THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN IRAQ AND THE U.S.:
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF DETERRENCE

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The American confrontation with Iraq poses important

questions for scholarship as well as for policy, but has developed

so quickly that it is difficult to produce a full-scale paper. So

this is something of a hybrid. Although it is partially motivated

by my belief that the American policy is foolish and that Iraq

does not pose a threat that is beyond the reach of normal

statecraft, it also represents a scholarly attempt to understand

what is happening. Pressures of time mean that this paper is

somewhat telegraphic, with ideas sketched but not fully developed

and an organizational scheme that is less than fully realized.

Nevertheless I hope this contribution to our discussion of

deterrence and Iraq will be of some use.

I. GENERAL

The broadest question is how much of general IR theory now

applies to U.S. foreign policy and to international interactions.

Although sometimes conflated, these are two separate questions--

that is, we might not be able to explain what the U.S. was doing,

but could explain likely outcomes, given American behavior. Or we

could explain the behavior of individual states but not the system

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characteristics.

    Related is the question of whether we are in a radically new
world and how much "old thinking" remains valid. Thus the Bush
National Security Strategy document says that few lessons from the
Cold War have much relevance, and elsewhere I have argued that we
are in a new world with the unprecedented development of a
security community among the developed countries.[1] There are many
intriguing questions here which are beyond the scope of this paper
(which is fortunate, because I cannot answer them), but if
everything has changed we would be hard pressed to find any
explanations, let alone guidelines for action. Furthermore, the
American stance toward Iraq, and the Bush doctrine in general,
follows from the Realist generalization that a state's definition
of its interest will expand as its power does. More specifically,
Offensive Realism perhaps provides the best explanation for what
U.S. is doing, although some of its proponents oppose these
policies.[2]

    This reminds us that many arguments about foreign policy are
descriptive and explanatory on the one hand and prescriptive on
the other. When states behave "badly," the general claim is
embarrassed. This raises the problem of how we explain behavior
we consider foolish when our theories do not incorporate
foolishness. Neorealism is not a theory of foreign policy and
cannot explain or predict what individual states will do.[3] But it
is not clear how many other theories can take the fifth amendment

in this way, and, more specifically, how this tension plays out in the context of arguments about coercion discussed below. Individual scholars like myself who find American policy not only wrong but unusually misguided are hard pressed to come up with an account that is much more than ad hoc, or even ad hominem (which of course may be correct).

Perhaps a clue lies in one of the few lines that brought applause in Bush's Cincinnati speech of October 7: "We will not live in fear." Taken literally, this makes no sense. Unfortunately, there are lots of bad things that can happen to us and that are beyond our control. It also ignores the fact that attacking Saddam increases the chance of his using WMD against the U.S.. What the statement indicates is an understandable desire for a better world, despite that fact that the U.S. did live in fear throughout the Cold War and survived quite well. But if the sentence has little logical meaning, the affect it displays is an understandable fear of fear, a drive to gain certainty, an impulse to assert control by taking strong action. It would be a mistake to try to characterize this as rational or irrational; it just is and provides a powerful impetus to behavior.

This reading of Bush's statement is consistent with my casual (and perhaps incorrect) observation that many people who opposed invading Iraq before September 11 but altered their positions afterwards (and this includes Bush) had not taken terrorism terribly serious before 9/11. As a result, these events greatly

increased their feelings of danger and vulnerability. The claim

that some possibilities are unlikely enough to be put aside lost

plausibility in face of the obvious retort: "What could be less

likely than terrorists flying airplanes into the Twin Towers and

the Pentagon?" During the Cold War, Bernard Brodie expressed his

exasperation with wild suggestions about military actions the USSR

might undertake: "All sorts of notions and propositions are

churned out, and often presented for consideration with the

prefatory words: 'It is conceivable that...' Such words establish

their own truth, for the fact that someone has conceived of

whatever proposition follows is enough to establish that it is

conceivable. Whether it is worth a second thought, however, is

another matter."[4] Worst case analysis is now hard to dismiss. The

fact that no one can guarantee that Saddam (or his successors)

will not use WMD to threaten or attack American interests means

that fear cannot be banished, at least as long as a hostile regime

remains in power.

II. COMMON ASSUMPTIONS

Before turning to the role that deterrence has played and

might play in U.S. policy toward Iraq, I want to flag three

questions whose answers are usually taken for granted but should

not be.

First, should we be disturbed by Iraq's WMD program? Do

these menace American interests? Even most of those who oppose

the administration's policy and believe that there are acceptable

alternatives to regime change and disarmament believe that the danger is real. I tend to agree and would feel safer if Saddam or his weapons were removed. But we should remember Waltz's argument that the spread of nuclear weapons will bring stability, regardless of the characteristics of the regime and its leader.[5] The issue is too large to be addressed here, but we should address it rather than jumping to the conclusion that because Saddam is evil, his WMD program threatens the U.S. and world peace. Those who call for a war if Saddam does not give up his WMD have to explain how he is likely to menace American interests if his program grows and why American counter-moves are not likely to be adequate.

Second, the current focus on whether Iraq could be deterred should not obscure the broader question of whether conciliation might be possible. After all, many disputes throughout history ended with some sort of rapprochement. The common assertion that conflict is inevitable may be correct, but seem self-evident only because they have not been challenged. Typical is Rice's statement that the problem is with "the ambition and behavior of Saddam Hussein, because sooner or later, the ambitions of Saddam Hussein and the interests of the United States are going to clash."[6] But does this mean that diplomacy, shifting alignments, inducements, and compromises, all coupled with threats, would be ineffective?[7] The clash of interests is constant in international politics. Saddam may want to dominate the region, but he is

hardly alone in this ambition. He has supported terrorism against Israel, but so do countries with which the U.S. maintains tolerable relations. He rails against the U.S., but this is hardly surprising considering American policy. He murders, tortures, and uses poison gas against is own people, but this repulsive behavior was not seen as an insurmountable barrier to cooperation in the 1980s. This is not to deny that Saddam may be beyond the reach of anything other than threats and force, as Hitler was, but just to argue that this should be the conclusion of analysis, not its starting point.

Third, even if it is agreed that the world cannot be safe if Saddam Hussein gets nuclear weapons, he is years from that goal. This raises the question of why Bush is seeking an immediate resolution of the problem. The answer may be that he believes that a coalition cannot be built slowly and that only a rapid pace can bring with it the domestic if not international support that he seeks. An alternative but not incompatible argument would point to the electoral calendar. But the main point is that the timing as well as the content of American policy needs to be explained.

III. COERCION AND DETERRENCE

When discussing the utility and validity of claims for deterrence, we need to distinguish between deterrence as an explanation of an individual state's behavior and deterrence as a theory of international outcomes, which depends on the interaction

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of the two adversaries. The question of whether deterrence does or does not accurately describe how one state thinks or acts is different from the question of whether deterrent threats have the influence that the theory posits. Deterrence thus could be flawed in the sense of providing bad guidance to decision-makers and simultaneously be a good explanation for their behavior. Indeed, critics of deterrence often say both that the U.S. followed a policy of deterrence during the Cold War and that the results were deeply unfortunate in increasing the dangers, conflicts, and tensions in Soviet-American relations.

Whatever the relevance of deterrence to U.S. foreign policy today in general and toward Iraq in particular, it is no longer the dominant framework, as it was during Cold War. Alexander George and Richard Smoke criticized the U.S. in that period for equating general foreign policy with deterrence;[8] this cannot be said of the Bush administration, even as it relies more heavily on military instruments.

The relevance of deterrence may turn in part on how narrowly we define it. If we define it broadly as the attempt to alter the positive and negative incentives others face in order to influence them, then it must apply to some extent. But this may be too general to be of much use.

On only a slightly narrower level, deterrence is a facet of the bargaining that results from a situation of both conflicting and common interest, especially when each sides needs to avoid a

breakdown. Both threats and promises are deployed, even if implicitly, and outcomes are policed by off the equilibrium path possibilities (i. e., states act to avoid unfortunate results, and it is the possibility of those results that leads to their not eventuating).

Further analysis requires a reminder that while we often talk of the distinction between deterrence and defense, the fundamental distinction is between coercion and brute force, each of which has two branches (deterrence and compellence for coercion, defense and offense for brute force).[9] Brute force, more familiar in the pre-nuclear age,[10] is the ability of a state to take and hold what it wants by physically defeating the other's army. Coercion, by contrast, works on the adversary's will and intentions by threatening or carrying out punishment--i.e., inflicting pain and holding at risk what the other values. Thus during the Cold War neither side could prevent the other from destroying it, but each could deter attack by threatening retaliation. This does not mean that threats are necessarily absent from brute force, but here what is being threatened is that the state will physically defend itself or take what is desired if the other does not comply peacefully. Although U.S. policy toward Iraq is often referred to as being coercive, this is true only in the colloquial and not the technical sense of the term. Bush feels he needs to threaten to physically oust Saddam Hussein because he believes that threats to inflict pain and punishment will not curb his bad behavior.

More specifically, the administration argues that disarmament if not regime change is needed because an Iraq with WMD, and especially nuclear weapons, could not respond to American coercion, especially deterrence. But we need to refine the question from "Can the U.S. deter Saddam Hussein if he gains additional WMD?" to "What possible acts on his part could the U.S. not deter him from?" The more differentiated question is necessary because some actions are harder to deter than others and the U.S. is more concerned about certain possible actions than about others. Thus even proponents of invasion do not say that Saddam will use WMD to strike the American homeland. Absent an American attack, the U.S. should be safe through the combination of the credibility of its threat to retaliate and Saddam's relatively low motivation to strike (although if he is as ambitious and evil as the Bush administration believes, perhaps this is too optimistic).

Rather, the concern is with extended deterrence--the American ability to deter Saddam from coercing his neighbors, especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The problem arises from what Glenn Snyder called the stability-instability paradox.[11] This concept, developed in the context of the Cold War, starts with the common observation that under conditions of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD), that neither side can launch an all-out nuclear war because doing so would result in its own devastation. The problem is that this stability permits either side to engage in adventures at

lower levels of violence, such as threatening or even attacking

allies with conventional weapons. Whether the stability at the

highest levels of violence really gave many opportunities for such

mischief during the Cold War is hotly debated, but the fear that

it did drove a great deal of American security policy. So it is

not entirely surprising that the Bush administration fears that

even a small Iraqi nuclear force would undermine American extended

deterrence. Put another way, the belief that the U.S. could not

deter a nuclear-armed Saddam from menacing U.S. interests and

allies in the region shows a healthy--or perhaps I should say

unhealthy--respect for Iraq's ability to deter the United States

from protecting its allies. Indeed, this fear sees the stability-

instability paradox operating even though there is no real

stability at the highest levels of violence. The U.S. could

conquer Iraq, and even with nuclear weapons the harm that Iraq

could inflict on the U.S. is much less the U.S. could exact and

much less than the USSR could have done, assuming that Iraq could

not launch a major smallpox attack, and yet Bush and his

colleagues still fear that they could not deter Saddam from

dominating the region.

The impediment to extended deterrence presumably is believed

to lie in the lack of credibility of American threats to destroy

or defeat Iraq. But for a threat to be effective, it does not

have to be 100% credible; effectiveness is a combination of

credibility and the consequences that are expected if the threat

is carried out, which are weighed against the putative gains that the challenger will accrue if the adventure succeeds. The obvious claim is that Saddam is like Hitler, a sociopath who cannot be deterred. This analogy does not hold, however. Even leaving aside the counterfactual of whether Hitler would have challenged nuclear armed adversaries, the Allies did not make a serious attempt to deter him until he was so strong that it was far from clear that he could be defeated, and this emboldened him, in part because he knew it made it less likely that the Allies would fight. An alternative claim is that Saddam could be deterred if he had the appropriate information, but because he kills anyone who disagrees or brings him bad news, this information does not reach him, making him "accident prone."[12]

But is he more of a menace than was the USSR, against which extended deterrence was quite effective despite the fact that a war would have destroyed the U.S.? The claim that Saddam's past behavior shows that he cannot be restrained in unconvincing.[13] The attacks against Iran and Kuwait, terrible as they were, cannot be taken as evidence of Saddam's undeterrability. The U.S. acquiesced in the former and refrained from trying to deter the latter. Not only did these acts probably appear fairly low risk to Saddam, they would have appeared so to most objective observers.[14] Furthermore, Saddam has been quiescent since the end of the Gulf War, with the not-so-minor exception of the attempt to assassinate George Bush, Sr. after he left office. The rebuttal

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is that this will change if he gains nuclear weapons, but it remains unclear exactly why Saddam would believe that these bombs would be such a powerful shield enabling him to succeed in great mischief in the face of overwhelming American might.

But even if I believe that deterrence would be effective, American leaders do not. Can deterrence work and can deterrence theory be applicable when the U.S. rejects it? There could be the potential for a self-fulfilling prophecy here. If the Bush administration were to pull back and Saddam to gain nuclear arms, he might believe that they would paralyze the U.S. and that he could expand with impunity.

The administration's skepticism about whether Saddam can be deterred in part reflects a general skepticism about deterrence, especially prominent among conservatives, that during the Cold War produced the search for multiple nuclear options, escalation dominance, and the desire for defense in many forms, most obviously ABMs. In part, it reflects the legacy of 9/11: the heightened sense of vulnerability and the associated feeling that nothing can be ruled out as totally implausible. Deterrence can fail; therefore although it may work, it cannot be relied upon.

IV. REMAINING FORMS OF DETERRENCE AND COMPELLENCE

It is hard to deny one of the main logical as opposed to empirical claims of deterrence, however: once Saddam believes that the U.S. is bent on overthrowing him, then there is no reason for him to be restrained because he has nothing to lose by causing the

U.S. and its allies maximum harm. Furthermore, Saddam may now be convinced (I would be) that Bush will try to overthrow him even if he gives up his WMD. So even if both he and the U.S. would prefer the outcome of his being disarmed and remaining in power to fighting a war, this goal may have been put beyond reach. The administration seems to have trouble with Schelling's basic point that if the other is to be influenced, credible threats to act if the other does not comply with demands must be paired with credible promises not to take the action if the other cooperates. Thus American threats have been undercut by the refusal to promise that Saddam could stay in power if he gives up the forbidden weapons. Indeed, shortly after the Security Council adopted its recent resolution, a senior administration official said that Saddam might be tried for war crimes even if he disarms.[15]

Some have argued that Saddam can be compelled to dismantle his WMD program if the threats are sufficiently credible. Thus several Senators justified their votes in favor of the strong Congressional resolution by saying that its passage made war less likely, a diplomat reported that Chirac won over Syrian support for a U.N. resolution by arguing that "war is much less likely if you support the resolution than if you don't," and an administration official said that "we had to make the case that the stronger the resolution was, the more likely a war could be avoided."[16] But if these threats could compel Saddam to give up

his WMD, why couldn't he be deterred from adventures even if he had nuclear weapons? A reply would have to rest on the particular value of nuclear weapons in undermining extended deterrence and on the difficulty of sustaining a credible threat over a prolonged period.

To make credible the threat to invade unless Saddam disarms, the U.S. might have to do all the things that Bush has done, and perhaps only a president who was willing to carry out the threat could do this. This would be a dilemma for critics who strongly oppose Saddam but prefer leaving him in power even if he does not disarm to waging war because the only way to get much chance of their first choice (disarming) is to follow a course of action that could lead to their third choice (war).

Perhaps some of these actors believe that while Bush is bluffing, their support for him will persuade Iraq to comply, thereby gaining what for most of them is their first choice of a peaceful solution that leaves Iraq without WMD. But it is more likely that they believe that Bush is bent on war and would go ahead without them if necessary. At least in the porous American system, it would be hard for a leader who was not committed to attacking to give off so much evidence of his willingness to do so.[17] Bluffing is difficult not only because of the costs of being caught out, but because getting ready to fight entails such extensive military, political, and psychological mobilization that only a leader committed to carrying out the threat is likely to be

willing to muster the necessary effort.[18] It is also possible that a leader who thought that he would pull back if need be would find himself politically and psychologically trapped by the process he set in motion and end up believing that the war was necessary.[19]

It would make more sense for Saddam rather than Bush to be the one who is bluffing. That he is not is hard to explain. The U.S. has the ability to overthrow Saddam and the threat to do so seems to me quite credible--indeed, it is hard to imagine a much more credible threat. Saddam's intransigence can be squared with the claim that extended deterrence could hold in the future if he believes that Bush will overthrow him even if (or especially if) he disarms. But if the threat has failed to penetrate or if he prefers fighting, with a slight chance of victory, to disarming, then it is harder to argue that we can be confident that the U.S. could deter later threats to its regional allies. Saddam may think that his WMD deterred the U.S. from marching to Baghdad in 1991 and will do so again. The implications of such a belief for U.S. extended deterrence are not clear. He could think that a more robust arsenal would allow regional coercion or could believe more conservatively that it would merely reinforce his ability to deter an unprovoked American attack.

Despite Iraq's apparent willingness to fight, the U.S. does seem to think that its coercion will work in some ways. What else, other than luck or Saddam's lack of capability, can explain why American leaders appear relatively unworried about his

launching a WMD attack against the American homeland in the event of war?[20] It also appears that at least some America leaders believe that if the U.S. overthrows Saddam it will establish a reputation for taking bold moves, and that this will have a favorable impact on the behavior of many other leaders. This is a form of compellence, and indeed quite a strong one.

Even though the U.S. does not explicitly acknowledge it, the possibility of inadvertent escalation and the related threat that leaves something to chance that were so important during the Cold War can be relevant as well.[21] Attacking Iraqi air defenses could lead to escalation, although this might not be undesired. A confrontation in Korea also could get out of hand. A country can increase its bargaining leverage by denying the existence of these dynamics, as Khrushchev did at the Vienna summit meeting with Kennedy (only to recognize them clearly during the Cuban missile crisis), however, thus making it hard to tell how actors are weighing these factors.

In the event of war, how can the U.S. deter Iraq from using WMD on the battlefield or against its allies? It is threatening the generals and colonels that if they obey orders to use these weapons, then the U.S. will do (unspecified) harm to them, linked to the (sometimes implicit) promise to reward them if they refuse. Other than that it is hard to see how deterrence can apply. During the Gulf War the U.S. sought to deter WMD use by threatening retaliation, which presumably would have led to or

been accompanied by the replacement of the regime. But since the U.S. now seeks regime change, its coercive tools are sharply limited. It is not clear whether the U.S. should again try to deter WMD use against its troops. Reaching this far might undermine the ability to deter other uses. Perhaps more likely to succeed is deterrence of use against allies like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. (Israel can deter an attack against itself, or at least can do so better than the U.S. can, although there is a danger that Saddam would seek to provoke Israeli retaliation, even with WMD, in order to rally the Arabs to his side.) A WMD attack on Saudi Arabia or Kuwait would trigger at least some world reaction. But it is not clear whether the American threat to retaliate in kind would be effective, and the political costs of carrying out these measures could be very high (although it can also be argued that the gain in terms of future credibility would more than compensate). Alternatively, the U.S. could threaten to destroy oil facilities, but this would make sense only in connection with the failure to replace Saddam. Overall, intra-war deterrence will be weak because it is hard to see what Saddam would have to lose by doing as much damage to U.S. interests as he can.

The contrasting American treatment of Iraq and North Korea fits with deterrence theory (although this does not preclude other explanations for the difference). If attacked or pressed too hard, North Korea could attack the South and U.S. forces with chemical if not nuclear weapons. This could not defeat the U.S.,

and indeed would lead to the conquest of the North, but would
exact an unacceptable price. Thus North Korea is too tough an
adversary to tackle unless the need to do so is overwhelming.
Iraq, on the other hand, is the "right size" enemy--troublesome
enough to merit attention, but not so strong that it has a
powerful deterrent. So the different way the U.S. responds to
these two states would not surprise a Realist.

The American fear of North Korea dovetails with its belief
that it could be deterred by Iraq in the future. Just the Bush
administration sees North Korea's weapons as a major menace
because they could coerce the South and Japan despite enormous
U.S. nuclear superiority, it holds to a strong form of the
stability-instability paradox in arguing that a few Iraqi nuclear
weapons would cripple the American ability to protect Iraq's
neighbors. Bush and his colleagues then have implicitly accepted
Waltz's argument that nuclear proliferation will spread deterrence
and bring about nuclear stability, while rejecting his claim that
the weapons would moderate behavior and instead asserting that
they will permit mischief, at least until the other states in the
region have weapons of their own.

The U.S. also shows an appreciation for the standard practice
of compellence in the way it has coerced its allies. By making
clear that it will move against Iraq with or without allied and
U.N. support, it changed the situation others face from one in
which they might be able to prevent a war to one in which their

choices are a war without their sanction or a war with it. The
option of avoiding war now unavailable, others prefer endorsing
the undesired war in order to preserve the possibility of
influencing the U.S. in the future and maintain the appearance
that the U.S. is not acting unilaterally.

The rumors that Iraq has threatened to destroy their oil
facilities if the U.S. is about to attack makes sense in
deterrence terms. This action would damage a major American
value. Indeed, Iraq may think oil motivates the American policy
and destroying the fields would make an attack pointless.[22] But in
fact this probably is not what the U.S. cares most about.
Furthermore, the U.S. wants others to believe that oil is not its
central concern, which means that it has to act as if this were
the case; if it were deterred by the threat of destroying fields,
then it would confirm an undesired image.

V. INDIRECT AND SELF-DETERRENCE

Cold War deterrence was bilateral; after the mid-1960s
assured destruction was mutual. Today the U.S. could not be
deterred from destroying Iraq by the fear of retaliation. But
this does not mean that the U.S. is free to use all the force
available, including nuclear weapons.

First, the hatred engendered in the Arab world from such use
could lead to terrorism (perhaps with WMD) or to other Arab
countries getting nuclear weapons (and perhaps turning them
against the U.S.). American use of nuclear weapons against Iraq

might cow others into submission, but it also might set in motion a train of responses that could do great harm to American interests. The reaction in West Europe and Japan would also be severe, and might lead them to break the alliance and/or produce their own nuclear weapons.

Second, killing millions of Iraqis would deeply offend American values. A New York Times poll of early October showed that if many Iraqi civilian casualties are expected, American support for the war drops sharply, indeed more sharply than if many U.S. soldiers are expected to die.[23] By killing innocent Iraqis, the U.S. would be destroying people that it valued. Although not the same as a game of Chicken in which starting a war would mean the destruction of American society, the game partakes of this element because by punishing Iraq, the U.S. would punish itself. This element is new. During the Cold War the U.S. was not inhibited by the thought that it would kill millions of Soviet civilians--that was the main point of the deterrent. Deterrence will have to look very different if only the guilty can be killed.

These inhibitions apply mostly to the current situation, in which the war would start with an American preventive attack. Were Iraq to sponsor terrorism against the U.S. or to attack a neighbor, American sensibilities would change, as would world opinion (although to a lesser extent).

V. ALTERNATIVES TO DETERRENCE

In the academic world, the main alternative to deterrence is

the spiral model in which threats, far from deterring, generate unnecessary conflict.[24] But not even doves think that this applies to relations between the U.S. and Iraq, although it may to the confrontation with North Korea. As noted earlier, however, the U.S. could try returning to the pre-Gulf War policy of diplomatic engagement. This might not work, of course; Iraq might not be satisfied with anything less than dominating its neighbors and, according to the logic of deterrence, conciliation might backfire by leading Saddam to believe that the U.S. was weak and frightened. Nevertheless, this policy is a not beyond reason, and it is interesting that it has received no attention.

A second alternative, more applicable to relations with friends and potential enemies than to actual ones, is a concert or a quasi-constitutional order. The topic is central to discussions of the shape of future world politics, but is too large for a full discussion and I merely want to note that in this relatively cooperative view of international relations, deterrence is relevant only in its broadest sense. States try to influence each other, but punishments are limited and consist mainly of exclusion from rewards and approval, with military destruction being no longer relevant. This could not be the basis for policy toward Iraq now, although perhaps holding out the possibility that a transformed Iraq could be part of this order would be an inducement or even an inspiration to potential new leaders of the country.

The Bush administration has found attractive two other alternatives to deterrence. The first is defense or, more generally, the threat and use of brute force rather than punishment. This not only applies to Iraq, but underpins policies such as providing Taiwan with the weapons that would permit it to beat back an attack from the PRC and the development of a missile defense system. Of course the hope is that these capabilities will not have to be used because their existence will discourage challengers, but the conceptual point is that this goal is accomplished through the ability to defeat the adversary, not deter it by the threat of punishment.

Finally and more originally, the Bush administration has endorsed a policy of preventive war, based on the belief that defense, although not as fallible as deterrence, cannot be entirely relied upon. The U.S. must then be prepared to nip problems in the bud, to attack adversaries before they gain the ability to menace American interests. This is not an entirely new element in world politics, even if Dale Copeland exaggerates its previous centrality.[25] The U.S. gave serious thought to attacking the USSR before it could develop a robust nuclear capability,[26] and the Monroe Doctrine and American westward expansion in the 19th century stemmed in part from the desire to prevent any European power from establishing a presence that could menace it. The U.S. was a weak country at that time; now the preventive war doctrine is based on strength, and on the associated desire to ensure the

maintenance of American dominance. This could prove to be a most interesting world, although it may also recall the old Chinese curse, "May you live in interesting times."

1.. "The National Security Strategy of the United States," White House, September 21, 2002; Jervis, "Theories of War in an Era of Leading Power Peace, <u>American Political Science Review</u>, vol. 96, March 2002, pp. 1-14.

2. John Mearsheimer, <u>The Tragedy of Great Power Politics</u> (New York: Norton, 2001); Dale Copeland, <u>The Origins of Major War</u> (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000); Eric Labs, "Beyond Victory: Offensive Realism and the Expansion of War Aims," <u>Security Studies</u>, vol. 6, Summer 1997, pp. 1-49.

3.. See Waltz's exchange with Colin Elman in <u>Security Studies</u>, vol. 6, Autumn 1996, pp. 7-61.

4.. Bernard Brodie, "The Development of Nuclear Strategy," <u>International Security</u>, vol. 2, Spring 1978, p. 83.

5.. Waltz, <u>The Spread of nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better</u> (London: IISS, Adelphi Paper No. 171, 1981); Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, <u>The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed</u> (New York: Norton, 2003).

6.. Quoted in Patrick Tyler, "Chief UN Inspector Expects Work On Iraq To Start Nov. 27," <u>New York Times</u>, November 16, 2002.

7.. The U.S. did diplomatically engage Iraq in the 1980's, but clumsily: see Bruce Jentleson, <u>With Friends Like These: Reagan, Bush, and Saddam, 1982-1990</u> (New York: Norton, 1994), and Evan Resnick, "Engagement as a Tool of Foreign Policy," dissertation in progress, Department of Political Science, Columbia University.

8.. Alexander George and Richard Smoke, <u>Deterrence in American Foreign Policy</u> (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974).

9.. Thomas Schelling, <u>Arms and Influence</u> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

10. George Qester, <u>Deterrence Before Hiroshima</u> (New York: Wiley, 1966) discusses pre-nuclear deterrence; John Mearsheimer, Conventional Deterrence (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press,

1983) analyzes deterrence without mass destruction.

[11]·· Glenn Snyder, "The Balance of Power and the Balance of Terror," in Paul Seabury, ed., The Balance of Power (San Francisco: Chandler, 1965), pp. 184-201; also see Robert Jervis, The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 19-23.

[12]·· For a fascinating study of information flows in Nazi Germany, see Zachary Shore, What Hitler Knew: The Battle for Information in Nazi Foreign Policy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[13]·· The best exposition is Kenneth Pollack, The Threatening Storm (New York: Random House, 2002); also see Robert Lieber, "Foreign Policy 'Realists' Are Unrealistic on Iraq," Chronicle of Higher Education, October 18, 2002. For good discussions of Saddam's reasons for his wars, see F. Gregory Gause, III, "Iraq's Decisions to Go to War, 1980 and 1990," Middle East Journal, vol. 56, Winter 2002, pp. 47-70, and Fred Lawson, "Rethinking the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait," The Review of International Affairs, vol. 1, Autumn 2001, pp. 1-20.

[14]·· For a fuller discussion, see John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "Can Saddam Be Contained? History Says Yes," International Security Program, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Occasional Paper, forthcoming. In many other cases as well, what are generally referred to as failures of deterrence actually are cases in which no deterrent threats were issued: see Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, "When Does Deterrence Succeed and How Do We Know?" Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, Occasional Paper No. 8, February 1980.

[15]·· David Singer, "US Plans to Pressure Iraq by Encouraging Scientists to Leak Data to Inspectors," New York Times, November 9, 2002. A related problem may complicate Bush's attempt to induce knowledgeable Iraqis to defect and provide information about Saddam's WMD program when they know that doing so is likely to trigger an invasion of their country.

[16]·· Quoted in Julia Preston, "Security Council Votes, 15-0 for Tough Iraq Resolution; Bush Calls it a 'Final Test'," ibid; quoted

in Steven Weisman, "How Powell Lined Up Votes, Starting with His President's," ibid.

[17] This conclusion is consistent with the argument of Kenneth Schultz, Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), although some of the steps of the reasoning are different.

[18] The efforts needed to make the threat credible may also simultaneously undermine the credibility of the promise not to invade if Saddam disarms, as noted above.

[19] For the psychological dynamics involved, see Daryl Bem, ASelf-Perception Theory,@ in Leonard Berkowitz, ed., Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, vol. 6 (New York: Academic Press, 1972), pp. 1-62; Deborah Larson, Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Joel Brockner and Jeffrey Rubin, Entrapment in Escalating Conflicts: A Social Psychological Analysis (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1985).

[20] Richard Betts, "Suicide From Fear of Death?" Foreign Affairs, vol. 82, January/February 2003, pp. 1-10.

[21] Schelling, Arms and Influence, ch. 3; Jervis, Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution, ch. 3.

[22] Most of the world apparently believes the main American goal is to control Iraq's oil: Adam Clymer, "World Survey Says Negative Views of US Are Rising," New York Times, December 5, 2002.

[23] Adam Nagourney and Janet Elder, "Public Says Bush Needs to Pay Heed to Weak Economy," ibid, October 7, 2002.

[24] Robert Jervis, Perception and Misperception in International Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), ch. 3.

[25] Copeland, Origins of Major War; also see Mearsheimer, Tragedy of Great Power Politics, and, for a study that is skeptical of the general prevalence of preventive wars but presents one example, Jack Levy and Joseph Gochal, ADemocracy and Preventive War: Israel

and the 1965 Sinai Campaign,@ <u>Security Studies</u>, vol. 11, Winter
2001/2. pp. 1-49. Randall Schweller argues that democratic states
fight preventively only under very restrictive circumstances:
"Domestic Structure and Preventive War: Are Democracies More
Pacific?" <u>World Politics</u>, vol. 44, January 1992, pp. 235-69, and
notes the unusual nature of the Israeli cases.

[26]·· Marc Trachtenberg, <u>History and Strategy</u> (Princeton: Princeton
University Press,˙1991), ch. 3.