuan proportions. But if the past is any guide to the future, policy makers will soon begin to reframe their thinking around realism. One can already see signs of realist resurgence within the present administration, with insiders calling for an end to the wars and other nations decrying American adventurism.[1] With so much at stake, it is time for strategists and policy makers to reexamine realism lest it be rejected out of hand.

From the earliest moments of recorded history, realist thought has dominated the study and practice of international politics.[2] Since the time of Thucydides, realists have never lost sight of the fact that we live in a world of states, large and small, that must look out for themselves.[3] Paraphrasing Thucydides, "The strong do what they will, while the weak suffer what they must." In such a world—where no world government exists to protect a state from the harmful intentions of others—survival is the name of the game. Thus, the essence of any security policy is the protection and preservation of the state itself. This article critically examines realism and its relationship to national security policy. Rather than focus on individual realist authors, it synthesizes their ideas into a general interpretation of the field and integrates them with the strong, symbiotic relationship between realist thought and national security policy.[4] The article outlines the realist argument and focuses on four premises—states, anarchy, interests, and power— illustrating the key differences between realism and other perspectives. The third section evaluates the usefulness of realism in terms of framing enduring security issues, and the final one discusses the future of realist thought with respect to framing emerging security issues.

What Is Realism?

Realism is the dominant theoretical tradition that defines the study of international politics. It begins with a pessimistic view of human nature, which Thucydides captures in his description of events during the Peloponnesian War. As his majestic history suggests, human nature drives men to repeal those "general laws of humanity," even when those deeds have the potential to hurt not only the guilty but also the innocent.[5] Why? Because people are not led by reason; they are led by reason *and* passion—and passion leads them into conflict and war. This point is worth stressing: that reason

can temper passion is never the issue; rather, the issue is that one can never be too sure that reason will temper passion *all of the time*.[6] For individuals interested in understanding national security, the lesson is simple, and the implications are enormous. States must constantly be on guard—not because statesmen are never honorable and peaceful but because they might at any moment become dishonorable and belligerent.

The pessimism found in realism certainly gives it a doom-and-gloom edge. Pessimism is not the same as fatalism, however, and in fact realists can be wildly optimistic on some matters, but at the heart of realist thought is the notion that mankind is flawed.[7] The world is what it is, and analysts must take it for what it is. Will it ever get better? The chances are slim. Why? Because people are what they are—passionate creatures, capable of reasoning right from wrong and shrewd enough to know that they should always hedge their bets.

Realist pessimism may accurately describe the human condition, but it does not capture the essence of international politics. After all, in international life, states—not people—matter more. Hence, some realists go out of their way to downplay the importance of humans themselves. In *Theory of International Politics*, still considered the most important work in the realist revival, Kenneth Waltz makes no index entries for ethics, justice, or morality.[8] Similarly, John Herz is emphatic about how his realism differs from that of Morgenthau, who, like Thucydides, "sees the chief cause of power politics in innate human aggressiveness."[9] Human behavior can be grounds for conflict and war, but the anarchic nature of international life remains an inescapable condition that leads to conflict, even in the absence of human aggressiveness.

Whether conflict stems from the nature of humans or the nature of international politics, or both, remains unprovable; however, one thing is certain—states acting in anarchy must look out for themselves. Since states and anarchy play cardinal roles in realist thought, we should be clear about their meanings. A state is what we ordinarily call a country. Costa Rica, Russia, and Finland are good examples. States have four essential features: territory, population, government, and sovereignty. Territory, population, and government are self-explanatory. Sovereignty refers to a state's ability to conduct domestic and foreign policies without undue external interference. This does not mean that a state can do whatever it pleases. On the contrary,

although all states enjoy some measure of autonomy, great powers can do more than weaker ones; thus, they tend to enjoy even more freedom of action. Still, no state—even those with the greatest of powers—can do all it wants all the time. No matter how powerful, states are limited in what they can do in the world.

Similarly, anarchy does not mean chaos or the complete absence of order. It simply refers to an absence of rule or of a hierarchical order based on formal subordination and authority. There is considerable order in an anarchic international system, but that order is not the hierarchical order characteristic of domestic politics.[10] That being the case, the consequences of anarchy can be severe. Because of the absence of a higher authority to which states can appeal, statesmen must think in terms of security first.

No matter how good their intentions, national security policy makers must bear in mind that without a world government, states must provide for their own protection. To do so means marshaling their power or the power of friends and allies who will support and defend them. However, such self-help actions, even when taken for purely defensive purposes, will appear threatening to others, who will be forced to respond in kind. This interstate phenomenon is commonly called the "security dilemma," and it adequately explains why arms races occur and why some wars begin.[11]

Because the potential for violence in the international system is so great, states must prioritize their interests, which come in many forms.[12] Peace, prosperity, and freedom are good examples, and although those three might be in the interest of *most* states, survival is the sole interest of *all* states.[13] The means to ensure survival is power. The kind of power needed can be hard to define. During the 1970s, for example, a group of relatively small Middle Eastern states nearly brought the industrialized world to a standstill because they controlled access to oil. Were they powerful? It depends on how one thinks about power. Similarly, terrorists today seem to wrest considerable power from their dastardly deeds, but are they as powerful as some seem to think? An answer begins by recognizing what power can and cannot accomplish in international life. Realists believe that power clarifies international politics because it sets up a world of strong and weak states. For them, the distribution of military capabilities throughout the world makes stark the differences between states and, by doing so, conditions

the international system, setting up an informal set of rules that brings some order to a disordered world.

Think of the Cold War to understand this last point. The balance of power between the Soviet Union and the United States kept the Cold War "cold." Although hardly a perfect peace—several deadly proxy wars took place during this time—the balance of forces between the two great powers enabled international life to go on without producing a cataclysmic nuclear war. Indeed, it is hard to imagine the Gulf wars or the war in Yugoslavia occurring during the Cold War. Why? The superpowers—through threats or use of force—never would have allowed them to happen.

Regardless of how one thinks of power, it is important to point out that power is fungible and relative. Fungibility refers to the ease with which capabilities in one issue area can be used to solve problems in other issue areas. From a national security perspective, military power remains the most fungible of all the instruments of power, including economic, diplomatic, and informational. Reviewing the cases, one discovers that force, and threats of force, have been the instrument of choice for most states in times of crisis. Indeed, because war remains the ultima ratio in international politics, military power remains the first and foremost concern of most powerful states.

The word *relative* refers to relative gains, as the term is used in the study of economics. In brief, realists believe that relative gains matter more to states than absolute gains. Why? One can never be sure how a state will use *any gain from any transaction*. On the one hand, states might spend gains—in the form of money—on services to improve life at home for their citizens. On the other hand, they might spend those gains on a large military force capable of threatening others. Thus, in international politics the question is never "Who gains?" but is always "Who gains more?"[14]

Recall the fierce debate in the United States on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The debate was not over the issue of what the United States will gain. Rather, the debate—at least from the dissenters—concerned the fear that Canada and Mexico might gain more. Was the United States afraid that Canada or Mexico might build a large army to threaten the United States? Of course not, but the mere fact that tensions existed among these close neighbors only highlights the difficulty of achieving international cooperation, even on something as relatively

benign as free trade. In the end, we can think of international politics as a struggle for power, cooperation, and peace, but that struggle is defined by the idea that state security must never be impaired.

Summing up, realists think that the international system shapes what states must do by presenting them with overwhelming incentives to pursue self-interests or by eliminating those that fail to pursue self-interests relent- lessly: "This . . . natural selection [process] may also be supplemented by a competition for influence: states that follow realpolitik maxims grow and those that rationally ignore the mandate of egoism decline and lose all influence. . . . To the extent that survival pressures tightly constrain states' behavior, internal characteristics cannot seriously affect state conduct."[15] In a world of realist politics, nations may inevitably settle their disputes through force or threats of force, acting purely in self-interest. In the end, states must look out for themselves.

Realism and Its Critics

Realism has many critics.[16] A number of them are convinced that realism is inherently limited because it takes little account of global change, a line of attack that sharpened considerably with the end of the Cold War. Others argue that realism overlooks the importance of global interdependence to international politics. Those who write on the importance of interdepen- dence have provided illuminating accounts of international politics by calling attention to the role of international institutions. These authors, known as institutionalists, stress the mediating role played by institutions, which lowers transaction costs among states and increases the prospects for international cooperation. Institutionalists like to point to the development of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as an example of an institution that not only has increased cooperation among its members but also has provided a framework for the economic and military integration of Europe itself. Moreover, institutional analyses have clarified the relationship between international politics and economics, opening up a line of inquiry known as international political economy. However enlightening institutional analyses might be, realists contend that these authors tend to exaggerate the possi- bilities for international cooperation because they do not understand—or have oversimplified the concern about—survival as a motivation for state behavior. States must look out for their own security—and they do so not

because they are greedy, selfish, or vile. States might be all of these, but that alone is not a sufficient reason to cause them to think in terms of security first. They must look out for their own security because of the lack of an authority capable of preventing others from using violence or threats of violence to destroy or enslave them.[17] This fact tends to be downplayed in institutional analyses, but it remains the driving concern for most states.

Another line of criticism comes from those who believe that the key to achieving a peaceful international system lies in radically altering state identity or transforming how states think about themselves and their relationships with others. Ideally, by not thinking of themselves as solitary actors responsible for their own security, states will develop a communitarian ethos and a broader sense of responsibility to the international community. This might sound desirable in principle, but in practice it will never work because anarchy and the danger of war cause all states to be motivated in some measure by fear or distrust, regardless of their internal composition, goals, or desires.[18]

This last point is lost on those who hang their hopes for humanity on democracy and are willing to risk blood and treasure to secure that goal. Democracy has had an impact on international life; it has both caused and affected the promotion of liberal capitalism. No doubt, democracy and free-market capitalism have taken hold of the world, and the apparent peace among the world's democratic states—both large and small—constitutes the "closest thing we might have to an empirical law of international behavior."[19] Put simply, democracies do not fight one another. Why not?

Some people believe that domestic institutions guard against the bellicose behaviors of kings or emperors.[20] Democratic leaders, if for no other reason than self-preservation, tend to hedge against risky wars because their own fortunes are tied either to maintaining the status quo or to assuring a victory, or both. Others are convinced that democratic states seem to prefer adjudication and bargaining to fighting.[21] In short, it is not that liberal states would rather trade than invade, as interdependence theory suggests; rather, liberal leaders prefer to "jaw, jaw rather than war, war," as Churchill might have put it.

As compelling as both explanations might seem, neither captures the essence of great-power politics, nor does either come close to describing what a democracy is like when it goes to war. According to George Kennan, democracy fights in anger. Democracy "fights for the very reason that it was

forced to go to war. It fights to punish the power that was rash enough and hostile enough to provoke it—to teach that power a lesson it will not forget, to prevent the thing from happening again. Such a war must be carried to the bitter end."[22] Because democracy also fights with vengeance, democratic wars resemble crusades, characterized by unlimited means, ultimate ends, and popular calls for unconditional surrender. But above all else, democracies are states, and all states have interests, not the least of which is survival. Again, peace might be an interest of some states, but survival is *the* interest of all states. When interests compete—as they tend to do—conflict arises, and war is the extension of that process. Thus, peace among the world's democracies will not last forever.

The Enduring Usefulness of Realism

Up to now, I have concentrated on description and analysis in an attempt to clarify the realist tradition. This section evaluates the usefulness of realism in terms of framing enduring security issues by focusing on war, intervention, globalization, and human rights.[23]

In an anarchic world, because *war* is always a possibility, realists present it as a standard—albeit destructive—instrument of statecraft or a continuation of politics by other means. One can attribute this practice to Clausewitz, who insisted that war was the result of some political situation: "The occasion is always due to some political object. War, therefore, is an act of policy."[24] As satisfying as Clausewitz might be, war often requires more than political justification. It requires moral justification. Yet realists ignore this aspect, insisting that most wars can be justified in terms of interests or the balance of power. The central premise of the balance of power is stability, not justice. In fact, realists argue that the very idea of a just war may be incoherent. Think about it—if one adopts the perspective of the statesman, which presupposes the protection and preservation of the state, there seems to be no escaping the demands of the national interest. This point is worth stressing: even though considerations about justice might be real and important, they are not as important as the demands of security. Other moral and political perspectives recognize this dilemma, but what makes realism so distinctive is its solution. When the demands of statecraft and of justice cannot be reconciled, realists argue that political leaders must choose injustice, even if it means war.[25]

Moral considerations aside, realists believe that stability is present in an international system when the system remains anarchic—without a strong central authority—and when the principal parties within the system remain unchanged. If one state threatens to attain a position from which it might dominate the rest, a military coalition of the other great powers will form against it, and a general war will follow. Thus, balance-of-power arguments are not strong arguments for war any more than they are strong arguments for peace. They are antihegemonic in that a balance of power seeks to prevent, through war if necessary, the rise of one dominant power.

Since the end of the eighteenth century, the European balance of power changed five times. Early in the nineteenth century, Napoleon's bid for supremacy stopped at Waterloo when a coalition of states put an end to his ambitions by destroying the Grand Armée. In the early twentieth century, the kaiser similarly challenged the European balance of power. Again, a coalition of states fought desperately for four years to rectify the situation. In the 1930s and early 1940s, Hitler overran Europe from the English Channel to the gates of Moscow. Again a great coalition of forces fought to restore the balance of power. Following that war, however, the balance was not restored. Russia was left with half of Europe, while the rest lay prostrate before it. Tragically, the Western Europeans who had fought to defeat Hitler now faced Stalin, and the resulting imbalance of power led to the Cold War, which lasted nearly 50 years. An imbalance of global power has existed since the end of the Cold War. The current unipolar configuration cannot last forever and is already showing signs of changing with a rising Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC). Will the changing distribution of power lead to war? It need not. If realism is correct, a balance of power ought to emerge that will force states to make appropriate security preparations and, barring attempts at regional hegemony, produce stability.

Although many states have intervened in the affairs of other states, realist authors have surprisingly little to say on the question of *intervention*. When they do address the subject, it is usually under the heading of nonintervention. Realists do so because they tend to think of intervention as an empirical question, not a philosophical one. That being the case, those realists who do tackle it head-on often fall back on John Stuart Mill's notions of self-determination and sovereignty.[26]

We are to treat states as self-determining communities, whether or not they are free, because self-determination and freedom are not the same—or so Mill thought. Citizens have the right to fight for their freedom, and when they struggle and fail, they are still self-determining. This Millian view of self-determination sets people up for the right to become free by their own efforts, and it cuts against the grain of intervention in general. Sovereignty, which legally defines a state's ability to conduct domestic and foreign policies without undue external interference, is the arena in which self-determining communities fight and sometimes win their freedom. It goes without saying, then, that there are things the international community cannot do for states, even for their own good. By this measure, the intervening state must make the case that its interference in someone else's liberty is best served by something other than moral support.

This is not an academic question—it sits at the center of the current administration's policy agenda.[27] During the 1990s, the United States was involved in numerous interventions, some of which clearly violated traditional views of sovereignty. Somalia II sticks in the minds of most Americans as an intervention characterized as wrong: wrong place, wrong time, and wrong reason. In the face of the ethnic killings and displacement in Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Kosovo, however, the idea of saving strangers came to the fore. Coupled with the attacks of 11 September 2001, the question of intervention posed new problems and challenges as arguments about preemption took hold of American policy. Some people within the Obama administration wish to see the United States continue to play an active interventionist role, while others seek to back away from it. In terms of framing the future of intervention, realism has something to offer policy makers. In multipolar worlds, great powers are prone to inattention. In bipolar worlds, overreaction is the concern. In unipolar worlds, like the one we are living in now, guarding against overextension is the problem.[28] In the coming years, the United States will have to balance the need for security against the humanitarian desire to save strangers. If it behaves shrewdly, it can reduce the risk of overextension and, perhaps, save a few but not all.

Unlike intervention, realists have much to say about *globalization*. More than a mere shift in economic policies, globalization is transforming state relations and remaking international politics before our very eyes, or so globalists insist. That globalization is occurring cannot be denied. Foreign

trade, travel, and communication seem to be transforming the world into a global bazaar where goods and services are traded openly and freely, and war among the great powers becomes less and less likely. Nonetheless, although international economics might be changing, international politics are not.

With this in mind, one ought to wonder what globalization is doing to security. Does it mean more peace, as globalists contend? Realists conclude it does not. Why? Economic interdependence among nations is not capable of altering the nature of international relations, which puts a premium on politics, not economics. Globalists fail to see this fact because they do not understand that international peace, underwritten by the great powers, produces interdependence and not the other way around.[29]

The logic is obvious. If I rely on you for something essential, like oil, then I am vulnerable to your whims and fancies. The more vulnerable I become, the more demanding you might become. You might demand more money, more services, or if your commodity makes me stronger, protection. I may be willing to go along in the short term, but the longer this transaction goes on, the more dependent I become. In short, interdependence creates vulnerabilities. For states this is a dangerous game, which is why international cooperation is so difficult to achieve. The enduring lesson is simple. Whether a state gains in an economic transaction is never the issue. The issue is always who gains more. Without a higher authority to appeal to, successful states will always hedge their bets when it comes to interdependence. Thus, globalization, at least from a security perspective, will not be enough to ensure a lasting peace.

Most realists eschew the idea of *human rights* as the basis for making decisions about national security, doing so largely because of realism's professed amorality.[30] Kennan expressed it best: "Government is an agent, not a principal. Its primary obligation is to the interests of the national society it represents, not to the moral impulses that individual elements of that society may experience."[31]

Even if survival is the main concern of all states, it is not the only interest of all states all of the time. Clearly, at times interests compete. When they do, it is worth remembering that security is the primary concern, but sometimes moral concerns should matter. The war in Kosovo is hard to justify simply in terms of interests. This, in fact, may be a case where interests

(stopping the spread of a wider war in Europe) coincided with a moral concern (stopping the slaughter of innocent civilians). Afghanistan, too, seems to fall into this category. In any event, sometimes interests and moral concerns do coincide. Realists recognize this fact but consistently come down hard on the limits of international action. As the discussion on intervention pointed out, human rights are a domestic—not an international—concern. States face real limits to what they can do to—and for—other states, but those restrictions do not necessarily exclude lending moral or material support in defense of human rights.

Realist Thought and the Future of US Security Policy

The previous section examined four enduring issues in an attempt to illustrate how realist thought can help frame policy responses. This section explores four emerging issues that will dominate security discourse in the coming years: counterinsurgency, social revolutions, nuclear weapons, and power transitions.

Within the marketplace of ideas, *counterinsurgency* casts a long shadow but has a short life. Why? Policy makers are beginning to realize that the return on the investment is simply not worth the costs. Consider Afghanistan. After 10 years, billions of dollars spent, and thousands of lives lost, Afghanistan remains one of the poorest states in the world. With a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of $800, a life expectancy of 42 years, and a mortality rate of 250 per 1,000 live births, it is a brand name for suffering. Moreover, if the United States were to stay in Afghanistan for another 10 years—adding billions of dollars and countless lives to the equation—it would create a state equal to but not greater than Pakistan. We would do well to remember that, in many ways, Pakistan is an American creation. American money began flowing into that country in 1954. Over the decades, the United States has sent billions of dollars to Pakistan, training and equipping its military and intelligence services. The goal of this activity sounds all too familiar: "create a reliable ally with strong institutions and a modern, vigorous democracy."[32] But after nearly 60 years, Pakistan is one of the most anti-American states in the world—a far cry from what was originally intended. That is a sobering thought, one that will loom large in the minds of policy makers as they stare into the budget abyss; it is also why counterinsurgency is destined to become a thing of the past. Another reason is the killing of

Osama bin Laden. Although it represents the high-water mark for special operations forces, whose courage and performance have been nothing but heroic and extraordinary, his end marks the beginning of America's withdrawal from Afghanistan.

As with intervention, when realists write about counterinsurgency, they usually do so under the heading "We Should Not Try That Again." Why? From a practical perspective, the US experience in this sort of war has not been a happy one. Guatemala, Iran, Cuba, and Vietnam add up to a bad scorecard, and recent events have continued this negative trend. Contrary to popular opinion, there is nothing small about these "small wars." In colloquial terms, their largesse is captured by the words "hearts and minds," which translates to "we can save you if you'll let us." In general, saving strangers is a noble goal but not necessarily good policy because it rarely works, at least not for long. In the constellation of cases, only Malaya and the Philippines seem to be unequivocal successes. The others—most notably Algeria, Indochina, and Namibia—all ended as something less than originally imagined.[33] With that rate of success, the demand for counterinsurgency will inevitably decrease.

American policy makers have not had to deal with the political impact of *social revolutions* for some time, largely because they are such rare events. Social revolutions can be thought of as "rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures; and they are accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below."[34] A unique aspect of social revolution is that changes in social and political structures occur together and in mutually supporting fashion. France, Russia, and China are the classic examples, but American policy makers last had to deal with the aftermath of such cataclysmic events in 1979. Revolutions in Nicaragua and Iran changed the social, political, and economic landscapes of Central America and the Middle East while consuming one presidency and distracting another. In both cases, few saw them coming, and even fewer knew how to frame a response. As we watch popular uprisings sweep through the Middle East today, one cannot help wondering if social revolutions are far behind.[35] Here realism can help.

First, we must realize that we can do little to influence the outcome of social revolutions because they are so difficult to predict. Few saw the Sandinistas overthrowing the iron rule of Somoza, and even fewer foresaw

or understood events in Iran. In both cases, US policy went into a period of confusion. In Nicaragua this resulted in the ill-fated Contra war, and in Iran it led to a long period of exclusion and denial; neither response produced a long-lasting, positive strategic effect in the region. Second, we must be prepared to deal with the revolutionary government as it is, not as we wish it to be, while keeping in mind that the policies of today can become the problems of tomorrow. In the case of Nicaragua, this meant supporting a long, brutal war; in the case of Iran, it ultimately meant Saddam Hussein. In both, it resulted in the ill-fated Iran-Contra Affair. Third, whatever the outcome, we must come to grips with the fact that social revolutions can be short- or long-lived, and we cannot tell which direction they will take. In Nicaragua the revolutionary government lasted just over 10 years; in Iran, much longer. In all of these instances, realist thought forced policy makers to come to grips with humility—in fact, one could do little after the revolution had occurred. In foreign affairs, humility is a rare but valuable commodity nonetheless.

Within the nuclear arena, policy makers will need to learn how to cope with the rising demand for small, reliable *nuclear arsenals*. In this regard, China, India, and Pakistan are the "new normal" when it comes to nuclear arsenals, and other states like Iran have been watching closely. We know that, within most nuclear countries, large arsenals assure statesmen little. As in other areas of competition, there comes a point of diminishing returns, and with nuclear weapons that point comes quickly; one needs only a few weapons to achieve relative security, even against a larger, better-equipped opponent. After watching nearly 50 years of arms racing during the Cold War, these states have reached the central conclusion that statesmen are not sensitive to the actual number of weapons a state might possess; they are sensitive to the idea that a state might have them at all. All the tough talk between the Soviet Union and the United States did not amount to much regarding nuclear numbers—both raced up but backed down as soon as they safely could. This fact has not been lost on others.

Overcoming bureaucratic resistance to the idea of minimum deterrence will not be easy. The toughest obstacle is located within the cognitive domain.[36] Minimum deterrence poses a challenge to the perceptions that many political and military leaders have about how nuclear deterrence works. Cold War paradigms characterized by numerical and technological

parity, large numbers of weapons, and sophisticated counterforce war-fighting plans provide the mental focal points around which policy makers' thoughts turn. In their quest for cognitive consistency, they will flatly reject or ignore evidence that challenges their well-formed perceptions about deterrence. Solving this problem will not be easy because it demands that decision makers take time to analyze their own preexisting perceptions. Realism can help frame this dilemma. Policy makers should keep in mind that Cold War policies of deterrence were based not so much upon real-world evidence of how leaders would actually react to nuclear threats but upon expectations of how those leaders would react—expectations drawn from policy makers' own deeply held beliefs about deterrence. In other words, Cold War notions are no more real than post–Cold War ones. One hears calls for new thinking about deterrence all the time, but that thinking usually turns out to be more of the same. In essence, old nuclear states are trapped within their own psychic prisons—the newer ones not as much, and they have adapted quickly. The age of minimum deterrence has arrived.

All of the above pales in comparison to the effects that will result from *global power transitions* in the world. Already ongoing, the effects of the redistribution of power will become more apparent in the next 10 to 20 years. The changing balance of power among states in the world poses the greatest challenge to US security, and, in this regard, the United States is in a precarious position. Large-scale economic changes, together with ongoing wars, have placed the United States in a relatively weaker position with respect to its rivals than it occupied eight years ago. In economic terms, the costs have been staggering, with estimates as high as $3 trillion. In military terms, even if the United States were to achieve its current war aims, American forces are less capable than they were in 2000. Continual deployments, along with the accompanying wear and tear on personnel and equipment, have left the US military in desperate need of replenishment. As the new administration has made clear, coming to terms with these structural challenges will be demanding. Harder still is trying to find another case that rivals or even approximates the United States' relative decline, the pitch and speed of which appear unusual.

Complicating this are the BRICs—Brazil, Russia, India, and China. Policy makers may be familiar with the BRIC countries, but few of them have thought seriously about the challenges they pose to US leadership.

Poised to become the four most dominant economies by the year 2050, these four countries encompass over 25 percent of the world's land coverage as well as 40 percent of the world's population, and they hold a combined GDP of approximately $18.5 trillion. On almost every scale, they would represent the largest entity on the global stage. Hardly an alliance, they have taken steps to increase their political cooperation, mainly as a way of influencing the US position on trade accords. Among the questions facing the United States, few are more important than this one: Can the United States successfully play the role of junior partner in some places in the world? If so, what strategies should it devise to ensure its well-being?

For the past 20 years, American policy makers have been in love with dominance. Military doctrine, trade papers, and journals are strewn with ideas of global hegemony. But America has never been a global hegemon. In fact, the idea of global hegemony is more illusory than real; one finds no case in history of a true global hegemon—a state that ruled the entire world. Its influence stretching north to south, the United States is a regional hegemon, but even here it will have to back away from its love affair with dominance, especially in light of pressing fiscal constraints. Here, again, realism can help. When faced with historic global-power transitions, states have essentially three choices: dominate, accommodate, or retrench. Domination strategies tend to be most appealing, which explains the United States' attraction to them at the end of the Cold War. Accommodation strategies tend to be effective but not as popular because they are based upon the realization that one cannot "win." This strategy is not about winning but about attaining some continuous advantage.[37] Retrenchment strategies tend to be least appealing but can prove effective in some instances. Britain successfully retrenched following the war, allowing America to ascend to new heights, while enjoying the benefits of American hegemony herself. No doubt, the United States would have more difficulty doing this with the BRICs but would not find it impossible. The countries have much in common economically and could forge a new future together, but much of that effort rides on America's forgoing the urge to dominate.

Conclusions

Accepting the tenets of realism is an act of humility—a rare commodity in international affairs but a useful one nonetheless.[38] American policy

makers will eventually come to it, even if they do so reluctantly. Is realism in our future? The answer is yes. Advances in technology, health care, and communications are shaping the world we live in. Yet beneath it all, international politics has not changed significantly since Thucydides. In spite of economic interdependence, global transportation, and the information revolution, we live in a world where states must look out for themselves. As long as that holds true, statesmen are well advised to frame policy responses in terms of interests; no other tradition does that better than realism. In so doing, they should remember that a foreign policy based on a realist assessment is neither moral nor immoral but merely a "reasoned response to the world about us."[39]

Notes

1. Ryan Lizza, "The Consequentialist: How the Arab Spring Remade Obama's Foreign Policy," *New Yorker* 87, no. 11 (2 May 2011): 44–55.

2. Originating with the Greeks, realism is found throughout contemporary European politics. One sees elements of realist thought, however, in various cultures throughout the world. Thus, realism is not "Western," per se. Interestingly, American policy makers have traditionally shunned realist thought. Woodrow Wilson thought balance-of-power politics was part of the "old world"; thus, he sought a "concert of power" to replace it. Since then, many US policy makers have followed Wilson's lead, seeking to make the "world safe for democracy."

3. Although it is true that the Greek concept of the state differs from our own, citizens of the Greek city-states possessed rights and freedoms not readily found elsewhere in the ancient world—the right to vote, assemble, own property, and pursue scientific knowledge, to name a few. For this reason, imperial Athens remains the archetype of contemporary democratic life.

4. Many realist authors and many forms of realism exist. The classical argument begins with Thucydides, Thomas Hobbes, and Niccolò Machiavelli. The theological argument is found in the works of Reinhold Niebuhr and Herbert Butterfield. Nicholas Spykman and A. T. Mahan represent the geopolitics school. The modern account begins with Hans Morgenthau, E. H. Carr, and George Kennan. The English School is best represented in the work of Martin Wight and Hedley Bull. The contemporary argument is found in Kenneth Waltz, Robert Gilpin, John Herz, Robert Tucker, Robert Osgood, Colin Gray, and John Mearsheimer. The strongest voice among sympathetic critics is Jack Donnelly.

5. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 245.

6. See Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), chap. 2.

7. Arms control is but one example of such optimism.

8. Kenneth N. Waltz remains the most prominent modern realist. His *Theory of International Politics* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1979) dominated discussions of international studies throughout the 1980s and well into the 1990s. Even though the field has moved in other interesting directions, Waltz remains a force to be reckoned with.

9. John H. Herz, *The Nation-State and the Crisis of World Politics: Essays on International Politics in the Twentieth Century* (New York: D. McKay, 1976), 10. Even though Waltz is often cited as the father of "structural realism," John Herz first wrote about it. His book *Political Realism and Political Idealism: A Study in Theories and Realities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951) remains a standard for readers interested in international politics.

10. See Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977) for a superb illustration of this relationship.

11. The phrase comes from Waltz's first book, *Man, the State, and War*. First published by Columbia University Press in 1959 and released by that press in a 2001 edition, it outlines the basic argument around which studies of war and peace still take place.

12. Some critics like to talk in terms of values rather than interests. Their point, I assume, is to cast the discussion of state motivation in terms of normative rather than material concerns. But nothing is more normative than thinking of security in terms of survival. Besides, few states, if any, pursue interests that they think are "valueless."

13. Waltz makes this point time and again, and it reverberates throughout his writings: "I built structural theory on the assumption that survival is the goal of states" ("Evaluating Theories," *American Political Science Review* 91, no. 4 [December 1997]: 913). "The survival motive is taken as the ground of action." "By assumption, economic actors seek to maximize expected returns, and states strive to secure their survival." "I assume that states seek to ensure their survival" (*Theory of International Politics*, 92, 134, 91).

14. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, chap. 7, "Structural Causes and Economic Effects."

15. David Halloran Lumsdaine, *Moral Vision in International Politics: The Foreign Aid Regime, 1949–1989* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 13, 12. In this book, Lumsdaine offers a superb illustration and critique of this line of reasoning.

16. Liberalism itself might be considered a critique of realism or an optimistic response to realist pessimism.

17. See Joseph M. Grieco, "Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 485–507.

18. See John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (Winter 1994/95): 5–49, http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/A0021.pdf.

19. Jack Levy makes this observation in "The Causes of War: A Review of Theories and Evidence," in *Behavior, Society and Nuclear War*, vol. 1, ed. Philip E. Tetlock et al. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1989).

20. The literature on democracy and war is voluminous. For the philosophical argument, see Michael W. Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Parts I and II," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12, no. 3 (Summer 1983): 205–35, 323–53. For a quantitative account, see Rudolph J. Rummel, "Libertarianism and International Violence," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 27, no. 1 (March 1983): 27–71. For an example of the structural account, see Clifton T. Morgan and Sally Campbell, "Domestic Structure, Decisional Constraints, and War: So Why Kant Democracies Fight?," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35, no. 2 (June 1991): 187–221.

21. Similarly, see Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post–Cold War World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

22. George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy, 1900–1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 66.

23. Jack Donnelly originally examined the issues addressed here. I do not intend to refute his interpretation or conclusions—merely to update and expand them. See Donnelly, "Twentieth Century Realism," in *Traditions of International Ethics*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations: 17, ed. Terry Nardin and David R. Mapel (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 85–111.

24. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 86–87.

25. Donnelly, "Twentieth Century Realism," in Nardin and Mapel, *Traditions of International Ethics*, 101.

26. The best modern argument on nonintervention remains Michael Walzer's in *Just and Unjust Wars*, 3rd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1977). Although hardly a professed realist, Walzer makes the strongest realist case I have found. See "A Few Words on Non-Intervention," in J. S. Mill, *Dissertations and Discussions* (New York, 1873), III: 238–63.

27. Lizza, "Consequentialist."

28. This theme reverberates throughout realist writings, particularly those of Waltz, Gilpin, and historian Paul Kennedy.

29. Again, this theme reverberates throughout Waltz's and Gilpin's writings, as well as others.

30. In the debate regarding human rights, some individuals think that rights are universal. That is, rights are applicable to all humans by virtue of the fact that they are human. Others believe that rights are relative. That is,

rights are culturally relative to the different societies found throughout the world. Recently, and in large part due to a reaction to cultural relativism, some realists have sided with those who support universal human rights. They do not, however, advocate intervention as a cure to human-rights abuses. Instead, they hold true to the principles of self-determination and sovereignty.

31. George F. Kennan, "Morality and Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 64, no. 2 (Winter 1985/86): 206. George Kennan was one of America's leading realist practitioners as well as one of its most prolific authors. The architect of the containment policy, Kennan is revered as one of those rare intellectuals who actually had a dramatic impact on foreign affairs. His most important book on international politics remains *American Diplomacy*.

32. Lawrence Wright, "The Double Game," *New Yorker* 87, no. 13 (16 May 2011): 91.

33. I thank my colleague Dr. James Kiras for this information.

34. Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 4. Skocpol's work, along with Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), remains iconic in the genre.

35. I thank Dr. Mary Hampton for this observation.

36. See Jeremy Olsen, "The Best Defense: Making Maximum Sense of Minimum Deterrence" (thesis, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, 2011).

37. I thank my friend and colleague Dr. Everett Dolman for tutoring me on the importance of this idea.

38. Lastly, I thank Jack Donnelly for encouraging me to think about realism and human rights. His unselfish attention during my student years remains the model I strive to emulate. See his *Realism and International Relations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000) for the definitive, synthetic treatment of the realist tradition, and his *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989) for the same regarding human rights.

39. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*, 238.

To Deter or Not to Deter

Applying Historical Lessons to the Iranian Nuclear Challenge

Cheryl M. Graham, PhD*

Since the dawn of mankind, humans have sought to enhance their chances of survival through the development of various types of weaponry. And the most effective weapons consistently have been copied by others who felt threatened or intimidated by their existence. Pres. John F. Kennedy considered this tendency in making his March 1963 prediction regarding nuclear weapons proliferation. At that time, only the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and France were armed with nuclear weapons, but Kennedy forecast that another 15 to 20 countries would join this club by the mid-1970s. He also warned that such a development should be regarded as "the greatest possible danger and hazard."[1]

Although Kennedy's fears were not realized, the issue of horizontal nuclear proliferation has once again assumed a prominent spot on the international strategic agenda. Like Kennedy, recent US leaders have referred to the spread of nuclear weapons capabilities as the greatest possible danger to international security. In a September 1993 address before the United Nations General Assembly, Pres. Bill Clinton argued that "one of our most urgent priorities must be attacking the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction [WMD], whether they are nuclear, chemical or biological."[2] More recently, Pres. Barack Obama warned that "nuclear proliferation to an increasing number of states" represents the greatest threat to US and global security.[3]

Concerns about the impact of nuclear proliferation are accentuated by rising uncertainty regarding the reliability of deterrence strategies, causing some analysts to caution that new nuclear enemies "may be madder than 'MAD' [mutually assured destruction]."[4] This article examines the Iranian

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nuclear program to determine whether these concerns are justified, to assess whether preventive war is an appropriate or viable method of eliminating the Iranian nuclear "threat," and to determine whether such a strategy is preferable to one of deterrence. To facilitate this assessment, the article draws parallels between the contemporary Iranian nuclear issue and proliferation challenges originating in China during the 1960s.

The Chinese Proliferation Challenge: Lessons from the Past

In the early 1960s, many Kennedy administration officials, including the president, viewed potential Chinese nuclear capabilities as a serious threat to Western national security. A June 1961 Joint Chiefs of Staff report concluded that China's "attainment of a nuclear capability . . . will have a marked impact on the security posture of the United States and the Free World, particularly in Asia."[5] Kennedy's attention was increasingly drawn to the Chinese nuclear issue in the aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis, and in January 1963 he directed the Central Intelligence Agency to assign the highest possible priority to uncovering information about Beijing's nuclear efforts. Kennedy's apprehension was further heightened by his belief that the Chinese attached a lower value to human life and would therefore be less susceptible to deterrence threats. Estimates indicate that between 15 and 30 million Chinese died as a result of Mao Zedong's misrule and the Great Leap Forward program of rapid industrialization. Compounding these concerns was the fact that when Mao launched the program in 1958, he was known to have declared openly that "half of China may well have to die."[6]

The context in which China's nuclear developments took place was also very important in shaping the Kennedy administration's threat perceptions. China in the 1960s had already fought the United States in Korea, attacked India, and threatened Indochina, Indonesia, and Taiwan. Chairman Mao had publicly stated that nuclear war with the United States was a scenario not to be feared. He is quoted by the Chinese as saying, "If the worst came to the worst and half of mankind died, the other half would remain while imperialism would be razed to the ground and the whole world would become socialist."[7] This, coupled with Chinese support for the Vietcong and North Vietnamese insurgencies, meant that China in the early 1960s possessed all of the characteristics of what is now referred to as

a "rogue state." Many analysts were also concerned that the strategy of deterrence, which had prevented a nuclear war with the Soviet Union since the beginning of the Cold War, could not be applied to the Chinese.

US officials were keen to develop measures to address this problem, and a number of high-level debates took place within the White House over whether to use military force to curb China's embryonic nuclear program. During a visit to Moscow in July 1963, Amb. Averell Harriman was instructed to play on the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations and draw out Premier Nikita Khrushchev's opinion regarding potential US action aimed at limiting or preventing Chinese nuclear developments. The matter was also discussed during a visit to Washington that year by Chiang Kai-shek's son, Gen Chiang Ching-kuo. He suggested that the United States provide covert support for paramilitary operations against Beijing's nuclear installations and emphasized that his exiled government would "assume full political responsibility" for any action.[8]

In parallel to deliberations about the need for preventive military action against China's nuclear program, the State Department's Policy Planning Committee was reevaluating the notion that a Chinese nuclear capability would have an intolerable impact on Western security. This committee, headed by China expert Robert Johnson, submitted its first report in October 1963, downplaying the military threat posed by Chinese nuclear endeavors. The committee argued that preventive action was unnecessary because the vast gulf between Chinese and US nuclear capabilities made it exceedingly unlikely that China would use nuclear weapons unless its territory were directly under attack. Committee members viewed Chinese nuclear ambitions as a vehicle for gaining prestige and respect rather than as a means of enabling an aggressive military posture. Johnson submitted a subsequent report in April 1964, which concluded that "the significance of . . . [a Chinese nuclear] capability is not such as to justify the undertaking of actions which would involve great political costs or high military risks."[9] In the final section of this report, Johnson expressed doubts over whether preventive action would have the desired long-term effect of halting Beijing's nuclear enterprises:

> It is doubtful whether, even with completion of initial photographic coverage of the mainland, we will have anything like complete assurance that we will have identified all significant nuclear installations. Thus, even "successful" action may not necessarily prevent the ChiComs from detonating a nuclear device in the next few years. If an attack should be

made, some installations are missed and Communist China subsequently demonstrates that it is continuing to produce nuclear weapons, what is likely to be the reaction to the half-finished U.S. effort?[10]

Iran—the Contemporary Proliferation Challenge

The themes circulating in the current debate over the Iranian nuclear impasse are similar to those regarding Beijing in the early 1960s. As in the proliferation challenge posed by China, one proposed method of countering the Iranian threat is to engage in a preventive war against Tehran's nuclear infrastructure. In discussions of how to deal with Iran's nuclear defiance, Bush administration officials frequently warned that "all options are on the table."[11] Although President Obama has approached the Iranian nuclear issue in a more conciliatory manner than his Republican predecessor, the White House continues to warn Tehran that the use of force has not been ruled out. In January 2009, when asked whether military options were still under consideration, White House press secretary Robert Gibbs replied, "The President hasn't changed his viewpoint that he should preserve all his options."[12]

Arguments in favor of preventive military action against the Islamic Republic of Iran are common in the academic community. Norman Podhoretz has argued that "if Iran is to be prevented from developing a nuclear arsenal, there is no alternative to the actual use of military force."[13] He compares Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's public expressions of the desire to "wipe Israel off the map" with the objectives outlined by Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf* and argues that failing to utilize military force to stop Ahmadinejad now is as irresponsible as not stopping Hitler at Munich when "he could have been stopped earlier and defeated at an infinitely lower cost."[14]

Bernard Lewis makes the case that the concept of MAD will not function when applied to Iran. For him, there is no comparison between the Islamic Republic and other governments with nuclear weapons as a result of "what can only be described as the apocalyptic worldview of Iran's present rulers."[15] Lewis concedes that a direct nuclear attack by Iran against the West is unlikely in the near future but maintains that Israel has good reason to be concerned by such a prospect. Although an Iranian nuclear attack against Israel would incur an unavoidable number of Palestinian Muslim casualties, Lewis argues that Iran will not be deterred by this prospect. For

him, members of the regime will even use the phrase "Allah will know his own" to convince themselves that they are actually doing collateral Muslim casualties a favor by "giving them a quick pass to heaven . . . without the struggles of martyrdom." Lewis cites al-Qaeda's acceptance of large numbers of Muslim casualties in the 1998 attacks against US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania as evidence of this phenomenon. He also maintains that the Iranian Shia complex of martyrdom and apocalyptic visions renders any concerns about possible Israeli retaliation obsolete.[16] Mainstream Shia religious doctrine maintains that after the death of the Prophet Mohammed, leadership of the Muslim community was transferred to a succession of 12 imams, beginning with Imam Ali through to the 12th imam, Muhammad al-Mahdi (born AD 868). The Mahdi did not die, but in 873 or 874 entered what is known as a period of Lesser Occulation. It is said that he reemerged briefly in 940 before entering the Greater Occulation and will not return until the Day of Judgement to usher in a worldwide incorrupt and just Islamic government.[17] Although there is no precise theological prediction for when this day of judgement will occur, it is commonly believed that it will happen at a time when the world has descended into chaos. He concludes that "for people with this mindset, MAD is not a constraint; it is an inducement."[18]

Clearly, similarities exist between today's concerns regarding Iranian nuclear intentions and those circulating about the prospect of a nuclear-armed China in the 1960s. Problems associated with preventive military action to curb Tehran's nuclear endeavors also closely resemble those identified vis-à-vis China. First, such efforts are extremely unlikely to remove the nuclear threat *permanently*. The general consensus is that although preventive attacks are likely to set back the Iranian program, they would not prevent its recovery. In December 2008, the *Atlantic* magazine collaborated with retired Air Force colonel Sam Gardiner in a series of war games focused on Iran. After close consideration of the location and physical features of Iran's nuclear infrastructure and a range of possible military options, Gardiner concluded that no *permanent* military solution existed for the issues of Iran.[19] It is also highly likely that preventive action would serve as a catalyst for increased Persian nationalism and provide impetus for the regime to resume nuclear efforts with increased vigor. From this perspective, military action would enforce the perception of a perpetually hostile

West and the belief that a nuclear weapons capability is essential to deter Western aggression.[20]

Remembering that preventive action would qualify as an act of war, one can reasonably assume that the Islamic Republic would retaliate. One possible scenario relates to Tehran's ability to manipulate its political and military influence in Iraq to undermine the war effort and the overall stability of the region. Despite the belief that virtually all of Tehran's intelligence and covert action organizations secured sources of influence in post–Saddam Hussein Iraq, it is clear that the Iranians have been restrained in their activity there more recently.[21] The US State Department's *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008* recognized that while "terrorism committed by illegal armed groups receiving weapons and training from Iran continued to endanger the security and stability of Iraq . . . incidents of such violence were markedly lower than in the previous year."[22] Although Iran has scaled down its support for Iraqi militias, this support could intensify noticeably in the wake of a preventive strike.

The Case for Deterrence

In light of the predicted costs and questionable benefits of preventive military options, the only persuasive justification for starting another war in the Middle East would involve having good reason to believe that the leadership in Tehran is fundamentally undeterrable. Fortunately, pessimistic predictions that the ayatollahs will be inclined to initiate a nuclear Armageddon are unlikely to manifest themselves. Although Ahmadinejad's statements about wiping Israel off the map are inexcusable, they do not indicate a proclivity toward nuclear suicide. Claims to the contrary ignore the fact that such provocations have been part of Iranian political rhetoric since the 1979 revolution and are not symptomatic of any broader nuclear ambitions.[23] Ahmadinejad's confrontational discourse also reaps political benefits in the sense that it undermines his reformist opposition, whom he can accuse of seeking rapprochement with a hostile and threatening West.[24] It is also interesting to note that such rhetoric is not unique to Iran. During the Cold War, Khrushchev once infamously promised to "bury America," whereas Ronald Reagan declared that the Soviet Union would end up on the "ash heap of history."

Future Iranian nuclear attacks against Israel are not strategically *impossible*, but a number of reasons lend confidence that Iran will be deterred from taking such action. Lewis maintains that the Iranian regime will not be deterred by the fact that a nuclear attack against Israel would also kill a staggeringly high number of Palestinians and Muslim citizens in neighboring states. However, he fails to recognize that Iran's portrayal of itself as the foremost defender of Palestinians is an image that it has pursued with vigor since the 1979 revolution. The acceptance by any Iranian leadership of a large number of Muslim deaths is simply not consistent with this long-standing expression of concern for the Palestinians.[25] The relevance of Lewis's comparison between a potential Iranian nuclear attack against Israel and the 1998 African embassy bombings by al-Qaeda is also questionable. Al-Qaeda's ideology has exploited Islamic concepts such as *takfir* and *jihad* to justify the killing of other Muslims. The Iranian leadership does not subscribe to this militant extremist vision and is therefore unlikely to view collateral Muslim casualties as acceptable on the grounds that they have been granted "a quick pass to heaven." The prospect of damage to the holy city of Jerusalem (the third holiest location in Islam) is also likely to deter Iran from initiating a nuclear conflict with Israel.

Even if the Iranians were sufficiently confident in their ability to initiate nuclear attacks against Israel without damaging Jerusalem or harming disproportionate numbers of Muslim civilians, one still has reason to be optimistic about the prospects of deterrence. A November 2007 study for the Center for Strategic and International Studies estimated the Israeli nuclear arsenal at more than 200 boosted and fusion weapons, most with a yield of between 20 and 100 kilotons and some reaching one megaton.[26] In a hypothetical nuclear exchange, these high-yield weapons, combined with accurate delivery systems, would give the Israelis the option of striking all major Iranian cities while maintaining a reserve strike capability to ensure that no other Arab states could capitalize on the military distraction caused by an Iranian nuclear strike.[27] Israel's fleet of at least three *Dolphin*-class submarines armed with nuclear missiles also provides the Jewish state with a second-strike capability that nullifies any effort on the part of Tehran to conduct a decapitation strike and remove Israel's capacity for retaliation. Finally, aside from the credibility of Israeli deterrent capabilities, the Iranians must also consider the implications of US security guarantees to Israel. In her 2008

presidential campaign, Hillary Clinton, then a senator and now the secretary of state, warned that if Iranians were to "consider launching an attack on Israel, we would be able to totally obliterate them."[28] Although the credibility of such a threat is questionable, US defense commitments to Israel are nevertheless a factor the Iranian leadership will have to take seriously.

Although the Iranian regime theoretically should be deterred by credible deterrent threats supported by sufficient second-strike capabilities, Lewis has warned that Iran's mainstream Shia religious ideology will encourage the leadership to welcome punitive retaliation and destruction as a means of hastening the return of the hidden Mahdi. Such arguments have a certain headline-grabbing quality, but they do not reflect the true character of Iran's international conduct. Regardless of the frequent examples of ideologically inspired rhetorical bombast, the Iranian regime has behaved in a strategically calculating and rational manner since the 1979 revolution. When Iraq invaded Iran in 1980, the Islamic regime issued a series of bloodcurdling promises to embrace martyrdom and, if necessary, fight to the last man. However, when various strands of the war came together to indicate that Iran stood no chance of emerging victorious, Ayatollah Khomeini ended the conflict. In a public address on 20 July 1988, Khomeini stated that although he would have found it "more bearable to accept death and martyrdom," his decision was "based only on the interests of the Islamic Republic."[29] This statement ended Iran's eight-year war with Iraq and provides reassurance about the likely future of Iranian decision making. The fact that Khomeini, who has been described as the most extreme of them all, bowed to reality and pragmatic national interest rather than embrace martyrdom indicates that the Iranian leadership is capable of making rational and strategic calculations.

Iran's approach to the US-led coalition effort to remove the Taliban in Afghanistan provides yet another example of the regime's willingness to yield to realist principles as opposed to ideological inclinations. The Iranian government and the Taliban shared an antagonistic relationship long before the events of 11 September 2001 precipitated Operation Enduring Freedom. Animosity toward the Afghan regime stemmed from the movement's radical Sunni origins and close associations with Pakistan's military and intelligence services. Influenced by unique Persian pride and its stature as an Islamic state, Iran also viewed the Taliban as "reactionary peasants" tainting the image of Islam. The persecution of Afghanistan's Shia Muslim

minority and the spillover of drugs and instability across Iran's borders further exacerbated hostility.[30] This history of enmity led to a remarkable congruence of post–11 September interests between the United States and Iran. Despite long-standing hostility toward the United States, the Iranian government, in true "an enemy of my enemy is my friend" fashion, was extremely helpful with the US-led military effort in Afghanistan. It played an active and constructive role in the Bonn process, which created the new central government in Kabul, and was one of the first countries to officially recognize the postconflict leadership of Pres. Hamid Karzai.[31]

Overall, regardless of how Iran is often portrayed, the historical record of pragmatic behavior discussed above indicates that the regime is willing to prioritize realist considerations of national interest rather than revolutionary and religious ideology. This strongly suggests that it is highly unlikely that a nuclear-armed Iran will attack Israel without consideration of the consequences or that the mullahs will deliberately initiate a nuclear Armageddon to hasten the return of the Mahdi. Although no one can prove with absolute certainty how Iran will act in the future, previous behavior does undermine Lewis's arguments against the compatibility of deterrence and Islamic ideology.

Given its track record of terrorist sponsorship, some analysts understandably have drawn attention to the possibility that Iran may pass nuclear weapons, materials, or knowledge to nonstate actors. One of the biggest post–11 September concerns is that terrorism could escalate to the nuclear level—a nightmare scenario that could occur as a result of a transfer from a nuclear-weapons state to a terrorist proxy. As the *Country Reports on Terrorism 2005* emphasized, "state sponsors of terrorism pose a grave WMD terrorism threat. . . . Iran presents a particular concern, given its active sponsorship of terrorism and its continued development of a nuclear program. . . . Like other state sponsors of terrorism with WMD programs, Iran could support terrorist organizations seeking to acquire WMD."[32]

Although Iran could transfer nuclear weapons to one of its many terrorist proxies, this is exceedingly unlikely for a number of reasons. First of all, it is *incredibly* unlikely that *any* state, regardless of its ideological inclinations, would knowingly allow nuclear weapons to fall into the hands of actors it did not directly control, simply out of fear that the weapons might then be used against it. One should also note Iran's affiliation with a mixture of Islamist

factions and radical secular groups.[33] Although these ties are inexcusable, links with groups of varying ideological and political inclinations indicate that Iranian involvement is motivated by secular and national interests rather than radical preferences. The *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008* also identifies Iran's use of terrorist proxies as a means of advancing "its key *national security* and *foreign policy* interests" (emphasis added) and makes no mention of religious or ideological loyalties.[34]

Other nuclear terrorism scaremongers highlight the concern that Iran may be tempted to use one of its many terrorist proxies to carry out an anonymous nuclear attack against one of its enemies.[35] Proponents of this argument, however, neglect the fact that almost all of the nuclear material left behind after an explosion is suitable for forensic investigation to attribute nuclear weapons to their origin. Since weapons-grade materials do not occur naturally, material analyzed in the aftermath of an explosion will contain certain physical, chemical, elemental, and isotopic signatures that in turn provide clues about the origin of the weapon, making anonymity impossible.[36] Attribution capabilities have been complemented by well-articulated deterrence threats from Western governments. In October 2006, following North Korea's nuclear test, Pres. George W. Bush declared that the "transfer of nuclear weapons or material" to terrorists "would be considered a grave threat" and that North Korea would be held "fully accountable" for such action.[37] In a February 2008 speech at Stanford University, National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley expanded this threat to a universal scope: "The United States will hold any state, terrorist group, or other non-state actor fully accountable for supporting or enabling terrorist efforts to obtain or use weapons of mass destruction, whether by facilitating, financing, or providing expertise or safe haven for such efforts."[38] Even though President Obama has yet to make any similar reference to Iran, in May 2007 Senator Joseph Biden (D-DE), now the vice president, wrote, "We must make clear in advance that we will hold accountable any country that contributes to a terrorist nuclear attack, whether by directly aiding would-be nuclear terrorists or willfully neglecting its responsibility to secure the nuclear weapons or weapons-usable nuclear material within its borders."[39] Barring a complete reversal of strategic thinking, the United States likely will continue with this posture of expanded deterrence, regardless of Obama's gestures of reconciliation toward Iran.

When discussing the implications of nuclear proliferation, one must consider factors that encourage states to cross the nuclear threshold. Do states acquire nuclear weapons to facilitate aggression, or are there more peaceful, defense-oriented incentives driving horizontal proliferation? In answering this question, one can identify further parallels between the current Iranian nuclear issue and the Chinese challenge of the 1960s. The Chinese flirted with nuclear research in the late 1940s, but only after the outbreak of the Korean War did the importance of nuclear weapons in balancing the United States receive full attention. The war on the Korean Peninsula was a central issue in the 1952 presidential campaign of Dwight Eisenhower, wherein he pledged his commitment to resolving the conflict. He warned the Chinese that if armistice negotiations proved unsuccessful, he would be willing to escalate the war and publicly hinted at the possible use of nuclear weapons against Beijing.[40] This perception of US "nuclear blackmail" was enhanced further during the 1955 Taiwan Strait crisis when Secretary of State John Foster Dulles warned that the United States was willing to use force to prevent the communist conquest of Taiwan and that Washington intended to establish defense commitments with the island.[41]

Like China in the 1960s, the Iranian regime probably views the military muscle of the United States with acute trepidation. The United States currently has military forces stationed in Iraq, Afghanistan, a large number of Gulf States, South Asia, and Turkey. Although the ousting of Saddam improved Iran's *actual* security situation, it also confirmed mounting Iranian fears of strategic encirclement. Officials in Tehran became concerned not only that Iran might be sandwiched between two US client states but also that regime change in Iraq might encourage similar American ambitions for Iran. Iranian leaders are also likely to have drawn important lessons from the way the United States dealt with the respective proliferation challenges from North Korea and Iraq. They probably view the United States as averse to challenging states militarily once they have a nuclear capability but as more aggressive and in favor of regime change in states that have demonstrated nuclear intent. Viewed from this perspective, the notion that nuclear weapons are strategically necessary to ensure regime survival and territorial integrity is understandable.[42]

As noted, the Policy Planning Committee report submitted in October 1963 identified Chinese nuclear weapons as a vehicle for gaining prestige

rather than a means of facilitating aggression. Indeed, Mao is known to have viewed China's independent ability to mobilize and commit its armies in a manner equal to if not greater than that of other states as an inherent part of Chinese sovereign independence. In 1958 he reportedly informed senior colleagues that without nuclear capabilities, "others don't think what we say carries weight."[43] Evidence indicates that the desire for prestige and international respect is also driving Iranian nuclear endeavors. The general consensus among Iran's clerical leaders holds that the Islamic Republic is the representative of revolutionary Islam and the guardian of oppressed Muslims everywhere. They therefore believe that the fate of the worldwide Islamic community depends on the ability of Iran to develop the military capabilities to protect and advance that community's interests. In an April 2006 speech before the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council, Hassan Rohani, secretary of the council, emphasized this point: "This is good for our international reputation and shows that we have made good technological progress and have been successful in the area of technology. . . . It is going to be a very effective and important statement."[44] His speech also indicated that the Iranians may view nuclear weapons acquisition as a means of forcing dialogue from other states. Rohani pointed out that "the world did not want Pakistan to have an atomic bomb or Brazil to have the fuel cycle, but Pakistan built its bomb and Brazil has its fuel cycle, and the world started to work with them. Our problem is that we have not achieved either one, but we are standing at the threshold."[45]

Prospects—Applying the Proliferation Lessons of the Past

The 1963 Policy Planning Committee report argued that a Chinese nuclear capability would not fundamentally alter the balance of military power in Asia. It stated that "the great asymmetry in Chinese Communist and U.S. nuclear capabilities and vulnerabilities makes Chinese Communist first-use of nuclear weapons highly unlikely except in the event of an attack upon the mainland which threatened the existence of the regime." It also argued that nuclear capabilities would not alter "Chinese prudence in the use of military force" and, if anything, "could increase Chicom caution." Finally, the report stressed the need for the United States to maintain an appropriate balance between credible nuclear retaliatory threats and an "evident visible ability to deal . . . with communist aggression" in dealing

with a nuclear-armed China. This was considered essential to reassure Asian allies that the United States would be willing to respond to all levels of Chinese aggression in the region.[46]

On 16 October 1964, one year after the report, Beijing announced the detonation of its first atomic device. The Chinese government also stated that the acquisition of nuclear capabilities was driven entirely by defense motivations and a desire to break the nuclear monopoly of the two superpowers. It also stressed the importance of the ultimate abolition of nuclear weapons.[47] In effect, this statement confirmed the State Department's prediction that Beijing would act as a responsible nuclear power. Although it is not possible to say with certainty how Iran will behave if it crosses the nuclear threshold, the issues discussed in this article indicate that it too will act in a pragmatic fashion. Also reassuring is Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's recent reference to nuclear weapons as "a symbol of destruction [whose use is] forbidden."[48]

In response to the 1964 Chinese nuclear test, Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson swiftly issued the following statement:

> This explosion comes as no surprise to the United States Government. It has been fully taken into account in planning our own defense program and our own nuclear capability. Its military significance should not be overestimated.
>
> Still more basic is the fact that if and when the Chinese Communists develop nuclear weapons systems, the free world nuclear strength will continue, of course, to be enormously greater.
>
> The United States reaffirms its defense commitments in Asia. Even if Communist China should eventually develop an effective nuclear capability, that capability would have no effect upon the readiness of the United States to respond to requests from Asian nations for help in dealing with Communist Chinese aggression.[49]

In dealing with the contemporary challenge posed by Iran, the United States should not disregard the relevance of the Chinese proliferation experience in the 1960s. China's nuclear capabilities did not translate into the intolerable military problems foreseen by President Kennedy but may actually have facilitated rapprochement between the two countries.[50] Mao Zedong was also a much more ruthless and revolutionary figure than Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Mao actively supported anti-Western insurgencies all over the world, allowed millions of his own countrymen to perish in his mismanaged attempts at reform, and even spoke openly about his willingness to destroy half of the world for communism to triumph. Despite this track

record, the desire for self-preservation and national survival has successfully deterred China from using its nuclear weapons for more than 40 years.

As with China in the 1960s, if Iran does cross the nuclear threshold, a massive asymmetry will exist between Tehran's nuclear capabilities and those of Washington. Both the United States and Israel have the capability to inflict what can only be described as unacceptable damage against Iran in retaliation for its first use of nuclear weapons. However, when a new state enters the nuclear club, it is *essential* to establish deterrent relationships quickly. In 1964 President Johnson *communicated* to the Chinese a *credible* threat that the United States had an "enormously greater" nuclear *capability* and that he was willing, if necessary, to use force to respond to Chinese aggression. This threat set the parameters for a deterrent relationship that has now enjoyed success for more than four decades and ought to provide valuable guidance for the current US government. Clearly President Obama is attempting to establish a relationship with the Iranians and dissuade them from pursuing their nuclear weapons ambitions. If these measures to halt their nuclear program fail, then at least they will have laid the framework for communicating deterrent threats. President Obama would be wise to draw on some of the more assertive rhetoric of his predecessor, George W. Bush. He should make clear that the United States is committed to responding to Iranian aggression, be it direct or indirect, and should ensure that the United States maintains the capabilities to make deterrent threats credible. In the long term, a nuclear-armed Iran may even encourage a more cautious foreign policy from Tehran and pave the way for a more balanced and constructive engagement with the West.

Notes

1. News Conference 52, Pres. John F. Kennedy, State Department Auditorium, Washington, DC, 21 March 1963, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, http://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Ready-Reference/Press-Conferences/News-Conference-52.aspx.

2. Cited in "Counterproliferation Initiative, Presidential Decision Directive PDD/NSC 18, December 1993," accessed 23 January 2012, http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd18.htm.

3. Anthony Capaccio and Nicholas Johnston, "Obama Says Preventing Nuclear Terrorism Is Primary Goal of Atomic Policy," Bloomberg, 6 April 2010, http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601070&sid=apXunD6dMZJE.

4. Expression used by Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS) in debating the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1996, 6 September 1995, http://www.fas.org/spp/starwars/congress/1995/s950906a.htm.

5. Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, memorandum, 26 June 1961, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963*, vol. 22, *China; Korea; Japan*, doc. 36, US Department of State, Office of the Historian, accessed 23 January 2012, http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v22/d36.

6. Nicholas D. Kristof, " 'Mao': The Real Mao," *New York Times*, 23 October 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/23/books/review/23cover.html?pagewanted=print.

7. Rosemary Foot, *The Practice of Power: US Relations with China since 1949* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1997), 175.

8. William E. Colby to McGeorge Bundy, special assistant to the president, memorandum, 19 September 1963, 2, accessed 23 January 2012, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB38/document9.pdf. Document is now declassified.

9. "An Exploration of the Possible Bases for Action against the Chinese Communist Nuclear Facilities" (paper prepared in the Policy Planning Council, Washington, DC, 14 April 1964), GlobalSecurity.org, accessed 23 January 2012, http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/report/other/frus_30_025.htm.

10. Ibid.

11. "Bush Warns Iran of 'All Options,' " *BBC News*, 11 June 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7447428.stm. Considerations of preventive war have also been made public by Israeli officials. During a symposium in Herzliya in February 2009, Defense Minister Ehud Barak stated that "Israel's policy is clear: we do not take any option off the table with regards to Iran's nuclear program." Ofri Ilani, "Barak: Time Needed to Deal with Iran Slipping through Our Fingers," *Haaretz*, 25 February 2009, http://www.haaretz.com/news/barak-time-needed-to-deal-with-iran-slipping-through-our-fingers-1.270912.

12. Tom Baldwin, "US Pours Cold Water over Hopes of Iran Deal," *Times* (London), 30 January 2009, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article5614805.ece.

13. Norman Podhoretz, "The Case for Bombing Iran," *Commentary*, June 2007, 21, http://www.commentarymagazine.com/viewarticle.cfm/the-case-for-bombing-iran-10882.

14. Ibid., 20. Podhoretz is not alone in his comparison of these two leaders. In April 2009, Knesset speaker Reuven Rivlin drew the same analogy: "The hate expressed by the President of Iran is a warning to all humanity . . . [that] the world [had] witnessed the return of Adolf Hitler." He went on to say that although "this time he has a beard and speaks Persian . . . [his] words are the same words and the aspirations are the same aspirations and the determination to find the weapons to achieve those aspirations is the same menacing determination." "The New Hitler Speaks Persian," *Haaretz*, 21 April 2009, http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1079945.html.

15. Bernard Lewis, "Does Iran Have Something in Store?," *Wall Street Journal*, 8 August 2006, http://www.opinionjournal.com/forms/printThis.html?id=110008768.

16. Ibid.

17. Ali Alfoneh, "Ahmadinejad versus the Clergy," American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, August 2008, 1, http://www.aei.org/docLib/20080820_No523414MEOg.pdf. In one hadith, the fifth Shiite Imam predicted that when the Mahdi returns, "like Muhammad, the God messenger, he will destroy everything that was before and resume Islam from the beginning." Other hadiths claim that the Mahdi will kill two-thirds of the global population in order to "clean the earth from nonbelievers and deniers." Mehdi Khalaji, *Apocalyptic Politics: On the Rationality of Iranian Policy*, Policy Focus no. 79 (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, January 2008), 3–4, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/pubPDFs/PolicyFocus79Final.pdf.

18. Lewis, "Something in Store?"

19. James Fallows, "Will Iran Be Next?," *Atlantic*, December 2004, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2004/12/will-iran-be-next/3599/.

20. Investigations by the International Atomic Energy Agency have traced Iran's clandestine nuclear activities back to 1985. According to Patrick Clawson and Michael Eisenstadt, this suggests that "Iran has been engaged in less of a nuclear race than a nuclear saunter." They share the concern that preventive military action may reverse this trend and cause the Iranian leadership to assign a higher priority to the program than it has previously enjoyed. Patrick Clawson and Michael Eisenstadt, *The Last Resort: Consequences of Preventive Military Action against Iran*, Policy Focus no. 84 (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, June 2008), 6, http://www.theisraelproject.org /atf/cf/%7B84DC5887-741E-4056-8D91-A389164BC94E%7D/POLICYFOCUS84.PDF. Clawson and Eisenstadt also point out that when Iraq attacked Iran in the 1980 air raids on Tehran, other major cities did in fact cause the population to rally behind the regime, and even the former Shah's son volunteered to fight (although his offer was refused) (ibid., 8).

21. House, *The Threat from Iran: Prepared Testimony of Kenneth M. Pollack, Senior Fellow and Director of Research, the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, House Armed Services Committee*, 109th Cong., 1st sess., 29 September 2005, 6, http://www.brookings.edu/views/testimony/pollack/20050929.pdf.

22. US Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008* (Washington, DC: US Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, April 2009), 116, http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/122599.pdf.

23. According to Mehdi Khalaji, anti-Israeli rhetoric appeared in Iran for the first time in the 1940s from the Fadayeen-e Islam, an Islamic fundamentalist group committed to the elimination of the "enemies of God." Khalaji, *Apocalyptic Politics*, 24.

24. Shmuel Bar, Rachel Machtiger, and Shmuel Bachar, "Iranian Nuclear Decision Making under Ahmadinejad" (paper prepared for the Eighth Herzliya Conference on the Balance of Israel's National Security: "Israel at Sixty: Tests of Endurance," 20–23 January 2008), draft, 16, http://www.herzliyaconference .org/_Uploads/2814ShmuelBarIranianAhmadinejad.pdf.

25. W. Andrew Terrill, "Deterrence in the Israeli-Iranian Strategic Standoff," *Parameters*, Spring 2009, 85–86, http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/parameters/Articles/09spring/terrill.pdf.

26. Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iran, Israel and Nuclear War," PowerPoint presentation to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, 19 November 2007, slide 6, http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/071119_iran.is&nuclearwar.pdf.

27. Ibid.

28. Jake Tapper, "Pennsylvania's Six Week Primary Ends Tonight," *ABC News*, 22 April 2008, http://abcnews.go.com/WN/Vote2008/story?id=4698059.

29. John Simpson and Tira Schubert, *Lifting the Veil: Life in Revolutionary Iran* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995), 305.

30. Zbigniew Brzezinski and Robert M. Gates, *Iran: Time for a New Approach; Report of an Independent Task Force Sponsored by the Council on Foreign Relations* (Washington, DC: Council on Foreign Relations, 2004), 27, http://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/Iran_TF.pdf.

31. Ibid., 27–28.

32. US Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2005* (Washington, DC: US Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, April 2006), 173, http://www.npr.org/documents/2006/apr/state_dept_terrorism_report.pdf.

33. Islamist groups include Hezbollah, HAMAS, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Islamic militants in Afghanistan. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Kurdish Workers Party, and Iraqi militias are among the secular radicals supported by Iran. Anti-Israeli groups such as Hezbollah and HAMAS also provide the Iranian regime a conduit for fueling the Arab-Israeli conflict as a means of diverting attention from itself.

34. US Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008*, 10.

35. Scott Sagan drew attention to this possibility in February 2009 during a Herzliya Conference in Israel, http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/22412/Sagan_talk_Herzelia_Conference_020409.pdf.

36. M. J. Kristo et al., *Model Action Plan for Nuclear Forensics and Nuclear Attribution,* UCRL-TR-202675 (Livermore, CA: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, 3 March 2004), https://e-reports-ext.llnl.gov/pdf/305453.pdf.

37. David E. Sanger and Thom Shanker, "U.S. Debates Deterrence for Nuclear Terrorism," *New York Times*, 8 May 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/08/washington/08nuke.html?ref=world.

38. "Remarks by the National Security Advisor, Stephen Hadley, to the Center for International Security and Cooperation," Stanford University, 8 February 2008, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/02/20080211-6.html. In October of the same year, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, who continued to fill this role within the current Obama administration, also stated before the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace that "the United States will hold any state, terrorist group or other nonstate actor or individual fully accountable for supporting or enabling terrorist efforts to obtain or use weapons of mass destruction—whether by facilitating, financing or providing expertise or safe haven for such efforts." Thom Shanker, "Gates Gives Rationale for Expanded Deterrence," *New York Times*, 28 October 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/29/washington/29gates.html.

39. Michael A. Levi, *Deterring State Sponsorship of Nuclear Terrorism*, Council Special Report no. 39 (Washington, DC: Council on Foreign Relations, September 2008), 8, http://www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/Nuclear_Deterrence_CSR39.pdf.

40. John Wilson Lewis and Xue Litai, *China Builds the Bomb* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), 13–14. He later stated that his intention was "to let the Communist authorities understand that, in the absence of satisfactory progress, we intended to move decisively without inhibition in our use of weapons, and would no longer be responsible for confining hostilities to the Korean Peninsula." Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The White House Years: Mandate for Change, 1953–1956* (London: Heinemann Press, 1963), 181.

41. Lewis and Xue, *China Builds the Bomb*, 25.

42. Henry Sokolski, ed., *Taming the Next Set of Strategic Weapons Threats* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, June 2006), 30, http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/download.cfm?q=707. Sokolski also points out that as well as deterring a preemptive invasion, Pyongyang's presumed nuclear capabilities actually led to offers of economic and security benefits. Statements from Iranian officials indicate that Iran has aspirations to emulate such a diplomatic situation. For example Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Raza Asefi has stated that "we are ready for discussions and negotiations, but we need to know what benefits the Islamic Republic would get from them." Ray Takeyh, "Iran's Nuclear Calculations," *World Policy Journal* 20, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 25, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb6669/is_2_20/ai_n29026145/pg_3/.

43. Lewis and Xue, *China Builds the Bomb*, 36.

44. Dr. Chen Kane, "Nuclear Decision-Making in Iran: A Rare Glimpse," *Middle East Brief* no. 5, Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University, May 2006, 3, http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/MEB5.pdf.

45. Ibid.

46. Robert H. Johnson, *A Chinese Communist Nuclear Detonation and Nuclear Capability: Major Conclusions and Key Issues*, report prepared by the State Department Policy Planning Council, 15 October 1963, 1, 4–5, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB38/document10.pdf. Document is now declassified.

47. Chi Wang, "China's Nuclear Programs and Policies," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 39, no. 3 (March 1983): 18.

48. "Khamenei: Nuclear Bombs Illegal and Haram" [*sic*], *Islam Times*, 20 February 2010, http://www.islamtimes.org/vdcgt39x.ak9zw4j5ra.html.

49. Lyndon B. Johnson, "Statement by the President on the First Chinese Nuclear Device," 16 October 1964, American Presidency Project, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=26615.

50. In 1969 the United States and China initiated a dialogue that had developed into an unspoken "anti-Soviet alliance" by 1972.

Assessing the Claims of State-Building Skeptics: Occupation and Counterinsurgency in Iraq

Alana R. Querze, PhD*

> *Soldiers and Marines are expected to be nation builders as well as warriors. They must be prepared to help reestablish institutions and . . . be able to facilitate establishing local governance and the rule of law.*
>
> —Lt Gen David H. Petraeus
> Lt Gen James F. Amos

Traditionally, we do not equate state building with military strategy. It usually occurs after the cessation of hostilities as a means of solidifying an existing peace or enabling an exit strategy. Nonetheless, we are currently pursuing such a course in Iraq and Afghanistan to quell insurgency. Indeed, political leaders have considered state building, especially the creation of democratic institutions, a panacea for insurgency. However, we should not assume that state building creates effective governments, that democratically elected leaders enjoy widespread legitimacy, or that insurgents will not actively attempt to derail what might otherwise be successful tactics. Instead, we need to shift our focus from conjecturing over what ought to work to examining what is actually developing on the ground. Has the effort to create and strengthen new institutions in Iraq decreased levels of insurgency? At present, the literature has not fully addressed this question empirically, but the findings of related studies have generated a great deal of conjecture and a number of arguments. This article finds reasons to suppose that state building may disrupt as well as facilitate counterinsurgency (COIN).

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On the one hand, state building may in fact be part of a winning strategy during COIN warfare. First, new state institutions can normalize politics by giving social groups, including insurgents, an alternative and peaceful way to realize their goals.[1] In this way, insurgent groups may become socialized into the political system. Second, creation of a police and military force may legitimize and shift the burden of military operations to local citizens, who best understand their culture.[2] Third, because state building also entails creation of a new market economy, growth and development may give impoverished individuals an incentive to refrain from joining the insurgency.[3] Last, by constructing public works that provide essential services such as clean water, sanitation, electricity, medical care, and education, we can win the gratitude of the local population.

On the other hand, scholars suggest that state building may hinder COIN efforts. First, creation of new institutions requires alliances with local elites whose objectives are unlikely to coincide with the occupation's goals. For this reason, individuals deemed legitimate and funded by occupational forces would likely work against the goals of the occupation.[4] Second, instead of condoning the presence of occupational forces, new institutions would probably cause popular dissatisfaction because such institutions cannot fulfill their mandate under wartime conditions and have no autonomy from occupational forces.[5] Third, creating an accountable and effective government out of the ashes of a failed state is an extremely difficult task. Doing so during an insurgency would further reduce the chances of success. Hence, state building as a COIN strategy may prove effective only in states in which strong institutions previously existed. In sum, because external state building efforts probably would not be successful, such efforts will not decrease the insurgency.

America's long-term military success depends upon understanding whether engaging in state building before the cessation of hostilities helps or hinders the war effort—an important issue addressed by this study. However, asking whether state building wins the hearts and minds of the people assumes the possibility of building a successful state. Therefore, before assessing the effect of state-building activities on levels of support, we must determine the degree of success enjoyed by state building. This article, then, examines whether the Iraqi case supports the predictions of state-building skeptics. It does so by reviewing the literature on state building

and insurgency and then identifying four predictions asserting state build-ing's impracticality. The article then tests these predictions, using the case of state building in Iraq. As we shall see, despite continued failure in the delivery of essential services and economic development, gains have accrued as a result of democratization and the deployment of independent security forces. The article concludes by considering the implications of these find-ings in terms of a larger research project dealing with the effect of state building on levels on insurgency.

State Building: A Counterinsurgency Strategy?

Insurgencies are characterized by the use of indirect strategies (e.g., ter-rorism, psychological warfare, and guerrilla tactics) intended to erode the means or desire of the state to continue fighting. In such circumstances, the state may be either a domestic government or an occupational force. For this reason, insurgents may not attempt to control any one territory but blend into both urban and rural populations to avoid direct confrontations. Therefore, whereas guerrilla fighters are full-time soldiers, insurgents may fill multiple roles in society and only intermittently engage their enemies, thereby creating difficulty for authorities trying to ferret out insurgents from the general population. Since insurgents are adept at evasion, often-times they alone hold the initiative, allowing them to strike quickly and to deadly effect, without ever offering themselves up as targets. In this way, attrition becomes the worst enemy of the authorities, who must decide whether to give in to insurgent demands or continue to suffer further losses.

Military strategists offer a great deal of advice for countering insur-gency. However, a reading of the relevant literature reveals one central tenet from which all other advice stems: winning the support of the people is the key to victory.[6] As John Nagl explains, "to defeat an insurgency you have to know who the insurgents are—and to find that out, you have to win and keep the support of the people."[7] David Galula points out that any political cause includes "an active minority for the cause, a neutral majority, and an active minority against the cause," so the best strategy involves relying "on the favorable minority in order to rally the neutral majority and to neutralize or eliminate the hostile minority."[8] The tug of war between insurgents and counterinsurgents for the neutral majority is critical for both sides. A loss of hearts and minds by the occupation is connected to levels of insurgency

because, as resistance to the occupation grows, so will some individuals' desire to support or join the insurgency. Steven Metz explains that the two sides in insurgency warfare must create an identity that will appeal to the population and win their support:

> The counterinsurgency strategy . . . must not be based solely on the fact that the enemy has adopted insurgency, but also on the fundamental cause and form of the conflict. . . . In a political struggle, the insurgents must create a new identity structure and attract supporters to it. Hence the conflict is a competition for "hearts and minds." Advantage accrues to the side which creates the more appealing identity structure.[9]

Creating such a universally appealing identity, though, can become difficult because every population has religious, ethnic, tribal, or racial cleavages. In fact, insurgencies often involve several different identity groups fighting the state for their own reasons. David Kilcullen describes how al-Qaeda has masterfully united differing groups: "Transnational extremists infect an existing societal problem, and then through a process of contagion spread instability and violence into broader society."[10] He calls this process the accidental guerrilla syndrome because the majority of these insurgents are tricked into fighting for a larger cause that they may or may not support. Describing this syndrome in action, he quotes an Afghan provincial governor: "Ninety percent of the people you call 'Taliban' are actually tribals. They're fighting for loyalty or Pashtun honor, and to profit their tribe. They're not extremists. But they're terrorized by the other 10 percent: religious fanatics, terrorists, people allied to [the Taliban leadership *shura* in] Quetta. They're afraid that if they try to reconcile, the crazies will kill them."[11] The success of any COIN strategy, then, must ultimately discredit or co-opt insurgent identities, just as insurgents attempt to do the same to the occupation.

State Building as an Effective Counterinsurgency Strategy

To win the support of the people, many COIN strategists recommend building a legitimate government that addresses the people's concerns. Kilcullen, a senior adviser to Gen David Petraeus, describes the importance of state building:

> It is fundamental to build the political legitimacy and effectiveness . . . of a government affected by an insurgency. Political reform and development is the hard core of any counterinsurgency strategy, and provides a framework for all other counterinsurgency programs and initiatives. . . . An effective political strategy is designed to undermine support for insurgents, win over their sympathizers to the government side, and co-opt local community leaders to ally themselves with the government.[12]

COIN forces rarely use the term *state building* to describe many of their operations, but a review of these activities makes clear that they do in fact attempt to create and strengthen state institutions.[13] Furthermore, a number of their recommendations involve elections and democracy. Some individuals go so far as to say that "it is not possible to wage a successful insurgency against a democratic regime," explaining that "examples abound to verify the aphorism that 'the ballot box is the coffin of insurgency,'" specifically mentioning COIN successes in South Africa, the Philippines, Malaya, and El Salvador.[14] Nonetheless, we must not conflate state building and the establishment of democratic institutions. State building can refer to creating and strengthening institutions from any form of government. Consider, for example, France's occupation of Mexico from 1861 to 1867, during which it installed a monarchy, or Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia from 1979 to 1989, during which it created a communist government. Therefore, although creation of democratic institutions may be part of a specific state-building effort, all state building does not involve creation of democratic institutions.

Many COIN strategists point to three core rationales to explain state building's effectiveness. First, new state institutions may normalize politics by giving social groups, including insurgents, an alternative, peaceful way to attain their goals. This way, insurgent groups may become socialized into the political system. Michael Wagner concurs with this view in terms of the occupation in Iraq: "Creating an inclusive political process that gives the Iraqis a stake in building their own future is absolutely critical to the success of the overall operation. . . . Creating a safe environment and building political capacity are closely interrelated."[15] For this reason, he praises US attempts at state building and criticizes earlier strategies that did not take it seriously. Metz agrees with Wagner: "Protracted conflict, not insurgent victory, is the threat"; consequently, a strategy that "integrates insurgents into the national power structure" is vital.[16] Second, creation of a new government complete with a police and military force may shift the burden of military operations to domestic institutions and make the presence of the occupation legitimate. As Anthony Cordesman explains, creating new state institutions "helps the US compensate for the religious, ideological, and cultural differences that the US faces in fighting the war on terrorism; and it can help compensate for the lack of US civilian counterparts to the US military that can take

up many of the potential burdens in stability operations and nation build-ing."[17] Last, because state building also entails forming a new market economy, growth and development may give impoverished individuals incentive to refrain from joining the insurgency. As Metz argues, "businesses started and jobs created are as much 'indicators of success' as insurgents killed or intelligence provided" because "a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy must offer alternative sources of identity and empowerment for bored, disil-lusioned, and disempowered young males."[18] For these reasons, Metz believes that COIN should be discarded in favor of "stabilization and transformation operations" in order to "help clarify strategy and priorities" and "reinforce the idea that military force is a secondary factor in counterinsurgency."[19]

State Building as an Ineffective Counterinsurgency Strategy

Other scholars, however, are less certain about the effects of state building on levels of insurgency. According to David Edelstein, who conducted the first comprehensive study of success and failure of military occupations, "Intuitively, one might expect that indirect rule is more likely to aid in the winning of hearts and minds, but, in reality, both styles of administration are likely to lead to mixed results." As he explains, indirect rule may make an occupation seem more legitimate—an effect nullified, however, by the perception that the new institutions lack autonomy.[20] As David Chandler notes in the case of Bosnia, "external pressure created a state, but one with no real basis in Bosnian society and little popular legitimacy."[21] Perhaps the only people who see these new state institutions as legitimate are the foreign states and international organizations that create them. Another case in point, the new Iraqi constitution, includes several provisions that look more like terms of surrender than a framework for new state institutions. Specifi-cally, Article 8 states that "Iraq shall observe the principles of good neigh-borliness, adhere to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, seek to settle disputes by peaceful means, establish relations on the basis of mutual interests and reciprocity, and respect its international obligations."[22] How can one consider legitimate a constitution, imposed by a foreign state, that limits the pursuit of foreign policy? Similar provisions written into the German and Japanese constitutions after World War II found acceptance because the governments of these two states had the unified support of their populace during surrender. In Iraq, however, coalition

forces promised to be liberators, not conquerors. If we wish to win over hearts and minds, it would make more sense to allow local elites to design their own constitution.

If this is the case, why are local elites so often divorced from the state-building process? As Michael Wesley explains, "the 'failing state' label tends to delegitimize local politics. . . . As a consequence, the process of state-building relies heavily on the expectations of international agencies and officials."[23] Therefore, state building fails because "rather than treating local politics as the source of political institutions, international advisers rely on their own political understandings and commitments and their belief in the power of institutions to shape political behavior, rather than vice versa."[24] For this reason, Wesley argues that, "to be sustainable, agreement on the nature of the state must arise from existing social forces and understand-ings, from 'real' interests and clashes of interest which lead to the establish-ment of mechanisms and organizational rules and procedures capable of resolving and diffusing disagreements."[25] As long as state builders fail to give local elites more autonomy, new institutions not only will appear ille-gitimate but also will likely prove untenable in the long term. At the same time, however, transferring power to local elites can be highly problematic. Edelstein explains that to have indirect rule necessitates reliance "on local civilians of questionable loyalty."[26] In this way, funds and resources slated for state building and reconstruction may be diverted to either corrupt or antioccupation goals. Considering the possible misuse of funds, Keith Krause and Oliver Jütersonke theorize that, "if wrongly distributed, [aid] may reinforce social cleavages and, paradoxically, sow the seeds of conflict and insecurity, rather than alleviate them."[27]

As explained above, good reasons for skepticism exist regarding state building's effectiveness as a COIN strategy. In fact, state building that pro-motes democracy may actually inflame levels of insurgency. As Roberto Belloni notes, state building is often synonymous with the implementation of Wilsonian democracy.[28] Considering the success that developed states have had with their own democracies, statesmen may logically believe that replicating such institutions will also meet with success. Unfortunately, as Belloni laments, instituting democracy in conflict or postconflict zones can have paradoxical results. Instead of bolstering peace and conciliation, democracy may increase tensions:

Contemporary neo-Wilsonianism focuses on political and economic liberalization as means to build viable democracies. As increasingly highlighted by a new generation of democracy analysts, such a formula is often unsuitable for war-torn countries plagued by scarce domestic resources and continuing competition between groups wishing to control the state. At least in the short term, liberalization dangerously heightens competition among groups, thus increasing the possibility of a relapse into war. . . . Not only do political and economic liberalization risk promoting further conflict, they are also at odds with other important goals of international intervention in weak states; in particular, the attempt to uphold individual and group rights.[29]

In agreement with Belloni, empirical studies have shown that democratization and economic liberalization tend to increase levels of conflict.[30] However, in the long run, studies show that democratizing states are no more likely to experience domestic conflict than their authoritarian counterparts.

Exacerbating existing ethno-religious tensions by pursuing democratization may be an acceptable trade-off. However, during an insurgency, insurgents may purposely inflame tensions to produce a chaotic environment that further weakens occupational forces and the new government. In such circumstances, an insurgency could grow very quickly as rival identity groups begin to arm themselves. Unsurprisingly, then, early in the current Afghan war, one encountered pessimism about state building in Afghanistan: "Given the extreme fragmentation and militarization of Afghan society, democratic reconstruction cannot possibly work. Instead, we need to devise a more modest and realistic program, aimed at creating peace and restoring basic economic functions rather than rebuilding the entire state."[31]

Astri Suhrke also is pessimistic about democratization in Afghanistan: "With the national budget mostly financed by foreign governments and institutions, the Afghan government's major responsibility in accounting for the use of these funds is towards the donors, rather than its own people."[32] Accordingly, he labels Afghanistan a rentier state, explaining that this form of government "is not conducive to either economic development or the evolution of a democratically accountable government."[33] In addition to a lack of accountability is the issue of state strength. Externally providing a weak state with funding begins a cycle of dependency that negates the capacity to tax and move towards "fiscal sustainability." This dependency cycle creates a government in name only. Barnett Rubin observes that "electing officials to preside over a non-functional pseudo-state that can provide neither security nor services does not constitute democracy."[34] Nonetheless, one may argue that a guise of democracy ought to increase the

legitimacy of an occupation even in the absence of new institutions. However, as Jan Angstrom explains, this argument is flawed: "The liberal state-building paradigm starts from the assumption that legitimacy follows from institutions and law," but in fact "legitimacy follows from order."[35] Consequently, holding elections and building new institutions are meaningless if the occupation cannot ensure security.[36] Therefore, Angstrom argues that if the occupying force cannot create order, the populace will turn to local elites to provide security. Invariably, these elites will then contest the occupying force for local control.[37]

Galula, one of the seminal COIN strategists, advocates the use of elections—number five on his list of eight steps to win over local populations. He believes that the military should first "expel the main body of armed insurgents," "detach for the area sufficient troops to oppose an insurgent's comeback in strength," sever any links the population had with insurgents, and only then hold elections.[38] In this way, security would already be in place so that the nascent government would not lose its legitimacy. However, Galula's steps assume the possibility of ridding an area of insurgents before winning the support of the people. A Catch-22 situation could develop whereby one gains support of the people only through providing security but that security comes about only through support of the people. He also recommends that military leaders "discover what reforms are really wanted . . . or determine whether the announced reforms conform with the popular wish."[39] This advice is important because, as will be explained for the case of Iraq, the local population probably would neither utilize nor sustain institutions and facilities created without such consultation.

Expectations of state building's decreasing levels of insurgency rest on "an assumption that a sophisticated, yet still utopian, 'social engineering' approach could replace, or accelerate, a process of state formation that occurs rather more organically."[40] At present, the literature addressing this presumption is mixed. The democracies in West Germany and Japan reflect successful state building by occupational forces. As Karin von Hippel explains, though, "allied success in implementing democratic reforms was enhanced by respect for education and high literacy rates, advanced levels of industrialization, and, of course, unconditional surrender."[41] In other words, because Japan and Germany already possessed many of the ingredients for successful statehood, it was easy to replace old institutions with new. For

this reason, one might best describe the cases of Japan and Germany as state replacement under which preexisting bureaucrats and their institutional capacity were allowed to endure. However, most present-day state building occurs because states are weak or failed. Therefore, they have none of the elements that make for a smooth transition to new institutions. Consequently, Wesley's survey of current state-building endeavors is not hopeful:

> There is little evidence that the new, hands-on state-building project is any more effective than the old, arm's-length approaches to nation building. In Iraq and Afghanistan, the state-building missions face rising insurgent violence. In East Timor and Solomon Islands, until recently considered "poster children" for successful state building, unresolved tensions led to serious rioting in early 2006. Bosnia and Kosovo appear no closer to self-administration than they did in 1999, and the state of the Democratic Republic of Congo appears as fragile as it was before the original intervention.[42]

Thus, state building as anti-insurgency strategy may work only in states that have previously enjoyed strong state institutions. In this regard, neither Iraq nor Afghanistan represents a good candidate for this type of COIN strategy.

Thus far, we have considered how state building may affect levels of insurgency mostly in terms of winning over hearts and minds. However, state building may also affect strategic interaction between insurgents and occupational forces. Patricia Sullivan makes one such theoretical argument, explaining why strong states lose "limited wars" and developing a theory that foreign policy objectives requiring the compliance of those occupied probably won't succeed. Using this logic, Sullivan explains how the war in Iraq conforms to her expectations:

> Operation Iraqi Freedom is a case in point. U.S. troops attained their first objective—the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime—quickly, and few American lives were lost in combat. Less than three weeks after the invasion of Iraq on March 20, 2003, central Baghdad fell to U.S. forces. However, after the fall of the regime, the United States' primary political objective shifted from regime removal, a brute force objective, to regime maintenance, a moderately coercive objective, and the target became a growing insurgent movement.[43]

Consequently, because state building requires compliance from the native population, it depends upon low levels of insurgent resolve. As Sullivan notes, the populace can deny a stronger military force "simply by refusing to comply regardless of the level of destruction visited on it" because an insurgency "does not need to win or even fight battles to accomplish this[;] it can

avoid direct combat and frustrate a strong state's efforts to achieve a decisive military victory."[44] In this way, new state institutions may act as an Achilles' heel for occupational forces because they are easily disrupted.

A review of the literature on the effect of state building on levels of insurgency reveals two distinct positions. The first sees state building as an integral part of a strategy to win over a population in the grips of an insurgency. The second holds that it is impracticable and cannot decrease levels of insurgency. At present, we do not know which position is correct because most of this discussion has been either theoretical or anecdotal. We need an empirical study that assesses the ability of occupational forces to reach their own state-building goals.

Testing the Claims of State-Building Skeptics

Distilled from the literature presented thus far and the concerns of this author are four rationales which argue that external state building will fail. First, because new institutions are not created by those who will use them to govern, they likely will not reflect the values and desires of the people. Accordingly, these institutions may become circumvented, underutilized, or unworkable. Moreover, because these new institutions lack full autonomy, their legitimacy and responsiveness to citizens are questionable. Second, attempting democratization in a fragmented society during an insurgency will almost certainly lead to violent competition over state power and development aid. Majority groups probably will enjoy and distribute resources inequitably; in response, minority groups will turn to violence to defend their own interests. Third, by building public works, COIN forces give insurgents a large array of unprotected, high-value targets to select from. If those forces do not first ensure security, the billions spent on reconstruction will not translate into gains in economic development or feelings of gratitude. Last, citizens of a foreign state have goals and loyalties that supersede partnerships with an occupying force. Therefore, coethnics trained to fight against insurgents will be disposed to disloyal behavior that could take a variety of forms: unwillingness to battle kinsmen, use of power to settle ethnolinguistic or religious grievances, and infiltration with intent to spy or steal for insurgents. The four sections that follow use the case of state building in Iraq to determine if, or to what degree, these predictions have been borne out.

Creation of Institutions Independent of the People

After the fall of Saddam, the United States predominated over issues of governance. Iraqis had no influence over selection of the transitional government, the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC). The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) ignored calls by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani to hold elections for posts on the council, instead choosing each member itself.[45] Even after the CPA handed over power to the IGC, many security and reconstruction decisions were made without consultation from Iraqis.[46] Further, decisions made by Ambassador L. Paul Bremer during the reign of the CPA have had and will continue to have lasting effects on the Iraqi people.[47] In sum, the United States did predominate over Iraqis even at times when compromise and negotiation were possible. One must then ask what effect this had on the success of state building.

Iraqis were well aware of their disengagement from the state-building process. They resented the fact that they were not part of the decision calculus in the devolution of power to local levels of government, the design of the electoral system, the choice of a parliamentary democracy, or even smaller issues like the placement, size, and number of hospitals.[48] Little wonder, then, that the issue of capacity, whereby Iraqis failed to take ownership over new state institutions, became a central dilemma for the occupation. The capacity problem naturally fueled itself because Iraqis were unaccustomed to working in an institutional structure foreign to them; the occupation had to take a more senior role. The hesitation of heads of various Iraqi ministries to spend money from their budgets offers the best evidence of the capacity problem. Why wouldn't Iraq's ministries pay the salaries of police officers or buy parts necessary for the maintenance of infrastructure? A report from the United States Institute of Peace explains that "the extraordinary number of agencies, amounts of resources available, and high-level attention from multiple directions produce powerful 'centrifugal forces' that interfere with efforts to stay focused on local institutions and needs in the interest of advancing reforms that will be locally sustained."[49] In other words, the heads of these ministries were so turned around in regard to whom they were accountable that they did not first think of their own employees or the delivery of essential services to the Iraqi people. Ironically, the ministries were hampered by their desire to work with the occupation that was attempting to guide them towards their duties. Even when Iraqi

oil sales decreased the new government's financial dependency on the occupation, this situation proved problematic.

The difficulties within Iraq's new judicial system provide a good example of how US predominance in institutional design prevented state-building efforts from reaching stated goals. Sermid Al-Sarraf (a member of the Iraqi Jurists' Association), testifying in 2003 before Congress, reported that "Iraqis are feeling like strangers in their own country" because the CPA was "avoiding direct Iraqi involvement and their opinions in important decisions."[50] In later years, the courts were described in the following way: "To the average Iraqi, the CCCI [Central Criminal Court of Iraq] courts are an American creation. 'We call them the Potemkin Courts.'"[51] This comment affirms predictions that external state building often creates institutions with no legitimacy or real basis in society.[52] Additional examples also abound of modes of governance, offices, and ministries—with which Iraqis had no experience—being thrust upon them. In one case, the United States insisted that Iraqis establish their own inspectors general (IG): "The perception of the IGs as a foreign antibody inserted into Iraq's body politic by the Americans persists. Many IGs believe that 'everyone assumes we're just spies for the Americans.' One IG noted: 'If we're too active, our minister will fire us.' Another said, 'If I do my job, they'll kill me.'"[53]

Failures like the one described above offer strong evidence of the inability to build states externally. To deal with this issue, the occupation turned to capacity-building programs, believing that training, education, and an army of advisers could remedy "a crisis of Iraqi government mismanagement."[54] Ultimately, these programs proved as ineffective as the government they attempted to improve:

> Years after some capacity-building programs began, it was not clear whether they had any lasting effect.
>
> A look at Diyala province four years after the invasion illustrates how slowly Iraq's governing capacity had developed. None of Diyala's service directorates had a dedicated maintenance budget . . . [and] the local government in Diyala knew no more about ministry projects planned in its territory than it did in 2004.[55]

Not until later did the occupation recognize that only by allowing Iraqis to take a lead in the state-building process could it build capacity and fix mismanagement.

Just as difficult as persuading Iraqis to take ownership of their new government was the task of training them to maintain and utilize infra-

structure ordered by the coalition and built by foreign contractors. Unfortunately, just as Iraqis did not participate in the design of their governing institutions, neither did they have a hand in spending the billions of dollars to build sanitation facilities, schools, power plants, and other such structures. Consequently, they had neither the training nor the inclination to use these new facilities. For the coalition, this became the issue of sustainability; unless this problem could be fixed, all of the dollars and lives spent on reconstruction would go for nothing. In fact, the special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction (SIGIR) reported that "the deterioration of poorly maintained infrastructure projects after transfer to Iraqi control could end up constituting the largest source of waste in the U.S. reconstruction program."[56] Specifically, "the U.S. program was allowing too many reconstruction dollars to exit Iraq into the coffers of non-Iraqi firms."[57] Without Iraqi leadership over these projects, there was no way to ensure use of the facilities after the coalition handed them over. The rejection by Iraqi accountants of a "state-of-the-art financial management information system . . . built with U.S. rather than Iraqi accounting practices in mind" illustrates the difficulties associated with sustainability.[58] However, the phenomenon was much larger:

> All across Iraq in late 2005 and beyond, a series of SIGIR inspections discovered that physical infrastructure put in place by U.S.-funded reconstruction was breaking down and coming off-line. Failures plagued both refurbished and new facilities in the water, electrical, sewer, and oil sectors. It was not just a question of maintaining individual plants and teaching Iraqi engineers who run them to master more advanced machinery. It was about building the systems and processes within Iraq's government to sustain the infrastructure it had just received.[59]

Perhaps the best evidence that US predominance over Iraqi governance led to state-building failure was the success realized when the coalition allowed more involvement by the Iraqis and their leadership during the later years of the occupation. Instead of building capacity, the occupation eventually shifted its strategy to one of Iraqi leadership. Permitting the Iraqis to set their own goals, prioritize their own efforts, find their own solutions, and execute their own plans inculcated capacity and sustainability from the outset. By doing so, the Americans realized that the Iraqis, not the United States, should fix Iraq. Interviews show that many members of the SIGIR staff involved in the state-building process in Iraq echoed this doctrine:

> Ambassador Crocker said, "You have to listen as much as you talk. Let them tell you the problem and then use ways they think it can be fixed with our help. It is not going to

resemble how the Walla Walla, Washington City Council deals with Olympia, but it may work in Iraqi terms. So we talk about Iraqi solutions. . . . It has to work for them.". . .

"We've got to start listening to the Iraqis. That's Development 101," said David Atteberry, the USAID [United States Agency for International Development] representative on the Rasheed ePRT [embedded provincial reconstruction team], located in one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in Baghdad. "The answer to most of your questions can be found by talking to the people you are working with."[60]

Lack of Iraqi ownership of the state-building process led to debilitating errors. Nonetheless, these failures were not so egregious that a change in strategy after the fact could not redeem the overall state-building mission. Therefore, lessons learned about the ability of external actors to build states are mixed. External state building cannot succeed when state builders take the lead. However, if foreign state builders limit their role to facilitation of indigenous leadership, then exogenous state building can create capable governance, and, in turn, state building may become an effective strategy in winning hearts and minds during an insurgency.

Effect of Democratization on State Power and Development Aid

The combination of democracy and development aid, although not exclusively at fault, certainly had a role to play in igniting the violent sectarian struggles in Iraq. The first election was set for 30 January 2005. Sunnis understood immediately that elections would bring the Shia majority into power, so they decided to boycott them and withdraw their membership in the IGC. Up until the point of the elections, both Sunni and Shia governed jointly. For Iraqis the concept of democracy had already been framed as a winner-take-all system. However, the establishment of consociational democratic practices (such as minority veto) might have assuaged Sunni concerns that even as a minority player, participation in government would be constructive. But the United States did not foresee that sects within Iraq would not share power and work together: "American strategy was based on the belief that a functioning constitutional, multi-party democracy was the top priority for all Iraqis except a small number of extremists when, in fact, the security and power of their sect and ethnic group mattered more to a significant number, perhaps most."[61] Therefore, no provisions for power sharing were included to ensure minority participation in governing. The Sunnis rightfully feared that once in power, the Shia would use their electoral

victory to consolidate power and jealously guard state authority and the delivery of resources.

For the Sunnis, violence represented the only way to participate in politics after they left the government. The elections themselves became a target for insurgents because they symbolized the legitimacy of both the occupation and the new Iraqi government. Unsurprisingly, violence occurred on the day of the election: "Insurgents launched about 300 attacks, killing at least 35 people and wounding more than 100."[62] However, Sunnis ended their boycott of the next round of elections (less than a year later), and turnout was high but violence minimal.[63] Sectarian violence continued shortly after elections with the bombing of the golden dome of the al-Askari mosque. In reaction to that incident, "Iraq's Shi'a . . . accelerated the pace of sectarian killing that had been rising steadily for months. At least 1,300 Iraqis, mostly Sunni, were murdered in the next four days, many slain in the streets by organized killing squads associated with the militia of Muqtada al-Sadr."[64] As one commenter noted, "The elections that were to be the capstone of a new democracy were based on a formula that only increased the forces driving Iraqis apart."[65] Not until sometime after the surge in 2007 would the sectarian violence begin to ebb.

Democracy increased sectarian violence in other ways. First, the Shia attempted to dominate Iraqi politics by delaying provincial elections in order to hold on to Sunni majority district seats. This action led Sunnis to reject the provincial governments, cementing their belief that violence was the only answer. Additionally, the majority Shia party used force to replace a mayor with a party member.[66] In sum, both sides refused to concede after losing an election. Second, parties that did well in the elections used their power to take over entire ministries within the bureaucracy and then gave preferences in the distribution of resources to members of their own sect while blocking other sects from enjoying those same government resources. Even the coalition could not keep this from happening: "The construction commissioned by the civil affairs team crossed a de facto sectarian boundary. The Shi'a who held sway over city government took a 'Shi'a first' view of service delivery. Even if the pipes were completed, city officials would not allow the connection to a Sunni neighborhood to be activated."[67] These actions also increased the rejection of governmental authority and the choice of Iraqis to join with insurgents against the government.

The dozens of assassinations of government officials reflected this rejection of authority. In the end, this violence and power grabbing kept state institutions from their duty to govern effectively. Provincial reconstruction teams tasked with restoring order found that

> sectarianism and the battle for control between provincial and ministerial officials had crippled once-functioning organs of public administration. . . .The cycle's root causes were apparent. The struggle for power in Iraq's new electoral system, hurriedly arranged in the last days of the CPA, had overwhelmed the public institutions that manage reconstruction. The seeds of this tangled story were planted in 2003, matured in 2004, and finally burst open in 2005.[68]

Did democratization single handedly lead to an almost all-out civil war? Obviously, the treatment of Shia during Saddam's reign was a necessary element of the eventual violence. Moreover, foreign influences from Iran and al-Qaeda played a significant role in inflaming violence. Had the designers of Iraq's democratic and electoral systems possessed greater foresight, though, the use of alternative democratic designs could have averted the Sunni boycott and withdrawal of the IGC elections.

Reconstruction Efforts Targeted by Insurgents

Insurgent attacks on reconstruction began as soon as such efforts were under way. The ghastly toll from this violence affected every level of reconstruction. Insurgents followed up acts of sabotage with attacks on repair crews sent to fix the damage. The following account of initial attempts to increase electrical output is illustrative of the violence:

> Insurgents 'routinely targeted joint U.S.-Iraqi electricity meetings,' as well as Iraqis who were associated with the Coalition electricity restoration effort. In early June 2003, insurgents shot to death a senior Iraqi distribution engineer in front of her children as she left her Baghdad home. By the end of June, 'attacks on Iraqi electrical engineers and facilities in and around Baghdad' occurred daily.[69]

Despite the difficulties, however, the occupation continued construction because building up infrastructure was part of COIN strategy, but the lack of security made reconstruction impossible in a number of ways: (1) it was too dangerous to conduct site evaluations competently; (2) building sites were blown up before completion; (3) insurgents assailed trucks tasked with bringing building materials to sites; (4) individuals involved in construction were harassed, intimidated, kidnapped, and assassinated; (5) contractors at times pulled out of their contacts entirely; and (6) the increase in the cost

and time to complete any project became outrageous. In the end, "the number of non-Iraqi contractor deaths would continue to rise, nearing 1,300 by the end of 2008."[70] Why were so many contractors being killed? Even though construction was a major COIN strategy, coalition forces did not dedicate troops to protect building sites, power plants, or their employees.[71]

The targeting of public works and governing institutions by insurgents became the single greatest obstacle to state building in Iraq. Without security the plan to win over hearts and minds by delivering public goods to Iraqis remained unrealized, and the job boom in construction and improved economic growth that a new infrastructure should have generated never materialized. Further, the chaos that seemed to envelop Iraq with constant assassinations, kidnappings, car bombs, and improvised explosive devices painted a picture of an occupation (and an Iraqi government) incapable of warding off anarchy. Thus, common Iraqis had no reason to believe that the occupation would bring anything other than despair. Despite the billions of dollars spent, the delivery of essential services and the production of electricity and oil were actually lower than during Saddam's reign.[72]

Failure to complete reconstruction efforts taught the obvious lesson that security is a necessary condition for success: "Endlessly rebuilding in the wake of sustained attacks on reconstruction personnel and critical infrastructure proved to be a demoralizing and wasteful proposition."[73] However, after the establishment of security during the surge of US troops, the multiplier effect from reconstruction efforts originally envisioned by COIN strategists began to bear fruit:

> By the end of 2007, [reconstruction] employed 319,583 Iraqis in short-term labor projects and provided 13,275 with vocational training for a total of 260,000 man-months of employment. More than 260,000 man-months of short-term employment helped make visible community improvements, many of which were overseen by municipal governments in places just swept by violent clearing operations. The role of this economic stimulus in solidifying security gains, although hard to measure, was seen by its implementers and military personnel as an essential element of the surge's success.[74]

In turn, security also helped improve Iraqi governance, which relied on the safety of officials and ministers.

Loyalty of Native Security Forces

The task of completely rebuilding the military and police force of Iraq proved daunting for the occupation. Recruits had to be located, motivated,

trained, outfitted, compensated, organized, and provided leadership. However, the greatest problem in deploying newly minted Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) lay in their reliability as partners in the struggle against insurgents. Desertion in the face of enemy fire, perpetration of sectarian violence, and the difficulty of tracking weapons meant for the ISF plagued the effort to create a competent fighting force. Nonetheless, a successful sharing of the occupation's burden of security with the ISF could produce an increase in the number of soldiers ready to engage with insurgents, a legitimization of the use of force, and reduced visibility for the coalition. Moreover, the occupation could leverage the ISF's greater understanding of local customs, which would improve intelligence gathering.

Desertion was a problem in Iraq for three reasons. First, Iraqis did not relish the idea of firing upon their fellow countrymen. Second, a lack of adequate training or experience kept confidence low. Third, high casualties associated with terrorist bombs and assassinations were demoralizing. These three problems led to early defeats for the ISF:

> In April 2004, Sunni insurgents attacked Coalition forces in Falluja, Baghdad, Ramadi, Samarra, and Tikrit. . . . Many elements of the newly deployed Iraqi Security Forces proved unwilling or unable to fight. Some abandoned their posts and aided the insurgency. Others mutinied when they came under fire. Iraqi police units collapsed in Falluja, Najaf, Kerbala, and Kut, and the number of Iraqi police dropped by nearly 3,000 in one week in April 2004. The Iraq Civil Defense Corps fared worst of all. From April 2 to April 16, up to 12,000 ICDC members deserted.[75]

Worse even than these early defeats by the ISF were the human-rights abuses perpetrated by sectarian members of the ISF on the Iraqi civilian population. According to Carter Malkasian, "Iraqi Army units often turned a blind eye to militia attacks on Sunnis" and "actively participated in ethnic cleansing."[76] During the sectarian violence that gripped Iraq from 2004 to 2007, units of the ISF joined with Shia militias in their assaults against Sunnis. For this reason, the occupation's effort "as it trained and equipped Iraqi security forces . . . was unwillingly feeding the sectarianism."[77] Worse than simple failure, the occupation's state-building activity actually motivated insurgent actions by Sunnis who "violently rejected the National Police, seeing it as an extension of Shi'a militia killing squads."[78] The following report showcases ISF activities:

> In 2006, the United States discovered evidence of Shi'a death squads operating from the Ministry of Interior, and a secret network of prisons across Baghdad. Rival Shi'a factions

asserted claims to the spoils of government, commandeering floors of the MoI and appropriating U.S.-purchased weapons and vehicles for militia activity. Shi'a militias in particular successfully placed large numbers of their fighters on the government payroll. The National Police became so compromised that Sunnis began calling it a "Shi'a militia in uniform."[79]

During this time, as Brian Burton and John Nagl report, "over 50% of the weapons [were] delivered between June 2004 and September 2005, [and] approximately 190,000 firearms went unaccounted for; some likely ended up in the hands of insurgents and militia fighters."[80] Even after establishment of a new tracking system for these weapons, auditors believed that "U.S.-supplied weapons intended for ISF use may have ended up in militia or insurgent hands."[81] In addition to weapons, auditors "discovered that program funds might have been diverted to militia activity in one Baghdad district."[82]

Attempts to stop sectarian infiltration through the removal of high-level ISF officers did not succeed.[83] Another unsuccessful strategy of the coalition involved training the National Police to "emphasize human rights and the rule of law," but ultimately, as an independent report commissioned by Congress concluded, "It is not clear that this element of the Iraqi Security Forces, in its current form, can contribute to Iraqi security and stability in a meaningful way."[84] Nonetheless, the ISF did eventually become an independently effective force after the coalition successfully negotiated the inclusion of Sunni militias into the ISF. This action was integral to stopping sectarian violence that the ISF perpetuated by allowing Sunnis to officially protect their own territories while removing the need for Shia-dominated units to patrol these zones. Of course, integration of militias into the ISF did not occur without problems:

> The Ministry of Interior's desperate need for experienced recruits forced them to piece together units from Saddam-era commando units and Shi'a militia, each of which were likely to have their own sectarian agendas. The result was a force "riddled with corruption and sectarian influence," whose members engaged in routine shakedowns for private gain and committed appalling human rights abuses. These elite Iraqi units, trained and equipped by MNSTC-I [Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq] for counter-insurgency, were regularly accused of human rights abuses.[85]

Obviously, the ISF remains deeply flawed. Nonetheless, the goal by which the coalition is most interested in gauging success (the ability to hand over security duties to Iraqis) reached an important milestone when

in June 2009 American troops closed bases and left Iraqi towns and cities, thereby decreasing the footprint of the occupation by using the ISF. On the day in question when the coalition formally transferred security to the ISF, Iraqis marched in parades and set off fireworks.[86]

Again it seems that evidence from Iraq is mixed regarding the prediction that foreign states will build a security force disposed to disloyal behavior. On the one hand, there is no denying that the ISF was full of soldiers and officers who cared only for their sectarian identity. On the other hand, the coalition transferred power to the ISF, and thus far this force has operated independently of the coalition. The linchpin of success, it seems, resided in the incorporation of all sects into the ISF and the use of security forces native to the areas they were charged to protect.

Conclusion:
Implications for Gaining Support of the Iraqi People

How does the case of Iraq help us to judge whether external state building creates insolvent states? The long-term prognosis for the Iraqi state is still in question. The 2009 Failed State Index ranks Iraq as the sixth-most at-risk state, and the 2009 Corruption Perception Index rates it the fifth-most corrupt state in the world.[87] Recent elections have yet to produce a new government, and this delay has led to an increase in violence. Further-more, despite billions of dollars spent, attempts to increase the delivery of essential services and improve the Iraqi economy have made only very modest gains. Regardless, the security brought by the 2007 surge and the Sunni realignment with the coalition has made it possible to work on these defi-ciencies. Additionally, the coalition has realized at least two of its goals: creating a democratic government and a security force that can operate in-dependently of coalition forces, both of which allowed the United States to remove all combat troops in December 2011. Thus, state building made an exit from Iraq possible.

The generalizability of the Iraq case is important to consider. Are the failures of the coalition in Iraq inevitable and endemic to all exogenous state building? In fact, the United States could have avoided many of the challenges it faced. Had the coalition allowed Iraqis to take a leadership role over reconstruction and if institutions had been designed to ensure power sharing between sects, the insurgency might not have been as intense.

At any rate, the coalition made its biggest mistake by sending too few troops to Iraq. The ensuing power vacuum after the fall of Saddam's regime led to looting, sectarian violence, insurgency, and the creation of well-armed and organized militias. Furthermore, because top leadership took so long to remedy this error, insecurity quickly compounded the difficulty of attempts to deliver essential services, increase economic development, and build a competent new government. Hence the importance of the surge: security became a necessary condition for the success of state building.

The lack of unity of command and unity of purpose among coalition members stands as the last major mistake in the state-building effort. Though not the military's fault (because it had insufficient forces), the civilian side of COIN efforts did not receive support sufficient to succeed.[88] The SIGIR testified to Congress that the "existing structure for SRO [stability and reconstruction operations] management has led to poor coordination and weak operational integration, that these significant problems remain unresolved, and that they continue to inhibit SRO execution."[89] He therefore recommends creation of a new US Office for Contingency Operations capable of providing unity of command for missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Such an office would also help ensure that overly optimistic estimations of needed troop levels and similar mistakes would not recur.

It is too soon to say for certain whether Iraq is a solvent state. However, we can answer the question, What effect did state building have on Iraqis' level of support for the coalition? Future research needs to find a way to make connections between state-building activities and corresponding gains and losses in Iraqi support because, even if we agree that external state building can work, we still do not know if it is an effective COIN strategy. Unfortunately, even those persons involved in state building remain unsure about the effectiveness of their efforts:

> One ePRT member said, "Through the delivery of essential services, we might extend legitimacy to the local government, but I don't know if that's necessarily true." When asked what motivated the focus on essential services, the official replied, "Out of a sense of moral imperative, out of a sense of wanting to do the right thing." "I know the Iraqis appreciate that we are doing this," the official said, "but it might not translate into strategic success for us."[90]

It may be that certain aspects of state building are helpful and others are less important. The case of Iraq certainly gives credence to Angstrom's belief that "legitimacy follows from order."[91] Ensuring security was an

extremely important aspect of working towards success in Iraq. However, just as important was the need to co-opt Sunnis, Kurds, and Shia into the government. Had the coalition not assured the Iraqis that it had no intention of colonizing their country through state building and ensuing transfers of power, insurgency in Iraq may have overwhelmed the occupation. Scholars have already begun to connect state-building efforts to COIN success: "[Ayad] Allawi and [Gen George] Casey immediately poured $70 million in reconstruction and compensation funds into the city. Najaf would remain quiet for the next three years, and Sadr started pursuing power through political means instead of violent ones."[92] The next step must take a comprehensive look into the effects of all aspects of state building on Iraqi hearts and minds.

Notes

1. Anthony James Joes, *Resisting Rebellion: The History and Politics of Counterinsurgency* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004); Michael Wagner, "The Challenges of Iraq: Putting US Army Stability Operations Doctrine to the Test," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19, no. 4 (December 2008): 484–509; and David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009).

2. John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); and Anthony H. Cordesman, *The Importance of Building Local Capabilities: Lessons from the Counterinsurgency in Iraq* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2006), http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/060731_local_capabilities.pdf.

3. Steven Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/download.cfm?q=790; and Max G. Manwaring, *Shadows of Things Past and Images of the Future: Lessons for the Insurgencies in Our Midst* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2004), http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/download.cfm?q=587.

4. David M. Edelstein, "Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail," *International Security* 29, no. 1 (Summer 2004): 49–91, http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/edelstein.pdf; and Brian Burton and John Nagl, "Learning As We Go: The US Army Adapts to Counterinsurgency in Iraq, July 2004–December 2006," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19, no. 2 (2008): 303–27, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09592310802228658.

5. David Chandler, "Back to the Future? The Limits of Neo-Wilsonian Ideals of Exporting Democracy," *Review of International Studies* 32, no. 3 (2006): 475–94, http://westminsterresearch.wmin.ac.uk/3986/1/Chandler_2006_final.pdf; and Jan Angstrom, "Inviting the Leviathan: External Forces, War, and Statebuilding," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 19, no. 3 (2008): 374–96.

6. The importance of winning support of the people was recognized as early as the 1800s when France used a "political response to insurgency" whereby the "military would . . . attempt to win over the population, not only by offering protection but also by such methods as extending free medical help or establishing subsidized markets" so that "soldiers would act not only as administrators and police but also as 'overseers, workshop managers, teachers, gardeners, [and] farmers.'" Ian F. W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and Their Opponents since 1750* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 40. The following classic works and recent publications have upheld this position: Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations: Subversion, Insurgency, Peace-Keeping* (London: Faber, 1971); Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (New York: F. A. Praeger, 1966); Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2004); Bard E. O'Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*, 2nd ed., rev. (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2005); and James S. Corum, *Bad Strategies: How Major Powers Fail in Counterinsurgency* (St. Paul, MN: MBI Publishing, 2008).

7. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup*, xiii.

8. David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 53.

9. Steven Metz, *Learning from Iraq: Counterinsurgency in American Strategy* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/download.cfm?q=752, 83.

10. Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, 264.

11. Ibid., 39.

12. Ibid., 265–66.

13. State building is only one of many strategies encouraged by military experts. Command structures, the size and nature of unit deployments, and the selecting of targets are all addressed by COIN warfare texts. Similarly, other suggestions may help win support of the people without the use of state building. For example, COIN strategists stress propaganda, political stability, security for citizens, and minimization of the use of force. Strategists are also concerned with ending any international support insurgents may receive from abroad (e.g., supplies, recruits, and safe havens).

14. Joes, *Resisting Rebellion*, 234.

15. Wagner, "Challenges of Iraq," 498.

16. Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency*, vi.

17. Cordesman, *Building Local Capabilities*, ii.

18. Metz, *Rethinking Insurgency*, 53.

19. Metz, *Learning from Iraq*, vii.

20. When Edelstein refers to indirect rule, he means that a government is created and supported by the occupational force. His reference to direct control denotes rule by occupational forces without the creation of indigenous institutional structures. See Edelstein, "Occupational Hazards," 67.

21. Chandler, "Back to the Future?," 493.

22. "Iraqi Constitution," [5], accessed 17 February 2012, http://www.uniraq.org/documents/iraqi_constitution.pdf.

23. Michael Wesley, "The State of the Art on the Art of State Building," *Global Governance* 14, no. 3 (July–September 2008): 380.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Edelstein, "Occupational Hazards," 68.

27. Keith Krause and Oliver Jütersonke, "Peace, Security and Development in Post-Conflict Environments," *Security Dialogue* 36, no. 4 (December 2005): 455, http://graduateinstitute.ch/webdav/site/admininst/shared/iheid/800/krause/2005%20mit%20j%C3%BCtersonke%20krause_peacebuilding%5B1%5D.pdf.

28. Roberto Belloni, "Rethinking 'Nation-Building': The Contradictions of the Neo-Wilsonian Approach to Democracy Promotion," *Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, Winter/Spring 2007, 97–109, http://blogs.shu.edu/diplomacy/files/archives/08-Belloni.pdf.

29. Ibid., 98.

30. Caroline A. Hartzell and Matthew Hoddie, "Promoting Liberalization in Post–Civil War States: Building Peace or Fostering Instability?" (paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Diego, CA, 22–25 March 2006); Jacqueline M. Klopp and Elke Zuern, "The Politics of Violence in Democratization: Lessons from Kenya and South Africa," *Comparative Politics* 39, no. 2 (2007): 127–46; and Thorsten Gromes, "The Vicious Circle of Statebuilding and Nation-Building during the Democratization of Ethnically Divided Post–Civil War Societies" (paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention, New York, 15–18 February 2009).

31. Marina Ottaway and Anatol Lieven, *Rebuilding Afghanistan: Fantasy versus Reality*, Policy Brief no. 12 (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, January 2002), 1, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Policybrief12.pdf.

32. Astri Suhrke, "The Limits of Statebuilding: The Role of International Assistance in Afghanistan" (paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Diego, CA, 21–24 March 2006), 18, http://www.cmi.no/publications/2006/isapapermarch2006.pdf.

33. Ibid.

34. Barnett Rubin, "Peace Building and Statebuilding in Afghanistan: Constructing Sovereignty for Whose Security?," *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (2006): 184.

35. Angstrom, "Inviting the Leviathan," 380.

36. A Gallup poll of September 2003 showed the Iraqi population evenly split on the notion of instituting a democracy. This response could indicate that the form of government in Iraq was less important than its effectiveness. Lydia Saad, "What Form of Government for Iraq?," Gallup, 23 September 2003, http://www.gallup.com/poll/9343/what-form-government-iraq.aspx.

37. Angstrom, "Inviting the Leviathan," 374–96.

38. Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare*, 55–56.

39. Ibid., 84.

40. Krause and Jütersonke, "Peace, Security and Development," 448. The authors compare this artificial approach with an organic "historical process . . . driven by local actors, instrumentally using external alliances and resources to consolidate their power or achieve their goals" (ibid., 451).

41. Karin von Hippel, "Democracy by Force: A Renewed Commitment to Nation Building," *Washington Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 103, http://www.twq.com/winter00/231Hippel.pdf.

42. Wesley, "State of the Art," 379.

43. Patricia Sullivan, "War Aims and War Outcomes: Why Powerful States Lose Limited Wars," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51, no. 3 (June 2007): 518, http://www.sagepub.com/martin3study/articles/Sullivan.pdf.

44. Ibid., 507.

45. Babak Rahimi, *Ayatollah Sistani and the Democratization of Post-Ba'athist Iraq*, Special Report 187 (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, June 2007), 8, http://www.usip.org/files/resources/sr187.pdf.

46. Perhaps this occurred because the fledgling Iraqi government had yet to fill critical offices that might otherwise make policy.

47. Three of the most important of these decisions are the design of Iraq's new government, debathification, and dissolution of the Iraqi armed forces.

48. The United States wanted to change the Iraqi health system to deemphasize hospitals and increase the number of local clinics, but Iraqis in the health care system opposed this proposal. Nonetheless, the United States ignored the Iraqis and proceeded with its own plans. Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR), *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience* (Washington, DC: SIGIR, 2009), 190, http://www.sigir.mil/files/HardLessons/Hard _Lessons_Report.pdf#view=fit.

49. Jeremiah S. Pam, *The Treasury Approach to Statebuilding and Institution-Strengthening Assistance: Experience in Iraq and Broader Implications*, Special Report 216 (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, October 2008), 8, http://www .usip.org/files/resources/sr216.pdf.

50. Senate, *Statement of Sermid Al-Sarraf, Board of Directors, Iraqi Jurists' Association, before the Senate Committees on Foreign Relations and Judiciary*, 108th Cong. 1st sess., 25 June 2003, http://ftp.resource.org/gpo.gov/hearings/108s/90493.txt.

51. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 291.

52. Chandler, "Back to the Future?," 2006

53. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 214.

54. Ibid., 272.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid., 332.

57. Ibid., 234.

58. Ibid., 259.

59. Ibid., 258.

60. Ibid., 306, 301.

61. Metz, *Learning from Iraq*, 84.

62. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 205.

63. The BBC reported an "explosion in Baghdad's fortified Green Zone . . . shortly after the polls opened. Two civilians and a US marine were slightly injured." "'High Turnout' in Iraqi Election," BBC News, 15 December 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2 /hi/4531904.stm.

64. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 274.

65. Ibid., 256.

66. See James Glanz, "Baghdad Mayor Is Ousted by a Shiite Group and Replaced," *New York Times*, 10 August 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/08/10/international/middleeast/10iraq.html?pagewanted=print.

67. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 248.

68. Ibid., 249.

69. Ibid., 147.

70. Ibid., 179.

71. Leadership at the very top of US decision making had kept the number of troops in Iraq too low to provide security for construction. Leadership did not remedy this overoptimistic strategy, one of the biggest mistakes in the waging of the Iraq war, until the troop surge in 2007.

72. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*.

73. Ibid., 331–32.

74. Ibid., 309.

75. Ibid., 133–34.

76. Carter Malkasian, "Counterinsurgency in Iraq," in *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*, ed. Daniel Marston and Carter Malkasian (Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2008), 255.

77. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 202.

78. Ibid., 288.

79. Ibid., 275.

80. Burton and Nagl, "Learning As We Go," 315.

81. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 201.

82. Ibid., 302.

83. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*.

84. Gen James L. Jones, USMC, Retired, Chairman, *The Report of the Independent Commission on the Security Forces of Iraq*, 6 September 2007, in Senate, *The Findings of the Iraqi Security Forces Independent Assessment Commission, Hearing before the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate*, 110th Cong., 1st sess., 6 September 2007, S. Hrg. 110-231, p. 111/45, http://www.gpo.gov /fdsys/pkg/CHRG-110shrg38601/pdf/CHRG-110shrg38601.pdf.

85. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 201–2.

86. Alissa J. Rubin, "Iraq Marks Withdrawal of U.S. Troops from Cities," *New York Times*, 30 June 2009, http://www .nytimes.com/2009/07/01/world/middleeast/01iraq.html.

87. "The Failed States Index 2009," *Foreign Policy* and the Fund for Peace, accessed 6 March 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/06/22/2009_failed_states_index_interactive_map_and_rankings; and "Corruption Perceptions Index 2009," Transparency International, accessed 6 March 2012, http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009/cpi_2009_table.

88. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*.

89. *Testimony of Stuart W. Bowen Jr., Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, before the Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan on "An Urgent Need: Coordinating Stabilization and Reconstruction in Contingency Operations*," 22 February 2010, [1], http://www.wartimecontracting.gov/docs/hearing2010-02-22_testimony-BowenStuart.pdf.

90. SIGIR, *Hard Lessons*, 304.

91. Angstrom, "Inviting the Leviathan," 380.

92. Malkasian, "Counterinsurgency in Iraq," 249.

Self-Help and Africa's Collapsed States

The Critical Role of Subregional Hegemons

Nikolas G. Emmanuel, PhD*

Despite ongoing debate over the past two decades, the international community appears far from adequately prepared to confront the complex problems of state collapse on the African continent and elsewhere. In these places, the central authority of the state has eroded to such a point that it leaves those trapped inside looking for nonstate alternatives for security as well as access to basic goods and services. In a great number of such instances, entities prepared to intervene and help reestablish collapsed states have remained on the sidelines, watching the chaos not only have an impact on local at-risk populations but also ooze over borders and exert its effects both nearby and far away. These extremely complex, volatile, and potentially contagious situations have left international actors perplexed and extremely hesitant to become involved, to say the least. Yet, failed states represent clear economic and security threats internationally. Such reluctance to intercede and provide assistance is troubling, given the tremendously high human and economic costs of state collapse.

Since the failed US intervention in Somalia in the early 1990s, humanitarian-military missions by major international actors to address state failure have proven short-lived at best (e.g., the United Kingdom in Sierra Leone or the European Union [EU] in the Democratic Republic of the Congo [DRC] and Chad / Central African Republic). Brief, tactical interventions rarely attempt to tackle the difficult, long-term tasks of strengthening these soft spots in the international landscape. Short-lived,

*The author is an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at Oklahoma State University. He received his PhD in political science from the University of California–Davis. His research focuses on the use of soft intervention strategies such as the deployment of positive inducements or negative disincentives to facilitate changes in the behavior of various actors in Africa.

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very pointed missions can help stabilize a difficult situation, but such efforts alone cannot rebuild a collapsed state. These instances have left the relatively stronger subregional African powers such as Nigeria, Uganda, or Ethiopia trying to tackle the difficult task of restoring security and proper levels of governance to the failed states in their backyards. As Donald Rothchild indicates, "with no external enforcer to rely on …relatively better-functioning states are increasingly viewing some type of self-help as essential to reduce threats from violence."[1] However, one must ask if the regional security complexes dominated by particular subregional hegemons present a workable solution.[2]

The research presented here addresses these problems and concludes that the major international powers have a significant part to play in this dynamic; consequently, they should do more to increase the capacity and, perhaps more importantly, the legitimacy (at local, regional, and international levels) of subregional players in intervening to bolster the extremely weak states in their neighborhoods. They should do so because, if current trends continue, local core states will increasingly assume the burden of confronting state collapse, leaving the United States or EU member states to take on a more discreet role by providing training, intelligence, and assistance.

More than likely, regional and subregional actors in Africa organized around core countries will do most of the heavy lifting associated with interventions into the continent's collapsed and weak states in the foreseeable future. Angola, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, and other core African states have been left relatively alone to undertake the herculean challenges of extreme state weakness in places like Burundi, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, and so forth. Granted, they frequently turn to subregional and regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), or the African Union (AU) for added legitimacy and resources. In reality, however, these core states for the most part are left on their own to supply and pay for assistance as well as suffer losses in their attempts to intervene and find solutions to these situations. These costs go far beyond the capacities of most African states by themselves. Besides the human and economic costs, however, intervening states frequently have

mixed humanitarian and realist motives that significantly degrade their capacity to sustain protracted military and humanitarian interventions.

These two critical issues, capacity and legitimacy, undermine the practicality of having African actors undertake missions to rehabilitate fragile states on their own. These points need to be addressed in order to find African solutions to the problems associated with state collapse on the continent. In confronting these issues, this article discusses the experience of African subregional hegemonic state actors in their efforts to intervene in the continent's failed polities. In particular, the research presented here assesses the challenges that African core states confront in the current international political climate and the factors that influence their behavior in deciding when, where, and how to intervene. This article assumes that by helping to strengthen the legitimacy and capacity of key subregional actors, the international community can increase the ability of these crucial players on the continent to deal with collapsed states around them. Thus, we hope to stimulate further discussion about having African subregional actors confront failed states and the significant constraints involved. One needs to ask at what point core states on the continent can respond to collapse in their region.[3] In doing so, this article (1) examines the problems of collapsed states, (2) surveys potential solutions offered by African core states, and (3) assesses recent efforts of subregional hegemons to confront failed states on the continent.

Collapse

This discussion uses the terms *state collapse*, *state failure*, *fragile state*, and *extreme state weakness* interchangeably to refer to states that lack the capacity or the will to assure core functions of the contemporary state, especially providing security to their populations. Fundamentally, such states cannot control the activities of autonomous, private actors in their territories.[4] I. William Zartman succinctly points out that "state collapse . . . refers to a situation where the structure, authority (legitimate power), law, and political order have fallen apart."[5] In an extreme situation, as in Liberia during much of the 1990s or Somalia since the late 1980s, the central state virtually disintegrates, and power devolves into the hands of local warlords or militia leaders. Frequently, from these acute instances, exceptionally violent and bitterly contested vacuums of authority emerge. These places represent "a

black hole into which a failed polity has fallen . . . [where] substate actors [take] over."[6] Trapped inside, the collapsed state's "citizens" are left to fend for themselves while various nonstate actors wrestle for control of territory, people, and resources. Such circumstances illustrate Barry Posen's as well as David Lake and Donald Rothchild's version of the security dilemma operating at the domestic level.[7] As the state falls apart, groups arm to protect themselves in the "emerging anarchy" and the spiral of confusion while the heightened potential for violence begins to unfold. In the face of this uncertainty, local populations find themselves at extreme risk.

However, failure or collapse does not always mean that the remains of the state completely disappear from the scene. Critical players acting in the name of the state may retain some control of the capital city and/or outlying areas, as with Sierra Leone or the DRC.[8] In such resulting "archipelago states," the central government loses or relinquishes control in all but particular pockets, mainly where lucrative resources are concentrated.[9] Clearly, the concept of state collapse is relative to each particular situation. In one instance, the central government may virtually fade away, as in Somalia, or it may retain a relatively strong core and security/administrative apparatus, as in Sudan.

Nonetheless, the collapsed state has several discernable characteristics: (1) a lack of control of the territory within its international borders, (2) low levels of state/leadership legitimacy, (3) low levels of social cohesion, (4) frail and ineffective public institutions, and (5) limited extractive and growth-promotion capacities.[10] Perhaps most importantly, the failed state lacks "a monopoly on the use of force" throughout its territory.[11] Robert Bates argues that this Weberian approach points out the central quality of such events: the failing state cannot or will not provide security to the people in its territory.[12] It cannot enforce law and assert its authority.[13] As Robert Rotberg points out, these entities "lose authority over sections of territory" and stop controlling their borders as negative externalities such as terrorism and piracy spill out into neighboring countries.[14] As the state withers, its authority is supplanted by a wide variety of actors who take over security and organizational functions of the state. These autonomous non-state actors "seize upon the lack of restraint resulting from state weakness to engage in economic and political practices antithetical to the well-being of both the state in which they reside and of neighboring states."[15]

In such an environment, the collapsing state frequently exhibits extremely low levels of legitimacy among large sections of its population. The public shows either limited or no acceptance of state leaders, who in many cases are the central causes of problems in the first place. Poor governance frequently lies at the heart of failure. Such a situation is often exacerbated when the state uses violence, lashing out against its perceived opponents in an effort to maintain control. Such brutality, as in the case of Siad Barre's vicious repression of the populations in northern Somalia in the late 1980s, simply destroys any genuine claim to popular authority. This action undermines social cohesion as the state begins targeting members of particular communities and labeling them opponents of the state. Groups are pulled apart and divisions deepen, leading to heightened tensions and greater potential for violence.

As Zartman argues, collapse is the end of a long process of disintegration of state institutions.[16] Given these indicators, predicting state failure would seem relatively easy, but if frail and ineffective public institutions suggest potential collapse, one may tend to overpredict failure in much of the developing world. To a large extent, Africa has highly overcentralized and overexpanded states that take on too many responsibilities and go to extremes to concentrate decision-making power and resources in a small handful of elites. This tendency makes the state a significant "prize" to many actors, undermining regime longevity and stability.

Furthermore, capitals and other economically profitable locations become targets for a variety of state and nonstate actors that prey on them. Such behavior, as the authority collapses, weakens the ability of the state to extract resources and promote alternatives to failure. Corruption and mismanagement all too frequently leave available resources open to squandering and misallocation. The emergence of illegal economies also has an undermining effect, as state and nonstate elites compete for control of any lucrative, lootable resources. These illicit transnational trade networks fuel conflict and compound the situation in collapsed states, frequently spilling chaos across borders. The question then becomes, when does the menace of the externalities of state collapse justify self-help from more stable states in the region?[17]

The Spillover Effects of Collapse

State failure has an effect on multiple levels of the international system. The phenomenon clearly takes its biggest toll on the populations directly involved but also has a significant impact on regional and international stages.[18] Externalities or spillover effects that confront the global community include transnational terrorism, piracy, infectious diseases, regionalization of civil wars, attacks on coethnics across international borders, massive refugee outflows, illicit commercial networks of all types, environmental damage, disruption of trade flows, and costly peacekeeping and reconstruction efforts, among others. Some of these issues have grabbed the headlines of the world's major newspapers and have received much attention in Washington and elsewhere. Regardless of any awareness of the potential impact of state collapse, major powers have no real interest in intervening and rescuing the residents of failed states such as Somalia or the Central African Republic. However, considerable interest exists in tackling some of the externalities of these fragile states, such as terrorism, piracy, and so forth.

Consequently, in the past decade and a half, academics and policy makers have increasingly turned their attention to failing states. In 1994, for example, the Clinton administration began funding the State Failure Task Force (now the Political Instability Task Force), which has made great strides in comprehending the underlying factors involved in state collapse and identifying key variables to help predict future episodes of failure.[19] However, the events of 11 September 2001 (9/11) awoke the US government to the potential effect of the externalities of collapsed states such as Afghanistan. Shortly after, in 2002, Washington made fragile states a central plank in its foreign policy agenda, arguing that US national security was "now threatened less by conquering states than . . . by failing ones."[20] In 2004 the Bush administration took further steps to deal with such countries by putting together the US State Department's Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, which attempts to facilitate interagency coordination on collapsed states across the national security bureaucracy. According to the US Agency for International Development, "Failing and post-conflict states pose one of the greatest national and international security challenges of our day, threatening vulnerable populations, their neighbors, our allies, and ourselves."[21] In 2005 Bush also established a Policy

Coordination Committee for Reconstruction and Stabilization Operations to facilitate cooperation among bureaucracies on this issue.[22]

However, since the 9/11 attacks, Washington has primarily expressed its focus on collapsed states in relation to the US war on terrorism—not to the dangers these situations pose to neighboring countries or their populations. Thus, regional bodies and the better-functioning states in the affected area are left to confront the direct effects of state collapse. Intervention by these core states represents the only attempt to bring some modicum of security to extremely unstable environments.

Cases of Collapse in Africa

This article's identification of critical cases draws from the Political Instability Task Force's data set available in "Consolidated Problem Set," using it to examine the "major political instability events" episodes (referred to here as state collapse) from 1989 to 2009 in Africa.[23] We address this time period for two reasons. First, earlier conflicts leading to collapse in much of the developing world were dominated by the Cold War. The end of this East-West struggle left many states and regions to sort out various civil wars and problems of state weakness by themselves. Second, after 1989 one begins to see the emergence of regional security complexes in Africa aimed at confronting state collapses on the continent and the civil conflicts that frequently accompany them. Less than a year after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Nigerian-led Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) intervention into Liberia in August 1990 represents an important turning point in this evolution.

Furthermore, one might ask, why look at Africa? Simply, this continent suffers more from extreme state weakness and outright collapse than any other region on the planet. According to the Political Instability Task Force, in the past two decades, 26 of the 53 countries in Africa (49 percent) have experienced some form of failure (table 1). The length of the episodes varies from six months for Guinea in 2000 to more than 40 years for Uganda (1966–2006).

Table 1 also underlines the intractability of many of these cases, the 29 episodes having an average length of 141.8 months or almost 12 years. State failure, it appears, does not simply go away on its own. It endures, making outside help crucial. Furthermore, one should point out that state weakness

Table 1. Interventions in collapsed states in sub-Saharan Africa, 1989–2009

State	Start Date	End Date	Total Duration (months)	Major Power	UN	Regional Body	Core State(s)
Algeria	5/91	12/04	163				
Angola	1/75	3/02	326		UN		
Burundi	8/88	5/05	201		UN	AU	South Africa, Ethiopia
Central African Republic	3/03	—	73*	France	UN		Libya
Chad	10/65	10/94	348	France	UN	Organization of African Unity	Libya
Chad	10/05	—	43*	EU, France	UN		
Comoros	9/95	4/99	55	France			
Congo-Brazzaville	6/97	12/99	30				Angola
Congo-Kinshasa	3/92	—	193*	EU, France	UN		Rwanda, Uganda, Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Sudan, Chad
Djibouti	11/91	6/94	31	France			
Egypt	2/92	3/99	85				
Ethiopia	7/61	5/93	382				
Ethiopia	2/99	6/00	16		UN		
Guinea	9/00	3/01	6				
Guinea-Bissau	6/98	9/03	63			ECOWAS	Senegal
Côte d'Ivoire	9/02	4/07	55	France	UN	ECOWAS	Senegal
Kenya	10/91	9/93	23				
Lesotho	5/98	1/99	8			SADC	South Africa
Liberia	11/85	8/03	213		UN	ECOWAS	Nigeria
Mali	6/90	1/95	55				
Mozambique	7/76	10/92	195		UN		
Rwanda	10/90	7/01	129	France	UN		
Senegal	9/92	12/99	81				
Sierra Leone	3/91	3/02	132	UK	UN	ECOWAS	Nigeria
Somalia	5/88	—	251*	US	UN	AU	Ethiopia (unilateral), Uganda (AU)
South Africa	8/84	6/96	142				
Sudan (North-South)	7/83	1/05	258		UN		
Sudan (Darfur)	2/03	-	74*		UN	AU	
Uganda	4/66	5/06	481				
Average			141.8				

Source: Political Instability Task Force, "Consolidated Problem Set," version 2010, http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/PITF%20 Consolidated%20Case%20List2010.pdf.

*These cases are ongoing; the duration lists the number of months through April 2009.

is a chronic affliction for many countries, with new episodes reoccurring regularly. All five of the current ongoing cases (i.e., Central African Republic, Chad, Congo-Kinshasa, Somalia, and Sudan) have experienced multiple periods of state collapse since independence.[24] Sudan, for example, has effectively been a failed state since 1956, except for a brief period from 1972 to 1983. Besides its recent emblematic and virtual total collapse of governance, Somalia also experienced instability in the 1960s. Additionally, the DRC went through extremely difficult times shortly after independence, again in the 1970s, and most recently since 1996. Chad also has been described as a "mere geographic expression" on a map for most of its existence, suffering from repeated episodes of state collapse.[25]

Intervening in the Collapsed State

It is important to notice that 17 of the 29 African episodes (59 percent) of state collapse from 1989 to 2009 experienced some sort of outside intervention. In this study, the term *intervention* refers to an external third party's coercive intrusion into the internal affairs of a state for the purpose of restoring order (i.e., some semblance of security). These actions utilize the armed forces of the outside state or a group of states primarily to protect at-risk populations within collapsed states from wide-scale suffering or death, as well as to help reestablish the central government. Such interventions seek to assist the various actors within the collapsed state in overcoming the security dilemma by facilitating information flows between them as well as helping these groups commit to peace and renewed order. As Patrick Regan, Richard Frank, and Aysegul Aydin point out, "third-party interventions . . . are . . . attempts to manipulate the preferences of warring parties and, thus, conflict outcomes."[26] Although their research specifically addresses interventions in civil wars, the same idea holds for collapsed states, which frequently share similar dynamics.

Additionally, since nonintervention historically has been the norm in the Westphalian state system, some parties might construe such actions as hostile intrusions. However, to give legitimacy to these military actions, what remains of the rump state frequently invites an outside third party to come in. Further, either an international body such as the United Nations (UN) or a regional body such as the AU or ECOWAS can justify such interventions. Generally speaking, James N. Rosenau observes that these actions

have two primary characteristics: (1) they break the convention or norm of nonintervention, and (2) they are intentionally directed at altering the structure of political authority—qualities shared by external military interventions.[27] A variety of actors participate: 10 of the 17 interventions by third-party actors in African failed states involved major powers (EU, France, United Kingdom, and United States); 15, the UN; nine, regional bodies; and 11, African core states.

Concerning global powers, several interesting trends appear in the data on intervention in Africa's collapsed states. In the post-Mogadishu international environment, only the EU, France, and the United Kingdom have sent their military forces into failed-state environments with the goal of providing security to populations and stabilizing the central government. These actions were relatively short—several months at the most. The United Kingdom went into Sierra Leone from May to June 2000 with a small force of about 1,000 troops to repulse the Revolutionary United Front and revive the flailing peace process under the aegis of the UN. The EU and France undertook brief missions in the DRC in Ituri and Kinshasa, as well as slightly longer missions in both Chad and the Central African Republic, along the Sudanese border. The only exception to these types of short-lived interventions has been France's involvement in the Côte d'Ivoire, which has continued since 2002. Aside from these exceptions, other actors have assumed the lion's share of stabilizing and resuscitating Africa's failed states.

Historically, the UN has served as the central participant during direct armed interventions in collapsed states in Africa and elsewhere, but that organization no longer goes in alone or puts troops on the ground first. Currently, African organizations and states play the predominant role in initial military operations in Africa—a clear, growing trend that has created a multitiered conflict-management system. The UN coordinates initial intervention by regional forces, providing legitimacy and material to support a local reaction. This trend began in the early 1990s as a response to the ECOWAS direct military intervention in Liberia, which was organized by the ECOWAS regional body and began in August 1990. Shortly thereafter, "in his 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace*, former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali argued that regional security arrangements be used to lighten the UN's heavy peacekeeping burden as foreseen in Chapter 8 of the UN Charter."[28] Since this concept of burden sharing has blossomed in

Africa, African subregional bodies—including ECOWAS, SADC, and IGAD, along with the AU—have begun developing their own security complexes and deploying their own troops in a growing number of failed states and civil conflicts. In turn, the international community increasingly has tried to bolster the response capacity of these subregional and regional organizations. Africa has experienced this evolution in cooperation more than any other region on the planet. The model is now being implemented in Sudan/Darfur and Somalia but has appeared in a number of other cases during recent years, including Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Comoros, and Lesotho, to name a few. This scenario represents a new trend in the geopolitical order of Africa specifically and the international system more generally. Previously, African states had preserved the status quo, closely defending internal sovereignty. One of the central points of agreement in the Organization of African Unity—the Westphalian concept of nonintervention—has changed since the end of the Cold War.

Table 1 lists four interventions undertaken by all four types of actors (i.e., major powers, the UN, regional as well as subregional organizations, and core African states), either together in a synchronized operation as in Sierra Leone or the Côte d'Ivoire. On seven occasions, the UN teamed up with a regional body such as the AU in Darfur or ECOWAS in Sierra Leone. In all of these cases, the regional or subregional organization introduced troops from a number of countries around a core intervening state, such as Nigeria, Uganda, or South Africa. The Nigerian-led ECOWAS operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone, closely coordinated with the UN, are classic examples of this trend. This pattern of "African solutions to African problems" has recurred in a number of prominent cases, including the Senegalese-led ECOWAS action in Guinea-Bissau, the South African–led SADC operation in Lesotho, and the current Uganda-led AU/IGAD action in Somalia. This tendency signifies a new chapter in the way that relatively stronger African states confront their weaker neighbors. However, one should add that these regional and subregional bodies play a significant role in legitimizing the actions of hegemonic core states in Africa. As Francis Deng and his coauthors argue, "responsible regional organizations can facilitate cooperation, regularize relations, build confidence, and develop norms that help to manage conflict."[29] Organizations such as IGAD in

East Africa or ECOWAS in West Africa have contributed heavily to this process.

Before continuing to the positives and negatives of African-led interventions, this article addresses another trend—one that is potentially dangerous and growing. Table 1 identifies six African subregional hegemons that have unilaterally undertaken military operations in neighboring failed states, an action that runs counter to the tendency towards burden sharing. The most remarkable cases are Rwanda and Uganda in the DRC, Angola in Congo-Brazzaville, and, most recently, Ethiopia in Somalia. These relatively stronger states became involved in their neighbor's affairs without consulting the UN or other African organizations, seriously putting into question the legitimacy and legality of their operations, undermining their efforts, and putting their troops at risk. Without outside legitimacy, unilateral interventions by neighboring states often impose a complicating layer of interstate rivalry on the collapsed-state situation in which the interceding actor may take sides (or seems to have done so), discouraging compromise and compromising attempts to stabilize the situation.[30] This was clearly the case recently with the Ethiopian incursion into Somalia. Even though they might not have supported Islamist forces in the country, Somalis galvanized themselves against what they perceived as the Ethiopian invader. Their reaction deeply complicated Addis Ababa's ability to undertake a successful mission.

Regardless, at least three advantages exist for using subregional forces in humanitarian-military interventions, compared to more international forces from the UN.[31] First, subregional forces have a better understanding of the conflicts in their neighborhoods, the cultures they are dealing with, the local norms, and acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Local problems, however, may directly involve neighbors—or, as in the case of Ethiopia and Somalia, historic animosities can complicate relations between neighbors, making military interventions unacceptable for some parties. Second, regional forces may enjoy better acceptance by the local populations. Local fears of foreign domination and even neocolonialism can emerge when major international powers appear likely to intervene, as occurred in the failed US intervention in Somalia in the early 1990s. Armed forces from regional and subregional actors do not encounter such objections although exceptions do exist. Finally, African interveners have commonly demonstrated a stronger

and more lasting commitment to remain in a neighboring failed state—witness the Nigerian-led ECOWAS operation in Liberia, which lasted close to eight years. Furthermore, subregional players have a much greater interest in solving conflicts in their region because they suffer more directly from the various externalities than do outside actors. Both regional and subregional actors in Africa have some significant advantages over extra-continental actors. However, they also face unique problems that inhibit their ability to intercede in local failed states as well.

For all of their potential, African actors are constrained by two important factors: impartiality and lack of resources.[32] First, mixed motives and realist state interests can overwhelm more altruistic, liberal desires to lend a helping hand and strengthen the international state system, thereby subverting the legitimacy and credibility of the intervening state. It is hard to argue that neighbors will always be objective, neutral, and impartial. Ethiopia's recent involvement in Somalia demonstrates that even actors with significant military assets (relatively large armed forces) and international support can become bogged down by legitimacy problems. With this intervention, a question arose about whether Ethiopia was acting as a benevolent or malevolent hegemonic power in the subregion.[33]

This scenario leads to at least two clear definitions of hegemony. On the one hand, according to a liberal definition, the hegemon is a positive leader who encourages, cooperates, and sacrifices for the common good and to advance regional norms of peace and security. A more realist definition, on the other hand, would argue that the hegemon is a negative, exploitive power that desires only to cooperate with others in order to meet its own narrow interests. One can hardly argue that any intervener remains completely objective, neutral, and impartial. Undoubtedly, subregional actors may have important vested interests in their own backyards, and the process of disassociating liberal from realist intentions becomes murky. Self-interest frequently dominates the reason to intervene. Some of the less altruistic reasons to intervene in a neighbor's affairs include

- territorial expansion (Morocco / Western Sahara);
- the desire to defend domestic security interests (Ethiopia/Somalia);

- the desire to build military capacity against domestic challenges or subregional enemies (Angola/Congo-B, Congo-K against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola [UNITA]);

- the desire to create security linkages with the international community to build domestic capacity (Uganda/Somalia or Nigeria / Liberia, Sierra Leone); and

- the desire to build international credibility/respect (Nigeria under Sani Abacha and its actions in Liberia).

Second, subregional actors in Africa lack sufficient resources to sustain involvement in such complex emergencies for the long term. The fact that local groups within the failed state frequently identify this dilemma weakens the clout and seriousness of the intervention. Most African states simply do not have the money to finance costly military operations, leaving the larger or relatively wealthier states on the continent overwhelmingly dominant. Clearly, Nigeria and South Africa, along with a few others, will play a disproportionate role in such interventions. Few expect the Gambia or Swaziland to take the lead role in major operations in failed states in their respective subregions. To overcome this deficiency, extra-African actors such as the United States, France, or the EU can assist interventions and build the capacity of local actors to intervene. As John Predergast noted, though, "the big money problem is that the Americans and the Europeans promised over the last decade that as long as the Africans deployed in these kinds of situations, we would pay for the soldiers and equip them. And we haven't done it."[34]

So can we truly talk of African solutions to African problems without outside assistance? The continuing crises in Somalia, Zimbabwe, Darfur, Chad, the Central African Republic, the DRC, and so forth, demonstrate the weaknesses of the way "African solutions" have been implemented (or any solution for that matter, African or international). Nonetheless, the AU and subregional bodies such as ECOWAS, SADC, or IGAD send forces, frequently wrapped around a core African subregional hegemon, to places where no other international actor would dare to tread. Uganda's and Burundi's mission in Somalia offers the clearest example of this type of action. As indicated earlier, major powers are reluctant to become involved in Africa, and the UN is too cumbersome and slow to react, leaving the

onus of intervention to local states. The next section profiles the primary African subregional hegemons before analyzing their interventions in the continent's collapsed states.

Efforts of Subregional Hegemons

The states listed in table 2 along with a handful of other subregional core or hegemonic states have been at the heart of African armed missions into collapsed states for the past two decades. The relatively stronger states appear to be central to any attempt to successfully build any regional solution to collapsed states on the continent. The situation in Africa requires a group of benign, well-intentioned core states willing to build and sustain regional and subregional security complexes. Regional actors need to develop the vision and ability to help create and sustain legitimate African security structures capable of dealing with extremely weak states such as Somalia, Sudan, the Central African Republic, or the DRC. For example, many members of the international community view Nigeria as an important partner for peace in West Africa and an essential catalyst for the ECOWAS interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Like Nigeria in ECOMOG, the core states (table 2) have formed the backbone of regional and subregional military operations in failed states across the continent. As Deng and his coauthors indicate,

> Regions generally are organized around certain states that have the power and position potentially to play the role of hegemon or act as a pole around which the security or insecurity of other states revolves. The "core state" in each regional constellation possesses key assets in the form of geographical position, military, economic, political and diplomatic resources, and recognition as a regional leader. A large and powerful state inevitably compels its neighbors to shape their security policies, and to conceive of conflict management, with reference to itself.[35]

Each of these hegemons has reacted to the weak states in its neighborhoods in its own way, and each possesses different configurations of available, deployable resources. Interestingly, Ethiopia—the poorest subregional core state with an annual gross national income (GNI) per capita of $220— has the largest armed force in Africa with around 200,000 personnel, a carryover from both its recent conflict with Eritrea and its long civil conflict. South Africa, boasting the highest GNI per capita ($5,760), has a moderately sized but highly professional armed force of about 55,750 men and women. These two factors—GNI per capita and size of the armed

forces—are critical elements in determining the military and economic capacity of a given state to intervene and maintain operations in a collapsed-state environment.[36]

Table 2. Profiles of African "core states"

Core State	Gross National Income Per Capita (2007)	Population (millions) (2008)	Armed Forces Size (2008)	Intervention Tendency
Angola	$2,560	17.5	120,000	Unilateral
Ethiopia	220	85.2	200,000	Mixed
Nigeria	930	151.5	76,000	Multilateral
Senegal	820	12.9	17,000	Multilateral
South Africa	5,760	48.8	55,750	Multilateral
Uganda	340	31.9	45,000	Mixed

Sources: "Country Profiles," BBC, 2012, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/country_profiles/default.stm; "Background Notes," US Department of State, 2012, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/; and International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 2008* (Oxford, UK: Taylor and Francis, 2008).

However, legitimacy and giving the appearance of a benevolent hegemon are perhaps equally important to the success of assisting in the resuscitation of a failed state. As mentioned earlier, it is interesting to notice that core states do not always decide to intervene under the aegis of a regional or subregional organization. Such unilateral behavior brings into question the intentions of the third-party intervener. For example, one can make a case in point for the perceived lack of legitimacy of the Ethiopian incursion into Somalia (2006–9). The questionable intentions of Ethiopia inflamed various armed opposition groups in Somalia, undermining Addis Ababa's efforts to stabilize the situation. Ethiopia went into Somalia with some US assistance, but it did not receive authorization from the UN, AU, or IGAD (an East African subregional organization). In the end, this unilateral activity failed, in large part because of the questions surrounding legitimacy. However, one could have perceived Senegal's intervention in neighboring Guinea-Bissau as a hostile act, given the interconnected relations between the two countries, including the Casmanace rebels' use of Guinea-Bissau as a safe haven and staging ground for operations in southern Senegal. How-

ever, Senegal received authorization from ECOMOG before going in, thus bolstering the legitimacy of the operation.

At times, as in the case of Uganda, the third-party intervener sends its armed forces to a failed state for different reasons, depending closely upon the situation. Uganda felt a direct military threat from the externalities and extreme violence of the DRC in the late 1990s, deciding that it had to intervene to protect its own interests. These operations, which have gone on for the past 13 years now, have raised questions concerning the overall benevolence of Ugandan activities in the DRC (they are far from being alone). Yet, Uganda has also demonstrated recently that it can be an important player in the regional security structures in East Africa and the Horn of African, leading the AU/IGAD mission in Somalia, regardless of the terrorist attacks carried out in Uganda itself by the militant group Al-Shabab in the summer of 2010.

Clearly, as argued here, an intervening state that appears to be a threatening power, acting alone and out of pure self-interest (geopolitical, economic, etc.), subverts the legitimacy of its actions, regardless of that state's overall military and/or economic capacity. Both capacity and legitimacy are important variables to consider when analyzing any type of military intervention in an extremely weak state environment.

Before this discussion continues, some issues need clarification. First, as demonstrated by the data presented in tables 1 and 2, regional and subregional actors play ever more important roles in reacting to state collapse in Africa. Since the early 1990s, major international actors such as the UN have promoted this trend. Furthermore, at the heart of these interventions, several African core states have committed the vast majority of the troops and have undertaken command of the various missions. Examples include Nigeria's peacekeeping operations in Liberia under ECOWAS and the current Ugandan mission in Somalia under the aegis of the AU. However, this article argues that these subregional hegemonic states lack the capacity, and at times the legitimacy, to maintain operations in collapsed-state environments without outside assistance.

These three assumptions—the increasing role of regional actors, the prominence of core states, and the difficulties of capacity and legitimacy—lead this research to two underlying hypotheses. Primarily, the magnitude of the spillover effects, or externalities, of a collapsed state is inversely

related to the local subregional hegemon's relative power capabilities and regional legitimacy. That is, stronger states that promote liberal norms and act as benevolent hegemons can do a better job of helping their weaker neighbors. In direct relation to this hypothesis, it would be in the best interest of the international community to strengthen these core states (in terms of capacity and legitimacy), thus reducing the threat of collapsed states on the continent and beyond.

Do subregional hegemons really help bring an end to state collapse? The research presented here poses this question as its dependent variable (DV). Table 3 identifies a number of recent episodes of state failure and arranges a trichotomous outcome. A case receives a score of "low" if the intervener does not end the failure episode, a "moderate" if problems related to state weakness in the target persist after the end of operations, and a "high" if the mission restores the central government and ends the collapse. To determine the factors that influence this outcome, the research identifies three explanatory or independent variables (IV) as having importance. First, what was the military capacity of the intervening state? Cases with militaries over 50,000 personnel—the average strength of all of the core states' armed forces—received a score of "high." "Low" indicated states with armed forces of under 50,000. Second, how did the relative size of the intervening third parties' economies play into the ability to successfully undertake and sustain military operations in the failed-state environment? Here "high" designates a strong economic capacity with a GNI per capita over $1,750—again, the average for the subregional hegemonic states. The final explanatory factor addresses the regional legitimacy of the core state's operation, the intervener receiving a "yes" for a mission embedded within a UN, regional, or subregional operation and a "no" for a unilateral action.

Table 3. Key collapsed states and intervening subregional hegemons

Collapsed State (n=16)	Subregional Intervener	DV: Contribution to End of Collapsed State	IV1: Military Capacity	IV2: Economic Capacity	IV3: Regional Legitimacy
Burundi	Ethiopia	Moderate	High	Low	Yes
Burundi	South Africa	Moderate	High	High	Yes

Table 3. (*continued*)

Collapsed State (n=16)	Subregional Intervener	DV: Contribution to End of Collapsed State	IV1: Military Capacity	IV2: Economic Capacity	IV3: Regional Legitimacy
Central African Republic	Libya	Low	High	High	No
Chad	Libya	Low	High	High	No
Congo-Brazzaville	Angola	Moderate	High	High	No
Congo-Kinshasa	Angola	Low	High	High	No
Congo-Kinshasa	Rwanda	Low	Low	Low	No
Congo-Kinshasa	Uganda	Low	Low	Low	No
Congo-Kinshasa	Zimbabwe	Low	Low	Low	No
Côte d'Ivoire	Senegal	Moderate	Low	Low	Yes
Guinea-Bissau	Senegal	Moderate	Low	Low	Yes
Lesotho	South Africa	High	High	High	Yes
Liberia	Nigeria	High	High	Low	Yes
Sierra Leone	Nigeria	High	High	Low	Yes
Somalia	Ethiopia	Low	High	Low	No
Somalia	Uganda	Low	Low	Low	Yes

In a preliminary assessment of the available data, an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression indicates a few general trends (table 4). First, regional legitimacy appears closely related to the more successful interventions in this sample. These operations were parts of larger regional activities. Not only was the direction of the regional legitimacy variable positive, in the expected direction, it was also highly significant, far below the typical 0.01 threshold. AU and subregional efforts in Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, and Sierra Leone offer excellent examples of this trend. This statistical result indicates that the regional legitimacy variable plays a large role in explaining whether or not an African intervention was successful. When African states work within regional bodies, their efforts to help revive collapsed states are more fruitful.

Second, military capacity had an impact on the success or failure of a mission in a failed state. On average, intervening third parties with large armed forces perform better at stabilizing failed states than do their counter-

parts on the continent with smaller armies. Finally, the other IV, economic capacity, which measures GNI per capita, was not in the expected direction and had a negative impact on the outcome variable.

Table 4. Results of OLS regression

OLS Regression (n=16)	Coefficient	Significance
Military Capacity	0.64	0.080
Economic Capacity	-0.13	0.720
Regional Legitimacy	1.09	0.002
Constant	0.79	0.008
r2 = 0.668		

Conclusion

Because major powers probably will not intervene and because the UN is too slow and too cumbersome to help stabilize and rebuild collapsed states, African regional organizations and core states will likely do much of the work in this area on the continent in the foreseeable future. The international community needs to strengthen interventions by such regional and subregional actors in two ways: capacity and legitimacy. This initial examination of the available data on third-party missions into failed states in Africa reveals that states possessing the most developed militaries and backed by African interstate organizations have the highest likelihood of success. A deeper understanding of these processes requires the gathering of more data and the employment of better analytical tools to help African states and agencies relieve the massive human suffering and instability in the international systems caused by state collapse.

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