THE OVERTHROW OPTION

The Strategic Choices of Interstate Conflict and
Foreign-Imposed Regime Change

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Abstract

Since the US overthrow of regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003, foreign-imposed regime change has received a great deal of attention and analysis. Regime change is an absolute means of resolving an interstate conflict or commitment problem. Given this, why do states seek a more limited strategy when confronting hostile regimes? I argue that the ability to select a reliable successor regime prior to imposing regime change greatly affects its concomitant costs and the decision-making regarding regime change. Regime change costs include the overthrow operation, post-conflict governance, and future enforcement. If the foreign imposer selects a reliable successor regime prior to regime change, then the foreign imposer can delegate the responsibilities of regime change to the successor regime. If, however, the foreign imposer cannot select a reliable successor regime, then it must decide whether the target regime is too threatening to remain in power. If the foreign imposer considers the target regime to be an existential threat, then the foreign imposer will opt for direct regime change and bear the concomitant costs. However, if the foreign imposer considers the target regime to be a manageable threat, then the foreign imposer will seek more limited aims against the target regime.

Successor selection creates agency problems, the severity of which is greatly shaped by the prior relationship between the imposing and target countries. If the imposing and target countries historically had an amicable relationship, then the foreign imposer has close connections to target country constituencies who can compose a reliable successor regime with domestic legitimacy and to whom the foreign imposer can delegate regime change responsibilities. If, however, the imposing and target countries historically had an adversarial relationship, then the foreign imposer has weak connections to target country constituencies, and the imposed regime will be viewed as a traitorous puppet. In addition, the target regime can deter regime change attempts by eliminating internal rivals who could compose a reliable successor regime, which restricts the foreign imposer’s options for delegated regime change.

I test the theory through case study analysis of Allied regime change policies in the defeated Axis countries following World War II and paired-comparisons of US policies toward Iran in 1951-3 and 1978-9 and US policies towards Iraq during the Persian Gulf Crisis of 1990-1 and in the subsequent years, culminating in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. These cases illustrate the hypotheses and mechanisms presented in the theory and further highlight other related factors such as the importance of learning over time and the dilemmas of foreign-imposed democracy and domestic regime transitions.
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There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat, drink, and find enjoyment in his work. This I also saw is from the hand of God. For apart from God, who can eat or who can have enjoyment?

Ecclesiastes 2:24-25

First, chill. Then, get it done.

Gary McKoy

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Now to Him who is my God, my King, my Rock, and my Redeemer. I thank Him that He knew me before the foundation of the world. I thank Him that when I am faithless He yet remains faithful. I thank Him for His promise that I could turn to Him in the day of trouble, and He would deliver me, and I could joyfully glorify Him. I thank Him that His love and grace flowed down from heaven to melt my frozen heart. I thank Him not because I love Him, but because He first loved me and sent His Son to be a propitiation for my sins. Finally, I thank Him for another word from Ecclesiastes that is an encouragement and a warning to academics everywhere: “Of writing many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness to the flesh.”
To Angi-Doo

and Dew-a-Doo
Chapter One
Strategic Choices of Interstate Conflict Resolution

I think for us to get military personnel involved in a civil war inside Baghdad would literally be a quagmire. ... Once we got to Baghdad, what would we do? Who would we put in power? What kind of government would we have? Would it be a Sunni government, a Shia government, a Kurdish government? ... I do not think the United States wants to have the U.S. military forces accept casualties and accept the responsibility of trying to govern Iraq. I think that makes no sense at all.

Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, April 7, 1991

I really do believe that we will be greeted as liberators. I’ve talked with a lot of Iraqis in the last several months myself, had them to the White House. ... And if you look at the opposition, they’ve come together ... with representatives from Shia, Sunni and Kurdish elements in the population. They understand the importance of preserving and building on an Iraqi national identity. ... Is it cost-free? Absolutely not. But ... the cost will be much greater in a future attack if the terrorists have access to the kinds of capabilities that Saddam Hussein has developed.

Vice President Dick Cheney, March 16, 2003

Introduction

As Secretary of Defense under President George H. W. Bush, Dick Cheney provided the administration *apologia* for why the United States chose not to militarily overthrow Saddam Hussein at the conclusion the Persian Gulf War. Middle East members of the United Nations anti-Saddam Coalition assured the Bush administration that Saddam would be overthrown by the disgruntled Iraqi military leadership following Iraqi defeat in Kuwait. However, the expected coup failed to materialize. Saddam successfully co-opted and eliminated any potential rivals within his regime. Instead, Shia and Kurdish uprisings broke out in southern and northern Iraq, respectively, threatening to engulf Iraq and the broader Middle East in a sectarian civil war. US support for these uprisings or further use of military force to depose Saddam would have likely

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1 Quoted in Alfonsi 2007, 218.
forced the United States to occupy Iraq indefinitely to ensure stability. Preferring stability and disengagement to Saddam’s downfall, the Bush administration chose not to support these uprisings, nor did any other member of the Coalition. Saddam’s Republican Guard and Ba’ath forces brutally suppressed these rebellions, while Coalition forces remained nearby but uninvolved.

A decade later, Cheney, now Vice President under President George W. Bush, expressed much greater urgency and confidence about removing Saddam Hussein militarily. This change came about for two major reasons. First, the shock of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 caused a radical transformation within the Bush administration and throughout the country regarding global threat perception. In his second inaugural address, President Bush stated, “For half a century, America defended our own freedom by standing watch on distant shores. After the shipwreck of communism came years of relative quiet, years of repose, years of sabbatical. And then there came a day of fire. We have seen our vulnerability, and we have seen its source.”

The 9/11 attacks demonstrated that, despite US military preponderance and vast ocean borders, the US was nevertheless extremely vulnerable to unsophisticated terrorist operations from bold non-state actors. The Bush administration greatly feared the consequences of such terrorists using weapons of mass destruction (WMD) provided by “rogue” states. Iraq’s decade of defiance against UN resolutions demanding inspections and disarmament now posed a much greater threat in the post-9/11 world. Many in the Bush administration, including the President, believed peace and security were not possible while Saddam remained in power.

Nevertheless, the September 11 attacks do not explain Cheney’s newfound confidence that the US could maintain stability in Iraq without an indefinite occupation. This confidence

\[^4\] Betts 2002.
\[^5\] Litwak 2007; Suskind 2006; Woodward 2004.
was the result of US policy during the intervening decade since the Persian Gulf War, in which Washington worked to cultivate an alternative successor regime for Iraq. After Saddam survived his Gulf War defeat, the Bush-41 and Clinton administrations organized and financed an opposition coalition of Iraqi Kurds, Shia, and Sunnis. Washington’s original hope was that this coalition would overthrow Saddam without direct military support from the United States. Though these indirect efforts failed, the decade-long cultivation of a reliable successor regime helped convince the Bush-43 administration that foreign-imposed regime change in Iraq would not result in widespread instability. The administration believed that this alternative successor regime could reliably govern Iraq following US military victory. This ultimately proved to be incorrect. The long hostility between Washington and Baghdad made the US ignorant about genuine conditions in Iraq regarding its infrastructure and broader popular preferences. Washington depended on the exile Iraqi opposition to provide intelligence about Iraq, but their long exile made their ill-informed as well. Ultimately, the United States engaged in the long-term occupation that Cheney and the Bush-41 administration sought to avoid in 1991.

**Puzzle and Argument**

This dissertation analyzes the strategic choices states face when confronting hostile regimes, particularly the choices whether and how to impose regime change. Foreign-imposed regime change is the forceful overthrow of a foreign regime and the imposition of a more reliable successor regime. Regime change, when fully implemented, is an absolute means of resolving an interstate conflict or commitment problem. Yet, the full implementation of regime change does not necessarily require direct military action against the target regime or a long occupation following regime overthrow. The potential foreign imposer can delegate these regime change

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6 Reiter 2009.
responsibilities to members of the target country, who can then compose a reliable successor regime that will guarantee future stability and allegiance. Given this option, why do states impose regime change directly, which requires costly investments in the overthrow operation, post-conflict governance, and future enforcement, or adopt more limited strategies, which leave the target regime in power? Why do states, when confronting hostile regimes, not always impose regime change indirectly, which promises high reward for low cost?

The central argument of this dissertation is that the ability to identify and recruit a reliable successor regime greatly affects the concomitant costs of foreign-imposed regime change and, therefore, greatly determines the foreign imposer’s decision whether to impose regime change directly, indirectly, or seek more limited aims against the target regime. Successor reliability includes the successor regime’s ability to provide competent governance and its alignment with the foreign imposer’s interests and policy preferences. If the foreign imposer can select a reliable successor regime prior to imposing regime change, then this will greatly reduce the costs of regime change by allowing the foreign imposer to partially or completely delegate the responsibilities of regime change to the successor regime. These responsibilities include overthrowing the target regime, providing governance in the target country immediately or soon after overthrow, and enforcing target compliance for the foreseeable future. If, however, the foreign imposer cannot select a reliable successor regime, then it must decide whether the target regime is too threatening to remain in power. If the foreign imposer considers the target regime to be an existential threat, then the foreign imposer will opt for direct regime change and bear the concomitant costs. However, if the foreign imposer considers the target regime to be a manageable threat, then the foreign imposer will seek

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7 For simplicity’s sake, I use the term “foreign imposer” to refer to the primary decision-making regime, regardless of it actually chooses to impose regime change.
more limited aims in order to affect policy change in the target country but nevertheless reduces the likelihood of target regime overthrow.

A critical but often overlooked aspect of foreign-imposed regime change is that by imposing a successor regime, the foreign imposer is delegating the responsibility of target compliance to the successor regime. Successor selection, therefore, creates delegation and agency problems, in which the foreign imposer has varying knowledge about the successor regime’s true capabilities and preferences. The severity of these agency problems is greatly shaped by the prior relationship between the imposing and target countries. If the imposing and target countries historically had an amicable or beneficial relationship, then this mitigates the agency problems associated with regime change. The foreign imposer has credible knowledge and intimate connections to target country constituencies who could compose a reliable successor regime. The foreign imposer may even be able to delegate the regime change operation to the successor regime by coordinating and financing a coup or uprising. In addition, foreign regime change will likely be viewed more legitimately by the target population, and certain target constituencies may in fact have invited regime change as a means of restoring the previously beneficial relationship.

If, however, the imposing and target countries historically had an adversarial relationship, then this exacerbates the agency problems of regime change. The foreign imposer has poor intelligence about and weak connections to those with both governing competence and aligned interests. Indeed, those with the greatest competence are likely those responsible for implementing the policies long considered hostile and intolerable. In addition, the target population will likely view a regime imposed by a historical adversary as a traitorous puppet. This will increase the likelihood of extended domestic unrest and opposition and create
incentives for the successor regime to enact or re-enact policies unfavorable to the foreign imposer’s interests. This, in turn, greatly increases the need for a long-term occupation to provide security and stability in the target country and future enforcement to ensure successor compliance.

An important and observable implication of the importance of successor selection is the target regime’s response to the threat of foreign-imposed regime change. The target regime should also be aware of the importance of successor selection. The target regime, therefore, can restrict the foreign imposer’s strategic options by eliminating internal rivals who could potentially form a reliable successor regime. This deprives the foreign imposer of the option of indirectly imposing regime change and instead forces the foreign imposer to decide between directly imposing regime change and bearing it concomitant costs and other more limited strategies that make target regime overthrow far less likely. Target regime response, therefore, acts an intervening variable to the foreign imposer’s strategic decision-making. Ultimately, foreign-imposed regime change involves a triadic interaction between the foreign imposer, the target regime, and the successor regime, in which the dynamics of successor selection play a critical role.

**What is Regime Change?**

“Foreign-imposed regime change” is a new term for an old practice: the forceful overthrow of a foreign government and the imposition of a more reliable one. The term became popularized following the September 11 terrorist attacks and the new strategy of targeting “rogue states” that supported non-state terrorism and violated international norms against developing
weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Yet regime change has been a common practice in international politics for centuries, despite international legal prohibitions and the prevailing norm of national sovereignty. I define “foreign-imposed regime change” as a foreign intervention undertaken with the explicit purpose of removing members of the executive leadership of a particular state and either replacing them with specific individuals or establishing the institutions that will select new leadership. To be considered “regime change,” the intervener’s stated goal must be to remove and replace the target incumbent regime. To be considered “foreign-imposed,” the effort to remove the incumbent must depend on foreign support.

**Intervention**

I define “intervention,” in an international political context, as any temporary action by one or more states intended either to subsume or subvert the domestic sovereignty of another state’s ruling regime. Given the many definitions of intervention, it is helpful to state what this definition excludes, particularly in the context of regime change. Temporary means the intervener’s involvement in the target is not intended to be ongoing. James Rosenau states that interventions should have a “finite and transitory nature.” If the intervener chooses to annex territory or establish a permanent base or settlement, it ceases to be an intervention. In the case of regime change, it must be temporary with the intended goal of restoring independent sovereignty to the target country once the new leader or regime is stably installed.

An action can include anything from organizing a coup carried out by others to launching a full-scale military invasion, but it must forcefully threaten a particular group in the target country. In the case of regime change, that group is the incumbent regime. Scholars have

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8 Haass 2005; Lennon and Eiss 2004; Litwak 2007. The term was first used academically in Werner 1996.
9 Krasner 1999. For a full list of militarily-imposed regime changes from 1789-2011, see the table in the Appendix.
10 Rosenau 1969, 161.
traditionally been divided over whether interventions should include all manners of foreign interference or be restricted to military operations. Glenn Antizzo, for instance, designates a range of intervention types from diplomatic to military interventions.\textsuperscript{11} Elizabeth Saunders, on the other hand, warns, “The process that governs decisions to intervene covertly may be theoretically different from that leading to a decision to intervene overtly; lumping them together would risk comparing apples and oranges.” She asserts that covert actions like coups or insurgent support “do not risk extensive military losses, prestige, or audience costs to the same degree as overt [military] actions. Leaders of all types may be tempted by covert operations, which they may see as potentially quick and low cost.”\textsuperscript{12} Saunders’ concern, however, is methodological, and in this regard is well-taken. Yet direct and indirect interventions are conceptually comparable, as they both seek to accomplish the same goal, albeit through different means. J.H. Leurdijk states, in denoting the objectives and strategies of intervention, that the former aspect is “theoretically the most relevant one, while the second is especially of a practical nature.”\textsuperscript{13} Having decided upon the objective of regime change, leaders will likely favor the least costly policy, as Saunders implies. This is important for potential interveners considering regime change strategies and for potential targets considering preventive strategies. By excluding indirect action as a form of intervention, it becomes necessary then to explain why an indirect strategy was not adopted. Saunders makes operation costs a scope condition. When considered conceptually, however, it should more accurately be considered a variable or causal mechanism. This draws needed attention not only to indirect interventions, but also to cases of non-intervention, where indirect action was not possible and direct action considered too costly.

\textsuperscript{11} Antizzo 2010, 6-9.
\textsuperscript{12} Saunders 2009, 123.
\textsuperscript{13} Leurdijk 1986, 107.
Intervention violates *domestic sovereignty*, which Stephen Krasner defines as the authority the governing regime has within the state or polity and the effective control it has over its given territory. This is distinct from “international legal sovereignty” and “interdependence sovereignty,” which are the external recognition of a regime’s control over a given territory and the ability to control transnational diffusion effects, respectively.\(^\text{14}\) States can violate international legal sovereignty by breaking relations or refusing to recognize each other, but this is not interventionary unless it includes support for an internal party. Conversely, states can launch interventions into another state while still ostensibly recognizing that state’s sovereignty. Intervention involves a violation of sovereign relations between state and society, not between individual states. Violations of interdependence sovereignty, such as “the flow of goods, person, pollutants, diseases, and ideas across territorial border[,]”\(^\text{15}\) may constitute what Leurdijk calls a “passive variant” of intervention.\(^\text{16}\) These transnational diffusion effects, however, are largely unintentional and should not be considered an intervention in any meaningful sense.

Finally, interventions *subsume or subvert* another regime’s domestic sovereignty. In both cases, the intervener intends to usurp the domestic authority of the governing regime. International relations scholars have traditionally claimed that this is the central aspect of intervention. Oran Young states that states intervene in hopes of “changing or preventing change in political authority structures.”\(^\text{17}\) Leurdijk asserts that the two most emphasized aspects of interventions are “the objective envisaged is the political authority structure of [another] state,

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\(^{14}\) Krasner 1999, 9-25. Krasner also lists “Westphalian sovereignty” as another form of sovereignty, relating to the formal exclusion of external actors from any domestic authority. Violations of Westphalian sovereignty overlap with domestic sovereignty violations and should be considered interventionary insofar as the violations are informal and temporary. Once the violation is institutionalized in some way (i.e., annexation or an extra-territoriality agreement), it is no longer considered an intervention.

\(^{15}\) Ibid, 12.

\(^{16}\) Leurdijk 1986, 104.

\(^{17}\) Young 1971, 178.
and the means employed have a military character.”

Rosenau claims that interventions are “convention-breaking” and “authority-oriented;” in other words, “the former [state] makes a sharp break with the prevailing manner of relating to the latter and directs behavior at the latter’s structure of authority.” By becoming involved in an internal conflict within a sovereign state, whether in support of a particular group side or as a neutral mediator, the intervening state assumes the responsibility ostensibly reserved for the target regime.

Subsuming interventions are done with the intent of strengthening the domestic authority of the current regime, while subverting interventions are done with the intent of transferring domestic authority to a third party. Regime change is the latter type. The former are often, though not always, done with the invitation of the current regime, while the latter understandably are not. Nonetheless, invitation does not mean there was no violation of sovereignty. Invitations are often used to justify interventions as not threatening or abrogating another’s sovereignty. Yet central to Krasner’s criticism of the sovereignty norm as “organized hypocrisy” is that many regimes need external support to maintain power. Any foreign disruption and usurpation of domestic sovereignty, even if done in support of the current regime, is interventionary.

Regime Change Criteria

The fundamental criteria for foreign-imposed regime change are (1) the foreign imposer’s stated goal must be to remove the target state’s leadership or change its leadership selection method; (2) the effort to remove the regime must depend on foreign support; and (3) the imposer must either designate the specific individuals who will constitute a new regime or determine the institutions that will select the new leadership. Foreign-imposed regime change can range from simply removing and replacing the top leadership to transforming the entire regime structure.

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19 Rosenau 1969, 164-165.
20 Krasner 1999.
Alexander Downes refers to these respectively as “shallow” and “deep” regime changes. Pure decapitation, in which the incumbent leadership is captured or killed but no attempt is made to designate a successor, does not qualify as regime change. The imposer must exercise some control or choice over successor regime selection. Successfully removing and replacing the target regime are not necessary conditions for being considered a regime change intervention, but the foreign imposer must make clear that regime change was the ultimate goal. At minimum, the foreign imposer must explicitly state what groups or individuals would acceptably constitute a successor regime.

The target country must be independent prior to and following intervention, as determined by Gleditsch and Ward (1999). Foreign-supported wars of independence or secession do not qualify as foreign-imposed regime change. The target country also must retain its independence following regime change. Tanisha Fazal claims a state “dies” if it formally loses control of its foreign policy to another state, since the state no longer has a monopoly over the legitimate use of force. Fazal does not explicitly explain what constitutes state “resurrection,” but she declares that state “birth” is contingent on recognition by the League of Nations/United Nations or at least two great powers. I argue that state resurrection following regime removal requires the foreign imposer to formally recognize the supreme authority of the newly imposed regime. Imposer recognition of the successor regime as independent and legitimate, even if in name only, is a condition for regime change. If the foreign imposer occupies the country and does not recognize a new government as independent with sole domestic sovereignty, then the state is still considered dead.

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21 Downes 2008.
22 Fazal 2007, 15, 17-20, 30-34.
Regime change can be imposed directly through aggressive actions by the foreign imposer towards the target regime or indirectly by the imposer’s external coordination of domestic forces within the target country. Regime change strategies can include a whole range of different coercive strategies, which may or may not include coordination with target country forces or the aim of imposing regime change. Regime change can be imposed through the sole use of foreign military ground forces. The most oft-cited cases of foreign-imposed change, including in Germany, Japan, and Iraq, occurred in this manner. The threat or display of force may be sufficient to compel regime change. Haitian President Raoul Cèdres stepped down after receiving an American offer of $1 million and a personal threat from General Colin Powell. The forces of Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz defeated those of US-financed Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas in 1954, but the presence of American Marines off the coast of Guatemala ultimately convinced Arbenz to step down. Finally, imposing sanctions can be used to impose regime change when accompanied by demands that members of the target leadership abdicate or that the target country change its leadership selection method. The Bush-41, Clinton, and Bush-43 administrations all made the lifting of sanctions on Iraq conditional on regime change in Baghdad. Officials within the Obama administration have insinuated that sanctions against Iran are intended to provoke regime change, though they later backed away from these claims.

Organizing coups and supporting insurgents can also perform the same function as direct military action, a point recognized by several works on American interventionary behavior. Insurgents and dissidents often need foreign patrons to provide financial aid, weapons

23 For a detailed list and description of different coercive strategies, see Byman and Waxman 2002.
24 Girard 2004, 3-5.
25 Gleijeses 1991. Had Castillo Armas been successful without the presence of US Marines, it would be considered an indirect regime change.
26 Hiro 2001; Litwak 2007, Ch. 4.
27 DeYoung and Wilson 2012.
procurement, logistical support, and safe havens. Idean Salehyan notes that, as interstate warfare has become increasingly rare, states have fostered and supported internal insurgencies as a means of fighting wars. Insurgencies now often precede, supplement, or completely substitute for interstate conflict. “Rather than ‘go it alone’ and attack their rivals directly, many states hire help to do the job.” Salehyan finds that a plurality of all insurgencies from 1946-2003 (134 out of 285) were explicitly tied to an international patron. For insurgency support to be considered an intervention, the support must be such that the insurgency was unsustainable without it. Likewise, coups often include foreign support and coordination. The 1953 coup against Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddeq came about through Anglo-American organization and financing, but was carried out by Iranian military officers, clerics, and criminal gangs. Finally, foreign states can impose regime change through a combined effort of foreign and domestic military forces, as recently undertaken in Afghanistan and Libya.

Strategic Choices in Interstate Conflict

This dissertation analyzes the strategic choices states face when confronting hostile regimes. There are three idealized strategies for confronting hostile regimes: brute force, coercion, and concession. Brute force involves the physical capture and/or destruction of the adversary’s capabilities and treasure. Strategies for absolute victory, which permanently resolve the interstate conflict or commitment problem, are all examples of brute force. These

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29 Lichbach 1995.
30 Salehyan 2010, 494.
31 Ibid., 497. Thirty cases of insurgency were alleged to have foreign ties but cannot be conclusively proven. If these are included, then a majority of all post-World War II insurgencies have received significant foreign support. The data are derived from the Expanded Uppsala Armed Conflict Dataset (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2008).
33 Andres, Wills, and Griffith 2005/6; Daalder and Stavridis 2012.
34 Schelling 1966, 1-6.
include state death, population annihilation, and foreign-imposed regime change.\footnote{Reiter 2009, 25-34.} The former two are largely anathema in the modern international system, which has made foreign-imposed regime change the most prominent form of absolute victory.\footnote{Fazal 2007.} In the case of regime change, brute force changes the target country’s preferences rather than its capabilities. While the deposed target regime was defiant, the imposed successor regime is now compliant. Ideally, this should permanently resolve the interstate conflict without need of further compromise or coercion.

Coercion, on the other hand, involves threatened or latent violence in order to achieve regime compliance. Thomas Schelling states that coercion involves “the willingness to hurt, the credibility of a threat, and the ability to exploit the power to hurt,” rather than the actual use of force. Schelling admits that “the power to hurt is often communicated by some performance of it … [but i]t is the expectation of more violence that gets the wanted behavior, if the power to hurt can get it at all.”\footnote{Schelling 1966, 3, emphasis in original.} Yet, coercion is ultimately a more limited strategy for conflict resolution, because it requires consistent pressure on the target country. A permanent resolution depends on permanent coercion. Regime change offers the promise of a permanent resolution based on the replacement of the target regime’s hostile motive structure with the successor regime’s motive structure, which favors the foreign imposer’s policy preferences with the need of an external threat.

Finally, a state can resolve the conflict by conceding. Concessions are often the result of a state’s inability or unwillingness to use brute force or its failure to successfully coerce the target regime. This can be due to the state’s limited resources, the target regime’s invulnerability to coercion, or the state’s own vulnerability to target country coercion. The drawbacks of
concession are obvious, often involving material or reputational losses. Yet, the decision to concede strongly suggests that the losses from continued resistance were greater than those of concession. Regardless, concession is often the strategy of last resort.\textsuperscript{38}

These strategies, of course, are all idealized types, and realized strategies are most often combinations of each type. Regarding regime change, foreign imposers may seek to impose regime change indirectly by trying to coerce target constituencies into overthrowing the target regime. Foreign imposers may use embargoes, economic sanctions, blockades, and military actions to coerce target constituencies.\textsuperscript{39} In addition, the foreign imposer may offer policy concessions to target constituencies to persuade them to participate in the overthrow operation and in the future successor regime. This mixed strategy of indirect regime change is the optimal strategy for regime change, because it allows the foreign imposer to delegate the costs and responsibilities of regime change to the successor regime. The foreign imposer achieves the absolute victory of regime change without bearing the concomitant costs of the overthrow operation, target country occupation and governance, and possible future enforcement. This dissertation addresses the question of why states adopt suboptimal strategies of either imposing regime change directly and bearing the concomitant costs or adopting more limited strategies that do not permanently resolve the problem.\textsuperscript{40} I argue that the dynamics of successor selection, in which the foreign imposer identifies and recruits a reliable successor regime, greatly determines the decisions whether and how to impose regime change on the hostile target country.

\textsuperscript{38} Inducements and side payments could be considered a fourth strategy. However, if side payments are costly to the sender, then they can be considered concessions. If they are costless to the sender, then the two states are in harmony not conflict.

\textsuperscript{39} Byman and Waxman 2002, Ch. 4; Pape 1996, 82.

\textsuperscript{40} Dan Reiter (2009, 35) poses a similar question: “If … absolute war outcomes promise to reduce very substantially the likelihood of noncompliance, then why don’t states always pursue absolute war outcomes?” (emphasis in original)
Universe of Cases and Case Selection

Ideally, the universe of cases should include all hostile bilateral interstate relationships. However, “hostility” is difficult to observe *ex ante*, creating the risk of selecting cases on the dependent variable, based on the foreign imposer’s observed policy choice. It is, therefore, necessary to have a more objective indicator for potential hostility. One strong indicator for potential conflict is a change in the balance of power, whether interstate or within the imposing or target countries. A change in the interstate or intrastate balance of power often results in conflict, because this power shift can disrupt the structural conditions that undergird the international status quo.\(^{41}\) The rising power or new regime may seek to challenge the prevailing order or relationship, which then encourages status quo states to defend it. A rising power may consider establishing its hegemonic authority by imposing regime change on states hostile to its rise, or it may adopt other less substantial coercive measures to establish its authority. Status quo states, in turn, may consider replacing the rising power’s revisionist regime with one that adheres to the current order, or they may seek to weaken or chasten the target country through other measures.

Domestically, if a country undergoes a regular or irregular domestic regime change, the new regime may choose not to honor commitments made by the previous regime. Indeed, dissatisfaction with the previous regime’s international commitments may have been a primary cause for the domestic regime change. If this country is a great power, then the dynamics of revisionist aggression and status quo reaction are again at play, with the potential for mutual regime change attempts. If the country is not a great power yet opposes the prevailing order or previous international relationships, the hegemon may consider regime change as a means of enforcing its authority. Owen further suggests another type of commitment problem:

\(^{41}\) R. Powell 2006; Werner 1999.
revolutionary demonstration effect. When one country undergoes a revolution or ideological transformation, this provides information and encouragement to other countries regarding a similar ideological transformation. This poses a threat to foreign regimes, particularly those nearby, who still hold to the former ideology. This creates a commitment problem, because the target regime cannot commit to not being an example of ideological transformation, even if it does not intend to threaten other regimes. Foreign regimes, therefore, may seek to overturn the newly transformed regime to eliminate this external source of information and encouragement.\footnote{Owen 2010.}

To test the theory presented in this dissertation, I analyze the strategic choices facing the United States and its allies when confronting hostile regimes in Germany, Japan, Iran, and Iraq. The sole or primary foreign imposer in all of these cases was the United States, though Great Britain was involved in many as well. Furthermore, they all occur in the post-World War II era. In the Appendix, I provide a table listing all of the successful impositions of foreign-imposed regime change through the use of foreign military force from 1789-2011, both in conjunction with target country forces or done completely independently.\footnote{With further research, I hope to expand this list to also include cases of foreign coup coordination and significant foreign insurgency support.} The table clearly demonstrates that many great powers have engaged in foreign-imposed regime change over the centuries, but I apply these scope conditions geographically and temporally in order to maximize the costs and benefits of imposing regime change. Fazal argues that, after World War II, an anti-imperial “norm against conquest” took effect. This increased the utility of foreign-imposed regime change as a means of establishing and enforcing international authority, but it also increased the costs of foreign occupation.\footnote{Fazal 2007.} A foreign occupier was more likely to receive international condemnation and sanctioning, and target country insurgents were more likely to receive
international support, materially and rhetorically, which further increased their resolve for resistance. In addition, foreign occupation is particularly objectionable in US political culture, further increasing the domestic costs of post-conflict governance. Indeed, it was postwar hegemony of the United States that helped established the international norm against conquest. I believe it is helpful for the initial theory-testing to keep both the incentives and the costs of regime change high and constant across cases to emphasize the importance of successor selection and the resulting dilemma of foreign-imposed regime change. However, I hope to expand case selection temporally and geographically in future research to gain a deeper understanding of the changing (and unchanging) dynamics of foreign-imposed regime change.

To better test the theory’s hypotheses and casual mechanisms, I select two paired cases of conflicts between the United States and Iran and the United States and Iraq. Each pair includes instances, both between cases and within each case domain, in which the overthrow option is both accepted and rejected. These paired comparisons present particularly hard or “least-likely” cases, because the relationship between the United States and the target country does not change between cases. That initially seems to falsify my argument, since the prior relationship is a critical independent variable. These, therefore, serve as helpful cases to test the theory. I also adopt a rationalist bargaining framework for these cases. Foreign-imposed regime change involves a triadic interaction between the foreign imposer, the target regime, and the successor regime. Specifically, regime change is the result of bargaining breakdowns between the foreign imposer and target regime and the target regime and successor regime and bargaining success between the successor regime and the foreign imposer. In addition to verifying the theory’s hypotheses, I also seek to explain these bargaining outcomes. Rationalist explanations for

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45 George and Bennett 2004, 120-122.
46 Fearon 1995; Reiter 2003.
bargaining failure typically focus on intractable commitment problems and incentives to misrepresent one’s genuine capabilities and preferences. These cases explore the development of these problems as well.

Each of the selected cases includes a shift or expected shift in the interstate or intrastate balance of power, which increase the threat of client defection and order reconfiguration. Following World War II, the victorious Allies greatly feared that the Axis countries would eventually rebuild and once again take advantage of Allied disunity to dominate and threaten their respective regions, as happened after the First World War. In August 1951, Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddeq of Iran nationalized British-controlled oil and marginalized the ruling Shah, threatening British authority over Iran and Britain’s domestic economy and stoking American fears of Soviet authority extension into the Middle East. In February 1979, Iran experienced an even greater radical regime transformation, as a broad-based revolutionary coalition led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini overthrew the Pahlavi regime and established the first-ever Islamic Republic, which was intent on severing all meaningful ties with the United States, Iran’s former international patron. In August 1990, Iraq invaded and annexed Kuwait, taking control of its extremely lucrative oilfields. This threatened to drastically alter the regional balance of power and the global oil markets. Finally, on September 11, 2001, the US learned that despite its military preponderance and vast ocean borders, it was nonetheless vulnerable to deadly attacks from non-state terrorist actors and rogue states that might arm them with WMD. Following the overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Iraq became the focal point of US concerns, given its decade-long resistance to UN demands for inspections and disarmament. In each of these cases, shifts or expected shifts in the interstate or intrastate balance of power
created conflict. Yet, policymakers made varying decisions about how to confront these potentially hostile regimes.

**Dissertation Overview**

Chapter 2 develops the theory and hypotheses regarding the importance of successor selection in determining the best strategic option in confronting a hostile regime. If the foreign imposer can identify a reliable successor regime with governing competence and aligned interests, then this allows the foreign imposer to delegate the responsibilities of regime change, which include the overthrow operation, post-conflict governance, and future enforcement. If, however, the foreign imposer cannot identify a reliable successor, then the foreign imposer must fully bear these costs if it chooses to impose regime change. Under these circumstances, the foreign imposer’s threat perception regarding the target regime greatly determines whether the foreign imposer decides to bear these costs or adopt another more limited strategy. If the foreign imposer believes the target regime poses an existential threat, then it will impose regime change and bear the concomitant costs. If, however, the foreign imposer considers the target regime to be a manageable threat, then it will adopt other less decisive strategies.

Selecting a reliable successor regime creates agency problems, which affect the foreign imposer’s ability to identify and recruit a reliable successor regime. The severity of these agency problems is greatly affected by the prior relationship between the imposing and target countries. If the imposer-target relationship was previously amicable, then the foreign imposer will have strong ties to target constituencies that can compose a reliable successor regime. Moreover, regime change may be viewed more legitimately and possibly welcomed by important constituencies in the target country. This provides greater legitimacy to the successor regime
and less need for future enforcement. If, however, the imposer-target relationship was previously adversarial, then that foreign imposer will have weak ties to target country constituencies to which it could delegate regime change responsibilities. Moreover, regime change imposition will be viewed as aggressive and illegitimate, which would in turn delegitimize the successor regime and increase the need and costs for future enforcement. Target incumbents also can affect the costs of regime change by eliminating, co-opting, or stigmatizing those who might compose an imposed successor regime.

Chapter 3 analyzes Allied regime change policy towards Germany and Japan following World War II in order to illustrate the costs and commitments involved in adversarial transformation. The unrelenting aggression of the Axis regimes made the decision to impose regime change a *fait accompli*. However, the Allies faced a set of strategic choices on how they implemented regime change. The democratic Allies, the United States, Great Britain, and France, faced a particular dilemma, because they hoped to establish vibrant, stable democracies in Japan and Germany. However, imposing democracy would exacerbate the agency problems associated with regime change, since democracy makes the successor regime accountable to the target population. According to the theory, the target population should be hostile to Allied interests, given their long-standing adversarial relationship. The Allies confronted this dilemma of foreign-imposed democracy by enacting a series of costly measures to change popular preferences in the Axis countries, drastically limit Axis capabilities to prevent future aggression, and monitor Axis behavior in order to ensure continued compliance. These actions confirm the hypothesis that regime change against a long-time adversary would require costly investments in regime overthrow, occupation, and enforcement.
In Chapter 4, I analyze the two cases of American and British policy towards hostile regimes in Iran. Prior to Iranian oil nationalization in 1951, Great Britain had a century-old hierarchical relationship with Iran, and prior to the Iranian Revolution in 1978-9, the United States had been Iran’s international patron for the past twenty-five years. Therefore, in both cases, the Western patrons should have been able to impose regime change indirectly by delegating to the successor regime, which the Western patrons selected through their previous relationships with target country constituencies. This happened in 1953, as the British and Americans coordinated and financed a coup with members of the Iranian military, clergy, criminal organizations, and the Shah. Through these connections, the Western patrons were able to impose regime change indirectly and greatly minimize the concomitant costs. The Iranian Revolution seemed to present a similar situation, in which a hostile regime took power in Tehran and sought to sever its hierarchical ties with the United States. Nevertheless, these ties should have allowed the United States to once again impose regime change indirectly and maintain its vital strategic alliance. The United States did, in fact, seek to adopt the same strategy of delegated regime change, as the theory would predict. However, after the successful Western-imposed regime change in 1953, the Shah significantly limited US contacts with important Iranian constituencies in the military and intelligence services. In addition, he coup-proofed his regime, such that the senior military leadership had difficulty coordinating and making decisions without the Shah’s direct guidance. Thus, when the US sought to organize a military coup against the Khomeini regime, they found the Iranian military incompetent and uncooperative. Washington, therefore, opted first for a conciliatory polices towards the new regime in hopes of wooing regime moderates. However, once the Iranian Revolution radicalized following the Shah’s invitation to the US, Khomeini actively targeted potential coup plotters and US
sympathizers and endorsed the hostage-taking at the US embassy in November 1979. The US, in turn, adopted heavy sanctions against Iran, but nevertheless did not consider Iran an existential threat that required direct regime change imposition.

Chapter 5 analyzes US policy toward Iraq following the Iraqi invasion and annexation of Kuwait in August 1990. Because of the historically adversarial relationship between the United States and Iraq, the theory would predict that regime change would require costly investments in the overthrow operation, post-conflict occupation and governance, and future enforcement. These costs were further exacerbated by widespread Arab fears of a permanent US military presence in the Middle East and domestic fears of “another Vietnam.” Given the clear military advantage the US had over Iraq and the geographic distance between them, the US considered Iraq a manageable threat. The Bush administration, therefore, adopted more limited coercive measures against the Ba’ath regime, first to compel Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, then later to encourage a coup against Saddam Hussein. Both efforts failed. Despite six months of international sanctions and condemnation, Saddam refused to withdraw Iraqi forces from Baghdad. Therefore, the UN Coalition used direct military force to expel them. The Bush administration, encouraged by its Arab Coalition partners, believed the humiliating military defeat, the devastating aerial attacks in Baghdad, and the threat of unremitting international sanctions and isolation would encourage a military coup in Baghdad against Saddam Hussein. The US considered a moderate military regime in Baghdad, like those in other Western-aligned Middle Eastern countries, to be a reliable successor regime. It would maintain Iraqi stability and unity, continue to deter Iran, and adopt moderate international policies. However, Saddam was able to prevent regime change in Baghdad by co-opting and purging those who the Coalition hoped would compose a reliable successor regime. When disaffected Shia in southern Iraq and
Kurds in northern Iraq rebelled against the Ba’ath regime, the Coalition had to decide whether to support the uprisings or accept the incumbent regime in Baghdad. The Coalition considered these sectarian groups to be unreliable successor regimes, because their victory would likely result in the disintegration of the Iraqi state, an increase in Iranian influence, and greater regional instability. The Coalition, therefore, remained neutral, as Ba’athist forces brutally suppressed the uprisings. Nonetheless, the UN instituted aggressively intrusive disarmament measures to strip Iraq of its WMD capabilities and maintained its pre-war sanctions as enforcement measures to ensure Iraqi compliance. Since the US decided against direct regime change with its concomitant costs, it was forced to adopt less costly but less decisive enforcement measures.

Chapter 6 analyzes US policy towards Iraq in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, culminating in direct US regime change in Iraq in April 2003. Throughout the 1990s, the US adopted more limited measures, which included occasional military strikes, to compel Iraqi compliance with UN inspections and disarmament measures, but these measures became increasingly unpopular internationally. Nevertheless, despite imminent breakdown of the sanctions regime, the US still considered Iraq to be a manageable threat until the September 11 attacks. The attacks convinced the Bush-43 administration that the US was much more vulnerable to non-state terrorist actors and rogue states who could potentially supply them with WMD. Iraq went from being a manageable threat to an existential one. Given the change in threat perception and the historical animosity between the United States and Iraq, the theory would predict that the United States would seek direct regime change and bear the concomitant costs. Nonetheless, the Bush administration initially made one last attempt at coercive diplomacy through the UN, but Saddam’s strategy of “deterrence by doubt” made his genuine claims of WMD disarmament non-credible. The Bush administration, therefore, chose to impose
regime change directly, but it nevertheless believed that it could avoid much of the concomitant costs because of US cultivation of the Iraqi exile opposition in the decade following the Persian Gulf War. US policymakers believed these groups could compose a reliable successor regime, which would relieve the US of having to engage in a long-term occupation and future enforcement. However, the agency problems of regime change proved to be persistent. The adversarial relationship between the United States and Iraq provided the US with poor and ultimately inaccurate intelligence about the true nature of Iraqi infrastructure and popular preferences. Once US forces overthrew the Ba’ath regime, they were woefully unprepared for the subsequent governing responsibilities, which laid the groundwork for widespread instability and discontent, sectarian conflicts, and ultimately a series of insurgencies. US policymakers followed the theory’s predictions about seeking a reliable successor regime, but persistent agency problems of adversarial regime change required investments in occupation and governance as well. US unpreparedness ultimately resulted in a “fiasco” in Iraq.47

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation. I review the theory and summarize the case study evidence and suggest further implications of the theory and evidence and suggest future research opportunities.

47 Ricks 2007.
Chapter Two
The International Politics of Foreign-Imposed Regime Change

The decision to reject one paradigm is always simultaneously the decision to accept another, and the judgment leading to that decision involves the comparison of both paradigms with nature and with each other.

Thomas Kuhn

Removing odious leaders—“regime ouster”—is no easy thing. ... Regime replacement, the second step in regime change, is even more difficult, however.

Richard Haass

Introduction

Thomas Kuhn’s observation regarding paradigm shifts is likewise applicable to foreign-imposed regime change: the decision to reject or overthrow one regime is simultaneously the decision to accept or impose another. Yet, as Richard Haass suggests, regime change is more than regime ouster, but also includes regime replacement as well, which he rightly calls “the second step of regime change.” Regime change is an absolute means of resolving an interstate conflict or commitment problem, but it can also be very costly. Altogether, foreign-imposed regime change includes the overthrow of the target regime, the selection of a reliable successor regime, competent governance of the target country until the successor regime is stably installed, and future enforcement of successor regime compliance. These are all necessary to resolving the interstate conflict that motivated regime change. If the foreign imposer does not install a reliable successor regime, then it will either have to guarantee compliance through other means or allow the successor regime to possibly re-adapt the previous regime’s abhorrent policies. The latter would make the decision to impose regime change meaningless. Given the cumulative costs and

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1 Kuhn 1996, 77, emphasis in original.
2 Haass 2005, 70.
challenges of regime change, Haass recommends a more limited strategy of engagement and deterrence towards adversarial “rogue” regimes rather than seeking to impose regime change.\(^3\)

However, these concomitant costs of regime change are not static, but rather vary based on the success or failure of prior successor selection. Successor selection involves the identification and recruitment of a reliable successor regime. Successor reliability includes the successor regime’s governing competence and interest alignment with the foreign imposer. Successful successor selection prior to imposing regime change provides greater strategic options for imposing regime change and greatly reduces the concomitant costs. If the foreign imposer can identify and recruit a reliable successor regime, it can partially or completely delegate the overthrow operation, post-conflict governance, and future enforcement to members of the successor regime. Successor regime members can overthrow the target regime through a coup or internal rebellion, though with foreign financial and organizational support. Following overthrow, the successor regime can quickly take over the reins of power, minimizing the need for foreign occupation and governance. Finally, interest alignment between the successor regime and the foreign imposer reduces the need for future enforcement. If, however, the foreign imposer cannot identify and recruit a reliable successor regime prior to regime change, then this limits the foreign imposer’s strategic options for imposing regime change. It must solely bear the costs of the overthrow operation, long-term governance, and future enforcement if it chooses to impose regime change. The foreign imposer, therefore, must decide if the benefits of regime change outweigh the costs. If the foreign imposer believes the target regime poses an existential threat, then the foreign imposer will impose regime change and bear the high concomitant costs of militarily overthrowing the target regime, occupying and governing the target country, and identifying and installing a reliable successor regime. However, if the foreign imposer believes

\(^3\) Ibid.
the target regime poses a manageable threat, then the foreign imposer will employ a more limited strategy to contain the target regime threat and compel policy change, as Haass recommends.

Successor reliability, in turn, greatly depends on the prior relationship between the imposing and target countries. Successor selection involves agency problems of adverse selection and rival principals. The foreign imposer varies in its knowledge about the successor regime’s true governing capabilities and in its confidence about the successor regime’s true interest alignment. Moreover, there may be constituencies in the target country who are hostile to the foreign imposer’s interests yet may have greater sway over the successor regime. The severity of these problems is greatly influenced by the prior relationship between the imposing and target countries. If their relationship was historically amicable, then this mitigates the agency problems involved in regime change. The foreign imposer will have established ties to target country constituencies with governing competence and aligned interests, reducing the information problems of successor selection. If the foreign imposer has previous ties to the target military, it can delegate much of the overthrow operation to domestic agents. A previously amicable relationship also gives regime change greater legitimacy, with some target constituencies perhaps even desiring regime change as a means of restoring a previously beneficial relationship. These all make it easier to select a reliable successor regime. If, however, the prior imposer-target relationship was adversarial, then this exacerbates the agency problems. The foreign imposer will have difficulty identifying those with both governing competence and aligned interests. Moreover, the target population will likely view any successor regime as the traitorous puppet of a foreign adversary. This will increase the likelihood of extended domestic unrest and opposition and create incentives for the successor regime to enact policies unfavorable to the foreign imposer’s interests. This, in turn, greatly
increases the need for long-term occupation to provide security and stability and future enforcement to ensure successor compliance.

An important and observable implication of the importance of successor selection is the target regime’s response to the threat of possible foreign-imposed regime change. The target regime can restrict the foreign imposer’s strategic options by eliminating internal rivals who could potentially form a reliable successor regime. This deprives the foreign imposer of the option of indirectly imposing regime change and instead forces the foreign imposer to decide between directly imposing regime change and more limited strategies that make target regime overthrow far less likely. Ultimately then, foreign-imposed regime change involves a triadic interaction between the foreign imposer, the target regime, and the successor regime, in which the dynamics of successor selection play a critical role.

The chapter proceeds in five sections. The first section provides a typology of regime change, based on the motive for regime change. These types include adversarial transformation and authority enforcement. The second section describes the components of successor reliability, regime change costs and responsibilities, and threat perception. I then provide hypotheses regarding foreign imposer decision-making when confronting a hostile regime. The second section examines the agency problems associated with regime change, outlines the effect of the prior imposer-target relationship on these agency problems, and provides attendant hypotheses. The third section describes the potential target regime responses to the threat of foreign-imposed regime change, most notably the option of rival elimination, and provides a table outlining the proposed explanatory and dependent variables. The final section summarizes the theory presented.
**Typology of Regime Change**

Beyond defensive motives of conflict resolution, regime change is ultimately about establishing or enforcing of international authority. David Lake states that international authority is an informal social contract, in which a sovereign state subordinates significant policy areas to another sovereign state, supranational organization, or private actor. In exchange, the dominant actor provides security, economic benefits, or other social goods associated with international order. Lake makes a distinction between hierarchical relationships based on authority versus those based solely on coercion. Authority is distinct from coercion, because the subordinate state recognizes the dominant actor’s right to use force. Rather than the weak suffering what they must, they accept and sometimes even desire subordination. Lake acknowledges that force is occasionally necessary to enforce international authority, as it is domestically. Yet, he argues that even the occasional use of force to enforce authority has greater legitimacy than typical interstate coercion or brute force.\(^4\) However, Lake says little about how authority relationships are established. He makes numerous references to the American-led international order and its various institutions. Some states did in fact request to join the American-led order and were sometimes more desirous of American leadership than the United States itself.\(^5\) Yet the creation of this and other international orders was done through force as much as they were by invitation.

John Ikenberry describes international order as the “settled arrangements between states that define their relationship to each other and mutual expectations about their ongoing interaction. … It refers to the rules of the game.”\(^6\) Ikenberry’s main thesis is that constitutional orders are the most stable and enduring, as the “rules of the game” are designed to be universally

\(^5\) Ikenberry 1989; Lundestad 1999.
\(^6\) Ikenberry 2001, 23.
beneficial. His model for a successful constitutional international order is the one created by the
United States and Great Britain following World War II. Ikenberry’s argument, however,
focuses more on order design and operation than on the circumstances prior to creation. He
recognizes that most orders are created following systemic wars and gives great attention to the
debates about the nature of the emerging postwar order between the victorious powers and within
their respective governments. Yet, the ultimate fate of the defeated rival hegemons is also an
important component of order creation. In an earlier piece with Charles Kupchan, he and
Ikenberry argue that “internal reconstruction,” namely foreign-imposed regime change, is an
important means of socializing a defeated power into a new established international order.7
This reconstruction shapes the character of the order’s subordinate members and their likelihood
of compliance. The nature and success of international order are greatly determined by regimes
present at order creation and by those absent.

The American international order would not have been possible without the overthrow of
the German and Japanese totalitarian regimes and the restoration of pre-war regimes in Western
Europe, most notably in France. Prior to Allied victory, Germany and Japan sought to establish
their authority over Europe and Asia through a combination of invitation and force. Many of the
regimes in Eastern Europe and large constituencies within Western Europe did in fact prefer
German hegemony over possible Soviet or Anglo-American dominance. The Japanese were
likewise initially greeted as liberators by some within Asia who preferred Japanese hegemony to
Western imperialism.8 Nevertheless, the Axis powers quickly alienated these constituencies that
initially welcomed them, and they ultimately depended much more on aggression and coercion to
establish and enforce their authority in their respective spheres. To establish their international

7 Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990.
orders, the Allies first had to overthrow the totalitarian regimes in Germany and Japan and their puppet regimes throughout Europe and Asia. The United States and Great Britain restored most of the previous regimes in Western Europe, though they excluded from leadership those who most blatantly collaborated with Nazi Germany. In Germany, Japan, and East-Central Europe, however, the Allies established regimes with entirely new economic and political institutions and, in the case of East-Central Europe, a radically transformed socio-economic system.  

Beyond World War II, great powers have used regime change throughout history to create and enforce hierarchical orders in the international system. International orders often begin with a newly risen hegemon imposing subservient regimes on weaker or defeated states. The Napoleonic, Restoration, Axis, American, and Soviet orders all began with the defeat and removal of adversarial regimes and the imposition of submissive ones. Napoleon established French dominance over Europe not only through military victories and conquests, but also by imposing vassal states throughout the Continent. 1815, the quasi-official start date of the modern international era, began with the foreign defeat and overthrow of Napoleon and his vassal regimes. The Holy Alliance subsequently overthrew or threatened to overthrow any regime that deviated from the conservative Restoration order. The Axis powers of World War II not only expanded their territorial empires, but also installed a series of vassal regimes throughout Asia and Europe. The Allies, in turn, overthrew the Axis regimes and their puppets, both restoring previous governments and establishing entirely new ones. During the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union gained and ensured the loyalty of their respective client states through covert and overt regime change interventions. Finally, the attacks of September 11 were meant as challenges to American hegemony in the Middle East. The United States responded by

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9 Judt 2005; T. Smith 1994, Ch. 6; Tismaneanu 2009.
10 Grab 2003; Schroeder 1994.
11 Westad 2005.
overthrowing adversarial regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq and threatening regime change against similar “rogue” states.\textsuperscript{12}

Conversely, the failure or inability to uphold these imposed successor regimes often heralds the demise of international orders. Louis Philippe’s coup in 1830 against Louis XVIII, who the Sixth Coalition installed after removing Napoleon, created the first fracture in the Restoration order. The Restoration order finally crumbled following the Revolutions of 1848.\textsuperscript{13} Napoleon III attempted to spread French power to the Western Hemisphere by imposing Austrian Archduke Maximilian as Emperor of Mexico, but failed when Maximillian was overthrown by indigenous Mexican forces.\textsuperscript{14} The Axis order ended with the simultaneous defeat of the Axis regimes and their vassals. Soviet replacement of the Brezhnev Doctrine with the Sinatra Doctrine, which allowed Communist satellites to ‘do it their way,’ effectively ended the Soviet order in East-Central Europe.\textsuperscript{15} The United States lost its dominant relationships with Cuba and Iran when it failed to defeat or depose the respective Castro and Khomeini regimes.

International orders break down when subordinate regimes are allowed to defect or collapse.

Regime change is necessary to establish and maintain the allegiance of subordinate states. These two motives for regime change map onto two types of regime change: adversarial transformation and authority enforcement.

\textit{Adversarial Transformation}

Adversarial transformations are regime changes in which a previously hostile country is transformed into a trustworthy ally. Adversarial transformations often mark the creation and destruction of international orders, as an ascendant hegemon imposes new regimes on those

\textsuperscript{12} G.W. Bush 2002a; Litwak 2007.
\textsuperscript{13} Haas 2005, Ch. 3. For competing views on when the Restoration order ended, see Ikenberry 2001, 80, n. 1.
\textsuperscript{14} Cunningham 2001.
\textsuperscript{15} Loth 2001.
states that opposed its rise, which often includes the previous hegemon. The creation and downfall of international orders are commonly marked by the overthrow and imposition of numerous regimes. John Owen notes that periods of systemic ideological shifts are marked by wars of regime change. These ideological shifts often begin with a domestic revolution in a great power, which brings to power a new regime hostile to both domestic and international norms. Revolutionary regimes seek to spread their ideology abroad and overturn the prevailing international order, which includes overturning the regimes that perpetuate that order.\textsuperscript{16} French revolutionaries fought wars throughout Europe and established similar-type republics and, following Napoleon’s ascension, constitutional monarchies headed by Napoleon’s relatives.\textsuperscript{17} Regime change is also a means of replacing an enduring rivalry with a more amicable relationship. David Edelstein states that foreign imposers “seek first and foremost to install regimes that do not threaten their interests regardless of their ideology. … Ideally, the occupied territory is actually transformed from a wartime adversary to a reliable ally.”\textsuperscript{18} Regime changes following World War II ended the Anglo-German, Franco-German, and US-Japanese rivalries.

States may also seek regime change against those that provide sanctuary for hostile non-state actors, such as insurgents or terrorists. The sanctuary country may either be complicit with the non-state actor’s actions or too weak to stop them. A foreign imposer may seek regime change against the sanctuary country as a means of eliminating the threat.\textsuperscript{19} Israel intervened in Lebanon in 1982, not because the regime itself was considered hostile, but because the regime was considered too weak to stem attacks launched from its territory. The Israelis hoped to expel the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) from Lebanon and facilitate the election of Bashir

\begin{enumerate}
\item Owen 2010; cf. Colgan 2010, Ch. 7.
\item Grab 2003; Owen 2010, 135-153.
\item Edelstein 2009, 6-7.
\item Mallaby 2002; Patrick 2006; Piazza 2008.
\end{enumerate}
Gemayel, a Christian who would more actively defend Israeli interests. This was also the rationale for the American-led intervention against Afghanistan following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The attacks drastically altered American priorities and greatly exposed the threat posed by both non-state actors, such as al Qaeda, and by states willing to provide them with WMD or sanctuary within their borders. President George W. Bush issued a warning to “nations [who] oppose terror but tolerate the hatred that leads to terror,” stating bluntly, “that must change.” The Taliban regime was not itself directly blamed for the September 11 attacks but was nonetheless targeted, because the Taliban refused to turn over Osama bin Laden and his compatriots or allow the United States unrestricted access to Afghan territory. In his address before Congress immediately following the attacks, Bush charged the Taliban regime with “aiding and abetting murder” and ordered the regime to either “hand over the terrorists or share their fate.”

Adversarial transformation became an important part of US grand strategy following the September 11 attacks. Al Qaeda launched the attacks to compel the United States to abandon its hegemony over the Middle East and withdraw its military forces from the region. Responding to this new threat to the American international order, President Bush advocated a dramatic change in current American grand strategy. The Bush administration argued the threat went beyond terrorist organizations, but also included repressive authoritarian regimes, which were considered breeding grounds for dangerous anti-Western ideologies and, more specifically, could potentially...

20 Freedman 2008, Ch. 7. The Israeli intervention in Lebanon in 2006, however, did not have regime change as its goal. Rather, the goal was to disrupt Hizballah’s ability to launch rocket attacks into Israel and eradicate its “state within a state” inside Lebanon. The regime in Beirut was not the target of the intervention, though “Israel hoped that if Lebanon, not just Hizballah, was made to suffer for Hizballah’s adventurism, Lebanon’s political will to reign Hizballah in would finally increase” (Waxman 2006/7, 29).
pass on WMD to terrorists. In his commencement address at West Point in June 2002, the President laid out what became known as the Bush Doctrine:

In defending the peace, we face a threat with no precedent. . . . [N]ew threats also require new thinking. Deterrence—the promise of massive retaliation against nations—means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of massed destruction can deliver these weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies. . . . We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants who solemnly sign nonproliferation treaties and then systematically break them. . . . Yet the war on terror will not be won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge. In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action, and this nation will act.

Central to Bush’s declaration was that deterrence and containment were unworkable against dictatorial regimes, whose megalomania encouraged dangerous behavior and little consideration of the consequences. Many considered preventive war and regime change the only safeguards against such a threat. Prior to the 2003 Iraq War, Middle East specialist Kenneth Pollack warned that Saddam Hussein was “a solitary decision-maker who relies little on advice from others. . . . It is thus impossible to predict the kind of calculations he would make . . . once he had the ability to incinerate Riyadh, Tel Aviv, or the Saudi oil fields.” Robert Jervis, in summarizing the Bush Doctrine, states, “[R]egime change is necessary, because tyrannical governments will always be prone to disregard agreements and coerce their neighbors, just as they mistreat their own citizens.”

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24 G.W. Bush 2005a; Rice 2005.
27 Pollack 2002a, 36.
Authority Enforcement

Just as international authority is established and overturned through regime change, so it is also preserved and enforced through regime change. Lake notes, “Given incentives by subordinates not to comply in specific instances, the governor must enforce rules to deter future violations. … [E]nforcement may be necessary to prevent widespread defiance.” Regime change is the ultimate punishment for client states that threaten to abrogate the hierarchical relationship or, even worse, switch their allegiance to a great power rival. International patrons can respond by deposing the wayward regime and installing a regime more committed to the established relationship. France moved to overthrow “Emperor” Bokassa of the Central African Republic, a former French colony, in 1979 after he signed a major arms deal with Libya. American interventions in Guatemala in 1953 and Cuba in 1961 were both preceded by target regime attempts to move away from American dominance and towards an accord with the Soviet Union. Soviet interventions in East-Central Europe during the Cold War were explicitly tied to fears of defection.

Client regimes are especially prone to abandon international relationships following domestic regime changes. Owen finds that in many cases of foreign-imposed regime change, “intervention was preceded by an uprising, revolution, civil war, or coup d’etat in the target.” Security and economic partnerships are often severed following such irregular regime changes. Just as revolutionary regimes seek to overturn the international order through regime change, hegemons and status quo states seek to preserve it by overthrowing these revolutionary regimes.

29 Lake 2010, 593.
30 “Bokassa the First (1921-1996),” in Kalck 2005. Bokassa was, in fact, in Libya at the time of the French intervention.
31 Adelman 1986; Grow 2008.
32 Owen 2010, 23.
American and Soviet opposition to rebellions and revolutions in their respective spheres of influence were less about opposition to the movements themselves, but rather about protecting their relationships with their client states. The United States did not oppose the revolutions in either Guatemala or Cuba until they sought support from the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union supported reforms in Poland once Polish leaders assured the Soviets they would not withdraw from the Warsaw Pact. Only when Hungary announced its withdrawal did Soviets decide intervention was necessary.  

Regime change can also be a means of enforcing international authority regarding human rights norms. Global respect for human rights has become an important component of the post-Cold War international order. Those regimes which egregiously violate human rights norms make themselves targets for regime change. The International Commission on Intervention and State Strategy (ICISS) developed the “Responsibility to Protect” doctrine, which declares that states forfeit their sovereignty claims once they violate the human rights of their citizenry. Proponents of this doctrine have called on the international community to both overthrow these offending regimes and help build domestic institutions to protect oppressed groups. Michael Reisman asserts that the international human rights regime by nature is primarily concerned with transforming repressive regimes, albeit peacefully and indirectly. Nonetheless, “anyone who cares about the protection of human rights will want to preserve the strategy of unilateral regime change as an extraordinary remedy in the ‘dark days and hours’ when the formal international system cannot operate in time—or cannot operate.”

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36 Reisman 2004, 521.
Successor Reliability and Regime Change Decision-Making

Scholars and policymakers claim that regime change is an absolute means of settling an interstate conflict or enduring commitment problem.\textsuperscript{37} This claim is supported by quantitative studies, which find that foreign-imposed regime change has a positive effect on peace duration following interstate wars.\textsuperscript{38} Yet, foreign-imposed regime change is merely the foreign replacement of one regime with another. Neither component inherently resolves a commitment problem. Credible commitments involve mechanisms that either tie the participants’ hands or provide credible signaling of particular preferences.\textsuperscript{39} Regime change does not necessarily do either. The imposed successor regime could face the same incentives and constraints that caused the previous commitment problems. If the commitment problem is systemic, then a shift in the balance of power will inhibit the foreign imposer’s ability to enforce the settlement. If the commitment problem is domestic, then regime overthrow is perhaps a necessary first step in resolving the problem, but it may not be sufficient. The successor regime may face many of the same domestic incentives and constraints as the target regime and possibly even share the same policy preferences. Scott Bennett warns that “exogenous” regime change is unlikely to repair an adversarial relationship in the long term, because target constituencies may not approve of the new settlement and will likely reject it once external constraints are removed.\textsuperscript{40} Yet, the statistical evidence linking foreign-imposed regime change with enduring peace settlements suggests that regime change does resolve commitment problems, despite the under-specified mechanisms. I argue that these statistical outcomes are the result of the selection of a reliable

\textsuperscript{37} Lennon and Eiss 2004; Litwak 2007; Reiter 2009.
\textsuperscript{38} Downes and Krcmaric 2011; Lo, Hashimoto, and Reiter 2008.
\textsuperscript{39} Fearon 1997.
\textsuperscript{40} Bennett 1997.
successor regime. Reliable successor selection is necessary to resolve the commitment problem that motivated regime change.

Beyond overthrowing the target regime, the foreign imposer must also ensure that the successor regime is reliable, specifically that it has governing competence and interest alignment. Governing competence includes, most fundamentally, the ability to provide domestic security and basic social services. Beyond that, governing competence also includes the ability to enact imposer-favored policies and to suppress or accommodate constituencies hostile to foreign imposer interests. Supporters of the previous regime will likely oppose the implementation of imposer-favored policies. Resolving the prior commitment problem or interstate grievance will require either confronting or accommodating these groups as well. This is especially important and problematic if the motive for regime change was a prior revolution and ideological transformation. This suggests a deeper societal conflict that will require greater effort beyond simply target regime overthrow. The successor regime must be able to suppress these elements, while also adequately addressing their social grievances. A strong signal of governing competence is having prior governing experience, though this may be difficult if there is need for thorough regime purging. Regardless, the foreign imposer must select a successor regime capable of handling such difficult domestic tumult.

Interest alignment can range from total amity with and submission to the foreign imposer’s interests to simply having non-aggressive relations. What is critical is that the successor regime’s policy preferences conform to those desired by the foreign imposer. This is especially important if the motivating commitment problem involves a change in the international balance of power, such that the foreign imposer cannot independently enforce compliance indefinitely. The foreign imposer must select a successor with aligned interests, so
that the successor regime will be committed to the settlement regardless of external conditions. Potential members of a successor regime can demonstrate interest alignment through previous public actions and positions that clearly display their preferences and allegiances. It is especially helpful if they have economic or military ties to the foreign imposer. If the prior relationship between the imposing and target states was more adversarial, then the foreign imposer may recruit those in the target state who may have taken costly public positions in favor of or less hostile to the foreign imposer. The foreign imposer, in turn, may partially moderate some of its positions to order to better achieve interest alignment. Altogether, the ability of the foreign imposer to successfully identify and recruit a reliable successor regime, to which it can delegate much or all of the regime change responsibilities, determines the costs of regime change and the strategic options available to the foreign imposer. This increases the likelihood that the foreign imposer will choose to impose regime change rather than choose less decisive measures to confront the hostile regime.

*Regime Change Costs and Responsibilities*

Successor reliability greatly affects the concomitant costs of regime change by potentially allowing the foreign imposer to delegate the responsibilities of regime change to the successor regime. Foreign imposers seek the most efficient means of accomplishing regime change, which means reducing the costs as much as possible while still successfully achieving the overall goal. The responsibilities of regime change include the overthrow operation, post-conflict governance, and future enforcement, each of which varies in cost. The cost of the overthrow operation, when done directly, varies with the military balance between the foreign imposer and target regime. The more the balance favors the target regime, the costlier it will be. Regime changes of adversarial transformation often include heavy fighting and the complete destruction of the
target’s infrastructure and security apparatus. Target military forces, therefore, will fight especially hard to avoid defeat, increasing the brutality and devastation of war for both sides.\textsuperscript{41} In addition, military conflict tends to favor the defender, and regimes facing overthrow are likely to fight especially hard.\textsuperscript{42} Post-conflict governance costs can vary greatly, depending on the damage caused by the overthrow operation. Regime change is inherently destabilizing and increases the risk of civil war and refugee flows, which can in turn destabilize the greater region.\textsuperscript{43} The foreign imposer may have to commit to an indefinite occupation to finance reconstruction and ensure domestic and regional stability. After American and British forces destroyed several Iraqi security stations in Operation Desert Fox in 1998, Iraq’s neighbors warned CENTCOM Commander Anthony Zinni that these attacks significantly damaged Saddam Hussein’s regime and strongly recommended that the United States develop a plan to deal with the aftermath if the US planned on launching future attacks. Zinni, therefore, began developing a plan in the event of Iraqi state collapse, which required large investments from multiple US and international agencies.\textsuperscript{44} Finally, the foreign imposer may have to invest in future enforcement following regime change. The failure to identify a reliable successor suggests that the target is hostile to foreign imposer interests and authority. Having paid the costs of regime change, the foreign imposer must then protect its investment by enforcing successor compliance.

Yet, these costs vary greatly depending on prior successor selection. If the foreign imposer can successfully identify and recruit a reliable successor regime, it can partially or completely delegate the overthrow operation, long-term governance, and future enforcement to

\textsuperscript{41} This can have a re-enforcing effect, in which the increased brutality of war increases the imperative for regime change. See Werner 1996.
\textsuperscript{42} Carter 2010; Clausewitz 1976.
\textsuperscript{43} Downes 2010; Enterline and Greig 2008; Peic and Reiter 2010; Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006.
\textsuperscript{44} Gordon and Trainor 2006, 29-30, 158-159; Ricks 2007, 19-20.
the successor regime. The foreign imposer can overthrow the target regime by cultivating, coordinating, financing, and arming internal forces within the target country, including within the military, which will subsequently form the successor regime. A reliable successor regime also reduces the need for long-term occupation and governance in the target country beyond the immediate aftermath of regime overthrow. Legal scholar Michael Reisman supports regime change for humanitarian reasons, but nevertheless asserts that regime change is often so costly and time-consuming that it “is (almost always) a bad idea,” because oftentimes “there is no likely successor and no coherent internal political process that can produce an effective and acceptable candidate, and when as a result the occupation will be extended and expensive.”

By selecting a successor regime prior to regime change, the foreign imposer obviates these problems and the need for an extended foreign occupation. Finally, a reliable successor regime reduces the need for future enforcement by enacting and defending imposer-favored policies and suppressing and accommodating target constituencies hostile to foreign imposer interests. The availability of reliable successor regime, therefore, greatly affects the concomitant costs of regime change and ultimately the decision and strategy regarding regime change.

**Threat Perception**

If, however, the foreign imposer cannot identify and recruit a reliable successor, then the foreign imposer must decide whether it is willing to pay the concomitant costs in order to achieve regime change or adopt a more limited strategy that does not include regime change. The decision is greatly influenced by the foreign imposer’s threat perception regarding the successor regime. If the foreign imposer believes the target regime poses an existential threat to either the country or the regime, then it will likely seek regime change and bear the concomitant costs. In this case, the costs of target regime survival outweigh the costs of regime change.

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45 Reisman 2004, 298.
However, if the foreign imposer believes the target regime poses a manageable threat, then it will adopt a more limited strategy to resolve the conflict. These strategies include limited military strikes, troop deployments and maneuvers, economic sanctions, and other measures that either significantly weaken the target state’s military capabilities or provide harsh punishments for unfavorable policies. These strategies are similar tactically to those used to impose regime change directly or indirectly, but by removing regime change as an aim, they are less costly and less decisive. They are less costly, because they do not include the concomitant costs and responsibilities of regime change. However, they are also less decisive, because they leave the target regime in power and, therefore, are not an absolute means of conflict resolution. In addition, the foreign imposer may also offer concessions to the target regime if it is clear that the target regime is secure in power but does not pose an existential threat.

Threat perception is made up of many different factors that are notoriously difficult to perfectly ascertain. It, therefore, requires making a simple but important assumption about the foreign imposer’s interests. I assume that the foreign imposer’s primary interests are the security and prosperity of its regime and country, probably (though not necessarily) in that order. Therefore, the greatest threats to the foreign imposer would be internal revolt, external attack, and economic turmoil. If the foreign imposer’s leadership feels secure regarding regime stability, then it primarily fears external attack. If not, then it primarily fears internal revolt. Given this, the target regime may appear threatening due to its ability inspire domestic tumult or its ability to mobilize and project military power. The latter determination may be based on geographic proximity, population size, economic performance, or level of military technology.

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46 Byman and Waxman 2002.
47 Gause 2003/4; Walt 1987.
Furthermore, Robert Jervis argues that threat perception is most often shaped by unmotivated and motivated biases. Unmotivated biases include established beliefs about the world and other countries prior to the current crisis. Elizabeth Saunders asserts that different leaders hold different beliefs about threat origin, though she does not specify what determines these beliefs. Saunders argues that some leaders are “internally focused,” meaning that they believe that the source of a threat comes from its domestic institutions or policies. These leaders are less trustful of other regime types and more likely to believe that imposing a similar regime type will better ensure amicable relations. Other leaders, however, are “externally focused,” believing that internal composition is largely irrelevant for threat potential and instead focus exclusively on international behavior and capabilities. Jervis argues that unmotivated biases are especially influenced by recent or significant experiences. Therefore, states are more likely to base their threat perception on their most recent or meaningful experience with that country or another like it. Following the Egyptian nationalization of the Suez Canal, British and French leaders viewed Egyptian President Gamel Nasser as an uncompromising aggressor, due to their recent experiences with Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, to whom they often compared Nasser. They therefore concluded that, just as the Axis leaders needed to be forcibly removed, so too did Nasser. Leaders more easily believe and integrate information that conforms to pre-established beliefs and experiences and require much louder and costlier signals to receive disconfirming information.

Motivated biases, on the other hand, are situational biases based on incentives and constraints concurrent with but independent of the current threat. Motivated biases concerning threat perception are often based on the incentives and constraints leaders have for a given

49 Saunders 2010.
response. If it is easy or beneficial to confront the threat, leaders are more likely to perceive the threat. If, however, a response would be difficult or domestically costly, leaders are less likely to perceive a threat. Benjamin Fordham finds that US policymakers were more likely to “perceive” and respond to foreign threats when domestic and international politico-economic incentives favored a response, but policymakers were less likely to perceive and respond to threats when there were greater domestic and international constraints and disincentives. This suggests, then, that minimizing the costs of regime change may actually increase threat perception regarding the target regime, while maximizing the costs will decrease threat perception. This further demonstrates the importance of selecting a reliable successor regime in the decision whether to impose regime change, since successor selection affects the costs of regime change and the strategic options available.

*Hypotheses*

These hypotheses all pre-suppose a conflict between the foreign imposer and the target regime.

**Hyp1:** *If the foreign imposer selects a reliable successor regime, then it will seek to impose regime change by delegating the overthrow operation, long-term governance, and/or future enforcement to the successor regime.*

**Hyp2:** *If the foreign imposer does not select a reliable successor regime but considers the target regime to be an existential threat, then it will impose regime change directly and pay the concomitant costs of post-conflict governance and future enforcement.*

**Hyp3:** *If the foreign imposer does not select a reliable successor regime and considers the target regime to be a manageable threat, then it will adopt a more limited strategy to resolve the conflict.*

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51 Fordham 1998.
Agency Problems and the Prior Relationship

Successor reliability allows the foreign imposer to delegate the critical components of regime change to the successor regime, increasing the strategic options for indirect regime change and decreasing the concomitant costs to the foreign imposer. However, this delegation creates agency problems, in which the delegating principal (foreign imposer) may have insufficient information about the genuine capabilities and interests of the appointed agent (successor regime). If the successor regime desires selection, then it has incentives to misrepresent its true capabilities and interests, creating a dilemma for the foreign imposer.

A critical factor in the severity of the agency problem is the prior relationship between the imposing and target states. If their relationship was previously amicable or mutually beneficial, then this will mitigate the agency problems of regime change. The foreign imposer will have credible intelligence about and intimate connections to target country constituencies, allowing the foreign imposer to easily identify and recruit reliable members of a successor regime. Notably, the foreign imposer will likely be able to recruit and delegate to members of the previous or even current regime in overthrowing the target incumbent and providing stable governance thereafter. Furthermore, the successor regime will likely have greater domestic legitimacy, reducing the need for a long-term foreign occupation or additional enforcement measures. However, if the imposer-target relationship was previously adversarial, then this will exacerbate the agency problems of regime change. The foreign imposer will have limited intelligence about and connections to target constituencies who can compose a reliable successor regime. Moreover, the target population will be more opposed to making concessions to a long-time adversary and will likely consider any imposed successor regime to be a traitorous puppet.

\[\text{For political applications of the principal-agent dynamic, see Hawkins et al. 2006 and Miller 2005.}\]

\[\text{Bennett 1997; Colaresi 2004.}\]
The foreign imposer, therefore, will have to engage in an indefinite occupation to identify and stably install a reliable successor regime and suppress any resistant constituencies seeking to tempt or coerce the successor regime into enacting unfavorable policies.

*Agency Problems of Regime Change*

The most notable agency problems regarding regime change are adverse selection and rival principals. Adverse selection is the problem created by the agent’s incentive to misrepresent its preferences and qualifications and the principal’s difficulty in verifying them *ex ante*. In the case of regime change, potential members of a successor regime may promise to enact imposer-favored policies or claim to have governing experience and connections to influential constituencies. The foreign imposer may have difficulty verifying this beforehand, depending on its knowledge of the target state. The United States had poor intelligence regarding internal conditions in Iraq and depended on Iraqi exile groups’ expertise and domestic connections when first putting together an interim government. The exiles’ limited knowledge about Iraq’s true internal conditions caused significant problems for the Coalition occupying force and the Iraqi successor regime.⁵⁴

Foreign imposers must also contend with the presence of rival principals. Despite being foreign-imposed, the successor regime is still responsible to some domestic constituencies. These constituencies may pressure the successor regime to abandon policies favored by the foreign imposer and instead reinstate the policies implemented by the deposed target regime that initially motivated regime change. These former policies often have the support of influential target constituencies, and these disgruntled constituencies will likely still favor them even after regime change. The Nazi Party’s foreign expansionism and domestic anti-Semitism were

⁵⁴ Allawi 2007; Roston 2008. Ahmad Chalabi’s provision of poor intelligence suggests another agency problem regarding regime change: the potential successor regime may try to encourage conflict between the imposing and target states in order to achieve power.
popular with much of the German people, who had previously rejected the Versailles settlement and those political parties associated with it.\textsuperscript{55} Similarly, Iraqi Sunnis and even many Shia supported the Ba’ath regime’s war against Iran during the 1980s, the annexation of Kuwait in 1991, and its strong anti-Israeli stance. Both groups worried that following the Ba’ath regime’s foreign overthrow in 2003, “Iraq would be refashioned as a secular, ultra-capitalist democracy with a strategic alliance with the west and Israel.”\textsuperscript{56} Even as many in Washington and Jerusalem favor regime change in Tehran due to fear of the Iranian nuclear threat, it is not clear a new regime will adopt a different policy. The opposition Green Movement in Iran supports the current regime’s nuclear development program and opposes any capitulation to foreign demands and sanctions to cease the program.\textsuperscript{57} Imposing regime change does not automatically change these broader preferences, nor does it inherently ensure successor compliance.

Therefore, in addition to imposing regime change, the foreign imposer must also invest in additional enforcement measures to ensure successor compliance. Without the threat of retaliation or punishment, the successor regime will likely give in to domestic pressure.\textsuperscript{58} This makes successor compliance dependent on a perpetual power imbalance favoring the foreign imposer. This problem then feeds back into the adverse selection problem, because the foreign imposer will need to rely on the successor regime to sufficiently suppress these hostile groups or accommodate their demands, while still enforcing imposer-favored policies. Yet, if the foreign imposer selects an incompetent successor regime or one with insufficient interest alignment, then the foreign imposer cannot reliably delegate to the successor regime and must take on the burden and costs of enforcement. Poor successor selection may even result in multiple regime change

\textsuperscript{55} Bullock 1991.
\textsuperscript{56} Allawi 2007, 246; Mackey 2002.
\textsuperscript{57} Zakaria 2012.
\textsuperscript{58} Morrow et al. 2006.
impositions. As Guatemala sought hegemony over Central America in the mid-nineteenth century, it had to impose regime change on its neighbors several times, as the target populations continually overthrew the foreign-imposed regimes.\textsuperscript{59} Depending on the severity of the agency problems, the foreign imposer must be ready to enforce compliance even following regime change.

\textit{The Prior Imposer-Target Relationship}

The prior relationship between the imposing and target states greatly affects the severity of agency problems involved in regime change. If the two countries historically had an amicable or beneficial relationship, then this will help mitigate these agency problems. The foreign imposer is better able to identify and verify a successor regime with aligned interests, governing experience, and significant internal support. This minimizes the adverse selection problem. In addition, because there are constituencies in the target state that have previously benefited from this relationship, including former or deposed leaders, then the target population is more likely to be amenable to foreign-imposed regime change. Some constituencies may have even invited regime change to restore the profitable relationship. This minimizes the problem of rival principals, since there are broader constituencies within the target country who are personally invested in supporting imposer-favored policies. This reduces the need for additional foreign enforcement.

Regime changes among countries with historically amicable relations are often ones of authority enforcement. International patrons often have the strongest ties to the client’s military, which could allow the foreign imposer to delegate the regime change operation to the successor regime. Client militaries often receive much of their military hardware, technology, and training from their foreign patrons. They are likewise threatened if there is any breach in the hierarchical

\textsuperscript{59} Henderson, Delpar, and Brungardt 2000.
relationship and would, therefore, be much more amenable to a patron-imposed regime change. Patron imposers are also less likely to face resistance to external interference. David Lake states, “Authority and, specifically the right to punish noncompliance, ultimately rest on the collective acceptance of the [patron’s] right to rule.” Thus, even if a direct military operation is necessary, it may be small scale with little need of further occupation to identify and establish an amicable regime. France needed only 600 troops (and lost only two) to overthrow President Jean-Hilaire of Gabon in 1964 and reinstate former President Leon M’Ba. In Operation Barracuda in 1979, with only 130 troops and an airborne naval division, the French overthrew CAR “Emperor” Bokassa and installed former President David Dacko. The foreign imposer’s recognized authority provides legitimacy to the successor regime. Moreover, patrons may face less internal opposition, because target populaces recognize that they are unlikely to receive outside aid. Hungary initially resisted Soviet occupation in 1956 under the mistaken belief that they would receive Western assistance; twelve years later, Czechoslovakia did not make the same mistake.

Regime change against historically amicable countries is not restricted to hierarchical relationships. Even countries in more equitable relationships find it easier to impose regime change on their allies than their adversaries. They also have more credible intelligence about potential successor regime member with governing competence and aligned interests. It was much easier during World War II for the Allies to impose regime change on long-time ally France than long-time adversary Germany. Because of their previous relationship with France, Great Britain and the United States were able to install a regime they knew had widespread support, governing competence, and aligned interests. The same was not true of Germany.

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60 Lake 2010, 592.  
61 Reed 1987.  
Long-time hostility and rivalry between the imposing and target countries exacerbate the agency problems of regime change. These are more often regime changes of adversarial transformation. The long history of distrust and hostility significantly hinders any potential cooperation with target state constituencies who could help overthrow the regime or compose a successor regime. During World War II, the Allies made unconditional surrender the only possible settlement for victory, believing total defeat and full regime transformation were necessary to rid Germany and Japan of their historic militarism. The Allies even rejected overtures from segments of the German military who offered to overthrow Hitler and make peace. They were just as committed to destroying German military power as they were the Nazi regime itself. Moreover, the Allies did not want to run the risk of another “stab-in-the-back” myth, as happened after the First World War. Similarly, the Soviet Union executed many members of the Polish elite after the Nazi-Soviet partition of Poland in 1939. Once it became clear Poland would be reconstituted after World War II, the Soviet Union revoked its recognition of the London-based Polish government-in-exile and halted their westward advance, which allowed the Germans to destroy the Polish Home Army in the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. Moscow then imported Polish Communist exiles to establish a more reliable successor regime. The foreign imposer must also be prepared to fight against target domestic forces, even after the target regime is defeated. The Red Army allowed the Wehrmacht to destroy the Polish Army, so the Soviets would not have to face a strong Polish resistance one they imposed regime change. Following their entry into Germany and Japan, the Allies expected to face ferocious insurgencies

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63 Howard 2007; Rothwell 2005; Weinberg 2005. The German military coup plotters also made peace conditional on maintaining its 1939 borders, which included keeping the conquered territories in Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland.

64 Kaminski and Kaminski 2009. Stalin originally ordered the Red Army to stop its advance once he learned of the uprising in August 1944. However, after Churchill and Roosevelt expressed their displeasure, Stalin relented and reinitiated the Soviet advance. The Germans, however, were able to hold the Soviets off, giving them enough time to destroy the Polish Home Army. See Bullock 1991, 847-850.
against hostile and heavily indoctrinated populaces and developed substantive counter-insurgency plans.\textsuperscript{65}

Having overthrown the target regime, the foreign imposer then faces the difficult task of imposing a reliable successor regime. Traditional hostility between the imposing and target states increases the difficulty of identifying and recruiting a successor regime with aligned interests and governing competence, exacerbating the adverse selection problem. Adversarial transformation, therefore, creates a grave dilemma for the foreign imposer. Thoroughly purging the targeted regime strips the governing bureaucracy of those with the most expertise. However, keeping such officials in place runs the risk of future defiance and conflict. Moreover, it negates the motivating reason for regime change: replacing an intolerable and uncooperative regime.

During the US occupation of Iraq, Ambassador Paul Bremer’s decision to disband the Iraqi military was much criticized as a key factor in fueling the subsequent insurgency. Yet, keeping the existing Ba’athist military and bureaucracy in place would have required long-term and possibly permanent monitoring from Coalition troops, lest the Ba’athists return to oppressing Iraqi Kurds and Shia and reconstituting Iraq’s WMD program.\textsuperscript{66} However, creating an entirely new bureaucracy is close to impossible. Despite the deep-seated Allied opposition to the Axis regimes, less than 1\% of the Japanese bureaucracy was ultimately purged, though the military was dismantled and constitutionally outlawed.\textsuperscript{67} The German military was likewise eliminated and much more of the civilian leadership was prosecuted, but former mid-level Nazi officials were quietly reincorporated into both the East and West German governments, due to the

\textsuperscript{65} Willard-Foster 2009.

\textsuperscript{66} Jason Brownlee (2007, 336) makes a similar point: “Any consideration of what went wrong must grapple with counterfactuals of what new challenges the alternatives might have catalyzed. Had the CPA [Coalition Provisional Authority] behaved more leniently toward the Sunni Ba’athists, it might have further fueled [Moqtada al-]Sadr’s radicalism and doomed the modest rapport Bremer struck with [Grand Ayatollah Ali al-]Sistani. A more aggressive policy against Sadr would have confronted the mass-based movement surrounding him. Tactical criticisms of poor decisions thus oversimplify the political problems that overshadowed the CPA’s thirteen months.”

\textsuperscript{67} Dobbins et al. 2003, Ch. 3.
exigencies of the emerging Cold War rivalry and the inherent difficulties of finding capable officials.⁶⁸

Adversarial transformation will also likely require monitoring and enforcement measures to ensure future compliance. Given that the successor regime will likely include elements from the previous regime, the foreign imposer will need to independently ensure that the target state does not revert back to hostile practices. The historical hostility between the imposing and target countries will likely exacerbate the problems of rival principals, as domestic groups will likely question the legitimacy of an adversary-imposed government and will label the successor regime a traitorous puppet.⁶⁹ The successor regime may then be tempted to rescind imposer-favored policies and re-enact policies from the deposed regime. The foreign imposer, therefore, must establish monitoring and enforcement measures to combat this rival principal problem. These measures include consistent inspections, peacekeeping forces, and base installations. Even after installing a communist regime in Warsaw, Stalin appointed Konstantin Rokossovsky, a Soviet marshal of Polish descent, as the Polish Minister of Defense to further monitor Polish behavior and ensure their loyalty. He also placed thousands of Soviet officers in charge of Polish units or embedded them as “advisors.”⁷⁰ Similarly, Cold War exigencies did not mean the Western powers trusted the former Axis powers to be compliant. Lord Ismay famously stated that the creation of NATO and the large American military presence in Europe was as much about keeping “the Germans down” as it was keeping “the Russians out.” Along with constitutionally prohibiting any military offensive forces, the United States and NATO established permanent bases there to both protect Germany and Japan and to keep them down.

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⁶⁸ Ibid, Ch. 2; Best and Salheiser 2006; Edinger 1960.
⁶⁹ Vidkun Qvisling’s collaboration with the Nazis in occupied Norway has forever made his name synonymous with “traitor.”
⁷⁰ Kaminski and Kaminski 2009.
Hypotheses

Hyp4: If the imposing and target countries previously had an amicable or beneficial relationship, then this will mitigate agency problems, and the foreign imposer will not have to greatly invest in the overthrow operation, long-term governance and future enforcement.

Hyp5: If the imposing and target countries previously had an adversarial relationship, then this will exacerbate agency problems, and the foreign imposer will have to invest greatly in the overthrow operation, long-term governance and future enforcement.

Target Regime Response

The target regime is not without agency, however, within the successor selection process. An important and observable implication of these hypotheses is target regime response to the threat of possible foreign-imposed regime change. If these hypotheses are correct, target incumbents should also be aware of the importance of successor reliability and recruitment and act accordingly. Target incumbents can restrict the foreign imposer’s strategic options and possibly deter regime change by eliminating internal rivals. They can eliminate potential successors through arrest, execution, marginalization, and co-optation. This may be sufficient to deter the foreign imposer, unless the foreign imposer considers the target regime an existential threat and decides to impose regime change directly and bear the concomitant costs and responsibilities.

Deterrence has traditionally been presented in one of two forms: deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment. 71 Deterrence by denial means the target can defend itself against an external attack through a combination of geographic advantage and military prowess. The English Channel and British navy have prevented all attempts at foreign regime change against England for nearly a millennium. The brutal Russian winter greatly hindered Napoleon’s fateful assault on Moscow. Deterrence by punishment means a target may not have the ability to

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militarily prevent defeat but can credibly inflict such a costly punishment as to make attack ultimately not worthwhile. Despite the rhetoric of some in the incoming Eisenhower administration that policy towards the Soviet bloc would go from containment to rollback, fears of the growing Soviet nuclear arsenal made such claims hollow.\textsuperscript{72}

States, however, are not always strong enough to deter powerful aggressors. Foreign imposers are much more prone to initiate regime change interventions when there is a pre-existent power imbalance favoring the foreign imposer.\textsuperscript{73} Traditionally, weaker states have depended on stronger allies to provide protection. The Nasser regime survived the Sinai War not because of Egyptian military acumen, but because the United States waged economic warfare against Great Britain.\textsuperscript{74} Foreign regime change against North Korea would require not only confronting its massive military, but also that of China. Conversely, states are more likely to become the victims of regime change once their international patron is defeated. Napoleon was only able to set up puppet regimes once he had defeated the other great powers of Europe, and these puppet regimes were in turn deposed following his defeat.\textsuperscript{75} Vietnamese regime change against the Cambodian Khmer Rouge in 1979 included fighting a war with China as well.\textsuperscript{76} Without the protection of a strong international patron, weak states often suffer what they must.

However, leaders in weak states are not without their own means of deterrence. Incumbents can also deter foreign-imposed regime change by eliminating any viable successors within their countries. This greatly increases the costs of regime change by removing the option of delegating regime change, forcing the foreign imposer to either engage in a costly military operation and an indefinite occupation or adopt a more limited strategy that is less threatening to

\textsuperscript{72} Tudda 2005.
\textsuperscript{73} Downes 2008.
\textsuperscript{74} Kunz 1991.
\textsuperscript{75} Grab 2003.
\textsuperscript{76} Chang 1985; Westad and Quinn-Judge 2006.
the target regime’s hold on power. Target incumbents can eliminate internal rivals by co-opting, marginalizing, arresting, and/or assassinating them. These efforts are quite similar to steps taken to prevent coups and tamp down on internal rebellion.\textsuperscript{77} Oftentimes, these suppressive efforts from incumbent regimes are based on fears that their greatest threat comes from collusion between internal and external forces. The effectiveness of arrest, execution, and assassination is self-evident. Kenneth Pollack believed that regime change in Iraq would require a long US commitment, “[b]ecause Saddam has ruthlessly eliminated any potential leaders in the country, [and] there are no national figures like Nelson Mandela or Lech Walesa in whom the people will willingly invest their trust.”\textsuperscript{78} Incumbents can also co-opt rivals by giving them prominent roles in the government or providing them with state resources in exchange for their loyalty. Such benefits, however, must outweigh any offers made by the foreign imposer. Incumbents can marginalize rivals by charging them with not being committed enough to the national cause or ideology, be it nationalist, revolutionary, religious, etc. They also can strongly stigmatize anyone who cooperates with foreign powers, even the country’s international patron. Exile is another means of marginalization, as it may alienate a leader from her supporters, though it also increases the rival’s ability to build ties with external patrons. Yet, this may also weaken the rival’s domestic credibility, as the incumbent may be able to paint the rival as beholden to foreign interests. This makes the rival less attractive as a potential successor, since she will lack domestic legitimacy.

This strategy is especially important for deterring regime changes of authority enforcement. International patrons are well-positioned to organize a successful coup or insurrection, given their strong ties to domestic constituencies. Allies and clients are often

\textsuperscript{77} Quinlivan 1999.
\textsuperscript{78} Pollack 2002b, 401.
fearful of such action even prior to a rupture in relations. Even before the Sino-Soviet split, the first major purge of the People’s Republic of China was targeted against those considered too close to the Soviet Union. The Shah of Iran was constantly fearful that the United States and Great Britain would overthrow him, as they had done to his father Reza Shah and Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddeq. He diligently maintained a vast patronage network to buy off potential rivals and increasingly restricted US intelligence access within Iran. Nevertheless, when the Shah was ultimately overthrown, he was certain the US government was at least partially responsible. Filipino President Ferdinand Marcos feared the growing connections opposition leader Benigno Aquino was making with American officials while living in exile there. Imelda Marcos traveled to the US to coax him into joining Marcos’ government. When Aquino refused, he was soon after assassinated.

The target regime can also deter regime change by simply conceding to the foreign imposer’s demands. Given the concomitant costs of regime change, the foreign imposer would rather the target regime comply with it demands than impose regime change. If, therefore, the target regime concedes, the foreign imposer may choose not to actively seek regime change. After the United States imposed regime change on Iraq, Moammar Qaddafi agreed to abandon Libya’s WMD program, and Ayatollah Khomeini allegedly sent out back-channel feelers to the Bush administration to strike a “grand bargain” regarding contentious issues between Iran and the US. Deterring regime change may not require full concession, however. Rather, the target regime need only make divisive concessions, coneding enough to convince third parties that the foreign imposer is acting as an unreasonable aggressor. These third parties can either be external

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81 Burton 1989, 106-114.
82 Ibid., Ch. 5; Jentleson and Whytock 2005/06; Ross and Makovsky 2009, 188-190.
actors or domestic constituencies, who are now willing to support the target regime following its partial concessions rather than the foreign imposer.\textsuperscript{83} Target regime response, therefore, serves as an intervening variable regarding the existence of a reliable successor regime and the foreign imposer’s threat perception.

\textit{Hypotheses Restatement}

\textbf{Hyp1:} If the foreign imposer selects a reliable successor regime, then it will seek to impose regime change by delegating the overthrow operation, long-term governance, and/or future enforcement to the successor regime.

\textbf{Hyp2:} If the foreign imposer does not select a reliable successor regime but considers the target regime to be an existential threat, then it will impose regime change directly and pay the concomitant costs of post-conflict governance and future enforcement.

\textbf{Hyp3:} If the foreign imposer does not select a reliable successor regime and considers the target regime to be a manageable threat, then it will adopt a more limited strategy to resolve the conflict.

\textbf{Hyp4:} If the imposing and target countries previously had an amicable or beneficial relationship, then this will mitigate agency problems, and the foreign imposer will not have to greatly invest in the overthrow operation, long-term governance and future enforcement.

\textbf{Hyp5:} If the imposing and target countries previously had an adversarial relationship, then this will exacerbate agency problems, and the foreign imposer will have to invest greatly in the overthrow operation, long-term governance and future enforcement.

Taking these hypotheses and strategic interactions altogether provides a set of predicted strategic choices, presented in Table 2.1 below. The table illustrates three points worth highlighting. First, the threat perception variable is only meaningful when the foreign imposer cannot identify and recruit a reliable successor regime. If the foreign imposer can identify and recruit a reliable successor regime, then this lowers the costs for regime change, such that it is the best option regardless of threat perception. Second, target regime elimination of potential internal rivals removes the possibility for a reliable successor regime, even when there is an amicable relationship between the imposing and target states. The prior relationship between the

\textsuperscript{83} Yuen 2009.
imposing and target countries greatly affects the agency problems of regime change, but it does not guarantee the selection of reliable successor regime. The target regime can manipulate the successor selection process by eliminating internal rivals and thereby restrict the foreign imposer’s strategic options. Though I do not present specific hypotheses concerning target regime behavior, its response to the threat of foreign-imposed regime change serves as an important and observable implication of the hypotheses. Finally, the theory is falsified in cases where a long-time adversary can identify and recruit a reliable successor regime prior to imposing regime change. This contradicts the argument concerning the underlying mechanisms of the agency problems involved in successor selection. If a long-time adversary can identify a reliable successor regime prior to imposing regime change, then that would falsify that claim.

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**Conclusion**

This dissertation analyzes the strategic choices states face when confronting hostile regimes, particularly the choice whether to impose regime change. I argue that the ability to
select a reliable successor regime greatly affects the concomitant costs of foreign-imposed regime change and, therefore, greatly determines the foreign imposer’s decision whether to impose regime change directly, indirectly, or seek more limited aims against the target regime. If the foreign imposer can select a reliable successor regime prior to imposing regime change, then this will greatly reduce the costs of regime change by allowing the foreign imposer to partially or completely delegate the responsibilities of regime change to the successor regime. These include the overthrow operation, post-conflict governance, and future enforcement. If, however, the foreign imposer cannot select a reliable successor regime, then it must decide whether the target regime is too threatening to remain in power. If the foreign imposer considers the target regime to be an existential threat, then the foreign imposer will opt for direct regime change and bear the concomitant costs. However, if the foreign imposer considers the target regime to be a manageable threat, then the foreign imposer will adopt a more limited strategy to resolve the conflict.

The process of successor selection, which includes the identification and recruitment of a reliable successor regime, creates agency problems, in which the foreign imposer has varying knowledge about the successor regime’s true capabilities and preferences. The severity of these agency problems is greatly shaped by the prior relationship between the imposing and target countries. If the imposing and target countries historically had an amicable or beneficial relationship, then this mitigates the agency problems associated with regime change. The foreign imposer has credible knowledge and intimate connections to target country constituencies who could compose a reliable successor regime. The foreign imposer may even be able to delegate the regime change operation to the successor regime by coordinating and financing a coup or uprising. In addition, foreign regime change will likely be viewed more
legitimately by the target population, and certain target constituencies may in fact have invited regime change as a means of restoring the previously beneficial relationship.

If, however, the imposing and target countries historically had an adversarial relationship, then this exacerbates the agency problems of regime change. The foreign imposer has poor intelligence about and weak connections to those with both governing competence and aligned interests. Indeed, those with the greatest competence are likely those responsible for implementing the policies long considered hostile and intolerable. In addition, the target population will likely view a regime imposed a historical adversary as a traitorous puppet. This will increase the likelihood of extended domestic unrest and opposition and create incentives for the successor regime to enact policies unfavorable to the foreign imposer’s interests. This, in turn, greatly increases the need for a long-term occupation to provide security and stability and future enforcement to ensure successor compliance.

The target regime should also be aware of the importance of successor selection. The target regime, therefore, can restrict the foreign imposer’s strategic options by eliminating internal rivals who could potentially form a reliable successor regime. This deprives the foreign imposer of the option of indirectly imposing regime change and instead forces the foreign imposer to decide between directly imposing regime change and other more limited strategies that make target regime overthrow far less likely. Ultimately then, foreign-imposed regime change involves a triadic interaction between the foreign imposer, the target regime, and the successor regime, in which the dynamics of successor selection play a critical role.
Chapter Three
Safe for Axis Democracy: Allied Strategy in Postwar Germany and Japan

Because Japan is a democracy, Japan is now a great friend, ... and yet it wasn’t long ago that we warred with Japan. In other words, democracies have the capability of transforming nations. That’s what history has told us. And I have faith in the ability of democracy to transform nations.

President George W. Bush

Victory in a great war is something that must be won and kept won. It can be lost after you have won it—if you are careless or negligent or indifferent.

President Harry S. Truman

Introduction

Allied regime change against Germany and Japan following World War II is the adversarial transformation par excellence. The Axis powers’ violations of numerous interwar agreements and their unrelenting conquests of much of Europe and Asia-Pacific clearly demonstrated that these regimes posed an existential threat and convinced the Allies that full adversarial transformation was necessary for lasting global peace. Even during the summer of 1940, when Germany was at the height of its strength, British leaders did not waiver from their ultimate goal of regime change. The decision to impose regime change, therefore, was essentially a fait accompli. However, that did not dictate Allied choices regarding regime change implementation. According to the theory, the adversarial relationship between the Allied and Axis powers exacerbates regime change agency problems, making it difficult to identify a reliable successor regime. Rather, the theory predicts that the Allies would be forced to engage in costly postwar governance to constitute a reliable successor regime and would have to invest

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1 G.W. Bush 2005.
2 “President Harry Truman Radio Address, August 9, 1945,” in Merrill 1995a, 413.
3 Kershaw 2007, Ch. 1; Reiter 2009, 99-102.
in future enforcement measures to ensure peace and compliance. However, the Western Allies (the United States, Great Britain, and France)⁴ established vibrant democracies in Japan and Germany that became models of democratic transformation and subsequent pacification. Based largely on these examples of “democratic pacification,” members and supporters of the administration of President George W. Bush claimed that foreign-imposed democracy was an effective strategy for transforming a virulent adversary into a peaceful ally.⁵ Recent academic work has substantiated these claims, with much of their evidence also dependent on Axis pacification.⁶ This contravenes the theory’s claims about the effects of regime change agency problems. Imposing democracy on a former adversary provides an opportunity for the election of hostile revisionist parties. Allied-imposed regime change in Germany Japan, therefore, poses a problem for the proposed theory.

I, however, the Allies argue that the while sincere about establishing democratic governments in Japan and Germany, did not trust democratic mechanisms to maintain peace. Rather, the Allies implemented additional non-democratic and undemocratic enforcement measures that permanently reduced future Axis military capabilities, restrained political participation and debate, and sought to realign Axis popular preferences to conform to Western interests. These measures included the wartime devastation of the Axis countries to fully illustrate the costs of future re-initiation; the permanent destruction of all military institutions and domestic means of armament; the permanent exclusion of militarist and hyper-nationalist groups from civil society; the decentralization of political and economic authority; countrywide reeducation and indoctrination in liberal, anti-militaristic values; and the cession of large

⁴ References to “the Allies,” unless otherwise stated, solely include these three countries and exclude the Soviet Union.
⁵ G.W. Bush 2006b; Krauthammer 2004; Rice 2005.
amounts of territory. These measures were largely either contrary to democratic norms and processes, independent of democratic mechanisms, or intended to shape popular preferences to align with Allied interests. Altogether, the Allies intended to create conditions that ensured favorable policy outcomes prior to the full implementation of democratic sovereignty in Germany and Japan. These measures demonstrate that Allied regime change planners were very cognizant of the agency problems involved in adversarial transformation.

Allied pacification strategy highlights the central dilemma of foreign-imposed democratization. A fundamental component of democracy is outcome uncertainty, because democratic policy outcomes are determined by the vagaries of popular preferences and unfettered political competition. The ultimate aim of foreign-imposed regime change, on the other hand, is the implementation of long-term policy compliance. More specifically, the goal is to establish or reinforce a stable, hierarchical relationship with the target country. Pacification and compliance require a specific set of policy outcomes. Foreign-imposed democracy, therefore, requires either some foreign control over the electoral process or near certainty about public preferences.

Those linking foreign-imposed democracy to subsequent pacification ignore this dilemma. Instead, they often cite the “democratic peace” phenomenon to validate this linkage. However, many of the proposed mechanisms of the democratic peace are nullified in the instance of imposed democracy. Imposed democracies are often accompanied by imposed peace settlements, which may be at odds with popular sentiment. The simultaneous imposition of democracy and a peace settlement denies the public the opportunity to debate and approve the agreement, weakening the settlement’s legitimacy. Without additional compliance mechanisms,

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8 Bueno de Mesquita and Downs 2006; McKoy and Miller 2012.
publics in an imposed democracy may punish leaders who favor the settlement and elect those who promise revision, including militarily.

Allied pacification strategy strongly reflects this tension within foreign-imposed democracy. Because of the prior adversarial relationship between the Allied and Axis powers, the Allies did not trust the Axis populations to freely elect governments with Western-aligned interests. Even as the Allies established democratic institutions and procedures, they also imposed measures that included restrictions on or punishments for militarist, revisionist, or anti-liberal rhetoric and policies. They also instituted countrywide reeducation programs to instill liberal and peaceful values. These measures were intended to propagate liberal, peaceful norms to better guarantee Allied-favored outcomes once democracy was fully implemented. In some cases, these measures went beyond guaranteeing individual rights against a powerful central government or majoritarian tyranny. They restricted democratic rights of free speech, assembly, political participation, and sovereignty. Territorial cessions, intended to permanently weaken the Axis powers, included severe ethnic cleansing, with many forcibly removed from their ancestral homelands. These policies demonstrated Allied skepticism about the pacifying effects of democracy alone. Altogether, these measures were intended to reshape popular preferences and weaken national capabilities. This increased the likelihood of successor compliance and created safeguards in case of successor defiance.

The onset of the Cold War drastically changed the global strategic environment, but not the overall goal of Axis pacification. The Cold War caused greater interest alignment between the Western Allies and the former Axis countries. The United States, from its position of growing preponderance, became less concerned about a resurgent Axis threat, but those countries previously threatened and conquered by Japan and Germany insisted that pacification measures
remain in place. In response, the Allies created international institutions to bind and socialize the Axis powers into the Western international order. This allowed the Allies to utilize Axis strength for the Cold War conflict, while still containing the potential for future Axis aggression. The competing needs of controlling Axis reconstruction while combating Soviet aggression greatly shaped the postwar Western order and demonstrates that Axis pacification remained a key concern beyond the implementation of democracy.

The remainder of the chapter proceeds as follows. The next section provides working definitions of democracy and pacification. The third section details the arguments linking foreign-imposed democracy and pacification, which rely heavily on Axis transformation following World War II. The fourth section analyzes the causal mechanisms supposedly linking imposed democracy and pacification and contends that these mechanisms are either unrelated to democracy or inapplicable when democracy is imposed. The fifth section, relying on primary and secondary sources, explores the development and implementation of Allied pacification strategy in Japan and Germany. Allied strategy focused on eliminating Axis military capabilities and shaping and controlling public policy. Though the onset of the Cold War caused the Allies to significantly alter their grand strategy, they still kept many restrictive measures against the Axis powers in place and created international institutions to monitor and control Axis reconstruction. The final section summarizes the arguments made and evidence provided.

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10 The aim here is not to “prove” what caused peace between the Allied and Axis powers following World War II. There are many plausible and complementary explanations, including the polarizing effects of the Cold War (Farber and Gowa 1997; Mearsheimer 1990), the advent of nuclear weapons (Jervis 1989), forced disarmament (Towle 1997), transnational institutional integration (Ikenberry 2001), and Axis adoption of anti-militaristic norms (Berger 1998; Dower 1999). Rather, the aim is to analyze Allied measures enacted to ensure peace and the extent that these measures depended on democratic mechanisms. The Allies imposed these pacification measures during and immediately following the war, without foreknowledge of many of the aforementioned factors.
Defining Democracy and Pacification

Defining democracy is a historically contentious issue, with long-standing debates over the proper conceptual, normative, and practical aspects of democracy. Nonetheless, most contemporary definitions of democracy agree on four critical components concerning the proper nature of democratic processes: universal citizenship and suffrage for native-born adults; inviolable protection of individual civil liberties and due process; popular control and sanctioning of public policy through (at minimum) regularly held elections; and ultimate domestic sovereignty over citizen and territorial affairs. Any restrictions on these components suggest restrictions on democratic governance.\(^\text{11}\)

While there is continuing debate concerning all of these points, the final point is particularly relevant in regards to foreign-imposed democracy and Axis pacification. Some argue that there are many instances where transnational authority can be “democracy-enhancing,” through international protection of minority rights, issue insulation from powerful domestic interest groups, and the facilitation of more thoughtful, informed deliberation.\(^\text{12}\) International measures that protect minority rights and civil liberties should be considered democracy-enhancing, even if in contravention of majority opinion, since protection of these rights is a constitutive component of the democratic process. Beyond that, other violations of sovereignty are only democracy-compatible if implemented through voluntary domestic consent and in accordance with domestic democratic procedures. Otherwise, this undermines the fundamental principle of popular control over public policy.\(^\text{13}\)

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\(^{11}\) Schmitter and Karl 1991; Held 2006; Coppedge and Gerring 2011. This list is by no means exhaustive and is best considered a working definition for the purpose of argument.

\(^{12}\) Keohane, Macedo, and Moravcsik 2009. They reject as a “fallacy … that unfettered legal sovereignty is a necessary prerequisite for democracy.” Ibid., 4.

\(^{13}\) Any foreign interference in domestic affairs would still be violations of sovereignty in a strictly Westphalian sense, since external actors are exercising some level of authority. However, this may not be a violation of domestic sovereignty, because such interference was still domestically approved. See Krasner 1999.
Pacification is the enactment of policies intended to limit a country’s aggressive potential. This is distinct from a peaceful outcome, since a country may employ latent aggression without explicitly breaking the peace.\textsuperscript{14} Pacification measures directly target a country’s capability and/or preference for war. They can also include any measures that increase the transparency of target state policymaking and ensure policy compliance from the target country or population, since wars are often caused by either informational or commitment problems.\textsuperscript{15} Policy compliance is especially important, because the purpose of foreign-imposed regime change is the establishment or maintenance of a stable, hierarchical relationship. Patrons imposing or supporting regime change must ensure that the imposed successor regime prioritizes patron interests above those of domestic constituencies.\textsuperscript{16}

Proponents of foreign-imposed democracy as a pacification strategy must go beyond noting a correlation between imposed democracy and subsequent peace. Rather, they must demonstrate a causal linkage between foreign-imposed democracy and a change in a country’s capabilities and policy compliance. Moreover, they must not conflate peaceful intentions and behavior with democratic norms. Ido Oren notes that American beliefs about the democratic nature of Imperial Germany were determined by US perception of German threat, rather than the reverse. During the late-nineteenth century, political scientists, including Woodrow Wilson, lauded Germany’s constitutional system as a more efficient democratic model than even the American system. However, World War I greatly altered this American view of German

\textsuperscript{14} “The aggressor is always peace-loving (as Bonaparte always claimed to be); he would prefer to take over our country unopposed.” Clausewitz 1976, 370.
\textsuperscript{15} Fearon 1995. Fearon also includes the indivisibility of a mutually desired good as a cause of war. This condition is less relevant in this context, since democracy and the post-conflict settlement are usually imposed simultaneously. The good in question likely was divided within the settlement. Conflict over that division would then constitute a commitment problem.
\textsuperscript{16} Bueno de Mesquita and Downs 2006; McKoy and Miller 2012.
governance, even though German polity structured had not changed.\textsuperscript{17} To avoid this subjectivity and false conflation, peaceful behavior must be divorced from democratic norms. More specifically, proponents of a causal linkage between foreign-imposed democracy and subsequent pacification must demonstrate that the foreign imposition of democratic norms and processes causes a change in a target country’s capabilities, resolve, transparency and likelihood for compliance.

**Linking Foreign-Imposed Democracy and Pacification**

Most arguments for a causal linkage between foreign-imposed democracy and subsequent pacification rest upon three pillars: the democratic peace thesis; statistical evidence suggesting a correlation between foreign-imposed democracy and pacification; and the particular success of Axis transformation. However, in each instance, either the pacifying effects of democratic mechanisms are inapplicable when democracy is externally imposed, or the suggested pacification mechanisms are unrelated to democratic mechanisms.

*Democratic Peace*

The most prevalent argument for a causal linkage between democracy and peace is the empirical phenomenon that democracies rarely go to war against each other, commonly known as the “democratic peace.” Sebastian Rosato comments, “Democratic peace theory … is probably the most powerful liberal contribution to the debate on the causes of war and peace…. [It] provides the intellectual justification for the belief that spreading democracy abroad will perform the dual task of enhancing American national security and promoting world peace.”\textsuperscript{18} While there is common agreement that democracies have rarely fought, particularly in the post-

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{17} Oren 1995.  
\textsuperscript{18} Rosato 2003, 585.}
World War II era, there is great disagreement over why this is the case. Here I simply consider how the proposed democratic peace mechanisms would theoretically relate to foreign-imposed democracy and subsequent pacification.

Democratic peace proponents claim that democratic governance can affect a state’s resolve, capabilities, transparency, and likelihood for compliance. Democracy’s effect on state resolve is perhaps the most cited mechanism. Because common citizens often bear the greater costs of war, a popularly-controlled government would be less likely to initiate wars. Democratic publics may fight once provoked, but the costs of war will deter initiation. Moreover, leaders who drag their countries into war are more likely to suffer electoral punishment, further decreasing incentives for war. Democracies are also said to externalize norms of cooperation. Accustomed to bargaining and compromise on a domestic level, democratic leaders carry these norms into international politics. This leads to peaceful outcomes when interacting with other democracies, but may not apply when interacting with authoritarian leaders who are unaccustomed to such norms. Democracy also can negatively affect war-fighting capability through constraints on mobilization, what Jonathan Caverley calls “democratic enfeeblement.” Because democracies include more institutional veto players, they cannot mobilize as quickly for war. Democracies are also very transparent, since public policy is determined through open debates, open elections, and free news media. This provides other countries with either assurance about good intentions or early warning concerning malevolent

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19 For a helpful summary of this debate, see Brown, Lynne-Jones, and Miller 1996.
21 Dixon 1994; Maoz and Russett 1993. Others also argue that democratic institutions allow democracies to better signal resolve once in a crisis, since democratic leaders would be domestically punished for bluffing and/or backing down. This, however, relates to the effect of democracy on conduct during a crisis, not whether democratic regimes are less likely to initiate conflicts. For this argument, see Fearon 1994 and Schultz 1999.
22 Caverley 2010.
23 Tsebelis 2002.
intentions.\textsuperscript{24} Finally, democracies are more likely to honor international commitments. The existence of a greater number of veto players increases the difficulty of making any initial commitments. Therefore, since any commitments made require widespread approval, future reneging becomes more unlikely. Moreover, maintaining the favor of only one among the many veto players can assure continued compliance.\textsuperscript{25} These altogether provide several compelling reasons why democratic governance leads to peaceful relations.

Many of these democratic mechanisms, however, rest on two assumptions that are unlikely to apply in cases of foreign-imposed democracy. First, the mechanisms concerning resolve assume public aversion to bearing the costs of war. Yet, some states and populaces have revisionist aims, which lead them to be risk-acceptant in regards to war.\textsuperscript{26} This is especially true following war and defeat, which is often the pretext for imposed democracy. Indeed, overthrowing an incumbent regime suggests that the war was particularly brutal.\textsuperscript{27} This may engender desires for revenge and restitution, especially if foreign-imposed democracy was accompanied by an unpopularly imposed settlement. The desire for revenge increases the collective psychological payoff for war and decreases concerns about costs.\textsuperscript{28} Forcefully imposing democracy may feed a “victim” narrative, which can be exploited by revisionist or nationalist parties in a democratic context. Michael Doyle, while defending the existence of a liberal peace, concedes, “Clearly, a democracy of xenophobes and hyper-nationalists would externalize their preferences… [If] each democracy cultivates a normative commitment to complete autonomy and self-help, democracies will be likely to clash.”\textsuperscript{29} Defeated populaces in

\textsuperscript{24} Gaubatz 1996; Lipson 2003.
\textsuperscript{25} Kliman 2010; Leeds 1999; Martin 2000.
\textsuperscript{26} Kirshner 2000; Schweller 1994.
\textsuperscript{27} Werner 1996.
\textsuperscript{28} Harkavy 2000; Lowenheim and Heimann 2008.
\textsuperscript{29} Doyle 2005, 463.
a democracy may be more likely elect leaders who share their revisionist aims and punish leaders associated with an unpopular settlement.\textsuperscript{30}

Second, if the settlement is imposed without the equal participation of elected officials from the defeated state, then democratic commitment mechanisms may be negated. Democratic commitment is based on self-enforced compliance. It is founded upon a prior selection effect, whereby democracies only select agreements that have popular support.\textsuperscript{31} However, an imposed settlement circumvents this process, weakening the democratic commitment mechanism. Without additional compliance mechanisms to override public policy preferences, democratic publics are free to renege on agreements. Democratic transparency is nevertheless still applicable, alerting international actors to such desires for revenge and restitution. This may serve as an early warning system, providing an opportunity for the settlement to be renegotiated and war averted. It may also, however, trigger external enforcement mechanisms, which are distinct from democratic mechanisms. Regardless, imposing democracy does not assure that the populace will shun bearing the costs of war or remain committed to an imposed settlement. Without establishing additional enforcement measures, there is no guarantee that the target population will comply with the foreign imposer’s preferred policies.

\textit{Statistical Evidence for Linkage}

Recent quantitative studies, nevertheless, suggest that there is a strong correlation between foreign-imposed democracy and subsequent pacification. When a state imposes regime change upon another at the conclusion of a war, the likelihood of a future war between those states drops dramatically. More notably, when a democratic regime is imposed, peace has never

\textsuperscript{30} Colaresi 2004.
\textsuperscript{31} This selection effect is largely applicable to all states regardless of regime types, but may be amplified for democracies, given the greater amount of veto players. See Keohane, Macedo, and Moravcsik 2009, 25.
broken down between those countries. However, these studies do not provide a clear theoretical link between foreign-imposed democracy and subsequent pacification. Downes and Krcmaric fall back on the democratic peace literature for explanation, asserting, “It is not overly controversial to argue that if [foreign-imposed regime change] successfully transforms a target state into a functioning liberal democracy, then its foreign policy preferences—specifically the likelihood that it will fight another war against the (presumably democratic) intervener—may be permanently changed as well.” While it seems plausible that changing a state’s regime type will change its preferences, it does not necessarily follow that those preferences will be more peaceful. As stated previously, military defeat can stoke nationalist feelings of revenge and restitution. The idea of peace between democracies is dependent on specific assumptions about public preferences.

Lo, Hashimoto, and Reiter (LHR) also find that imposing democracy leads to peace between former belligerents. Yet their causal mechanisms linking foreign-imposed regime change to subsequent pacification are unrelated or antithetical to democracy. Furthermore, they do not explain why democratic regime change would have a different effect than authoritarian regime change. LHR explain peace following regime change as a result of policies marginalizing or eliminating hostile groups, controlling public debate and education, and “hardwiring pacifism” through the limitation or disbandment of all military forces. These policies, however, are unrelated to democracy. Rather, these measures seek to accomplish interest alignment and weaken the target country, which conforms with the theory’s expectations. Furthermore, LHR do not explain why imposed democracies would be more peaceful than imposed autocracies, since these measures are not exclusive to impose democracies. LHR

33 Downes and Krcmaric 2011, 27.
suggest that, since democratic states are the most likely ones to externally impose democracy, fellow democracies will create mutually constraining international orders. They cite John Ikenberry’s work on strategic restraint and postwar order, but Ikenberry claims that it is the foreign imposer’s (re: the United States) transparency that is critical to systemic stability, not that of its allies. The United States’ open institutions and numerous access points counter-act fears of dominance and abandonment. This, however, does not require American allies to be democratic. Greece, the Philippines, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, and Turkey all participated in and benefited from the American-led international order decades before their democratic transitions, just as many Middle Eastern authoritarian and transitional regimes benefit today. LHR therefore provide no theoretical reason why imposing democracy should have a different effect on peace and compliance than any form of regime change. This suggests that in instances of foreign-imposed democracy, other mechanisms may explain subsequent pacification.

**Axis Transformation Model**

Axis democratic transformation is arguably the greatest and most cited example of the ability of foreign-imposed democracy to pacify former belligerent countries. Successive authoritarian regimes in Germany and Japan were blamed for inciting several wars in the former half of the twentieth century. The peaceful respite during the interwar period coincided with tepid democratic experiments in both countries. When these experiments failed, the revived authoritarian regimes soon precipitated the most devastating war in human history. Following their ultimate defeat and the successful imposition of new democratic governments, Japan and Germany became models of foreign-imposed democratization and pacification. Scholars have lauded Axis transformation as the “apex,” “pinnacle,” and “gold standard” of democratic nation-

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35 Lo, Hashimoto, and Reiter 2008, 720.
building and pacification. A leading RAND study of American nation-building declared, “The cases of Germany and Japan set a standard of postconflict nation-building that has not since been matched.”

By the end of the Cold War, Germany and Japan were among the most powerful and most peaceful countries in the world, considered by many the true victors of the US-Soviet conflict.

President George W. Bush, among many others, credited the foreign imposition of democracy for the successful Axis pacification. On the eve of Junichiro Koizumi’s final visit to the United States as Japanese Prime Minister, Bush declared:

History has proven that democracies can change societies... Prime Minister Koizumi is one of my best buddies in the international arena ... sixty years ago, Japan was a sworn enemy of the United States. Today, they're an ally in peace. And what took place? Well, what took place was Japanese-style democracy... History has proven democracies don’t war with each other... Europe was at war twice that cost Americans thousands of lives. Today, they don’t war because the systems of government have changed. Democracies are at peace. Europe is whole, free, and at peace. And that’s an important history lesson for all of us.

Bush believed democracy could be similarly implanted in Iraq and Afghanistan and accused skeptics of “cultural condescension.” He compared such skepticism to postwar claims that democracy in Japan “would ‘never work,’” and that “the prospects of democracy in post-Hitler Germany were ‘most uncertain at best.’… Time after time, observers have questioned whether this country, or that people, are ‘ready’ for democracy—as if freedom were a prize you win for meeting our Western standards of progress.”

Critics of President Bush, nevertheless, disagreed with his application of the Axis transformation model to Iraq and Afghanistan. Their criticism, however, centered on the ability

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37 von Hippel 2000, 11; Coyne 2008, Ch. 5; and Brownlee 2007, 323, respectively.
39 Maul 1990.
40 G.W. Bush 2006a.
to universally impose democracy, not on its potential pacifying effects. They instead argued that Iraq and Afghanistan lacked the domestic endowments for democratic success, such as prior economic development, pre-existing administrative bureaucracies, ethnic homogeneity, and previous democratic experience.\(^{42}\) Yet, while these endowments may have helped in establishing democracy in Japan and Germany following the war, the Allies did not necessarily view them as beneficial for pacification. The victims of Axis aggression greatly feared that quick German and Japanese economic revival would allow them to once again dominate their respective regions. Rapid economic redevelopment following war can upset the postwar balance of power that allowed for peace.\(^{43}\) The Allies likewise debated to what extent they should maintain the Axis powers’ bureaucratic apparatuses, since these institutions mobilized for, initiated, and sustained continental wars over many years, despite heavy losses and countrywide devastation. Nor was ethnic homogeneity necessarily advantageous, since it helped fuel the fascist-militarist hyper-nationalism. While homogeneity might limit internal unrest, it does not necessarily have the same effect on external aggression. Finally, Germany and Japan’s democratic institutions did little to prevent the march to war. In Germany’s case, the Nazis came to power through democratic elections and coalition-building with a promise to overturn both the Versailles settlement and German democracy itself. Nazi Propaganda Minister Josef Goebbels boasted prior to one Reichstag election, “We become Reichstag deputies in order to paralyze the Weimar democracy with its own assistance. If democracy is stupid enough give us free travel privileges and per diem allowances for this service, that is its affair…. We come as enemies! Like a wolf tearing into the flock of sheep, that is how we come.”\(^{44}\) This certainly suggests a connection between authoritarian revival and subsequent aggression, but it also illustrates that publics do not


\(^{43}\) Powell 2006; Werner 1999.

\(^{44}\) Quoted in Bullock 1991, 348.
always have democratic or peaceful intentions. Prior Nazi electability was indicative of the agency problems involved in establishing democracy following military defeat. Monitoring and controlling public preferences, therefore, are a critical element for democratic pacification.

Scholars have cited other mechanisms to explain Axis transformation and pacification, such as demilitarization, international commitment to reconstruction, and the psychology of defeat. Demilitarization and international commitment to reconstruction, however, are independent of democratic mechanisms and can be implemented in authoritarian countries as well. The psychology of defeat, on the other hand, dovetails with democratic mechanisms, in that it reflects public preferences for peace. However, whether a country will “embrace defeat” is difficult to predict ex ante. John Dower notes that “the suicidal fanaticism that characterized Japanese behavior on the battlefield did not survive the war,” but this was by no means a given at war’s end. The Allies were surprised and relieved to discover that the “Japanese at all levels of society quickly blamed their own militaristic leaders for having initiated a miserable, unwinnable war.” This made establishing democracy much easier, once the Allies became confident about Japanese pacifist preferences. Nevertheless, based on the Axis forces’ wartime ferocity, the Allies expected strong internal resistance upon entering Japan and Germany. They developed beforehand a wide-ranging pacification strategy to confront potential opposition, including detailed plans for counter-insurgency operations. I next analyze this pacification strategy.

**Allied Planning for Axis Pacification**

Allied regime change implementation focused on limiting Axis capabilities, changing their preferences for aggression, increasing transparency, and instilling policy consistency. Yet

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45 Dower 1999.
46 Dower 2002.
47 Willard-Foster 2009.
democratic mechanisms only directly affected transparency. Pacification measures affecting capabilities, preferences, and compliance were either independent of democratic mechanisms, Allied prerequisites before fully allowing the free exercise of democratic rights, or direct violations of democratic norms and processes.

_Safe for Axis Democracy: Devastation, Censorship, and Reeducation_

Before fully permitting free democratic practices in the Axis countries, the Allies were intent on fundamentally transforming German and Japanese preferences from militarism, hyper-nationalism, and revisionism to liberal, peaceful values. While promoting liberal values is arguably an integral part of establishing democracy, the same is not necessarily true of peaceful values. Policymakers and scholars have conflated democratic values with peaceful and preferable behavior, but the two should be considered distinct.

The Potsdam Declaration in July 1945, in which the Allies (including the Soviet Union) laid out their postwar aims, well reflects the tension in Allied strategy between establishing democracy and securing long-term peace. The Allies made the establishment of stable democracies in Germany and Japan a central postwar aim. The Potsdam Declaration calls for “equal rights for all citizens without distinction of race, nationality, or religion.” The subsequent Japanese Constitution and West German Basic Law, which Western Allied officials either directly wrote or strongly influenced, guaranteed universal suffrage and freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, and collective bargaining. Yet the Potsdam Declaration made clear that democratic rights would only be established within the right political climate. It stated that “subject to the necessity for maintaining military security, freedom of speech, press, and religion shall be permitted.” Democratic rights would not outweigh the overall Allied pacification goal,

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which was “to convince the German people that they suffered a total defeat and that they cannot escape responsibility for what they have brought upon themselves, since their own ruthless warfare and fanatical Nazi resistance have destroyed the German economy and made chaos and suffering inevitable.”

To a large extent, much of this work was accomplished during the war. The totality of defeat, culminating in enemy occupation, made clear the Allies’ military superiority. In addition, the heavy aerial bombing during the war further made clear the wages of war and the consequences of future aggression. The aerial campaign was intended to cause psychological as well as material devastation. The Allies were intent on preemptively dispelling any “stab-in-the-back” myths, which took root following the negotiated armistice of World War I. Returning home from the Potsdam Conference just outside Berlin, President Harry Truman commented, “War has indeed come home to Germany and the German people. It has come home in all the frightfulness with which the German leaders started and waged it.” They also hoped that Allied bombing would cause internal discontent, leading to chaos and perhaps rebellion.

Though bombing did not lead to uprisings or much visible dissent during the war (the attempted German military coup of July 1944 notwithstanding), it greatly contributed to widespread resignation and acceptance of defeat following the war. As the Allies entered Germany, they found that areas which suffered heavier bombing were more likely to surrender unconditionally. They likewise found in Japan that those who endured aerial bombing became convinced of defeat earlier, though bombing in general caused widespread despair. Expecting to find a

50 “Protocol of the Proceedings of the Berlin Conference,” in Merrill 1995a, 321-322, emphasis added. Much of the Potsdam Declaration refers solely to Germany, but it is clear that Allied planning for Japan was to be quite similar.
51 “President Harry Truman Radio Address, August 9, 1945,” in Merrill 1995a, 407.
52 Biddle 2002. Stalin personally expressed disappointment that the German working class never rose up against the Nazi regime. Montefiore 2003, 492.
53 The Effects of Strategic Bombing on German Morale 1946; The Effects of Strategic Bombing on Japanese Morale 1947.
“German population consisting mainly of fanatic Nazis who would resist anything the Allies did,” the Allies instead found “fairly docile Germans, who seemed more interested in getting on with life than in squabbling with the occupiers.”\textsuperscript{54} This caused Byron Price, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, to note, “Whatever may be said of German recalcitrance, and the dubious outlook for their acceptance of democratic institutions, one thing is certain. The German people do realize—have been made to realize—that they lost the war decisively. They are at this stage a thoroughly beaten and frightened people.”\textsuperscript{55} The brutality and certainty of Allied victory created an environment favorable to Allied goals and thus more amenable for democratic reforms.

Yet, while the Axis populations felt duly defeated, this did not necessarily translate into feelings of personal responsibility for their country’s aggression. Price further noted, “Notwithstanding the punishments the Germans now suffer, … there is no apparent realization of collective guilt for the unspeakable crimes committed by the German nation or for the unforgiveable anguish and suffering spread by Germany throughout the world. One young German, who professed only hatred for Nazism, referred to Germany repeatedly in conversation as having been ‘drawn into war.’”\textsuperscript{56} A Columbia University dean, after conferring with nearly 500 German universities professors and administrators, reported that they “claim to have no idea why the world fears them; [have] no sense of personal responsibility for the war; knew nothing of Dachau; [and] had nothing to do with Nazis. I personally believe that about 50\% of these in educational circles … truly believed as above, but that 50\% were not telling the truth.”\textsuperscript{57}

Similarly, even as some Japanese spoke of the Allied occupation force as a “liberation army” and

\textsuperscript{54} Merritt 1995, 326.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 152-153.
\textsuperscript{57} “Dean William Russell to President Harry Truman,” in Merrill 1995b, 542.
blamed their military leaders for guiding them foolishly into an unwinnable war, very few felt any personal responsibility or guilt for Japanese aggression and atrocities.\textsuperscript{58} Moreover, most Germans and Japanese rejected any claims of Allied moral superiority, despite Axis aggression and atrocities. They saw little difference between their supposed atrocities and Allied bombing of civilian sites. Although Germans directly bombed were more likely to surrender unconditionally, they were also more likely to view Allied bombing as morally unjustifiable.\textsuperscript{59} They saw Allied victory as strictly evidence of military superiority, not moral. They attributed Allied victory to the Allies’ material, numerical, and technological advantage, while still claiming Germans soldiers were superior in training, skill, and courage. They strongly believed that had Germany had equal resources and numbers, they would have won.\textsuperscript{60} This suggested a resilient pride in German military prowess, which stoked Allied fears of a future militarist resurgence.

The Allies believed that the Axis peoples needed to actively reject their former militarist, hyper-nationalist ethos and embrace a more liberal, peaceful ideology to permanently ensure peace. The Allies believed peaceful norms could only take root if traditional norms of militarism and authoritarianism were banned from the public sphere. They therefore forbade all militarist and anti-liberal rhetoric, organizations, and political parties. Immediately following Allied declarations of freedoms of speech and political contestation, numerous Japanese ultranationalist parties and organizations sprung up. In response, the Supreme Command for the Allied Powers (SCAP) in Japan banned all such organizations. SCAP further ordered that any group deemed vaguely political must register with SCAP, declaring their aims, membership, and

\textsuperscript{58} Finn 1992, 13.
\textsuperscript{59} Merritt 1995, 247.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 248-250. Among the Allies, the Germans ranked the Russians as the best soldiers, followed by the British, then the Americans, and finally the French.
sources of funding. Such prohibitions were even more urgent in Germany, where the Nazis were democratically elected, and many right-wing parties still held sway even following defeat. As late as 1952, over 70% of (West) Germans rated Hitler as either a good or great leader. Earlier Nazi electoral victories made clear the hyper-nationalist impulse in German political culture. Afraid Germans would once again use the ballot box to elect revisionist parties, the Allies banned all organizations, speech and publications promoting revisionist, undemocratic, or anti-Allied views. The Germans, however, recognized that the banning of such parties was itself undemocratic. Price reported, “Many Germans ask why, if we really believe in self-government, we bar from the list of candidates all Nazis, although they not infrequently are the strongest leaders in the community.” He then rather condescendingly noted, “The answer is well-understood by Americans, but not by Germans.” Nonetheless, even Americans protested against some of these acts as undemocratic. The American Library Association, despite their “full endorsement of the obvious motive to stamp out Nazism,” nevertheless condemned the decision to “confiscate and destroy Nazi publications … as short-sighted, unsound and contrary to democratic principles.” The Allies, nevertheless, upheld these measures, which were used to outlaw not only neo-Nazi parties in West Germany, but later the Communist Party as well. For the Allies, the critical issue was shaping popular preferences to align with Allied interests.

The Potsdam Declaration called for “German education [to] be so controlled as completely to eliminate Nazi and militarist doctrines and to make possible the successful development of democratic ideas.” The Allies instructed the school systems and all forms of

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61 Harries and Harries 1987, 44-45.
63 Merritt 1995, 91-93.
65 “Ralph A. Ulveling, President, and Carl H. Milam, Executive Secretary, American Library Association, to President Harry Truman,” in Merrill 1995b, 265.
popular media to promote values of personal liberty and responsibility, while rejecting collectivist and militarist ideologies. Old textbooks that instilled racial-cultural superiority and blind obedience to the state were discarded, and new textbooks promoting liberal values and individual responsibility were published and widely distributed. Old textbooks that instilled racial-cultural superiority and blind obedience to the state were discarded, and new textbooks promoting liberal values and individual responsibility were published and widely distributed.67 Newspapers and radio broadcasts engaged in “benevolent lecturing,” teaching the superiority of liberal values over militaristic ones and providing accounts of Axis atrocities, with the unsubtle aim of convincing their audiences that they bore some responsibility for these actions.68 Tony Judt noted that the war tribunals “were as much about pedagogy as justice.”69 The Allies also sought to recast the histories of Japan and Germany from narratives of heroic victories and perpetual victimhood to ones of foolish aggression that unnecessarily inflicted pain and destruction on the world and themselves. One report titled “Plan for the German Mind” called for an end of epithets describing Germans as “cruel,” “ruthless,” “inhuman,” or “arrogant,” since these all carried connotations of German strength or superiority. Rather, the Allies must “[c]onvince the German people they and all they have done, and all that they stand for, are stupid… Coldly, logically, factually, it can be established that the Germans have been politically, diplomatically, economically, militarily, scientifically, culturally stupid … unwaveringly stupid to the point of self-destruction.”70 While much of Axis reeducation was not this explicit, historical textbooks and propaganda made clear the folly of past and future aggression.

**Axis Down and Americans In: Demilitarization, Partition, and Controlled Rehabilitation**

The Allies, however, did not trust these reeducation programs alone to guarantee Axis pacification. They also enacted measures to permanently limit Axis military capabilities.

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68 Harries and Harries 1987, 66, 68.
69 Judt 2005, 53.
70 “Plan for the German Mind,” in Merrill 1995b, 21-23, emphasis in original.
Permanent Axis demilitarization was the cornerstone of Allied postwar planning, the one point of consistent, unanimous agreement among the Allies (including the Soviet Union) during and immediately following the war. General disarmament was long seen as the global solution to war. Following World War II, however, the Allies applied disarmament exclusively to the defeated Axis powers, and with much greater severity. All Axis military institutions were to be completely and permanently dissolved, military, paramilitary and veteran organizations disbanded, and all industries related to armaments and munitions dismantled. In a speech before Congress following the Yalta Conference, President Franklin Roosevelt declared that the Allied “objective in handling Germany is simple—it is to secure the peace of the rest of the world now and in the future. Too much experience has shown that that objective is impossible if Germany is allowed to retain any ability to wage aggressive warfare.” Roosevelt further stated, “Japanese militarism must be wiped out as thoroughly as German militarism.” 71 These aims were reiterated in the Potsdam Declaration and implemented throughout Germany and Japan. All military units and institutions were disbanded, arsenals demolished, submarines sunk, naval vessels seized, military production halted, and military research confiscated. Yet demilitarization was more than simply disarmament; it also included excising militarism from Axis culture. The Allies banned “all clubs and associations which serve to keep alive the military tradition in Germany,” including even veterans’ organizations. 72 SCAP forbade Japanese military units fighting abroad to return in any type of official formation, nor to be greeted by “any display of flags, banners, or emblems of distinction.” 73 This coincided with reeducation programs that disparaged the Axis military past as self-destructive and counter-productive.

71 “Address of the President to the Joint Session of the Congress, March 1, 1945,” in McJimsey 2003, 623-624, 637.
73 Harries and Harries 1987, 34.
The Allies also moved to dismantle and partition the Japanese and German empires. Japan lost territory in Northern China, Manchuria, Korea, and Formosa, territories gained as far back as the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. Japan also ceded control of Okinawa to the United States, who in turn established a military base there to both protect Pacific sea lanes and ensure Japanese pacification.\(^\text{74}\) In addition, between six to seven million Japanese were deported and repatriated back to Japan, half of whom were civilians and many of whom had lived outside Japan for decades.\(^\text{75}\) With Japan deprived of the vital raw materials and industrial production capacity from its overseas territories, American officials considered postwar Japan “no more than a fifth-rate power,” and no further partition was deemed necessary.\(^\text{76}\)

German partition was far more divisive, though the Allies (including the Soviet Union) agreed on two important points. First, they revoked all Nazi-era conquests, restoring Austrian independence and returning the Sudetenland and Alsace-Lorraine to Czechoslovakia and France respectively. Second, they agreed that Prussia should be dismembered, and much of it ceded to Poland. Poland lost much of its eastern territory to the Soviet Union in the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939. Stalin was intent on keeping this territory, so the Allies agreed to compensate Poland with German territory. This served the dual purpose of appeasing Poland and weakening Germany. Truman, with grim irony, defended this decision as a means of establishing Polish Lebensraum, claiming that “there are over three million Poles who are to be returned to Poland [who] need room to settle. The new area in the West was formerly populated by Germans, but most of them have already left in the face of the invading Soviet army. We were informed that there are only

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\(^{74}\) Borton 1967.
\(^{75}\) Dower 1999, 48-51.
about a million and half left.”77 Truman’s rationalization notwithstanding, the Prussian cession and the return of the Sudetenland led to significant ethnic cleansing in Eastern and Central Europe, resulting in estimated expulsion of seven million Germans from their ancestral homes and the deaths of over two million.78 Winston Churchill confessed that he was “saddened by the tales of the masses of German women and children flying along the roads … to the West before the advancing Armies. I am clearly convinced they deserve it; but that does not remove it from one’s gaze.”79 The Allies cooperated in and condoned massive postwar population transfers in Europe and Asia, hoping to staunch the secessionist movements and internal ethnic divisions that long plagued these regions.80

Yet the decision to dismember Prussia went beyond Polish compensation. It was also considered a fundamental part of German demilitarization. Prussia’s militarist legacy was as much blamed for German aggression as Nazi ideology. Roosevelt declared that peace could only be secured through “assurance that neither the Nazis nor Prussian militarism could again be revived to threaten the peace and the civilization of the world.”81 British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden claimed that “Hitler is not so unique as all that. He is merely the latest expression of the Prussian spirit of military domination.” His successor Ernest Bevin agreed that getting “rid of Hitler, Goering, and the others” would not solve the problem, but “[i]t was Prussian militarism, with its terrible philosophy that to had be got rid of [sic] from Europe for all time.”82

The Prussian cession was meant to both weaken German strength and erase a supposedly threatening part of German culture.

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77 “President Harry Truman Radio Address, August 9, 1945,” in Merrill 1995a, 412.
78 de Zaya 2006, 2; Hitchcock 2008, 167.
79 Quoted in Frank 2007, 91.
81 “Address of the President to the Joint Session of the Congress, March 1, 1945,” in McJimsey 2003, 618.
82 Both quoted in C. Clark 2006, 673.
Besides Prussia, the Allies were divided on if and how to partition the rest of Germany. During the war, all sides favored partition, though they disagreed over the extent. At the Tehran and Yalta Conferences, Stalin advocated splitting Germany into five separate states. Churchill originally favored two German states, but once they made the decision to cede Prussia to Poland, he believed further partition would be unnecessary and counter-productive. Roosevelt, however, was emphatic that Germany be divided and agreed with Stalin’s number of five or more. On a memorandum suggesting different options for the Rhineland and Ruhr Valley, including an independent state or Allied military control while remaining part of Germany, Roosevelt scribbled, “Take it from Germany!” Truman, coming into office once Germany was largely defeated, abandoned Roosevelt’s support for further partition, believing it would create future German grievances, slow the pace of European recovery, and require long-term American military presence in Europe. Stalin acquiesced, and the official Allied plan called for a single German state, though administered separately during the occupation period.

Despite zonal divisions, the Allies hoped to rely upon the sustained unity of the wartime Grand Alliance to keep Germany contained. The Allies made numerous statements expressing their fears that Germany would take advantage of Allied divisions, regardless of a newly imposed regime. Even as the war was still raging, the Allies agreed that the “main danger centering around a post-war Germany is not that she will again at an early date become an aggressor but that she will be enabled to maneuver so as to play one Ally against another, thus creating disunity which in turn would pave the way for another war.” Truman later reiterated this point: “[T]he United Nations are determined that there shall be no next war. That is why the

84 “Notes for Conference with the President, ca. February 1945,” in McJimsey 2003, 119.
85 “The Berlin Conference: Agenda Proposed by the Department of State: Germany- Partition, June 30, 1945,” in Merrill 1995a, 116-120.
United Nations are determined to remain united and strong. We can never permit any aggressor in the future to be clever enough to divide us or strong enough to defeat us.”

Those opposed to German partition were also motivated by fears of Allied disunity, arguing that maintaining German division would require Allied military forces to remain in Central Europe, which would inevitably lead to intra-Allied conflict. They remembered well the “skill with which the Germans played one power off against another during the Hitler period,” seeing this as “evidence of their capacity to take every advantage of the political possibilities that would be provided by the establishment of several German states.”

Despite plans for regime change, the Allies (including the Soviet Union) still expected Germany to pose a threat, albeit initially through diplomatic chicanery. The key to peace, therefore, was a unified, demilitarized Germany contained by the Grand Alliance via the United Nations.

This, of course, did not happen. Although the Grand Alliance fractured rather quickly, Allied planners made sure their fears of German manipulation did not come to pass. Rather than German partition causing Alliance division, Alliance division led to the institutionalized partition of Germany into the Western-created Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the Soviet-created German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1949. Both sides feared that a unified, neutral Germany would tilt in the opposing side’s favor. Indefinite, if not permanent, division was deemed the optimal solution. Yet, even then, the Western Allies were still mindful not to allow the FRG to become too powerful. As the West Germans crafted their Basic Law, a temporary constitution in lieu of German unification, the Western Allies insisted that the Germans adopt a

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87 “President Harry Truman Radio Address, August 9, 1945,” in Merrill 1995a, 408.
89 American officials hoped that a demilitarized Germany without Western forces would assuage Soviet fears about Western encirclement and cause them to adopt more liberal policies in Eastern Europe. “The Berlin Conference: Agenda Proposed by the Department of State: Treaty for the Demilitarization of Germany with Commitment to Use United States Forces (June 27, 1945), June 30, 1945,” in Merrill 1995a, 112.
90 Trachtenberg 1999.
federalist, decentralized system to hinder any possible military mobilization. The Allies further insisted that the *Länder* (province states) borders be reapportioned, so that each would be of a roughly equal medium size. They did not want any one particular *Länder* to dominate the FRG as Prussia dominated the former Reich. When the Germans balked at this, the Allies threatened to write the Basic Law themselves and impose it by fiat.\(^91\) The Allies further insisted that the central government have minimal taxation and police authority, and that the *Länder* be given greater say in national policy. The result was a federal, bicameral system, about which the Germans claimed, “*[T]he new Bundesrat [upper house] would give the *Länder* much more direct influence on federal legislation, government, and administration than the Senate enjoyed under the American constitution.*”\(^92\) Despite these changes, the Allies still instituted an Occupation Statute, which gave the Allies veto power over any West German laws, the right to impose their own laws, and the right to enforce any laws. The Allies ultimately allowed this statute to lapse in 1955, after establishing supranational safeguards and being convinced of German interest alignment.\(^93\)

Cold War tensions did force the Allies to reconsider rearmament in both Japan and Germany. Seeing Japan as sufficiently weakened by its territorial losses, American officials were less concerned about limited Japanese rearmament. Indeed, they became concerned that further purges would weaken the Japanese state, which would invite Soviet encroachment and domestic socialist victories. These American concerns, however, were not shared by Japan’s neighbors, who had more directly experienced the horrors of Japanese expansionism. The countries of the postwar Far East Commission, which included Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and the nationalist Chinese government, insisted that any peace treaty with Japan either include very

\(^{91}\) Spevack 2001, 343-348.
\(^{92}\) Ibid., 418.
\(^{93}\) Ibid., 468.
punitive conditions on Japan or an American military commitment to defend the Asia-Pacific countries from foreign aggression. Surprisingly, the Japanese voiced the same concerns. Having suffered the ravages of war, they were extremely reluctant to prepare for another. The Americans now regretted that their demilitarization program had been too effective, as the Japanese made clear their preference for the American security umbrella rather than full rearmament. Cold War concerns had solidified US-Japanese interest alignment, but now the United States was forced to provide Japanese security. Nevertheless, Japan’s neighbors made clear that Japanese demilitarization was a requirement for peace.

The Americans were likewise eager to see Germany rearmed, but were again rebuffed by allies who more directly experienced Axis aggression. Like the Far East Commission, France and the Benelux countries would not agree to German rearmament without an American military commitment to defend Europe and monitor Germany. Unlike the Japanese, the Germans were much more willing to rearm, making Western control over rearmament that much more imperative. The result was the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949, the same year the FRG was established. The United States gradually committed itself to maintain forces inside and around Germany, which opened space for German military and economic integration. The FRG was officially made a member of NATO on May 9, 1955, with German troops made subordinate to NATO command. The same day, the Occupation Statute was abolished. Nevertheless, the FRG was still denied the right to expel Western forces from its own territory.

95 Harries and Harries 1987, Ch. 25. American regret over forced demilitarization led SCAP officials to deny that they ordered the war renunciation clause be inserted into the Japanese constitution. While discussing this controversy with a Japanese official, one American official noted, “Before the Korean War the author was our old man. After the Korean War the author was your old man.” Kades 1989, 224, emphasis in original.
96 Trachtenberg 1999, 126-127.
German economic rehabilitation was similarly safeguarded through broader Western integration and socialization. Even in its truncated form, West Germany managed to outpace France in coal and steel production by 1949, only four years after the war ended. European economic recovery depended on German economic recovery, but France feared that a revived Germany would once again dominate Europe. The Allies, therefore, decided to socialize Germany into the Western order through transnational institutional controls. Recognizing the Americans and British would insist on German rehabilitation, the French proposed the pooling of French and German coal and steel, along with any other European country willing to participate, into the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). This would allow for German revival, while giving France and other European states greater control over German resources and assurances over German intentions. Marc Trachtenberg best summarizes Allied pacification strategy: “Germany was to be tied to the West, and in important ways was made part of the West, but her freedom of action was to be curtailed, and she was not to have the same sovereign rights as the other western powers.”

Conclusion

Allied-imposed regime change in Japan and Germany conforms with the theory’s prediction that an existential threat would lead to regime change with costly postwar governance and additional enforcement measures. Nonetheless, the imposition of democracy seemingly conflicts with the theory’s underlying argument that imposing regime change on a former adversary would exacerbate agency problems. Democracy allows the citizenry to freely choose their own foreign policy, and a defeated rival population will likely (or even possibly) elect

97 Sutton 2007, 38.
98 Hitchcock 1998; Sutton 2007, Ch. 2.
99 Trachtenberg 1999, 128.
revisionist parties and re-adopt aggressive policies. However, Western Allied leaders were
cognizant of that problem and imposed policies accordingly. Though committed to establishing
democracy in Germany and Japan, the Allies were determined to control the successor selection
process in these countries. Allied planners blamed the previous Allied victors for being, in
President Truman’s words quoted above, “careless and negligent and indifferent” following the
First World War. The World War II victors witnessed first-hand the outcome of unfettered
democracy in revisionist countries during the interwar period. German and Japanese publics
rejected what they considered unfair constraints from the Versailles settlement and subsequent
agreements. In Germany, democratic publics elected nationalist parties that promised restitution,
culminating in the victory of the Nazi Party under Adolf Hitler. In Japan, civilian leaders were
assaulted by a coalition of military officers and hyper-nationalists, who castigated them as
complicit in Western dominance and demanded that Japan achieve hegemony over East Asia
through military conquest. Following the defeat of these regimes in the deadliest and costliest
war in human history, the Allies were committed to establishing stable democracies in Japan and
Germany. However, their primary goal was ensuring that these democratic outcomes would
conform to Allied preferences for pacification and Western alignment.

To ensure pacification and interest alignment, the Allies enacted policies intended to
permanently limit Axis capabilities and align preferences with those of the Western Allies. This
began with the devastation of both countries during the war and continued after the war with
policies that disbanded all military forces, forbade future rearmament, detached significant
amounts of territory, outlawed militarist or anti-liberal rhetoric and organizations, and instituted
countrywide reeducation programs to instill liberal, peaceful values. These measures created an
environment by which the Allies believed Axis democracy could flourish without threatening the
international community. Yet many of the measures themselves were decidedly undemocratic. They restricted freedoms of speech, assembly, political participation, and sovereignty. The Allies were intent on maintaining peace above all else, even if this violated democratic norms.

Democracy played a meaningful but by no means primary role in Allied plans for Axis pacification. While the Allies were clearly genuine about establishing stable democracies in Germany and Japan, many of their pacification methods were either independent of or contrary to democratic norms and procedures. The Allied pacification strategy included additional enforcement measures that changed public preferences before democracy was fully implemented and limited Axis military and mobilization capabilities. All independent Japanese and German military institutions were abolished, and limited rearmament was only allowed under the auspices of Allied control and supervision. Japan was given the option of suffering a more punitive peace agreement or accepting a large American military presence within its border. Unsurprisingly, it chose the latter. German rearmament was only permitted under the auspices of NATO, with its forces only allowed to serve under foreign command. These regulations violate the democratic norm that only domestically elected officials have ultimate authority over policy. The Allies further weakened the former Axis powers by removing large amounts of vital territory. For those territories gained through recent conquest, such a policy was certainly justifiable, but should not be considered a democratic mechanism. However, this argument cannot be applied to Prussia. For the sake of weakening Germany, uprooting its military legacy, and appeasing Poland and the Soviet Union, ancestral German lands were ethnically cleansed, and millions of Germans lost their homes and their lives.

While the essence of democracy is outcome uncertainty, the purpose of regime change is establishing international authority, which includes policy subordination. The Allies therefore
only fully implemented democracy once they felt confident about reformed Axis preferences. The incessant targeting of civilians during Allied aerial raids helped inculcate countrywide war weariness and preclude any “stab-in-the-back” myths. Inclusion in international institutions also helped socialize Germany and Japan into norms of peace and cooperation, but the socialization process included limiting their ability to adopt independent policies. Moreover, a critical part of socializing the Axis powers was forbidding Japanese and German citizens from espousing any views deemed militarist, revisionist, or undemocratic. They were likewise forbidden from organizing politically to support such views. The Allies also established reeducation programs to instill liberal, peaceful values and stigmatize any undemocratic, militarist ideologies. While these restrictions may be considered reasonable given Germany and Japan’s expansionist ideologies and problematic democratic records, they nonetheless demonstrate an undemocratic distrust of popular sovereignty. The Allies only trusted Axis democracy under certain prerequisite conditions. Reeducation and socialization were prerequisites for democracy, not effects of democracy.

Scholars and policymakers must recognize this fundamental dilemma of foreign-imposed democracy. The global spread of democracy means nations may adopt policies unfavorable to other democracies. On the other hand, enforcing compliance may require suborning undemocratic practices. The Allies arguably found the most optimal balance in their strategy towards postwar Japan and Germany. Yet this strategy included subverting democratic norms and procedures. The Allies made this tradeoff quite willingly in order to ensure that the world remained safe for Axis democracy and, in President Truman’s words, to make sure “the victory was won and kept won.”
Civil rebellion poses painful dilemmas not only for the nation involved, but also for other states that have a stake in the outcome. Outside powers must ask themselves two fundamental questions: Will the existing leadership survive the challenge? And if the answer is no, to what extent can or should an external power be prepared to intervene actively to promote an outcome favorable to its own interests?

Gary Sick, Carter aide for Iranian affairs

[Mosaddeq] failed as a statesman, because he refused both to compromise with Iran’s external opponents and to annihilate his enemies at home. ... Twenty-five years later, Iranian revolutionaries swore they would not make ‘the Musaddiq mistake.’”

James Bill

Introduction

Iran has been a perennial victim of foreign-imposed regime change. In the first half of the twentieth century, Iran suffered two Anglo-Russian/Soviet invasions in 1911 and 1941 that removed unreliable regimes and imposed more compliant ones. Reza Khan, founder of the Pahlavi dynasty, came to power in 1921 in a military coup that was strongly supported by the British, if not directly organized by them. In August 1953, the United States and Great Britain organized and financed a coup against Premier Mohammed Mosaddeq in support of Mohammed Reza Shah. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Iran’s likely development of nuclear weapons and support for non-state terrorist groups has made it once again a potential target of foreign-imposed regime change. Yet, in 1978-80, as Iran underwent an ideologically transformative revolution from a secularized, pro-Western monarchy to a virulently anti-Western

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1 Sick 1985, 66.
2 Bill 1988, 56. There are many different spellings of the name “Mosaddeq,” including “Musaddiq,” “Mossadeq,” and “Mossadegh.” I settled on “Mosaddeq,” because it was the spelling used in the most recent works on Mosaddeq from those who read Farsi. However, when citing a direct quotation, I use the author’s spelling.
4 DeYoung and Wilson 2012; Haass 2010a; Litwak 2007, Ch. 6.
Islamist republic, there was seemingly little international effort to halt this change. The lack of American response was especially surprising, considering Iran was the “pillar” of American power in the Middle East. As late as New Year’s Eve 1977, President Jimmy Carter toasted Iran and its monarch, Mohammed Shah Reza Pahlavi, as “an island of stability in a turbulent corner of the world.”\footnote{Sick 1985, 30.} However, as this island became increasingly unstable, the United States seemingly did little to prevent it from sinking. This chapter seeks to explain how the United States and Great Britain were able to successfully impose regime change in 1953, but the United States failed to do so during the early years of the Iranian Revolution.

Great Britain had established its authority over Iran the early nineteenth century. Thus, by the time Mosaddeq nationalized Iranian oil in June 1951, the two countries had a well-established amicable relationship. The theory, therefore, would predict that the British should have been able to identify and recruit a reliable successor regime, unless Mosaddeq successfully eliminate any potential rivals. Britain’s amicable relationship did, in fact, provide the British with close ties to critical constituencies in Iran, particularly among Iranian international businessmen and royalist military officers. This significantly decreased the costs of regime change, which encouraged the British to seek regime change rather than compromise. Nevertheless, Mosaddeq’s initial political success convinced him that he had successfully marginalized any pro-British rivals. Moreover, he believed that the united Iranian support for oil nationalization and American preference for a negotiated settlement further protected him from British regime change attempts. He, therefore, also refused to make the concessions that could have staved off regime change. However, the British were able to exploit fractures within Mosaddeq’s coalition, particularly between Mosaddeq and the Islamic clerics. This allowed the British to construct a coalition of royalist officers, Iranian businessmen and criminal
organizations, and Islamic clerics to depose and Mosaddeq and compose a reliable successor regime. In addition, the British gained American support by convincing the incoming Eisenhower administration that Mosaddeq’s intransigence was creating instability in Iran, which the Communists could then exploit, as had recently happened in East-Central Europe. Washington, in turn, gained the Shah’s support by promising to negotiate a more equitable Anglo-Iranian oil settlement following Mosaddeq’s removal. This helped bring interest alignment between the foreign imposers and the successor regime. In August 1953, the CIA in Iran coordinated with Iranian military officers, clerics, and criminal gangs to destabilize the regime and overthrow Mosaddeq. Following the coup, the US negotiated a final oil settlement between Tehran and London, resolving the dispute between the two countries, and supplied the Pahlavi regime with military and financial aid to placate and suppress any lingering domestic opposition.

In January 1979, the United States again attempted to organize a military coup to save the vestiges of the Shah’s crumbling regime and prevent Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini from coming to power. This attempt, however, failed, because of lessons learned by the revolutionaries and, ironically, by the Shah himself. The US had supplanted Great Britain as Iran’s international patron after the anti-Mosaddeq coup. According to the theory, this amicable relationship should have given Washington sufficient connections with important Iranian constituencies to organize another coup if necessary. However, after witnessing first-hand how easily foreign powers orchestrated a coup against Mosaddeq, the Shah sought to deter future regime change attempts in Iran by significantly limiting US contacts with Iranian constituencies, both within the regime and among opposition groups. He also made sure there would be no other dominant figure within the
Iranian government who could challenge his authority, as Mosaddeq had done.\textsuperscript{6} The Shah structured the military such that he alone made all major decisions and appointments. He used this position to foster division among high-ranking officers, promoting those who demonstrated unwavering loyalty and demoting those who demonstrated independent initiative. This structure proved fatal during the revolutionary onslaught in 1978. The Shah refused to allow the military to use full force against the demonstrators, and no other figure within the government was powerful enough to force his hand. In January 1979, when it was clear to all that the Shah’s reign was over, the US sent an envoy, General Robert “Dutch” Huyser to organize a coup and prevent the revolutionaries from taking power. However, Huyser found that the Iranian military lacked the competence to aggressively combat the revolutionary onslaught and resolve to cooperate with the post-Shah civilian leadership. The military was too fractured and dependent on the Shah’s authority to function effectively. Once this attempt failed, Iranian revolutionaries followed up by eliminating all potential pro-American constituencies and agents within Iran. Given the choice between launching a more direct military operation and acquiescing to the Islamic regime, the US chose to acquiesce.

\textbf{Anglo-American Regime Change in Iran, 1953}

This case study includes three sections. The first section describes the establishment of British authority over Iran, which became particularly important after the discovery of Iranian oil and the founding of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Tehran sought to weaken British authority by seeking other great power counter-balances, including Nazi Germany and the United States. The British, in turn, consistently enforced its authority through indirect and direct regime changes. The second section details the Anglo-Iranian oil crisis and the reasons for bargaining

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., 8-9; Afkhami 2009, 187.
failure that motivated regime change. The British, having exercised authority over Iran for so long, refused to make any major concessions and instead sought to remove Mosaddeq through economic coercion and electoral intrigue. Mosaddeq also refused to compromise, because of his own personal convictions, his confidence in united domestic support and fear of domestic punishment, and his belief in US support as well. The third section illustrates how British connections to Iranian constituencies and US financial and organizational prowess allowed the Western powers to launch a coup against Mosaddeq and impose a reliable successor regime led by the compliant Mohammed Reza Shah. Washington convinced the Shah to support the coup by promising a more equitable oil settlement, thus assuring interest alignment and governing competence.

**Iran, Great Britain, and the United States**

Great Britain first established its authority over Iran when the two countries signed the Definitive Treaty of 1814 as a defensive treaty against Russia. The treaty gave Britain international authority over Iran (then Persia) in exchange for British military protection. The British agreed to defend Persia in exchange for Persian agreement that no other foreign troops would be allowed within Persian territory. Over the next century, Persia became a key battleground in the Anglo-Russian “Great Game,” as the two great powers fought over control of Central Asia. During the nineteenth century, the British increasingly dominated Persian political and economic affairs, weakening the power of the reigning Qajar dynasty. At the turn of the century, a coalition of Persian domestic groups fought together against the Qajar monarchy in the Constitutional Revolt of 1906. The Constitutionalists initially had moderate British support as they sought greater economic modernization and political inclusion, but the British turned
against them when the Constitutionalists also moved to diminish foreign influence in Persian affairs. Together with Russia, Great Britain launched a joint intervention in 1911 to depose the Constitutionalists and restore the Shah’s authority. Nevertheless, the British recognized they would need a more competent and assertive successor to guarantee their interests in Persia.\(^7\)

**Reza Shah and Regime Change**

Reza Khan founded the Pahlavi dynasty in 1925. Reza was the head of the Cossack Brigade and first came to power in 1921 as part of a reformist coup. He was named Minister of War and Commander-in-chief and quickly consolidated power, ousting his civilian partners mere months after the initial coup. Two years later, Reza had amassed enough power to force the Shah to appoint him Prime Minister. The Shah then fled to Europe, never to return. Reza considered abolishing the monarchy and establishing a secular republic, in the style of his hero, Kemal Ataturk of Turkey. However, the Islamic clerics strongly opposed this decision and instead encouraged him to displace the Qajar dynasty and become the new Shah. He assented and crowned himself the new Shah of Persia in December 1925.\(^8\)

Reza Shah took over a country that was economically under-developed, internally divided, and foreign dominated. He immediately worked to reverse all of these problems. Reza enacted a myriad of measures to quickly modernize and industrialize Persia. He established a free public school system and founded Tehran University. He built state-owned factories, provided low-interest loans on small businesses, and negotiated higher tariff rates on imported goods. He built thousands of miles of roads and railroads, including the Trans-Persian Railroad, and provided electricity to all Persian cities. These reforms, however, did not extend to political reforms. Reza established an authoritarian police state, with rigged elections and harsh

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\(^7\) Pollack 2005, 14-24.
\(^8\) Ibid., 27-28; Afkhami 2009, 12-23; Paine and Schoenberger 1975, 11; Ward 2009, 128-135.
repressive measures. The Shah confiscated land from aristocratic landowners who objected to his rule and reforms. His policies also focused on urban centers to the neglect of Persian agricultural development. Peasants migrated to cities, where they lived in crowded tenements with poor living standards. The urban middle class, who most benefited from the Shah’s economic and social reforms, were nevertheless alienated by his repressive rule.  

Reza Shah also worked to diminish British and Russian influence in Persia. Reza Shah’s ascension was neither planned nor organized by the British, but they were evidently in favor of a stronger, more steadfast regime in Tehran. Moreover, there is some evidence his forces received munitions from the British. One US official in Tehran noted, “[T]he British can neither be credited with Reza Khan’s rise nor blamed for it[.] … It may have suited his purpose to make them think they had influenced his decisions.” Furthermore, the Communist revolution in Russia ended the Anglo-Russian détente that developed before World War I, allowing the Shah to play the two powers off against each other. He expanded the size and strength of Persian military forces, expelled all foreign officers, and defeated many of the tribal sectarian movements. Tribal conflicts often served as proxy wars between Tehran, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union, so in bringing these tribes to heel, Reza both consolidated his rule and further weakened foreign influence.

Nevertheless, the British and the Soviets maintained great influence in Persia and remained a threat to the Shah’s power. The Soviet threat came from their proximity and their natural military advantage. The British threat came from their superior military technology and their control over Persian oil through the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC). Winston Churchill, then Lord of Admiralty, negotiated a deal with Tehran in May 1914, just prior to the

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10 Quoted in Paine and Schoenberger 1975, 11.
outbreak of war in Europe, in which Britain received Iranian oil at highly discounted rates, and APOC shareholders received the overwhelming bulk of the profits. In 1933, Reza insisted on renegotiating the arrangement, but the newly agreed upon terms were hardly better than the former arrangement. The new arrangement reduced the amount of British-controlled land, but the British still maintained control of all of the most lucrative oilfields in southern Persia. Tehran received an increased share of the profits, but depended on British revenue reports to determine their allotted share. APOC was also exempted from both Persian and British taxation and insisted that Tehran pay for any British taxes. This all amounted to continued British profit exploitation. Reza, nevertheless, agreed to this arrangement, due to both ignorance and desperation. Persian finances were greatly crippled by the worldwide depression, and Tehran was in desperate need of additional oil revenues to finance its many new programs. Nonetheless, this unfair settlement remained a significant problem for Anglo-Persian relations.

To counter-balance Anglo-Soviet interference, Tehran sought closer ties with the United States and Germany. The United States sent some influential advisors to Tehran to assist with financial policies, but largely remained uninvolved in Persian affairs. Germany, on the other hand, responded much more enthusiastically, especially after Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933. In 1935, Persia and Germany signed a new trade agreement, exchanging Persian raw materials for German industrial products. German advisors and technicians served in key government and industrial leadership positions, and German influence became such that Reza Shah changed the name of the country from “Persia” to “Iran” to emphasize the country’s Aryan origins. Nevertheless, the Shah was most intent on overcoming foreign domination and remaining neutral of foreign disputes. This became increasingly difficult as war among the

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12 Elm 1992, 15-17.
13 Ibid., 23-43; Paine and Schoenberger 1975, 13-14.
14 Stewart 1988, 9-10.
European great powers drew near. The Shah went so far as to purchase military arms from Czechoslovakia, rather than Germany or Great Britain, to demonstrate Iranian neutrality.\textsuperscript{15} When war finally did break out in October, the Shah, according to British Minister to Tehran Reader Bullard, adopted a policy of “frantic neutrality.”\textsuperscript{16} He wanted to give neither side an excuse to violate Iran’s sovereignty. Yet the presence of hundreds of German officials in Iran made the Pahlavi regime suspect in British eyes.

The problem became even more pronounced once Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. The Shah now faced a grave dilemma. The Nazi invasion made the Soviet Union and Great Britain allies once again, severely limiting the Shah’s ability play the former rivals off against each other. Both were suspicious of the Germanophilic Pahlavi regime and were strongly considering deposing Reza Shah. However, Reza and most international observers believed Germany would soon win, which made the Shah reluctant to openly support the Allies. The Shah, thus, faced a simultaneous commitment and signaling problem: he could not commit to either side, nor could he credibly signal commitment to either side, since he was in fact not committed to either side. Because the Allies were the more proximate threat, the Shah sought to accommodate them as much as possible, but he refused their request to expel all Germans from Iran. Berlin threatened to sever relations with Iran if it gave in to the Allied ultimatum.\textsuperscript{17} Nonetheless, on August 22, as it became clear the Allies were intent on imposing regime change, Reza Shah sought to deter regime change through concessions by ordering all non-essential German nationals to leave Iran. Despite this, the threat of Soviet collapse was too great to risk

\textsuperscript{15} Afkhami 2009, 62.
\textsuperscript{16} Quoted in Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Stewart 1988, 70; Ward 2009, 151-153.
any possible future Iranian non-compliance. Great Britain and the Soviet Union, therefore, launched a joint invasion into Iran three days later.18

Though German presence in Iran was the proximate reason for regime change, it was not the only reason. The Allies wanted unencumbered access to Iranian oil and transportation, in order to provide the Soviet Union with necessary arms and supplies. Reza Shah was considered overly independent and headstrong, and the Allies wanted a more pliable ruler of such a vital country. Recognizing that Iran was militarily outmatched, Reza decided to abdicate rather than fight. Announcing his abdication to his government, the Shah declared, “The bottom line is that they consider me their enemy, because I have protected this land. I do not wish to be the cause of enmity toward and misfortune for my country and my people. I have therefore decided to resign.”19 There was still the problem, though, of successor selection. Reza and his former government clearly preferred that the crown prince, Mohammad Reza, become the new Shah. The Allies, however, opposed this. The British first considered reinstating the Qajar dynasty, but they feared the exiled family no longer held legitimacy within Iran. Indeed, the Qajar heir apparent had become a British citizen, spoke only English, and had even adopted the English surname “Drummond.” The British, therefore, opted against “saddling ourselves with a candidate who might collapse at the first opposition.”20 They then suggested that a younger Pahlavi become Shah, and Iran be governed by an Allied-approved Prime Minister. The Iranian government refused and recognized Mohammad Reza as the new Shah before Allied forces reached Tehran. The British accepted this fait accompli, since, as Minister Bullard recognized, “no alternative presented itself, nor could any have been without considerable delay and a welter of intrigue.” Accepting the Crown Prince removed the costs of fighting a possible insurgency in

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19 Quoted in Ibid., 74.
20 Quoted in Ibid., 67.
Iran and gained the acquiescence of the Iranian bureaucracy and population. Bullard further noted that the new Shah was “not credited with much strength of character,” which “if true, [might] suit present circumstances,” and “if unsuitable, [could] be got rid of later.”

In imposing regime change, the Allies not only deposed an untrustworthy incumbent, but approved a successor they considered easily controllable and replaceable.

American Postwar Involvement in Iran

Upon becoming Shah, Mohammad Reza Shah adopted the same policy goals as his father: reconsolidating domestic power and achieving greater independence from Anglo-Soviet control. The new Shah viewed closer ties to the United States as the solution to both problems. The overthrow of Reza Shah also brought the reinstitution of Iranian Constitution of 1906, which included freedom of speech and assembly, the release of political prisoners, freely contested elections to the Majles, and Cabinet subordination to the Majles rather than the Shah. These all led to an explosion of political activity and the proliferation of long-suppressed political organizations and parties. The most noteworthy was the establishment of the Communist Tudeh Party, which received much support from Iran’s large urban labor class and the Soviet occupation forces. Other smaller parties also developed that were affiliated with particular constituencies, such as landowners, bazaaris (traditional merchant class), liberal intellectuals, and the Islamic clergy.

Mohammad Reza Shah hoped to reassert absolute control by first strengthening the power of the military. The Shah received important financial assistance from the United States. In particular, the United States provided support for Iranian security forces, foreign and domestic, through World War II Lend-Lease aid. US officials hoped to make the Iranian

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21 Quoted in Ibid., 79-80.
government strong enough to provide internal stability and resist foreign aggression, from both the Soviet Union and Great Britain. The US military provided training for Iranian military forces. American Colonel Norman Schwarzkopf, father of the future Desert Storm commander, took over the Iranian Gendarmerie and effectively became the Iranian Minister of the Interior.\textsuperscript{23} In addition, the Shah promoted several new generals and colonels and directed US Lend-Lease aid to military development. Iranian military prestige was severely damaged by the Anglo-Soviet occupation, and the Shah worked to strengthen their morale. He also successfully resisted efforts by the Prime Minister to purge royalists within the War Ministry and thus strengthen civilian control over the military.\textsuperscript{24}

The United States also actively worked to reduce Anglo-Soviet presence in Iran. The joint Anglo-Soviet invasion gave the respective powers occupational control over southern and northern Iran. Soon after entering the war, the US convinced Great Britain and the Soviet Union to agree to the Tripartite Agreement in January 1942, which affirmed Iranian sovereignty and called for trilateral withdrawal from Iran six months following the war’s conclusion.\textsuperscript{25} Nevertheless, Moscow actively sought to destabilize the Iranian government. It provided a great amount of financial and organizational support for the burgeoning Tudeh Party. Moscow also provided support for separatist uprisings among the Azeri and Kurdish populations that bordered the Soviet Union. Once the war ended, Soviet support became even more overt, and in November 1945, the Azeris announced the establishment of the Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan, with their own provincial assembly and Azeri and Turkish as recognized languages. The Kurds followed suit in January 1946 with the Kurdish People’s Republic. Both announcements stopped short of outright independence, but both made clear their effectual

\textsuperscript{23} Kinzer 2008, 64; Paine and Schoenberger 1975, 16-17; Pollack 2005, 40-42; Ward 2009, 171-172.  
\textsuperscript{24} Ward 2009, 170-171.  
\textsuperscript{25} Pollack 2005, 41.
independence from Tehran. Both governments were also defended by Soviet forces, who prevented Iranian forces from entering the regions and suppressing the uprisings.\footnote{Ibid., 44-45; Gasiorowski 1991, 46; Hess 1974, 125-126; Paine and Schoenberger 1975, 20.} Washington appealed to Moscow to honor the Tripartite Agreement and withdraw from Iran by March 1946, which was seven months (rather than the agreed-upon six months) after the war’s end. Moscow equivocated and declared that they remained in Iran at the request of the Azeri and Kurdish governments. Soviet intransigence coincided with Soviet peace treaties that gave it virtual control over Bulgaria and Romania and George Kennan’s “Long Telegram” about Soviet expansionism and the need for containment.\footnote{Hess 1974, 131, 133-134.} After strong US urging, Tehran brought its complaint before the United Nations Security Council, and Moscow looked for a way out. Iranian Prime Minister Ahmad Qavam traveled to Moscow and negotiated a deal, in which the Soviet Union received a large oil concession in northern Iran in exchange for Soviet withdrawal. By May, Soviet forces had fully withdrawn from Iran, and by December, Tehran had defeated all separatist forces. However, the Majles refused to ratify the Soviet oil concession agreement.\footnote{Ibid., 139-145; Gasiorowski 1991, 46-47; Paine and Schoenberger 1975, 20-21; Pollack 2005, 45-47.} The Soviets ultimately received nothing for their withdrawal from Iran and abandonment of the separatist governments. Tehran, however, retained full control over its territory, and Washington became more committed to Iran’s defense in the burgeoning Cold War against the Soviet Union.

The Anglo-Iranian Oil Crisis

With Soviet influence greatly diminished within Iran, the Majles now sought to weaken British influence as well. In the same session that the Majles rejected the Soviet oil concession, the legislature called on the government to renegotiate the oil concession with the Anglo-Iranian
Oil Company (AIOC). The AIOC and British government maintained full control over Iranian oil deposits and received a vast majority of the profits. In 1947, the AIOC received £40 million after-tax profits for Iranian oil sales, while Tehran only received £7 million. The AIOC also refused to honor the conditions of the 1933 concessions, which included wage increases, managerial advancements for Iranian employees, and British investment in road, school, and hospital construction. Majles members demanded a more equitable renegotiation. They pointed to the deals struck between American oil companies and the governments of Venezuela and Saudi Arabia. The US companies agreed to an even 50/50 split of the profits, which put pressure on AIOC to make a similar concession. The Majles also demanded greater transparency, since the AIOC often under-reported its sales figures, so it could keep a greater share of the profits. In response the British offered a Supplemental Agreement, which guaranteed annual Iranian profits at a minimum £4 million and additional hiring of Iranians for managerial positions. They, however, balked at giving Iranians greater control or oversight of Iranian oil production.

Majles nationalists were outraged by this meager offer and responded by forming a broad-based coalition in October 1949 called the National Front, led by Mohammad Mosaddeq. It was composed of three major domestic constituencies: the urban middle class, the anti-communist working class, and Islamic political activists associated with Ayatollah Abolqasem Kashani. Despite their disparate interests, these parties were brought together by their virulent opposition to any settlement with the British that did not include Iranian control over Iranian oil production.

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29 Afkhami 2009, 115. APOC changed its name to AIOC, in accordance with the country’s name change.
Mohammad Mosaddeq was the leading liberal-secular nationalist in the Majles, with a long record as a member of and dissenter against both the Qajar and Pahlavi regimes. He was considered charismatic, incorruptible, and fiercely nationalistic, and thus became the natural leader of this new movement. National Front members preferred nationalization, but were willing to accept shared control with the British. However, neither the AIOC nor the British government would budge. A memo from the Ministry of Fuel privately acknowledged “that the Persians are not so far wrong when they say that our proposals are, in fact, merely dressing up AIOC control in other clothing.” They worried about both the economic and reputational effects of conceding to Iranian nationalist pressure. The British economy, still fragile following World War II and carrying the additional burden of German occupation, depended on sales and tax revenues from the AIOC. The British Admiralty received two million tons of oil annually at heavily discounted rates from the AIOC, which made up 85% of its fuel needs. Purchasing oil elsewhere would have cost Great Britain hundreds of millions of pounds. Furthermore, the AIOC’s manipulation of British income tax laws meant the Iranian government essentially paid the company’s taxes. Finally, the British feared that making concessions in Iran would lead to similar concessions throughout the Middle East and the wider British Empire. The Supplemental Agreement kept the essentials of the AIOC system in place.

To get the Supplemental Agreement passed, the British strongly urged the Shah to appoint Army Chief of Staff General Haji Ali Razmara as Prime Minister. They hoped a strong military figure could face down Mosaddeq and the National Front and force the Supplemental Agreement through the Majles. However, Iranian public sentiment was overwhelmingly against

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35 Quoted in Abrahamian 2001, 191.
compromise with the AIOC and against any Iranians advocating compromise. Appointed in the summer of 1950, Razmara negotiated with both sides for almost a year in order to reach a compromise in which each side made concessions. In particular, he tried desperately to convince the AIOC to at least provide greater transparency regarding the price and quantity of oil sold and develop a ten-year program to train and promote Iranian technical staff. He, in turn, warned Iranians that a battle with Great Britain would only lead to instability and economic ruin. Regardless, both sides rejected his proposals and pleading. Razmara’s failure ultimately cost him his life; he was assassinated in March 1951.\(^{38}\) Members of the Majles openly celebrated his murder, and Ayatollah Kashani declared it a “religiously necessary act” and hailed the assassin as “the savior of the Iranian nation.”\(^{39}\) Within days of Razmara’s assassination, the Majles voted to make Mosaddeq the new Prime Minister and to nationalize the AIOC.\(^{40}\)

The British immediately recognized that a reversal of Iranian oil nationalization would require Mosaddeq’s removal. Stephen Kinzer observed that the British “were used to manipulating Iranian prime ministers like chess pieces, and now suddenly, they faced one who seemed to hate them.”\(^{41}\) Their preferred method was for the Shah to simply dismiss him, but the Shah insisted that Mosaddeq’s domestic popularity was too great for him to move against Mosaddeq.\(^{42}\) They, therefore, opted for a regime change strategy of economic coercion. When the Iranians demanded access to AIOC receipts, the British responded by shutting down the oil refinery at Abadan and canceling all oil shipments from Iran after. They called on all British employees to depart to their Basra headquarters in Iraq and stated that those who remained


\(^{39}\) Afkhami 2009, 123.

\(^{40}\) Abrahamian 2001, 186-187; Kinzer 2008, 82.

\(^{41}\) Kinzer 2008, 91.

\(^{42}\) Elm 1992, 219-220, 221. Moreover, the Shah apparently preferred that Mosaddeq serve as Prime Minister, since the Shah also supported oil nationalization and believed Mosaddeq was in the best position to successfully implement it. Afkhami 2009, 124.
would be unable to convert their salaries into sterling. Furthermore, the British convinced their allies, including the United States, to neither purchase Iranian oil from the “National” Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), nor provide visas for their nationals seeking employment with the NIOC.  

Some countries, including Italy and Japan, refused to comply with British demands and offered to buy Iranian oil and sell the NIOC tankers. The British responded by blockading Iran, intercepting any foreign tankers carrying Iranian oil, and forcing them to port. The British claimed that these tankers were stealing British property. Though most countries opposed British action, they nevertheless stopped buying Iranian oil.

Washington, however, still pressed for a negotiated settlement. US officials consistently pushed the British to compromise, especially after Razmara’s assassination and the Majles’ ratification of oil nationalization. The State Department declared that US officials “fully recognize the sovereign rights of Iran and sympathize with Iran’s desire that increased benefits accrue to that country from the development of its petroleum.” US Ambassador to Tehran Henry Grady likewise stated, “Since nationalization is an accomplished fact, it would be wise for Britain to adopt a conciliatory attitude.” However, Great Britain was a vital ally in the developing Cold War with the Soviet Union, which threatened to turn into a hot war following the North Korean invasion of South Korea in June 1950. Washington did not wish to alienate the British nor see them forced out of the Middle East. While US oil companies were open to economic expansion in the Middle East, Washington preferred that London be the leading military power in the region. Secretary of State Dean Acheson declared that the United States’ greatest concern was that “Britain might drive Iran to a Communist coup d’état, or Iran might

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45 Elm 1992, 81-93.
46 Quoted in Kinzer 2008, 92, 93.
drive Britain out of the country.”\(^48\) Washington vetoed British plans to send forces to seize southern Iranian oilfields and the main refinery at Abadan, fearing the Soviets would likewise invade northern Iran, leading to a nineteenth century-style division of Iran.\(^49\) Rather, President Truman sent Averell Harriman to Tehran as personal envoy to help resolve the conflict. After much effort, Harriman convinced both sides to accept a 50/50 profit-sharing, but the two sides refused to agree over the issue of control. The British were willing to acknowledge Iranian ownership of its own oil, and Mosaddeq was willing to provide additional compensation to the AIOC, but the two sides remained divided over who maintained ultimate control over oil drilling, profits, and oversight.\(^50\) The British next took their dispute before the United Nations, arguing that Iranian nationalization was a breach of contract. Mosaddeq, however, decided to travel to New York to personally advocate for Iran. The Prime Minister argued that this issue did not belong before the UN, since it was a dispute between a government and a company, not two governments. More significantly, he argued that this was an issue of national sovereignty, and that Iran had the right to use its resources as it saw fit. The UN Security Council sided with Mosaddeq and tabled Britain’s anti-Iranian resolution.\(^51\) From that point on, London abandoned all further negotiations (except another failed attempt at the World Court) and became solely focused on Mosaddeq’s downfall.

Mosaddeq’s downfall seemed increasingly possible, as British sanctions on Iranian oil devastated the Iranian economy. Following his visit to the UN, Mosaddeq met with Truman to request financial aid, but Truman reluctantly refused his request, because this would create

\(^{48}\) Quoted in Elm 1992, 124.

\(^{49}\) Elm 1992, 157-166, 224-225. The British, however, were comfortable with such a division.

\(^{50}\) Abrahamian 2001, 188-190; Elm 1992, 131-143; Kinzer 2008, 107-110.

conflict with London.\textsuperscript{52} The British also stymied Iranian attempts to get loans from the World Bank, particularly after the Shah told the British that economic problems within Iran were weakening Mosaddeq’s domestic prestige.\textsuperscript{53} Despite Mosaddeq’s predictions, world markets were unaffected by the loss of Iranian oil, as other British and US supplies made up the difference. The British, therefore, could maintain their blockade indefinitely.\textsuperscript{54} Mosaddeq was increasingly denounced in the Majles by pro-British members, who blamed his intransigence for ruining the country. Even the religious parties were beginning to move away from Mosaddeq, as they were never comfortable with his secular liberalism. The British saw an opportunity to defeat Mosaddeq in the upcoming elections in July 1952. This was London’s traditional and preferred method of regime change, using its influence with domestic constituencies to affect political outcomes. They organized and financed a coalition of pro-British politicians, conservative landowners, and pro-Shah royalists who were suspicious about Mosaddeq’s republican leanings. As election returns came in, the results looked unfavorable for the National Front, so Mosaddeq took the unprecedented step of cancelling the elections while they were still ongoing. The move was constitutionally questionable, but Mosaddeq justified it by claiming there was foreign interference in the elections. He then went further, demanding that the Shah give him authority over the war minister portfolio. Mosaddeq wanted to ensure that if Great Britain used military action against Iran, he would have control over Iranian military forces. By demanding authority over the war minister portfolio, Mosaddeq was effectively usurping the Shah’s authority. The Shah refused, having fought to maintain this authority following his

\textsuperscript{52} Kinzer 2008, 130; Pollack 2005, 60.
\textsuperscript{53} Elm 1992, 207.
\textsuperscript{54} Afkhami 2009, 130, 133; Kinzer 2008, 117; Marsh 2005, 92; Pollack 2005, 61.
father’s removal. In response, Mosaddeq fainted before the Shah, took to his bed, and resigned the next day.55

With Mosaddeq now ousted, pro-British Majles members nominated former Prime Minister Qavam, who served during the Azerbaijan crisis, to replace him. Qavam previously had pro-Russian sympathies, which enabled him to negotiate the Azerbaijan settlement with Moscow. However, to return to power, Qavam strongly courted the British through public and private assurances of interest alignment. Qavam’s newspaper attacked Mosaddeq and advocated reconciliation with the British. He wrote to George Middleton, the British charge d’affaires, “I am prepared to … be sincerely assisted by His Majesty’s Government in laying the foundations of … [a] real friendship between the British people and the people of Persia[.]”56 Qavam immediately announced he was ready to compromise with the British and would arrest anyone who violently opposed this policy, including Ayatollah Kashani. The British were ecstatic about Qavam’s strong stance, as they recognized that Mosaddeq’s downfall was necessary to reverse nationalization, but not sufficient. There was still significant support within Iran for nationalization, so Mosaddeq’s successor would have to directly confront and likely suppress these forces. Following Qavam’s announcement of accommodation with the British, protests and riots broke out throughout Iran, demanding Qavam’s resignation and Mosaddeq’s reinstatement. The Shah, hoping to avoid mass bloodshed and fearing the common soldiers would defect to the opposition, caved to public pressure. He forced Qavam to resign and reinstated Mosaddeq as Prime Minister. It was now apparent who truly held power within Iran.

Gholam Reza Afkhami, a biographer of Mohammed Reza Shah, observed that Mosaddeq

56 Quoted in Elm 1992, 235. Qavam also proposed deposing the Shah and reinstalling the Qajar dynasty. The British considered this, because they were disappointed in Mohammad Reza’s apparent weakness in confronting Mosaddeq, but the Qajar heir still had to insurmountable problem of being too connected with the British. Ibid., 237; Afkhami 2009, 139-140.
“symbolized hope, self-respect, and a glimpse of greatness lost over the past centuries of stagnation. … Qavam, on the other hand, offered defeat, a return to reality, an acceptance of defeat, a sense of worthlessness.”57 The Shah asked Mosaddeq upon his reinstatement whether he intended to maintain the monarchy. Mosaddeq stated that he would, but only if the Shah recognized that his authority was subordinate to the Majles, and his role was to reign, not rule. Mosaddeq further consolidated his control by declaring martial law, seeking emergency legislative powers for six months in order to pass necessary reforms, and purging the military of high-ranking officers considered loyal to the Shah.58

Mosaddeq now felt confident that British efforts at indirect regime change had completely failed. He had defeated and marginalized all potential British supporters in the government and the military. Upon his triumphant return to power, Mosaddeq boldly told British charge d’affaires Middleton: “You have failed at the Security Council, you have failed at the Hague, and you failed to overthrow my government. Your legal position is hopeless, and you are dealing with a united Iranian people firm in their resolve to maintain the nationalization laws.”59 The final point was most problematic for the British, but ironically, for Mosaddeq as well. Even if Mosaddeq was disposed to any compromise with the AIOC or British government, he was clearly beholden to more radical opposition groups. US officials had long recognized this problem. During Mosaddeq’s previous trip to Washington, one US official lamented that the British and Iranians could not reach a mutually beneficial arrangement. Mosaddeq responded, “Don’t you realize that in returning to Iran empty-handed, I return in a much stronger position than if I returned with an agreement which I would have to sell to my fanatics?”60 More

57 Afkhami 2009, 142.
59 Quoted in Afkhami 2009, 143.
60 Quoted in Kinzer 2008, 131.
pointedly, Ayatollah Kashani told Harriman during his envoy mission to Iran, “If Mosaddeq yields, his blood will flow like Razmara’s.” Harriman, in turn, reported to the State Department, “It is the opinion of all Americans in Persia … that no Persian Government—whether Musaddiq’s or any other—can run counter to this strong public feeling.” Now, following the widespread protests, not only was Mosaddeq reappointed Prime Minister, but Kashani was elected Speaker of the Majles. The Tudeh party had also played a prominent role in the anti-Qavam, anti-British protests. This was particularly worrying for US officials. They recognized that Mosaddeq was personally hostile towards the Soviet Union and Communism in general. However, they feared that Mosaddeq’s weakening domestic base would either force him to make common cause with the Tudeh, or that the Communists would take advantage of the instability in Tehran to launch a coup themselves. This weighed heavily as the British pressed the Americans to support their unrelenting goal of regime change.

### Regime Change Decision and Strategy

The British began plans for Mosaddeq’s forceful removal immediately after he returned to power. Following the failure of their electoral strategy and US opposition to military action, the British decided to organize a coup. They recognized that they needed three components for success: reliable domestic agents, popular support, and American support. Initially, they only had the first. Despite Mosaddeq’s optimism and widespread anti-British sentiment, the long relationship between Iran and Great Britain provided the British with several amicable constituencies within Iran who favored a restoration of mutually beneficial relations. Their most

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61 Quoted in Ibid., 107.
62 Quoted in Elm 1992, 130.
63 Elm 1992, 244-246; Heiss 2004, 197-198.
64 Kinzer 2008, 141-142.
critical contacts were the Rashidian brothers, who were wealthy Iranian importers of British goods. They had close connections with Iranian gangs and criminal organizations, who could provide street muscle and domestic chaos during the appropriate time. To lead the coup, British officials chose Fazlollah Zahedi, who served previously as Minister of the Interior in 1951 until Mosaddeq forced him to resign. The Shah later appointed Zahedi to the Senate, and he served as head of the Retired Officer’s Club, which was populated by officers disgruntled by Mosaddeq’s military cutbacks, royalist purges, and marginalization of the Shah. Zahedi also had ties to Islamic clerics and religious parties, who were increasingly at odds with Mosaddeq. Zahedi’s record, however, was not unblemished. During World War II, he was a leading Nazi sympathizer and had developed plans for a pro-German tribal uprising if German forces invaded Iran. He was later captured and interned by the British. Nonetheless, this experience demonstrated his ability to organize domestic uprisings. US Ambassador Loy Henderson admitted Zahedi was “not ideal,” but had “more chance of piloting Iran through turbulent days following Mossadegh’s resignation than any other candidate now on the horizon.” Yet, the British had difficulty recruiting the most important agent: Mohammad Reza Shah. The military was unlikely to launch a coup without the Shah’s support. The Shah had already suffered a great diminution of power by opposing Mosaddeq before, and he was leery of doing so again. Moreover, despite Britain’s strong ties to several important constituencies, Mosaddeq still commanded popular support and the apparent backing of the United States.

Mosaddeq’s own actions, however, severely weakened both. Mosaddeq’s military purge weakened the Iranian military at a time when the United States greatly feared Soviet encroachment in the Middle East. Moreover, the National Front began to fracture as Mosaddeq

66 Quoted in Kinzer 2008, 156.
sought greater dictatorial powers. In January 1953, when his six months of emergency powers were set to expire, Mosaddeq requested a further year-long extension. This caused a permanent split between Mosaddeq and many of his National Front allies, including Kashani. The Majles granted Mosaddeq further emergency powers, but only after popular demonstrations in support of Mosaddeq partially organized by the Tudeh. Mosaddeq removed Kashani as Majles Speaker and further purged and arrested officers and officials considered loyal to the Shah and the British. From Washington’s perspective, Mosaddeq now appeared isolated, dictatorial, and dependent on Communist support. The fear that instability within Iran would lead to a Communist takeover finally led the United States to also favor regime change in Iran.

This change in American policy was, to a great extent, caused by a regime change in the United States. Republican Dwight Eisenhower replaced Truman as President, and his administration was much more amenable to forceful regime change in Iran. Yet, even during the waning months of Truman administration, US officials increasingly recognized that foreign-imposed regime change would be necessary in Iran. Moreover, Truman and Eisenhower officials agreed that crisis resolution would require both regime change in Tehran and policy concessions in London. Washington gained greater leverage over the British after Mosaddeq suspended diplomatic relations with Great Britain and expelled all British citizens from Iran. This severely crippled British regime change plans, as the British embassy served as the major coordinating grounds for regime change operations. However, CIA operatives, led by Kermit Roosevelt, had long been working with MI6 operatives to foster a coup against Mosaddeq and were able to pick up where the British left off.

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68 Marsh 2005.
69 Abrahamian 2001; Gasiorowski 1991, 70-72; Louis 2004, 17-172. Kermit Roosevelt was the grandson of former President Theodore Roosevelt.
Anglo-American Coup Plot

The plan was rather straightforward. First, throughout the spring of 1953, the CIA and its Iranian operatives created an environment of domestic chaos. They kidnapped and murdered the Tehran police chief, a prominent Mosaddeq supporter, and bombed the home of a leading cleric. They then distributed Tudeh leaflets, declaring the imminent onset of an atheist republic.\(^70\) Next, their supporters within the Majles, led by Kashani, denounced Mosaddeq for his inability to maintain public order or resolve the economic and international crises. They instead declared their support for the Shah and demanded that Mosaddeq resign. Mosaddeq responded by denouncing his political adversaries and their foreign supporters and closing the Majles following a referendum in July. It was against this backdrop that the US convinced the Shah to join their plot. He too feared that Mosaddeq was now dependent on Tudeh support, and the Americans promised the Shah that, following the coup, Iran would receive large amounts of US aid and an equitable oil deal. The Shah was finally convinced of US support when Eisenhower publicly denounced Mosaddeq’s ties with Iranian Communists. The Shah issued Roosevelt two signed \textit{firmans} (royal decrees) on August 12, calling on Mosaddeq to resign and appointing Zahedi the new Prime Minister.\(^71\)

Armed with the \textit{firmans}, the coup plotters next moved to arrest Mosaddeq, his leading ministers, and his military chief of staff Taqi Riyahi at midnight on August 15. The plotters controlled most of the brigades stationed around Tehran, which would allow them to take control of Riyahi’s headquarters and sever all the phone lines in Tehran. Colonel Nehmatollah Nasiri led the Imperial Guard to Mosaddeq’s compound to arrest the Prime Minister, while Zahedi led

\(^{70}\) Abrahamian 2001, 204; Gasiorowski 1991, 73.

the tank convoy to capture the radio station and read the *firman* declaring him the new Prime Minister. A Tudeh informant in Imperial Guard, however, revealed the plot to the Tudeh party leadership, who in turn informed Mosaddeq. Riyahi sent military reinforcements to his home and intercepted Nasiri’s forces. Mosaddeq arrested Nasiri and declared the resignation decrees were invalid, since the Shah did not have the Constitutional authority to remove him. Riyahi arrested many of those involved in the plot, and Zahedi went into hiding. The Shah, fearing the worst, fled the country, first for Baghdad and then Rome.\(^2\)

Mosaddeq and his supporters appeared triumphant, but Roosevelt and the Rashidian brothers (who were not among those arrested) devised a back-up plan. Because the coup failed at the outset, most of the royalist brigades involved in the coup never exposed themselves. However, they were stationed on the outskirts of Tehran, and any move into the city would have aroused suspicion. Roosevelt, therefore, devised a plan in which Mosaddeq himself would invite these forces into the city. The Rashidian brothers paid Iranian gangs to pose as Tudeh members and hold violent anti-Shah and anti-Muslim demonstrations. These demonstrators attacked Western journalists, stoned mosques, and tore down statues of the Pahlavi Shahs. Actual Tudeh members then joined the demonstrations, not knowing these were staged. Ambassador Henderson, who was purposely abroad for the coup attempt, returned to Tehran and told Mosaddeq that continued US “support” was dependent on his ability to restore order. Mosaddeq appointed his nephew, General Mohammad Daftari, as military governor of Tehran, not knowing his nephew was among the coup plotters. Daftari then ordered the royalist brigades to come to Tehran, and on August 19, the coup recommenced. These brigades successfully took control of the radio station and cut the city phone lines. The hired gangs held large pro-Shah demonstrations and forced all those in public to carry pro-Shah banners or place Shah pictures in

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their cars. The police allowed these demonstrations to go on, but arrested any pro-Mosaddeq or Tudeh demonstrators. Once again, a corps of Imperial Guards attacked Mosaddeq’s compound, but this time they were successful. Royalist and Mosaddeq forces fought for nine hours until royalist forces finally broke through the compound. Mosaddeq initially escaped capture, but he surrendered to Zahedi the following day. Zahedi declared victory and announced the formation of a new Cabinet that very evening.73

Successor Regime Consolidation

Upon hearing the news of the coup’s success in Rome, the Shah proclaimed, “I knew it! I knew it! They love me! … I knew it all the time.”74 The Shah returned to Iran within days, and he and Zahedi immediately worked to consolidate their gains and suppress any further dissent. US support was critical to the regime’s success. Less than two weeks following the coup, Washington sent Tehran a series of aid packages totaling around $70 million to help recoup the losses from the two-year long embargo. The Shah and Zahedi used this aid to strengthen Iranian military and internal security forces in order to suppress any supporters of the deposed regime. Mosaddeq and his leading ministers were arrested and placed on trial. Many of his former supporters in the National Front, including those who had previously broken with him, rallied to his defense, and the former Prime Minister was sentenced to a three-year jail sentence and then indefinite house arrest. His colleagues, however, were not as fortunate. His foreign minister, who publicly advocated abolishing the monarchy after the Shah fled, was executed. Other ministers and pro-Mosaddeq officers were given life sentences, and numerous opposition leaders were arrested in the lead-up to the next Majles elections. The Tudeh party was the most heavily targeted and suppressed. Over two thousand Tudeh members were arrested that year, and the

following September, Iranian intelligence forces uncovered a large Tudeh network within the military. The discovery and destruction of this network effectively ended Tudeh’s influence in Iranian politics. The Majles elections, held in March 1954, were blatantly rigged, ensuring a much more subservient legislature. The same gangs who fostered chaos during the coup were again employed to intimidate voters during the upcoming Majles elections. US aid was critical in maintaining their services. Within a year of the August 1953 coup, the Pahlavi-Zahedi regime had crippled much of the opposition within Iran.75

Along with suppressing Mosaddeq’s supporters, Washington and the successor Zahedi also worked to accommodate those who still sought a more equitable oil settlement between Tehran and the AIOC. London hoped to reestablish Iranian-AIOC relations on the previously favorable terms, but, as one US official observed, “[I]t is fully and universally understood that the AIOC stink in Persia and any attempt to reinstate them, in whatever guise or form, is bound to fail.”76 The Shah and Zahedi were very fearful that any restoration of AIOC power would lead to the downfall of their regime, as happened under Razmara and Qavam. Kashani, despite his prior break with Mosaddeq and support for Zahedi, declared, “I am ready to die to preserve the honor and interest of Iran, and I ask all the Iranians who fought to nationalize our national resource to stop fighting each other and instead unite to defend our national sovereignty and honor.”77 Even the British charge d’affaires agreed that “there is [so] much latent support for Musaddiq throughout the country,” that restoring the former AIOC arrangement “would be courting disaster.”78 Washington ultimately negotiated a deal in which London recognized Iranian nationalization, and oil revenues would be divided equally between the NIOC and a

76 Quoted in Elm 1992, 310.
77 Quoted in Afkhami 2009, 198.
78 Quoted in Elm 1992, 315.
Consortium of international oil companies. The Consortium, however, would control all oil production, marketing, and pricing. The Consortium included the AIOC (renamed British Petroleum), Royal Shell Petroleum, and a collection of American oil companies. To compensate for their loss, British Petroleum received £25 million from Tehran and £200 million from the new Consortium members. The deal was largely unpopular in Iran, who viewed it another foreign-orchestrated deal that denied Iran full sovereignty over its own resources. Nevertheless, the Shah and Zahedi still argued that they succeeded where Mosaddeq had failed. The British acknowledged Iranian nationalization, lifted the embargo, and agreed to equal revenue-sharing. The newly elected Majles ratified the agreement, and the newly empowered security forces ensured no further public dissent.\textsuperscript{79}

Removing Mosaddeq did not alone guarantee compliance. The British also had to ensure that the successor regime had aligned interests and could competently govern. Had it not been for American involvement, it seems likely there would have been a repeat of the Razmara and Qavam debacles. Washington ensured interest alignment by both installing a more amenable government in Tehran and forcing London to compromise. Washington also provided the Pahlavi-Zahedi regime with sufficient funds and intelligence to consolidate power and suppress discontent. Britain ultimately lost its control over Iranian oil and its authority over Tehran. The Shah was glad to have the support of a new international patron, but like Reza Shah and Mosaddeq before him, he still sought an independent Iran.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 310-330; Afkhami 2009, 198-199; Pollack 2005, 75.
**US Regime Change in Iran, 1979**

This case study includes three sections. The first section provides an overview of the Iranian-US relationship following the 1953 coup, as the US established its authority over Iran, and the Shah sought to limit US access and influence within Iran to deter future indirect regime change attempts. The second section describes the origins and development of the Iranian Revolution, the Shah’s weak responses, and US progression from confidence in the Pahlavi regime’s resilience to its slowly growing awareness of the revolutionary momentum. The third section details US regime change plans, first for a Council of Notables of leading Iranian figures and then, following the Shah’s abdication and Khomeini’s imminent return, for an Iranian military coup organized by General Huyser. However, the Shah’s successful coup-proofing and the military’s fear of revolutionary success and vengeance ruined the military’s competence and resolve, respectively. Khomeini and the revolutionaries learned from the “Mosaddeq mistake” and purged Iran of all US and royalist supporters. Faced with the choice of military intervention or acquiescence to the revolutionary regime, the US chose the latter.

**Iran-US Relations**

The events of August 1953 once again demonstrated to Mohammad Reza Shah his regime’s vulnerability to both internal and external threats. Like his father, he lost his grip on power at the critical moment of trial. However, unlike his father, foreign powers were responsible for his salvation, rather than his downfall. Nevertheless, the Shah became intent on firmly establishing his authority internally and his security externally. He, therefore, solicited American patronage as a counter-balance to the historical Anglo-Soviet domination. The United States likewise wanted the Shah to strengthen his regime, though not because of any fealty to or admiration for the Shah personally, but rather to establish Iran as a bulwark against Communist
expansion. Since World War II, Washington had invested in developing Iranian security and military forces. Following the coup, the US intensified such efforts, financing more technical equipment and training. CIA operatives helped establish the new National Intelligence and Security Organization (SAVAK), which handled both domestic and foreign security and intelligence and ultimately became the Shah’s more important pillar of power. The US also worked to rebuild the Iranian economy, which had been devastated by the two-year British blockade. Within weeks of the August coup, the United States sent Iran over $70 million in aid to help recoup the loss. The US also brokered a final oil deal between Iran and Britain, which upheld Iranian oil nationalization and equally divided the profits between Iran and a consortium of oil companies. Though the settlement was generally unpopular within Iran, Iran now indisputably owned its own oilfields and received royalty fees, which ultimately came to 12.5% of total sales.\(^8^0\) By 1956, due to American aid and oil profits, the Iranian economy was steady and beginning to prosper.

The Eisenhower administration next moved to integrate Iran into its regional security network. Iran joined the Baghdad Pact, along with Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan, and Great Britain, though the United States was not itself a member. This pact was meant to serve as the “Northern Tier” buffer against Soviet expansion in the Middle East. Yet Egyptian President Gamel Nasser also felt threatened by the Baghdad Pact, believing (correctly) that it was also meant as a guard against growing Arab nationalism.\(^8^1\) In late October 1956, Great Britain, France, and Israel launched a joint invasion of Egypt to depose Nasser and take control of the Suez Canal and Sinai Peninsula. London and Paris chose not to inform Washington about their military plans beforehand, since the Eisenhower administration was openly opposed to such action.

\(^8^0\) Gasiorowski 1991, 89-92, 114-118; Pollack 2005, 74-75.
\(^8^1\) Indeed, as one scholar notes, “[The Baghdad] pact had an exceptional array of enemies—Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, France, and the Soviet Union.” Kyle 2001, 98.
Washington indeed reacted harshly to the invasion, putting monetary sanctions on Great Britain until they relented.\textsuperscript{82} British capitulation in the Suez War confirmed the United States as the dominant foreign power in the Middle East.

In March 1957, the US issued the Eisenhower Doctrine, which declared that US would become more directly involved in deterring Communism in the Middle East, instead of deferring to the British. A nationalist coup in Baghdad in July 1958 and subsequent Iraqi withdrawal from the Baghdad Pact further upended American Middle East policy. This illustrated the growing threat of Arab nationalism and strengthened the American commitment to Iran. The US negotiated a more direct bilateral security agreement with Iran, in which Iran received even more American military aid. In 1958 alone, Iran received $104 million in American aid. In return, the US established military bases in northern Iran to more directly spy on the Soviet Union. Iran ultimately hosted the largest US military mission in the world.\textsuperscript{83}

\textit{American Efforts for Iranian Change and Reform}

Yet increased commitment to Iran also increased American concerns about Iran. American officials had consistently urged the Shah to focus on internal reforms and development, but he instead preferred to focus on building his domestic and foreign security forces. The Shah was singularly intent on firmly establishing his internal authority and external security. US officials, however, were convinced that such policies were making Iran once again ripe for revolution.\textsuperscript{84} Ironically, the successful coup in Iraq confirmed both the Shah and US officials in their respective beliefs. The Shah was further convinced he needed to guard his regime against internal threats, while the US believed reforms were needed to quell domestic

\textsuperscript{82} Kunz 1991.

\textsuperscript{83} Gasiorowski 1991, 110-112, 121-122; Palmer 1992, 72-81; Pollack 2005, 76.

\textsuperscript{84} Elizabeth Saunders labels Eisenhower an “externally focused” leader, but his administration clearly believed that reform in Iran was necessary for US security.
dissent. American officials, therefore, began considering alternative options for leadership in Tehran. The Shah had already demonstrated his fecklessness during the 1953 coup, and many in Eisenhower administration considered him to be “weak, vacillating, vainglorious, and callow.”

US officials let it be known that they were amenable to a military coup against the Shah, though unlike in 1953, they took no active steps to encourage or organize one. In early 1958, General Valiollah Qarani, head of Iranian army intelligence, organized a coup with different segments of the military, disaffected members of the middle class, and former National Front members. Their plan was not to remove the Shah, but rather transform the government into a more genuine constitutional monarchy. They planned to restore the Majles’ authority, promote individual liberties, and enact needed electoral reforms and anti-corruption measures. Qarani and his associates had several contacts with the American embassy and CIA officials in Iran and made them aware of their plans. These officials did not explicitly encourage these plans, but they did not discourage them either, nor did they alert the Shah about the impending coup. In an interview with US scholar Mark Gasiorowski, one CIA officer admitted that the decision to not inform the Shah about the plot constituted de facto American approval. The Shah, however, learned of the plot and arrested those involved a few days prior to the intended coup date. He later learned that American officials were aware of the plot, but chose not to inform him. This further confirmed the Shah’s suspicions concerning his powerful international patron and contributed to his insatiable need for internal and external invulnerability.

The new Kennedy administration, inaugurated in January 1961, was even more intent on pushing for reforms in Iran. In response, the Shah launched the “White Revolution,” a campaign to accelerate economic modernization and political reforms. After strong American urging, he

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85 Pollack 2005, 77.
87 Gasiorowski 1993.
appointed as Prime Minister the reformist Ali Amini, who had close ties to the American government following his service as ambassador to Washington. Though the US was not pushing for full regime change, US policymakers’ experience with Amini convinced them that he was a more competent leader who would enact US-favored reforms. Amini introduced a radical land reform measure, which met with immediate opposition from the landowner-dominated Majles. Islamic clerics likewise opposed his measures expanding women’s rights. The Shah used the unrest as an excuse to dismiss Amini the following year, fearing that he was another Mosaddeq but with American support. Nevertheless, the Shah also sought to accommodate the US and therefore enacted moderate versions of US-favored reforms through Cabinet decrees. These reforms alienated the Shah’s power base amongst the large landowners and clerics, making him even more dependent on his security forces to maintain order. Riots and demonstrations broke out in June 1963 throughout Iran to protest these reforms, led by Shi’ite cleric Ruhollah Khomeini. Iranian security forces arrested Khomeini and brutally suppressed the demonstrations, with casualty estimates ranging from 300 – 3,000 killed. In November, Kennedy was assassinated, and his successor Lyndon Johnson returned US emphasis to military aid rather than domestic reform.88

Iran: The Independent “Pillar”

The 1963 riots confirmed again for the Shah the two great lessons he learned from his father’s downfall in 1941 and his own near downfall in 1953: maintain the strength and loyalty of the military and prevent any rival from taking an active leadership role.89 He blamed Washington for pushing for reckless reforms that created domestic unrest. The US caused further problems for the Pahlavi regime following the ratification of a status of force agreement

(SOFA) in 1964. This included an extraterritoriality clause, declaring that American citizens could only be tried in American courts. For many Iranians, this was an affront to their sovereignty and dignity. Khomeini, freed from prison, denounced the agreement as having “reduced the Iranian people to a level lower than that of an American dog!” He was again arrested and this time forced into exile. Khomeini thus became the stubborn, indignant symbol of Iranian opposition to the Pahlavi regime and to American influence.

Despite popular perceptions of the Shah as a willing American lackey, he actively worked to reduce US authority within Iran. Fearful of another Qarani or Amini, he marginalized American-trained advisors and “surround[ed] himself with yes-men [and] … winnowed out any political figure who might teach him unpleasant truths.” He also greatly limited US connections and intelligence within Iran. He replaced the SAVAK’s CIA advisors with those from the Israeli Mossad. He further insisted that joint operations between SAVAK and the CIA be strictly foreign-related. Any intelligence gathering done within Iran would be solely done by SAVAK, who would then pass on any pertinent information to the CIA. This information, however, was often purposefully erroneous. Finally, the Shah established absolute control over the military. He rewarded military officers with high salaries, pensions, quality medical care, and good housing. The Shah also maintained personal control over promotions and military assignments. He encouraged personal rivalries among officers, making their promotions completely dependent on his good will. He demoted or gave poor assignments to those he considered overly independent, and he instructed SAVAK to monitor military officers to prevent

90 Quoted in Pollack 2005, 94.
91 Ibid., 93-94; Sick 1985, 10-11.
92 Rubin 1980, 113-114.
any future coups. All of these measures made his regime more secure internally, but proved devastating when the regime faced widespread popular dissent.

Several events in 1967-68 dramatically changed the Iranian-American relationship. 1967 was the final year of American aid to Iran, as Iran was no longer officially considered a developing country. This change was done at the behest of the Shah, who wanted Iran to be recognized as a regional power and not a second-tier dependent. The Six Day War in June 1967 marked a significant shift in Middle Eastern balance of power, as Israel scored a series of resounding victories over its Arab neighbors and took control of the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. It further demonstrated the apparently unending volatility of the region and the importance of supporting amicable regimes. The Tet Offensive in February 1968 made clear the limits of American power and began a period of retrenchment in American foreign policy. The United States now sought to limit its global commitments, not only in Southeast Asia but throughout the world. That year the British adopted a similar but far more drastic policy of abandoning all of their bases “east of Suez” (except Hong Kong). These included several outposts on the Arabian Peninsula, which guarded the Persian Gulf. These places would now become independent countries, and the United States and the Shah feared they would be unstable targets for Arab nationalism and Marxist infiltration. Finally, in November, Richard Nixon was elected President. Nixon had built a strong personal relationship with the Shah when Vice President during the Eisenhower administration. Now, he and his new National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, planned to make the Shah’s Iran the pillar of American Middle East foreign policy.

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95 Pollack 2005, 95.
96 Palmer 1992, 82-84.
98 Sick 1985, 7-8.
Upon taking office, Nixon and Kissinger adopted a new foreign policy, dubbed the Nixon Doctrine, in which the United States would depend on local allies to provide regional security and stability. In the Middle East, the obvious choice was Iran. Because of prevailing anti-Persian sentiment in the Arab world, Saudi Arabia was included with Iran as the “Twin Pillars” of stability in the Middle East. Iran, however, was the more dominant country.\textsuperscript{99} Unlike previous administrations, which supported the Shah’s regime but had notably derisive views of the Shah personally, Nixon and Kissinger held the Shah in high personal regard. Kissinger declared the Shah to be “that rarest of leaders, and unconditional ally[.] … He could have leaned toward us but taken our protection for granted, and striven, as had other leaders, to pick up whatever loose change could be found by manipulating the rivalry of the superpowers for short-term ends. Instead, the Shah chose friendship with the United States.”\textsuperscript{100} Nixon sent a directive to the Defense Department, allowing the Shah to purchase whatever military hardware he preferred, short of nuclear weapons. This reversed the policy of the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations, which all sought to stem the Shah’s voracious military appetite.\textsuperscript{101} The Shah also requested that the US limit its Iranian contacts to those either in SAVAK or the foreign ministry. Now that he was in more a powerful position, the Shah moved to protect himself against any future American attempts at regime change through coup coordination. Nixon agreed and ordered US officials within Iran to limit their contacts to those approved by the Pahlavi regime. Thus, in the years preceding the Iranian Revolution, US intelligence gathering was at its lowest mark since World War II. Even Kissinger later acknowledged that the Shah was “excessively, even morbidly, suspicious of attempts to diminish his authority.”\textsuperscript{102} Yet,
because of the Nixon administration’s acquiescence to the Shah’s request, the CIA no longer monitored Tudeh or had contacts with National Front and other opposition groups. The US, therefore, missed the growing discontent within Iran, the growing importance of the mosque networks, and Khomeini’s increased influence among the Iranian population.\(^{103}\)

To pay for the most advanced military hardware and recoup the deficit created by the loss of American aid, the Shah convinced the members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to demand that the oil companies increase the oil prices. In January 1973, the Shah took full control of oil production within Iran, nullifying the twenty-year settlement arbitrated by the United States following the August 1953 coup. The Shah followed this up by increasing both oil production and prices, made possible by the Arab oil embargo following the October “Yom Kippur” War. The Shah did not take part in the embargo, but took full advantage of it. Iranian oil profits went from $790 million in 1970 to $1.6 billion in 1972 to $17.8 billion in 1975.\(^{104}\) The shockwaves created by the oil crisis caused the greatest global recession since World War II and demonstrated the financial coercive power of the Middle Eastern regimes. Furthermore, unlike the Arab regimes, the Shah still sold Iranian oil to the United States and Europe, highlighting Iran’s vital importance.

Nevertheless, the Shah was spending much of Iran’s oil profits on American military hardware, which helped mitigate the US trade deficit. The October War further fed the Shah’s mania for the most advanced weaponry, as he witnessed the military power of a Soviet-equipped Arab coalition and Israeli dependence on eleventh-hour American military aid.\(^{105}\) Just as Iranian oil profits skyrocketed during this period, so too did Iranian expenditures on American-made

\(^{104}\) Gasiorowski 1991, 102-103.
\(^{105}\) Rubin 1980, 141.
arms: from $470 million (1972) to $2.2 billion (1973) to $4.3 billion (1974). Against the warnings of both American and Iranian advisors, the Shah purchased hardware too technologically advanced for the Iranian military (and in some cases, even the American military). Opponents of the Shah’s regime accused the US of purposely selling Iran excess hardware, so that US companies could line their pockets with the petrodollars the US itself spent on Iranian oil. The drastic increase in US businessmen and technical experts inside Iran only served to validate these claims.

These policy greatly exacerbated existing structural problems in the Iranian economy and society. The policies adopted during the White Revolution favored urban industrialization over rural development, causing many Iranian peasants abandon their farms and stream into the cities. This exodus severely damaged Iranian agricultural production, which ultimately made Iran even more dependent on oil revenues. Yet oil prices began to drop once the embargo ended, which led to an economic downturn. Official corruption also reached extravagant heights, as government officials pocketed large amounts of oil revenues and extracted bribes from weapons manufacturers and other international corporations. This further increased wealth disparity between the upper and “new” middle classes on the one hand and the lower and “traditional” middle classes on the other. The massive influx of peasants into urban centers made this disparity more visible and dangerous, as these peasants left rural poverty only to experience urban poverty, while executives and bureaucrats extravagantly displayed their ill-gotten gains. The height of this new extravagance was the Shah’s Persepolis gala in August 1971, celebrating the 2,500 year-anniversary of the coronation of Cyrus the Great. The Shah spent an estimated $2 billion on an event held largely for international audiences rather than Iranian. Indeed, few

107 Ibid., 69-71; Pollack 2005, 106-110; Rubin 1980, 139-140, 158-167.
Iranians were even invited to the affair. At the gala, the Shah also announced the replacement of the Islamic calendar with the “Iranian” calendar, beginning at Cyrus’ coronation. Many Iranians started to express their anger through terrorist attacks, which only made the Shah more dependent of SAVAK repression and terror. By 1976, even many within the Pahlavi regime and the (now) Ford administration recognized the need for some significant changes, even if there was reticence about what those changes should be and how far they should go.\textsuperscript{109}

**Iranian Revolutionary Crisis**

Both the election of Jimmy Carter as US President and the Shah’s growing recognition that the current system was untenable led the Shah to institute a series of moderate reforms in February 1977. He freed hundreds of political prisoners, eased some of the censorship laws, and allowed the formation of some opposition parties. Much of the Iranian population attributed these policies to pressure from the new Carter administration. They, therefore, pressed for even more significant reforms. However, by the end of the year, as the Shah became more confident about his relationship with Carter, he backed away from further reforms. His regime also sought to defame Khomeini, who was able to smuggle taped sermons from exile in Iraq into neighboring Iran. In January 1978, an Iranian newspaper published an anonymous article accusing Khomeini of, among many things, being a British spy and a homosexual. This sparked large protests and rioting in his home city of Qom, which in turn brought harsh repression and up to seventy dead. Shiite tradition dictates that public mourning should occur forty days following a death. Thus, in mid-February, there were widespread displays of mourning throughout Qom commemorating January’s deaths, which led to further protests, further rioting, further crackdowns, and further deaths. Thus began a cycle of fortieth day protests and demonstrations that spread throughout

\textsuperscript{109} Pollack 2005, 97-100; Rubin 1980, 169, 188; Sick 1985, 17-18.
Iran throughout the first half of 1978. In June, the Shah sought to appease the protestors by implementing more reforms. He dismissed SAVAK head General Nasiri (who twenty-five years prior tried to arrest Mosaddeq in the failed coup attempt), banned pornographic movies deemed offensive by clerics, lightened anti-inflation measures that hurt the *bazaaris*, and promised free Majles elections in June 1979. Though most were skeptical about whether free elections would generally be held, many of the demonstrations dissipated through June and July. Ayatollah Shariatmadari, the leading Shia cleric in Iran, was more moderate than Khomeini and called on Iranians to forego the next round of fortieth-day mourning demonstrations.\(^{110}\)

Demonstrations continued throughout the summer, but were smaller than those during the preceding this months. This changed following a fire at the Rex Cinema movie theater on August 19, in which nearly four hundred people were trapped inside and died. The government and the Islamists each blamed the other for the fire. The government claimed that this was part of the Islamists’ campaign against blasphemous entertainment, as Islamists had previously burned down several theaters. However, the Islamists claimed that SAVAK set the fire to defame the Islamists. In this instance, SAVAK’s reputation for being all-powerful and completely ruthless worked to its disadvantage, as Iranians refused to believe such a tragedy could happen without SAVAK’s complicity. Khomeini and his supporters called for a new round of countrywide demonstrations and the abdication of the Shah. The Shah responded by appointing Jafar Sharif-Emami the new Prime Minister of a new “national reconciliation” government. Sharif-Emami was the grandson of an ayatollah and thus had close ties to the religious community. However, he was also a former President of the Majles with a reputation for corruption. Nevertheless, Sharif-Emami immediately enacted a series of policies to placate the Islamists. He further lifted censorship, established a ministry of religious affairs, released

many leading clerics from prison, shut down many casinos and brothels, and returned to the Islamic calendar. The Prime Minister even offered to allow Khomeini to return if he abandoned his radicalism.

At this point, the Iranian opposition still remained divided between radicals led by Khomeini and moderates led by Shariatmadari and the National Front leadership. The moderates responded positively to Sharif-Emami’s appointment and reforms, but they demanded further reforms and a sustained commitment to holding free elections the following year. Khomeini, however, declared these concessions to simply be a ruse to defuse revolutionary fervor. Both moderates and radicals continued to hold large demonstrations to keep the pressure on for more reforms. Nevertheless, despite the potential to split the revolutionary movement by accommodating the moderates, the Shah refused to send a credible signal that he would hold elections or significantly relinquish his control over power. Yet, he was also reticent about ordering a full military crackdown, as he had previously done during the 1963 riots against the White Revolution and as his military advisors pled with him to do now. On September 7, Khomeini’s supporters held a march that included half a million people, thousands of whom were wearing the white shrouds of martyrdom and chanting of “Death to the Shah” and “Khomeini is our leader.” That day, the Shah declared martial law and announced a daytime curfew of 6:00am. For reasons still unclear, this announcement was not officially broadcast, so the following morning 5,000 protesters gathered in Jaleh Square in Tehran. The military, seeking to demonstrate that the stick of martial law was a serious as the carrots of political concessions, attacked the crowds with lethal force, killing hundreds in Jaleh Square and throughout Tehran. Black Friday, as the day came to be known, marked a major turning point
for the revolution, as it essentially nullified the moderate opposition and united them behind Khomeini.\textsuperscript{111}

The Shah responded to Khomeini’s heightened profile by asking Baghdad to expel him from Iraq. Khomeini ultimately settled in Paris, and, with the assistance of Westernized Iranian revolutionaries already living there, became the international symbol of Iranian resistance to the Shah’s regime. Khomeini also changed tactics from holding large demonstrations, which caused violent confrontations with the military, to calling for general strikes throughout Iran. Blue-collar and white-collar workers, including those in the government and NIOC, went on strike, demanding higher wages, dissolution of SAVAK, the end of martial law, and Khomeini’s return. On October 17-18, all Iranian workers went on a two-day strike. On October 31, at Khomeini’s behest, oil workers went on a permanent strike. The moderate opposition also lined up behind Khomeini. Prime Minister Sharif-Emami, with the Shah’s blessing, approached National Front leaders about joining the government under a more genuine constitutional monarchy. These leaders, however, traveled to Paris to consult with Khomeini directly before deciding. Khomeini rejected any participation with the Pahlavi regime and declared that anyone who accepted the regime’s offer would have no place in a post-monarchical regime. From Paris, the National Front leaders rejected any compromise with the Shah and instead declared their support for a new government based on Islamic principles. Ayatollah Shariatmadari also announced his alignment with Khomeini, stating publicly, “Our demands are the same.” Khomeini successfully stigmatized anyone who compromised with the Pahlavi regime as traitors to the revolution.\textsuperscript{112}

The Shah finally abandoned his conciliatory strategy and, on November 7, announced the formation of a military government. Many expected the Shah to appoint as the new Prime


\textsuperscript{112} Hiro 1985, 78-83, quote on p. 81; Afkhami 2009, 482-485; Rubin 1980, 219-222.
Minister the hardline General Gholam Oveissi, who earned the moniker “the Butcher of Tehran” by brutally suppressing demonstrators previously in 1963 and more recently in the Jaleh Square Massacre. However, the Shah instead appointed Army Chief of Staff Gholamreza Azhari as Prime Minister, considered a much milder person than Oveissi. Other high-ranking generals, including Azhari, begged the Shah to reconsider and appoint Oveissi; the Shah, however, would not relent. NSC aide Gary Sick noted, “If the Shah was primarily concerned about avoiding a possible military takeover or the emergence of a military rival to himself, Azhari was the perfect choice. If he was, instead, intent on installing a tough and vigorous military government that would restore some measure of discipline to the country, Azhari was an unlikely selection.”

Even as the Shah recognized that his country was slipping into chaos, he was extremely reluctant to give meaningful authority to any potential rival. Yet, the Shah was also genuinely averse to depending solely on brute military force to achieve domestic peace. He wanted to avoid another bloodbath, as had happened in 1963 and at Jaleh Square. In his speech announcing the formation of a military government, the Shah declared, “I have heard the message of the revolution,” and promised reforms once order was restored. He followed up by ordering the arrest of high-ranking members of the government and military who were considered especially corrupt and/or repressive. These moves signaled weakness to both the opposition and to the Shah's supporters. Nevertheless, the revolutionaries were initially reticent about holding large demonstrations in the wake of the new military government. Yet, once it became clear that this government would be as vacillating as the previous civilian governments, the demonstrations once again swept Iran, and by December, it was evident to nearly everyone that the Pahlavi regime would not survive long.

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113 Sick 1985, 93.
Carter Administration Response

Many in both Iran and the United States believed the election of Jimmy Carter as President in November 1976 would bring great change to the Iranian-American relationship. Yet Carter’s election brought with it false fears and unmet promises. Carter campaigned on a platform of rejecting the Nixon-Kissinger realpolitik, which included delegating security responsibilities to anti-Communist authoritarian governments regardless of their human rights record. Carter instead advocated the limitation of global weapons sales and the promotion of universal human rights as the center of American foreign policy.115 His election was an apparent endorsement of this change in policy. The Shah, hoping to pre-empt Carter, instituted a series of reforms soon after the new President took office. Carter, however, following the advice of leading State Department officials and prominent Shah supporters like David and Nelson Rockefeller, largely left existing Iranian policy in place. Carter made all overseas weapons sales dependent on direct White House approval, but nevertheless allowed the Iranian purchase of Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) airplanes. This approval came despite a drawn-out, highly publicized Congressional debate over the human rights abuses of the Pahlavi regime. The disparity between Carter’s campaign rhetoric and realized policy was best demonstrated by remarks Carter made while visiting Tehran on New Year’s Eve 1977. In a now-infamous toast, Carter declared with haunting irony that the Shah was “an island of stability in a turbulent corner of the world.” Carter’s campaign promises and actual policy sent strongly mixed signals on what American policy towards Iran would be.116

115 Vance 1983, 316.
Some claimed the inconsistency between Carter’s campaign rhetoric and actual policy fueled the radicalism and anti-Americanism of the oncoming Iranian Revolution.\textsuperscript{117} When the Shah first visited the Carter White House in November 1977, he was met by large demonstrations from Iranian students, which ultimately required the use of tear gas against them. The Shah’s opponents in Iran took this as a signal of Carter’s disapproval of the Shah’s policies, believing that Carter officials personally organized such demonstrations. It was, therefore, all the more disappointing when Carter made no real moves to push the Shah to enact reforms, but rather effusively praised the Shah both on this occasion and later in Tehran during his New Year’s toast. Members of the National Front reached out to Carter officials soon after he took office, but were rebuffed. A prominent Iranian ayatollah later commented, “We didn’t expect Carter to defend the Shah, for he is a religious man who has raised the slogan of defending human rights. How can Carter, the devout Christian, defend the Shah?”\textsuperscript{118} The anti-Americanism of the Iranian Revolution was, therefore, in many ways targeted against Carter personally, with many images of him being hanged in effigy because of his perceived hypocrisy.\textsuperscript{119}

Nonetheless, supporters of the Pahlavi regime blamed Carter for pushing the Shah to make hasty reforms and then not supporting him sufficiently during his time of need. Kissinger, while agreeing that “a country should avoid revolutions by making timely concessions,” nevertheless accused the Carter administration of “force-feeding an internal programme” on the Shah and “placating our human rights advocates in the middle of a crisis.”\textsuperscript{120} Senator Barry Goldwater, a former Republican Presidential candidate, accused the administration of “pull[ing]
the rug out from under the Shah.” Nixon, who attended the Shah’s funeral in Cairo in July 1980, declared that the Carter administration had treated the Shah shamefully. Finally, the Shah himself in his memoirs accused the Carter administration of advocating a “heedless, pell-mell rush toward anarchy, rather than toward democracy, [which] could not but lead to disaster.”

Yet, while Carter was more outwardly reticent than Nixon and Kissinger about providing the Shah with advance military hardware, there was little change in policy or supportive rhetoric once Carter took office. Indeed, the Carter administration adhered to the same hands-off policy regarding intelligence gathering in Iran, and the intelligence agencies offered the same effusive praise of the Pahlavi regime, even as Iran descended into revolutionary tumult. In August 1978, the CIA reported that “Iran is not in a revolutionary or even pre-revolutionary situation.” The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) likewise reported that the Shah would remain in power for at least another decade. Iran had experienced occasional revolutionary uproars, most recently during the White Revolution, but the Pahlavi regime had demonstrated its endurance. None in the Carter administration, neither the State Department, the intelligence agencies, nor the US embassy in Tehran, alerted the White House to any danger. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance recalled, “We were reassured by the judgment of the ambassador, the experts in the State Department, the CIA, and other agencies and foreign governments that even though [the Shah] might be required to make political compromises that might dilute his power, the Shah was not in serious danger.”

Nevertheless, the Shah felt paralyzed by the lack of guidance from his

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122 D. Harris 2004, 370.
123 Pahlavi 1980, 170.
124 Quoted in Moens 1991, 217.
international patron, despite his decade-long efforts to limit US influence and intelligence-gathering in Iran. He complained that Carter never personally called to encourage him or give instructions until December, lamenting, “Is it any wonder that I felt increasingly isolated and cut off from my Western friends? What were they really thinking, what did they want—for Iran and of me? I was never told. I never knew.”

The Carter administration only began to recognize the problem following the Jaleh Square Massacre in September. Sick reports that, contrary to the Shah’s account, Carter called the Shah the Sunday after Black Friday to express his condolences and his support. The Shah, in turn, expressed his determination to continue his program of restoring order and instituting reforms. The turmoil in Iran did not receive significant attention in Washington until US Ambassador William Sullivan sent a long telegram on November 9 from Tehran, titled “Thinking the Unthinkable.” Sullivan subtly advocated for abandoning the Shah and supporting a moderate coalition government of the military and clerics. He viewed the military and clerics as the two strongest pillars of the Iranian society, with the Shah being supported by the former. However, Azhari’s failure to bring stability lead Sullivan to conclude that the military would soon have to abandon the Shah and make cause with the clerics. He further assumed that the senior military would leave with the Shah, and that the younger military officers were moderate and Western-leaning. Sullivan, therefore, argued that Khomeini would be forced to placate the pro-Western military by reaching out to moderate civilians in forming to new government.

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126 Pahlavi 1980, 161-162.
127 Sick 1985, 51.
Moreover, he suggested that Khomeini would be content to adopt a passive, “Gandhi-like” role, acting as the spiritual conscience of the new Islamic republic, but having no specific role.128

Sullivan’s telegram was met with universal opposition in Washington, but it nevertheless forced policymakers to confront the turmoil in Iran and develop an assertive policy. This exposed a split within the administration on how to respond to the Iranian crisis. Those in the State Department, including Vance, Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher, and Undersecretary David Newsom, believed the Shah needed to enact more significant political reforms and form an inclusive civilian coalition government. They argued that only a genuine power-sharing relationship could save the Pahlavi regime.129 National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, along with Defense Secretary Harold Brown and Energy Secretary James Schlesinger (who previously served as Defense Secretary under President Nixon), instead advocated sending the Shah a clear message that the United States supported and preferred the full use of military force to restore order. A few days prior to Sullivan’s telegram, Brzezinski called the Shah to confirm US support for whatever course he chose to pursue. Brzezinski understood better than the Shah that the US was not well-positioned to influence events in Iran. If the Shah used extreme force to restore order, the State Department may be unhappy, but Washington would accept it as a fait accompli.130 Nevertheless, the Shah refused to allow the military to fully enforce martial law. The Shah’s reluctance was partially due to fear that the majority conscript army would eventually rebel if forced to indefinitely attack their fellow countrymen. Yet the Shah was also personally averse to ruling solely by force, nor did he want to bequeath such a regime to his son. Following his abdication, the Shah wrote:

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128 Ibid., 81-85; W. Sullivan 1981, 201-203. In his memoir synopsis of the telegram, Sullivan excludes his assessment that Khomeini would take a “Gandhi-like” role, perhaps because of how incorrect this prediction proved to be. He was, however, by no means alone in wrongly predicting Khomeini’s future intentions.


Since leaving my country I have often [been] asked, and indeed wondered myself, whether stronger action on my part could have saved my throne and my country. Certainly my generals urged me often enough to use force to re-establish law and order in the streets. … [But that would] not resolve my fundamental dilemma—a sovereign may not save his throne by shedding his countrymen’s blood. A dictator can, for he acts in the name of ideology and believes it must triumph no matter what the cost. But a sovereign is not a dictator. He cannot break the alliance that exists between him and his people. A dictator has nothing to bestow, for power resides in him alone. A sovereign is given a crown and must bequeath it to the next generation. This is my intention.\(^\text{131}\)

The Shah’s reluctance to use force was matched by his reluctance to make any genuine power-sharing concessions. Vance complained that “the Shah’s concessions since August, too little, too late, had not shaken the religious and political opposition’s determination to end the monarchy.”\(^\text{132}\) Even as his regime was teetering, the Shah refused devolve genuine political authority (re: control of the military) to civilian control. Regardless, the opposition was largely united in its refusal to cooperate with the Pahlavi regime. Finally accepting that the Shah had neither the will to fight nor the ability to compromise, the Carter administration now moved to identify and develop a reliable successor regime.

**Regime Change Decision, Strategy, and Failure**

A gaffe by President Carter at an informal press breakfast on December 7, 1978 captured US ambivalence throughout the crisis and its slow drift towards a regime change policy. When a reporter asked the President whether he believed the Shah would survive the crisis, Carter responded, “I don’t know. I hope so. … We primarily want an absence of violence and bloodshed, and stability. We personally prefer that the Shah maintain a major role in government, but that is a decision for the Iranian people to make.” This was a surprising

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\(^{131}\) Pahlavi 1980, 167.  
\(^{132}\) Vance 1983, 331.
statement, considering the Iranian people had never had a say in whether the Shah ruled. The State Department issued a “clarification” of Carter’s remark, but it left a strong impression in the US and Iran that the Carter administration was looking at other options beyond the Pahlavi regime. In fact, throughout December, the Carter administration came to an eventual consensus that if the United States hoped to maintain any beneficial relations with Iran, the Shah would have to go. This began with a proposal by former Undersecretary of State George Ball to establish an Iranian “Council of Notables” as an interim government and culminated in the appointment of National Front member Shapour Bakhtiar as Prime Minister. Following Bakhtiar’s appointment, Washington sent General Robert “Dutch” Huyser to Tehran to assess and shore up the cohesion and loyalty of the Iranian military. However, this also proved to be “too little, too late.” The Shah had personally crafted a military leadership that did not know how to function without him. Once he abdicated and fled Iran, the military leadership became feckless and refused to support Bakhtiar as they had the Shah. A week after Khomeini’s triumphant return on February 2, the military declared its neutrality and let the nascent Bakhtiar regime fall. With that ended US efforts to maintain a client regime in Tehran.

_Council of Notables_

Brzezinski later noted that during December, “the issue in Washington gradually ceased being how to help the Shah save himself but became instead how to save Iran even without the Shah.” The debate continued within the Carter administration on the best path to saving Iran. The State Department still favored a solution in which the Shah ceded governing authority to a moderate coalition government, which included clerics and Islamists. State Department officials began to adopt Sullivan’s position that if the US supported regime change sooner rather than

\[133\] D. Harris 2004, 120-121; Sick 1985, 109-110, quote on p. 110.
later, it was more likely to influence the interest alignment of the successor regime. This thinking was facilitated by moderate signaling from the Khomeini camp. Khomeini gained great international recognition following his move to Paris, but he was still unfamiliar and uncomfortable with communicating with Western audiences. He was, however, greatly assisted by Western-educated aides, both in Paris and in the United States. They cast a much more moderate vision for an Islamic Republic, which was still ill-defined. They refuted claims that women would be denied equal rights and downplayed Khomeini’s statements that Islamists would be willing to shed and spill “torrents of blood” to overthrow the Shah. These aides played into Western antipathy for the Shah’s regime and Western hope that it would become a liberalized republic.\footnote{D. Harris 2004, 106-110; Sick 1985, 111-113.} This encouraged those within the Carter administration that hoped relations with a moderate Islamist regime were possible. Brzezinski, Brown, and Schlesinger, however, continued to favor a solution in which the military formed a government that would first restore order and then become “civilianized,” as had happened in Turkey and Brazil.\footnote{Brzezinski 1983, 371-373; Moens 1992, 223-224.}

To break the impasse, Brzezinski asked former Undersecretary of State George Ball, who served under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, to review the Iranian situation and provide policy recommendations. After discussions with Iranian experts inside and outside of government, Ball recommended the Shah appoint a “Council of Notables” of prominent figures throughout different segments of Iranian society. This Council would govern Iran through a transition period as it decided the structure and composition of a future Iranian regime. The Council of Notables would, in essence, serve as both an interim government and a constitutional convention. Ball’s proposal was regime change in all but name. Such a council would allow the US to gather information about all of the major prominent figures within Iranian society and possibly
influence the composition of the successor regime. The Council of Notables would, therefore, allow the United States to be involved in the successor selection process. Nevertheless, both Brzezinski and Sullivan opposed the idea.\footnote{Brzezinski later expressed his mistake in inviting Ball, candidly admitting that “in selecting Ball, I violated a basic rule of bureaucratic tactics: one should never obtain the services of an ‘impartial’ outside consultant regarding an issue one feels strongly about without first making certain in advance that one knows the likely contents of the advice.” Brzezinski 1983, 370-371.} They recognized that such a Council would likely call for the Shah’s abdication, which seems to have been Ball’s intent. They doubted the Shah would approve a plan that would likely result in his forced abdication. Sullivan believed any viable plan would require military support, which Ball’s plan was unlikely to receive. The “Council of Notables” plan was ultimately rejected, but it nevertheless was the first serious regime change proposal in the Carter administration and gave voice to the grave concerns within Washington over the dire situation in Iran.\footnote{Brzezinski 1983, 372-373; Sick 1985, 107-109, 114-117; Vance 1983, 332-333.}

Soon after this, Prime Minister Azhari had a heart attack, grimly encapsulating the weakness and failure of the military government. On December 28, Carter sent the Shah a telegram laying out Tehran’s strategic options and stating that the Shah’s vacillation had created an untenable situation, particularly regarding military morale. The President stated that United States’ highest preference was for the Shah to appoint and properly empower “a civilian government … that is moderate and can work with the United States and with the Shah and maintain order[.]” If this was not possible, then the Shah should appoint “a firm military government which would end disorder, violence, and bloodshed.” If this was not possible either, then the Shah should ultimately consider abdicating and appointing a Regency Council to govern in his son’s name. The Shah responded by officially dismissing the military government and appointing National Front leader Shakpour Bakhtiar as the Prime Minister of a new civilian
government. All sides recognized that Bakhtiar could not successfully regain order if the Shah remained in power. The US, therefore, shifted towards this new reality.  

_The Huyser Mission_

Following Bakhtiar’s appointment, Washington sought to reassure the Iranian military that it still intended to maintain close ties and encouraged the military to support the new government. Therefore, the Pentagon recommended sending General Robert “Dutch” Huyser to Iran to assess the strength and cohesion of the military and encourage it to support Bakhtiar. Washington was certain about military interest alignment, but US policymakers were concerned about the military’s willingness to support the Bakhtiar government, accommodate the moderate opposition, and sufficiently suppress the more radical elements. Washington greatly feared that Khomeini was merely a front for Soviet infiltration. As with Mosaddeq twenty-five years prior, US policymakers believed Khomeini would come to power as part of a left-leaning coalition. They pointed to his support among leftists groups affiliated with the Tudeh Party, the Soviet Union, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The Shah long held this belief, referring to the supposed Communist-Khomeini collusion as the “unholy alliance of Red and Black.” Both the Shah and Washington refused to believe the opposition’s organizational sophistication was not foreign-inspired.  

General Huyser was the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of US European Command. In this capacity, he made several trips to allies in North Africa and the Middle East, including Iran. He was, therefore, the natural choice to serve as a trusted envoy to Tehran, given his long familiarity and comfort with the Iranian military and the Shah personally. In early 1978, Huyser led a mission to Tehran to assist the Shah in reorganizing his forces into a better command

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140 Huyser 1986, 36, 176; Pahlavi 1980, 162.
control system. He noted from his previous work with the Shah that “one of his principal requirements in designing a command control system was that he should be able to maintain absolute control. He wanted a foolproof system to protect him from a coup.”\textsuperscript{141} The Shah’s desperate need to maintain absolute control continued throughout that tumultuous year, even as it gravely threatened his survival. Even after appointing Bakhtiar Prime Minister and openly contemplating “an extended vacation,” the Shah still refused to relinquish any real power. Bakhtiar sought to demonstrate the credibility of this new government by appointing General Fereidoun Jam as Minister of War. Jam was renowned for having resigned as Chief of Staff many years prior after opposing the Shah’s repressive policies. Jam, who lived in self-imposed exile in London, only agreed to rejoin the government if the Shah ceded him full authority over the military. Once again, the Shah refused to relinquish military control.\textsuperscript{142} Bakhtiar’s government seemed imperiled from the beginning, and it was Huyser’s mission to convince the military and the Shah himself to support Bakhtiar unequivocally. It would prove to be a very difficult and ultimately unsuccessful task.

The goal of the Huyser mission was first and foremost to convince the military to fully support the Bakhtiar government. However, if Bakhtiar proved unable to gain widespread support, Huyser should prepare the military to seize power and retake control. Huyser was eager to avoid bloodshed, but he accepted that “five or ten thousand lives now might be the price of avoiding a million deaths later.”\textsuperscript{143} Nonetheless, the military ultimately failed to sufficiently support Bakhtiar or launch a coup against Khomeini. The failure of the Huyser mission was perhaps over-determined and came from three overlapping problems. First, the military simply did not trust that Bakhtiar would be able to hold onto power if the Shah went into exile, making

\textsuperscript{141} Huyser 1986, 6-8, quote on 8.  
\textsuperscript{142} Sick 1985, 130-131.  
\textsuperscript{143} Huyser 1986, 100.
Bakhtiar’s downfall a self-fulfilling prophecy. The personal authority of the Shah was the legitimating force of the regime, fragile though it now was. The military believed the Shah’s departure would rob the regime of whatever legitimacy it had left, fully throwing the country into civil war and leaving Iran vulnerable to Soviet attack. Even Mosaddeq, at the height of his power, recognized the Shah’s role as head of the Iranian nation and refused to demand his abdication. Most of the senior officers, therefore, fluctuated between going into exile with the Shah and launching a coup as soon as he left. Huyser worked hard to dissuade them from doing either. Concerning the former, he appealed to their sense of duty and patriotism. It would be dereliction of duty to flee their home and allow Iran to fall into chaos and Soviet domination. Concerning the latter, Huyser quickly recognized that the Iranian military was logistically incapable of launching a coup under their supposed time frame. A coup involves taking control of vital government centers and resource supplies. When Huyser pressed them on how they would specifically go about launching a coup, they demonstrated their ignorance concerning the logistics involved.\textsuperscript{144} The Shah had so successfully protected his regime against a coup, that it was invulnerable to a coup that would have likely saved his regime. Most of the officers made it clear that if they did launch a coup following the Shah’s departure, it would be done in hopes that he would come back once order was restored. His efforts at coup-proofing ironically made his exile that much more likely and permanent.

The Shah’s coup-proofing created the second problem for the Huyser mission: lack of trust, cohesion, and competence amongst the senior officer leadership. The Shah worked assiduously to keep the military divided, so as to prevent either a domestic or foreign-inspired coup. Huyser saw firsthand from his previous work with the Shah that he was obsessed with coup-proofing his regime. Iranian officers rarely met together, but instead met with the Shah

\begin{footnote}{\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 57.}\end{footnote}
individually or in very small groups. The Shah used this to foster competition and suspicion amongst the officers and personal loyalty from each of the officers to him alone. Despite his prior experience with the Iranian military, Huyser was surprised to find how rarely the senior leadership met together, even those who were of the same branch. He spent much of his time in Tehran encouraging officers to make collective decisions on military planning, in the event that they did have to launch a coup. These efforts were further hampered by the incompetence of the most senior leadership. The Shah made promotion dependent on officer subservience not competence. General Jam resigned as Chief of Staff rather than acquiesce to the Shah’s demands for continued repression. The Shah consistently bypassed senior Air Force General Toufanian for promotion to Chief of Staff or Minister of War, despite and likely because of his dynamism and intelligence. He instead promoted General Abbas Gharabaghi, who proved to be very weak and vacillating. Huyser felt bound by the Shah’s choice, so he worked hard to encourage Gharabaghi to provide leadership, in terms of bringing the senior officers together and working with Bakhtiar. Gharabaghi, however, was one of the leading skeptics concerning Bakhtiar’s ability to maintain control, and this skepticism further undermined Bakhtiar’s ties to the military. In mid-January, Gharabaghi abruptly resigned after a confrontation with Bakhtiar. Huyser believed that that provided a good opportunity for stronger leadership, but to his surprise and frustration, none of the other senior officers wanted to be Chief of Staff. Instead, they convinced Gharabaghi to return. After this incident, Huyser became convinced that Gharabaghi could not provide sufficient leadership and was even more worried that no other senior officers were willing to fill that vacuum.

145 Ibid., passim.  
147 Huyser 1986, 157-159. Toufanian and General Rabii seemed willing to take on the post, but the other officers were so indignant about Gharabaghi not resigning that Toufanian and Rabii likewise insisted that he not reconsider.
Third, Huyser failed to reach out to the civilian leadership or any officers beyond the most senior. In fact, during his month-long stay in Tehran, he never met personally with Prime Minister Bakhtiar, even as he was encouraging the senior military leadership to work closely with him. Part of the reason he did not meet with Bakhtiar was to encourage the military leadership to do so. He did not want to serve as a go-between for the civilian and military leadership, but rather wanted them to develop a strong working relationship. Furthermore, Huyser believed Ambassador Sullivan’s constant correspondence with Bakhtiar was sufficient communication. Upon arriving in Tehran, Huyser made an arrangement with Sullivan, in which Huyser would focus on military relations while Sullivan would focus on civilian. This ultimately proved problematic, as Sullivan rarely met with Bakhtiar, but rather was intent on establishing contacts with the Khomeini-led coalition. Only later, when he learned how much he and Sullivan were working at cross purposes, did he recognize the folly of this policy.\textsuperscript{148} Moreover, Huyser had very few private meetings (if any at all) with any officers outside the highest leadership. Neither his memoirs nor his reports back to Washington include comments concerning meetings with more junior officers. Instead, he mostly relied on the reports of the very senior officers and occasional reviews to get a better understanding of morale and capabilities. From his personal review of Iranian soldiers, he determined that most were supporting the incumbent regime, and though some might defect to Khomeini, he felt confident most would remain loyal. This determination however did not come from personal, private interviews with lower-level officials. In this way, Huyser unintentionally perpetuated the Shah’s policy of isolating American officials from vital intelligence concerning the ground conditions within Iran.

\textsuperscript{148}Ibid., 290-291.
This does not mean that if one, or even all, of these factors had changed, the revolution would not have succeeded. By January 1979, the groundswell for Khomeini’s return was immense. By the end of the month, Khomeini’s power and authority were such that the greatest threat to the Bakhtiar government was whether Khomeini personally declared it to be illegitimate. This was while Khomeini was still in Paris with no specific military or paramilitary forces aligned with him.\textsuperscript{149} However, a military internally cohesive and united behind Bakhtiar would have presented Khomeini with a much different political landscape upon his return on February 3, 1979. A strong show of force and unity could have convinced Khomeini, who was clearly a shrewd political operator, to work with the regime and break from his leftist allies. Following the Jaleh Square massacre, Khomeini was intent on avoiding a direct conflict with the military. He held fast to the belief that Iranian soldiers, free from the Shah’s influence, would not fire on fellow Iranian Shi’ites.\textsuperscript{150} Bakhtiar in turn showed his willingness to compromise with Khomeini by abolishing SAVAK and withdrawing Iran from the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), the successor to the defunct Baghdad Pact.\textsuperscript{151} The US was also willing to give Iran some latitude in terms of its relations, as long as this did not mean a turn towards the Soviet Union or neutralism. If the military remained united behind Bakhtiar, it is not clear what Khomeini’s reaction would have been.

Instead, the Iranian military capitulated within a week of Khomeini’s return. Huyser had returned to the United States a few days prior, after receiving numerous death threats and being accused of being a “Vice Regent” by \textit{Pravda}, the main Soviet newspaper.\textsuperscript{152} Upon his return, Khomeini announced the formation of a new government under Mehdi Bazargan. Bazargan was

\begin{footnotes}
\item[149] Ibid., 115, 179; Sick 1985, 147-148.
\item[151] Hiro 1985, 91; Huyser 1986, 276.
\item[152] Huyser 1986, \textit{passim}.
\end{footnotes}
a member of Mosaddeq’s government with close ties to both the National Front and pro-Khomeini clerics.\textsuperscript{153} Droves of Iranian soldiers and airmen defected to Khomeini’s new regime and took control of numerous army barracks and police stations, providing the revolutionaries with several army caches. On February 11, the military announced it would remain neutral in any struggle over political control. Gharabaghi entered into secret negotiations with Khomeini forces, and many of the senior general were later arrested, executed, or forced into exile.\textsuperscript{154}

In a meeting of the Special Coordination Committee (SCC), leading Carter officials met to determine what American policy should be.\textsuperscript{155} The withdrawal of the military convinced most of them, including Christopher, Newsom, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Charles Duncan, that the US should reach out to the new Khomeini-Bazargan regime and encourage the military to officially support it. While they held no illusions about fully co-opting the new regime, they still believed normal relations could be possible if the US made a good-will gesture. Their main goal was the expulsion of leftist groups, supported by the Soviet Union and the PLO, from the Khomeini coalition. Brzezinski, however, still favored one last effort at a military coup. He blamed the military withdrawal on Huyser’s precipitous exit and advocated for sending him back to Tehran. Christopher, Duncan, and Newsom all opposed this decision, believing military fragmentation was too severe for effective action. Joint Chiefs Chairman David Jones suggested the military adopt a “southern strategy,” taking control of the southern oilfields and thereby negotiate from a position of strength. This was similar to British intervention plans in 1941 and 1952. Newsom, however, feared that this or any move by the military would cause a further anti-American backlash, and that the “southern strategy” would lead to Soviet intervention and

\textsuperscript{153} Hiro 1985, 104.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 91-93; Huyser 1986, 282-285; Ward 2009, 224.
\textsuperscript{155} The following information comes from “The Special Coordination Committee, February 9, 1979,” Brzezinski Materials: Agency Files, Carter Presidential Library, February 9, 1979.
partition. Brzezinski, nevertheless, was insistent that the US act like a “big power” and send Huyser back to organize a coup. The other SCC members partially relented and agreed to call Huyser to get his assessment of the situation in Iran and gauge whether he would be willing to return to Tehran. Huyser stated that the military option and his return to Tehran were dependent on unequivocal US military, financial, and political support for the Iranian military. Huyser recognized that this would be too costly for the Carter administration, given the recent wounds of Vietnam and the Shah’s general unpopularity amongst the American public. He, therefore, recommended reaching out to Bazargan, claiming that Bazargan understood the leftist-PLO threat and would be receptive to US overtures. Brzezinski was finally swayed by Huyser’s counsel and agreed that acceptance to the Khomeini-Bazargan regime was the only policy option available.

Though Iran certainly did not pose an existential threat to the United States, Huyser’s threat assessment seemed to be influenced by domestic constraints, since power clearly lay with Khomeini not Bazargan. Nevertheless, Khomeini was still an unknown entity and had demonstrated no fealty to the Soviet Union. Moreover, religious ideologues were traditionally anti-communist, despite the supposed “Red-Black coalition.” So there appeared to be hope for some accommodation between Washington and the new regime in Tehran, even if the US had to abandon its patron relationship with Iran.

*Iranian and US Post-Pahlavi Strategies*

Upon taking power, Khomeini sought to reassure domestic and international audiences that though Iran would now be an Islamic republic, a heretofore unknown regime type, it would still be inclusive and open to the outside world. The selection of Bazargan as the first Prime Minister was intended to be reassuring, as was the choice of Dr. Ibrahim Yazdi as Foreign
Minister. Yazdi formerly lived in Houston, TX and served as Khomeini’s leading spokesman in the US during Khomeini’s time in exile. Bazargan and Yazdi made clear to US officials that Iranian-US relations would be quite different than during the Pahlavi regime. Nevertheless, they were intent on maintaining normalized relations with the United States. Yazdi told those in Washington that Iran would pursue foreign policy of strict nonalignment, reminding them that Iran had no desire to return to the Russian sphere. He even suggested that Iran might still slightly favor the US, since, according to the new Foreign Minister, “At least Americans believe in God.”

Khomeini quietly supported these efforts. When leftist revolutionaries seized the US embassy two weeks after Khomeini’s return, the Ayatollah and other clerics condemned the attack and ordered the revolutionaries to withdraw. Nevertheless, Khomeini also moved to deter any future coup attempts by purging the military. Outside the monarchy itself, the military had the closest ties to the United States of any Iranian institution. It was, therefore, vital to purge it of any officers who might collaborate with the US to organize another coup plot. Those who defected to Khomeini’s side prior to February 11 were largely spared, but many others were targeted. Most of the high-ranking officers were either arrested, executed, assassinated, or went into exile. In addition, the regime established a rival revolutionary military organ, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard or Pasdaran. Pasdaran’s mission was to monitor the regular military and ensure the triumph of the Islamist wing of the revolution against both leftist groups and royalist counter-revolutionaries. Military purges lasted throughout much of the first half of 1979, until it became evident that it was having a severely detrimental effect on morale. Khomeini called for a

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156 Hiro 1985, 105; Sick 1985, 54.
157 Quoted in Sick 1985, 144.
halt to the purges and offered amnesty to all officers and soldiers unless convicted of murder or torture. Nevertheless, independent tribunals, executions, and assassinations continued.159

The Iranian strategy of combining international moderate signaling with internal purges ended after the Carter administration allowed the Shah to come to the US for medical treatment. The Shah had secretly suffered from cancer for many years. Now living in exile, he sought to come to the US to receive proper treatment. US officials originally demurred, recognizing this would likely disrupt the fragile relations with the Khomeini regime and put Americans living in Iran at risk. However, just as happened at the beginning of the Carter’s term, lobbying by Kissinger, the Rockefellers, and other prominent Shah supporters caused a change in policy. In October, Carter granted the Shah’s request to receive medical care in the US, and on October 22, he arrived in New York.160 Iranians were furious that the US was, from their perspective, harboring a fugitive, and they feared that this was the beginning of another 1953-style coup attempt. Khomeini abandoned his policy of moderate international signaling, condemning those who sought cordial relations with the US as “American-loving rotten brains [who] must be purged from the nation.”161 Bazargan and Yazdi were personally singled out after meeting with Brzezinski at a conference in Algiers. On November 4, a group of Iranian students seized the US embassy in Tehran. The embassy had served as the base of operations for the 1953 coup, and the Iranians believed the Shah’s invitation to the United States was a pretext for another foreign intervention.162 Rather than condemning the embassy seizure, as he had done in February, Khomeini lauded the students and gave them his public support. Bazargan and Yazdi resigned in

161 Quoted in Sick 1985, 204.
protest, and the Islamists reinitiated their purge of the military with much greater intensity, now targeting more junior officers as well.

The Carter administration initially adopted a conciliatory position following the advent of the Islamic Republic, since it lacked options for indirect regime change. US officials recognized that the intimate hierarchical relationship with Iran was likely over, but they still hoped that Islamist Iran would remain a bulwark against Soviet expansionism in the Middle East. Bazargan and Yazdi’s appointments and moderate statements reassured Washington, despite the anti-American purges taking place in Iran. However, Khomeini’s endorsement of the embassy seizure and hostage-taking and Bazargan and Yazdi’s subsequent resignations shattered the fragile Iranian-US relationship. Ten days after the embassy seizure, the Carter administration froze all Iranian assets that were either in the United States or were under the control of US banks. This included large amounts of Iranian assets that were not actually deposited in American banks, but nevertheless required transfers through banks in New York. The US ultimately froze an estimated $12 billion in Iranian assets over the fourteen-month period of the hostage crisis. Deputy Treasury Secretary Robert Carswell commented, “This was by far the largest blocking of assets in U.S. history, and by far the most successful.”163 Washington also put an embargo on all Iranian imports and US exports to Iran, save for food, medicine, and clothing. Moscow vetoed a US resolution in the UN that called for international sanctions against Iran, but many American allies reluctantly joined in the embargo, including Great Britain, France, Japan, and West Germany.164

Despite these coercive measures, Iran refused to release the hostages. Frustrated and facing intense domestic pressure, Carter ordered a risky military mission in April 1980 to rescue

164 Ibid., 253; Emery 2010.
the hostages. The rescue mission was a spectacular failure, which embarrassed the United States internationally, turned public opinion against Carter domestically, and further inflamed Iranian coup fears. Tehran became even more intransigent and rejected the American claim that the military mission was simply a hostage rescue, believing that the Americans planned to connect with counter-revolutionary forces within the military. Iranian fears were not completely ill-founded. The new deeper round of purges revealed several coup plots, the most intricate of which was organized by Bakhtiar and Oveissi from Iraq. Iranian regime change fears began to shift from Washington to the Ba’athist regime in Baghdad. The Islamist regime worked relentlessly to stamp out any further opposition within the military and from leftist revolutionary groups who split with the Islamists.\(^{165}\) The confrontation between Tehran and Baghdad would exploded into a full-scale war in September (discussed further in the next chapter), but Iran was handicapped by the US embargo on Iranian military supply parts. Iran bought nearly all of its military hardware from its former American patron, and the need to resupply finally gave the sanctions sufficient bite. It still took several months to negotiate the release of the American hostages and the Iranian assets, because it required negotiations with several independent US banks. In January 1981, immediately after Ronald Reagan succeeded Jimmy Carter as President, Iran finally released the hostages, and the US released the assets.\(^{166}\) The US now had to adopt a much more defensive stance against its erstwhile ally, while Iran had to confront a more immediate existential threat: Saddam Hussein’s Ba’athist regime in Iraq. Nevertheless, the Islamists’ purge of US sympathizers had reduced American strategic options in Iran and secured the new regime against US attempts at indirectly imposed regime change.


\(^{166}\) Carswell 1981.
Conclusion

Regime change success and failure in 1953 and 1979, respectively, depended greatly on the reliability of the successor regime. In both cases, there were amicable relationships between the foreign imposer and the target regimes. However, because of Iranian learning, Tehran was better able to deter regime change in 1979 than in 1953. In 1953, despite the great amount of hostility within Iran toward Great Britain and the AIOC, the British used their long-established relationships with critical domestic constituencies to foster regime change. Their blockade and embargo hurt the Iranian economy, and many Iranian domestic groups blamed Mosaddeq for the ongoing crisis. Yet, Mosaddeq felt confident in his uncompromising stance, because he received clear signals of domestic support after the Iranian people demanded his reappointment. Indeed, he more feared that any compromise with the British might political marginalization or even assassination, as happened to previous Prime Ministers. Mosaddeq also believed that the US opposed British obstinacy and supported a negotiated settlement. However, when US policymakers decided that deposing Mosaddeq was necessary to achieve a settlement and avoid possible Soviet encroachment, they did not signal to Mosaddeq this change of heart. Nor did they need to, since coup coordination was a low-cost regime change method. Britain’s Iranian connections and US promise of aid and a favorable oil settlement allowed the Western powers to garner support from the Shah and major parts of the Iranian military and even members of Mosaddeq’s own coalition to overthrow Mosaddeq and compose a reliable successor regime. The coup’s success ended the crisis between Iran and Great Britain, but also allowed the US to supplant Britain as Iran’s international patron. It also once again demonstrated to Iranians, from the Shah on down, the destabilizing influence of foreign powers.
The lessons learned from 1953 led to a series of ironic strategic choices that ultimately derailed American coup plans in 1979 and led to the advent of the first Islamic republic. The Shah recognized that the close relationship between the United States and domestic constituencies made him vulnerable to foreign-imposed regime change, so he diligently worked to limit US influence and intelligence-gathering in Iran and structured that military so that it was solely beholden to him. Nonetheless, the Shah continued to believe that Washington held greater authority in his country than even his own regime. Therefore, the Shah instituted some liberal reforms soon after Carter took office to pre-empt American interference. Yet, the Shah’s efforts to minimize American influence in Iran were such that the United States had little real leverage to force reforms. Moreover, these reforms whetted the Iranian public’s appetite for further reforms, which ultimately snowballed into countrywide demonstrations and rioting. The Shah expected US guidance on how to confront the revolutionary unrest in his country and even believed the US was somehow involved in fomenting the unrest. Yet, due to the Shah’s own policies, the US intelligence within Iran was so poor that US officials in Tehran and Washington were unaware of the extent of the problem until it was too late. The Shah and his US supporters faulted Carter administration for failing to properly respond to signals suggesting the Shah’s imminent downfall. Yet, many of these criticisms came from those most responsible for limiting US intelligence within Iran: the Shah himself and members of the Nixon and Ford administrations. Ultimately, the US failed to receive the signals that the Shah’s regime was in trouble, because the Shah worked diligently and successfully to limit US authority over his country. Thus, despite having a close relationship with Iran, the US was ill-positioned to defend its client or impose a reliable successor regime in the ultimate time of crisis.
Chapter Five
Saddam Survives: Overthrow Failure in the Persian Gulf War

Saddam is still there. He is like a cancer. I hope the Iraqi people or the Iraqi army just take matters into their own hands and put him out. Otherwise how can we negotiate with Iraq while he is there? ... [I]t will be impossible for us to do anything constructive with Iraq while he is there.

President George H.W. Bush\textsuperscript{1}

Ironically, while Saddam was wrong in thinking that America’s Vietnam and Lebanon hangovers would save him from a war, the painful lessons learned by U.S. policy makers from those conflicts may have actually saved Saddam himself from capture.

Secretary of State James Baker\textsuperscript{2}

Introduction

Regime change against Iraq was an implicit US goal in the Persian Gulf War of 1991. Saddam Hussein’s paramount desire was to establish Iraqi hegemony in the Arab world, which ran counter to the American long-time strategy of preventing any one power from dominating the Middle East.\textsuperscript{3} Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, was part of Saddam’s hegemonic mission in the Middle East. Had he been successful, Saddam would have controlled the second and fourth largest proven oil reserves in the world.\textsuperscript{4} President Bush told King Hussein of Jordan soon after the Iraqi invasion, “I’m not going to allow that man to control two-thirds of the oil of the [Persian] Gulf. This is a man who is hostile to the United States, and his hands are on our lifeline.”\textsuperscript{5} Prior to the Kuwait invasion, Saddam had shown himself at odds with US interests by developing a nuclear weapons program and decrying Western efforts to peacefully broker an

\textsuperscript{2} Baker 1995, 437.
\textsuperscript{3} Hudson 1996; Lustick 1997.
\textsuperscript{4} According to the amount recorded in July 1990. Lieber 1993, 89.
\textsuperscript{5} Quoted in Heikal 1992, 251. Iraqi and Kuwait oil together only constituted 40% of Persian Gulf oil.
Arab-Israeli settlement. Most alarmingly, he explicitly threatened to launch a nuclear attack against Israel, arguing that a settlement with Israel was only possible through military confrontation. His invasion of Kuwait and unremitting obstinacy throughout the subsequent crisis left no further doubt. Coalition policymakers became convinced that peace in the Middle East was not possible while Saddam Hussein remained in power in Baghdad.

The United States and Iraq long had an adversarial relationship, despite their temporary “alliance of convenience” during the latter part of the Iran-Iraq War. The theory, therefore, would predict that the United States would be unable to impose regime change indirectly, because Washington had little intelligence about and no meaningful connections to potential members of an Iraqi reliable successor regime. Imposing regime change, therefore, would require bearing the concomitant costs of a long-term occupation to identify and establish a reliable successor regime, while US forces governed Iraq during the interim. The Bush administration was well aware that such a plan would ignite fierce opposition in the Arab world and amongst the American public, to say nothing of its own aversion to a foreign occupation. The Arab Coalition members were very wary of directly targeting another Arab leader and feared that Saddam’s downfall would lead to a permanent US presence in the Middle East. The Bush administration, in turn, was very wary of alienating its Arab partners and feared that overthrowing Saddam would lead the US into a Vietnam-like quagmire and further destabilize the Middle East. The failure of coercive diplomacy prior to the commencement of Operation Desert Storm convinced Bush that Saddam was inherently aggressive and untrustworthy, but the great distance between the United States and Iraq and Iraqi military preponderance prevented

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Iraq from posing an existential threat to the United States. The theory, therefore, would predict that the US would not seek regime change against Iraq.

Nevertheless, Bush and most other Coalition leaders still feared that Saddam would remain a constant regional threat while he remained in power. Therefore, the US attempted to get around the agency problems caused by the prior adversarial relationship by adopting a regime change strategy of using military force and coercion to impose regime change indirectly. The United States heavily bombed Baghdad, with the aim of coercing those in capital of overthrowing Saddam. The Coalition also targeted the Ba'athist leadership and coercive apparatus in Baghdad and the loyalist Republican Guards on the battlefield. This served the dual purpose of crippling Iraq’s authoritarian command structure and providing the opportunity for a military coup by the regular Iraqi military leadership. The Middle East Coalition members assured Bush that there was great dissatisfaction with Saddam within the military, due to the recent decade-long war with Iran that ultimately ended in a stalemate. The invasion of Kuwait was partially intended as a means of placating and occupying the Iraqi the enlarged Iraqi army and increasing the amount of revenue for further military patronage. The Middle East Coalition members believed another military defeat would trigger a coup that would bring to power a moderate military government like those of other US-aligned Middle East regimes, such as Egypt and Turkey.

Nonetheless, this regime change strategy failed for three major reasons. First, the Coalition did not actively coordinate with any potential members of a reliable successor regime actually inside Iraq. There is some evidence that Riyadh and Ankara were in contact with former

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military and Ba’athist officials in exile, but there was no evident coordination with anyone inside Baghdad who could actually perform the overthrow operation.\textsuperscript{10} Rather, the Coalition depended on assurances from their few contacts and their expectations of Iraqi behavior based on its history of perennial coups. Second, due to Iraq’s extensive coup history, Saddam was prepared for potential domestic unrest. Therefore, he withdrew Republican Guard forces from the Kuwaiti border to Baghdad, so they would be protected from the initial Coalition assault and could provide his regime with extra protection in the capital. Moreover, Saddam successfully co-opted and eliminated all likely members of a reliable successor regime. He initiated a series of purges prior to the Kuwaiti invasion and provided a series of payoffs following Iraqi defeat in Kuwait. Saddam, therefore, deterred any Baghdad-based attempts at regime change. Third, the Coalition was, in fact, successful in encouraging Iraqi uprisings against Saddam, but the uprisings came from Shia and Kurdish sectarian groups, who the Coalition did not consider reliable agents. Their victory would likely end in the destruction of the Iraqi state, the expansion of Iranian influence in Iraq and perhaps beyond, and the destabilization of the broader Middle East. This outcome would be completely against Coalition interests. The Coalition, therefore, remained neutral as Saddam’s Republican Guards brutally suppressed these uprisings. Regime change failed, however, because the Coalition’s preferred successors remained loyal to Saddam Hussein, and the Coalition did not prefer those who actually did rebel. The Coalition could not overcome either the agency problems created by the prior adversarial relationship or Saddam’s successful deterrence strategy of rival elimination. Despite the Bush administration’s efforts, the ultimate outcome conformed to the theory’s prediction. The UN, therefore, adopted more limited aims of weakening Iraq’s military strength, particularly by stripping it of its WMD programs.

\textsuperscript{10} Allawi 2007, 52; Heikal 1992, 317.
During the Persian Gulf crisis, there was another instance of foreign-imposed regime change, which provides a noteworthy shadow case: Iraqi regime change in Kuwait. Within days of conquering Kuwait, Baghdad established the Provisional Free Kuwaiti Government (PFKG) as a reliable successor regime and perhaps as a stalking horse for eventual annexation. Nevertheless, regime change could have been the permanent solution. The Arab League opposed the Iraqi conquest and annexation of Kuwait, but the League may have rallied around the PFKG to prevent Western interference and a wider regional conflict. Saddam was successful in providing an alternative successor, but ultimately failed because the Iraqis did not eliminate the incumbent. The Kuwaiti Emir and the ruling al-Sabah family survived capture and provided a more natural focal point for resistance to Iraq. The Arab regimes were unwilling to deny al-Sabah legitimacy, which provided an opening for greater international (i.e., American) involvement. So while Baghdad was successful operationally, regime change in Kuwait failed strategically. Yet, both Iraq’s initial success in Kuwait and the Coalition’s ultimate success in Kuwait were due to having available and reliable successor regimes. Had Iraqi forces successfully captured and presumably executed the al-Sabah family, there may have been a dramatically different outcome.\footnote{Iraqi forces killed the one Kuwaiti royal family member they successfully captured. Bush and Scowcroft 1998, 321; Heikal 1992, 195.} Kuwaiti regime change, thus, provides an interesting simultaneous shadow case to US/Coalition efforts at regime change in Iraq.

The chapter proceeds in four sections. The first section provides an account of Saddam Hussein’s political rise and consolidation of power, which included the elimination of his many rivals. I then chronicle the development of the Iraqi-US relationship during Saddam’s reign from Cold War hostility to the “alliance of convenience” during the Iran-Iraq War to the return of cooling relations due to rival bids for Middle East hegemony in the post-Cold War world. The
second section details the successive failures of US deterrence of Iraqi aggression towards Kuwait, Coalition compellence of Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, and Iraqi deterrence of Coalition formation and attack. This section also includes an account of Iraq’s brief regime change effort in Kuwait, which had it been successful may have deterred further military action. The third section describes the Coalition success of Operation Desert Storm in expelling Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the failure to encourage a Baghdad-based military coup. The Coalition failed to coordinate with its preferred successor regime, and Saddam successfully co-opted those the Coalition would have preferred. When sectarian groups engaged in an undesired uprising against Saddam, Coalition forces stood aside while Saddam’s loyalist forces brutally defeated the rebels. The fourth section provides a summary of the case study argument and evidence.

**Iraqi-US Relations**

Prior to the Persian Gulf War, relations between the United States and Ba’athist Iraq were generally adversarial but rarely involved direct confrontation. In the Middle East, the United States supported Israel’s existence and the Shah of Iran’s regional ambitions, both of which were anathema to Saddam Hussein. Yet, Washington and Baghdad both opposed the Islamic theocratic regime that supplanted the Shah in 1979. However, when Iraq invaded Iran in September 1980, this did not immediately cause the United States and Iraq to enter into an “alliance of convenience,” as some suggest.\(^\text{12}\) American policy during most of their decade-long war was akin to what John Mearsheimer calls “bloodletting,” passively encouraging both sides to fight while largely remaining neutral.\(^\text{13}\) Nevertheless, the US and Iraq did not develop a close

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\(^\text{12}\) Jentleson 1982; Resnick 2011.  
\(^\text{13}\) Mearsheimer 2001, 154-155. This is different from what Mearsheimer calls “baiting,” in which a country actively instigates a war between two other countries. Ibid., 153-154. The US is sometimes accused of encouraging Saddam to attack Iran, but Hal Brands (2011) convincingly debunks this claim.
relationship, and the inner workings of Iraqi governance still remained opaque to the US. Only in the final years of the war, following the Iran-contra fiasco and imminent Iraqi collapse, did the US actively intercede to forestall Iranian victory. This brief period of cooperation did not provide Washington with any significant contacts with Iraqi constituencies would be helpful in indirectly imposing regime change.

Following the war, Washington sought closer relations with Baghdad as part of the US’s post-Cold War “new world order.” Saddam, however, envisioned a new Baghdad-led order in the Middle East, which included the expulsion of Western influence and preparation for an eventual military confrontation with Israel. It also included financial support from the wealthy Arab oil states of the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, which Saddam claimed he fought to protect during the Iranian War. When Kuwait balked at cancelling Iraq’s war debt and providing further loans, this caused increasing tension between the two countries, leading to the Iraqi invasion and conquest of Kuwait in August 1990 and the first major challenge to the new world order.

Saddam’s Iraq

The US-Iraqi relationship had long been adversarial, dating from the July 1958 revolution in Baghdad. The pro-Western King Faisal II and Prime Minister Nuri el-Said were overthrown, executed, and replaced by a pan-Arab, Communist-leaning military dictatorship. The United States and Great Britain briefly considered launching a military intervention to reverse this coup. However, given the difficulties of a likely long-term occupation and possible Soviet counter-intervention, they opted against it.¹⁴ The following decade saw the rise and fall of several regimes in Baghdad, each competing to be the most pan-Arab and anti-Western. In addition, there was continual Iraqi hostility towards the independent state of Kuwait. Kuwait was

¹⁴ Saunders 2010, 82-87.
previously a sheikhdom within the Basra province, which constitutes the southern portion of modern Iraq. When Britain designed the borders of modern Iraq and granted it independence in 1932, Kuwait was not included. Instead, Kuwait became an oil-rich British protectorate. This left Iraq almost completely cut off from the Persian Gulf. In June 1961, when Kuwait gained its independence, Iraqi President Abd al-Karim Qasim declared that Kuwait rightfully belonged to Iraq and deployed troops to the Kuwaiti border. Great Britain and Arab League states sent forces to Kuwait to deter an Iraqi attack. In 1963, the Ba’ath party successfully overthrew Qasim and agreed to recognize Kuwait’s independence. However, the Ba’athists were themselves overthrown a few months later, and when they returned to power in July 1968, they too adopted a more aggressive stance towards Kuwait, though without explicitly denying its right to exist.15

One of the leaders of the new Ba’athist regime was Saddam Hussein. Within months of the Ba’athist takeover, Saddam was named Vice President of Iraq and the head of the Mukhabarat, the internal security forces. Saddam’s paramount goal was to end Baghdad’s decade of coups and consolidate Ba’ath control over Iraq. Upon taking power, the Ba’athists immediately purged the government of all non-Ba’athists and Iraqi society of all rival political organizations. Saddam’s stated aim was to ensure “there is no chance for anyone who disagrees with us to jump on a couple of tanks and overthrow the government.”16 The Ba’ath party and the Mukhabarat were composed mainly of Sunni Arabs, with its leadership composed almost entirely of the Tikriti clan, including President Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr and Vice President Saddam Hussein. These ethnic-religious bonds helped maintain unity within the party and government.17 They next focused on breaking the military’s hold on power by purging, exiling,

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17 Tikriti dominance within the government became so glaring that in 1976 the government banned any public figures from using names that revealed their tribal or geographic affiliation. Quinlivan 1999, 139.
and/or executing all the leading officers in the Cabinet. The Ba’athists also established political commissars within the military to monitor their activities. Saddam was the leading force behind all these moves.\textsuperscript{18}

Having solidified Ba’athist control over power, Saddam next moved to consolidate his own position. President al-Bakr largely deferred to Saddam regarding policymaking. In June 1972, Saddam nationalized the Iraq Petroleum Company, a consortium of several Western companies that controlled all oil production and pricing in Iraq. The following year, the Arab members of the Oil and Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) announced an increase in oil prices and an oil embargo on Western countries, in retaliation for American support for Israel during the October Yom Kippur War. Oil prices went from $3.10/barrel to $11.65/barrel by the end of 1973. Even after the embargo was lifted, prices remained high, which fueled a major economic boom in Iraq. Saddam used this major influx of petro-dollars to build infrastructure, housing, and schools, provide subsidies for new industries, and develop an advanced patronage-welfare system. He successfully established a system in which “security services would provide the stick of compliance, and oil revenues, the carrot of Ba’ath-style socialism.”\textsuperscript{19} In June 1979, President al-Bakr chose to retire “for health reasons,” allowing Saddam to assume the Presidency. Both prior to and following his ascent to the Presidency, Saddam purged and executed all rival civilian leaders, including personal friends. Most infamously, Saddam ordered the immediate arrest of several Ba’athist officials during a televised conference of the senior leadership in July 1979, as his remaining loyalists cheered on. He then made these loyalists publicly participate in the deposed leaders’ executions, making them complicit in his bloody

\textsuperscript{19} Mackey 2002, 228.
consolidation of power. This sent a clear signal throughout Iraq about who now held absolute power in Baghdad.\textsuperscript{20}

During his decade-long rise to power, Saddam took control of Iraqi foreign policy as well. Internationally, Saddam’s goal was to make Baghdad the center of the Arab world. Most notably, this meant serving as the leading defender of the Palestinian cause and leading antagonist against Zionist oppression and Western imperialism. Most significant from the American standpoint, Saddam formed an official alliance with the Soviet Union in April 1972. Through Soviet support and the new oil windfall, Iraq was able from 1970 – 1975 to double its armed forces.\textsuperscript{21} The US responded by strengthening its ties with Iran. The Shah of Iran, with his long ties to the United States and close personal relationships with Nixon and Kissinger, was deemed the “pillar” of US policy in the Middle East and received a great amount of US military hardware and foreign policy deference.\textsuperscript{22} The Shah had long supported the ongoing Iraqi Kurdish insurgency to keep his western neighbor weak and distracted. Indeed, the Kurdish insurgency was instrumental in the consistent downfall of Iraqi regimes. At the Shah’s strong urging, the United States began funding the Kurdish rebellion in northern Iraq. Saddam publicly staked his reputation and political standing on permanently settling the Kurdish conflict.\textsuperscript{23} However, the Iranian and American support for the Kurds, including two Iranian military regiments, prevented Saddam from defeating the insurgency. Therefore, at an OPEC conference in Algiers in March 1975, Saddam offered to settle long-standing disputes with the Shah in exchange for halting all support for the Kurdish separatists. According to the Algiers Accords, Iraq renounced all claims to Khuzestan, a majority-Arab region within Iran, and agreed to adjust

\textsuperscript{20} Karsh and Rautsi 1991, 50-56, 113-116; Mackey 2002, 198-211, 228-234.
\textsuperscript{21} Karsh and Rautsi 1991, 75-79.
\textsuperscript{22} See Chapter 4.
\textsuperscript{23} Karsh and Rautsi 1991, 79-82; Mackey 2002, 222-224.
the Iran-Iraq border at Shatt al-Arab in Iran’s favor, despite being the main Iraqi access point to the Persian Gulf. In return, Iran immediately withdrew its support for the Kurdish separatists, as did the United States. Within weeks, Saddam’s forces crushed the Kurdish insurgency, but the US-backed Iran had clearly demonstrated its dominance in the Persian Gulf region.²⁴

**US-Iraq “Alliance of Convenience”?**

The Iranian Revolution changed Iraq-US relations, though not as quickly or as drastically as some suggest. The Carter administration originally hoped to maintain cordial and mutually beneficial relations, if not a close partnership, with the new regime in Tehran. However, the attack on the US embassy in Tehran in November 1979 and the subsequent year-long hostage crisis dashed any such hopes.²⁵ Saddam also initially greeted the Iranian Revolution with cautious optimism. He welcomed the downfall of the Shah, who imposed the humiliating settlement on him at Algiers. Yet, Saddam also feared the effects of theocratic revolutionary contagion, particularly on Iraq’s sizable Shia population.²⁶ Saddam therefore reached out to moderate elements in Iran’s new regime, such as Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan and Foreign Minister Ibrahim Yazdhi. He expected the elderly Ayatollah Khomeini to quickly fade into the background, as did many Iranian and foreign observers. Khomeini, however, maintained control over the revolution, ousted these moderate officials, and called for a similar revolution in Iraq. Iraqi Shia were especially receptive, given their shared faith and increasing disgruntlement with the Ba’athist regime. There were numerous border conflicts between Iran and Iraq, culminating in dual assassination attempts in April 1980 against Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz and Iranian Foreign Minister Sadeq Qotbzadeh. Saddam responded by brutally suppressing Shia

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²⁵ Yetiv 2008, 43-44.
²⁶ The onset of the Iranian Revolution may have been one reason he chose July 1979 to officially assume the Presidency, in order to fully consolidate control in the midst of foreign turmoil. Hiro 1989, 28-29; Karsh and Rautsi 1991, 108-109.
groups within Iraq and preparing for war against Iran. Saddam considered the Khomeini regime an existential threat to his hold on power, and he was further enticed by the prospect of gaining full control over Khuzestan and Shatt al-Arab. In a nationally broadcast speech in September 1980, Saddam physically tore up a copy of the Algiers Accords, declaring the agreement null and void. Five days later, Iraq attacked Iran, beginning the longest and second deadliest war of the twentieth century.\footnote{Gause 2010, 62-64; Hiro 1989, 34-39; Karsh and Rautsi 1991, 137-149; Mackey 2002, 249-251.}

For much of the war, the US supported each side, depending on their battle performance. The US offered some support to Iran during the initial Iraqi assault, despite intense US anger towards Iran over the ongoing hostage crisis. The US feared that Iranian collapse would encourage Soviet expansion into the Middle East, particularly in light the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. With a defeated Iran on its border, there was little standing between the Soviets and the Gulf states. The US sent warnings to both Iraq and the Soviet Union that it would neither tolerate the dismemberment of Iran or Soviet intervention therein. Beyond that, the United States adopted a policy of “benign neglect.” This was due both to limited American capabilities in the Persian Gulf region and Washington’s genuine ambivalence over the war’s outcome. The loss of Iran, the subsequent hostage crisis, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan all illustrated American weakness in the region. President Carter called for the creation of a Rapid Deployment Force for the Persian Gulf, in case the Soviets tried to take advantage of Iranian weakness.\footnote{Palmer 1992, 109; Yetiv 2008, 44-46, 50.} However, as long as Iran and Iraq remained in a stalemate and the Soviets remained outside Iran, Washington had little incentive to get involved. The US hostages were released from Iran in January 1981, and the war had surprisingly little effect on
global oil prices. The US further discouraged the Gulf states from providing Iraq with airfield use and Israel from covertly supplying Iran. Ultimately, Washington wanted and expected the war to end in a stalemate, as did most other international observers. As Dilip Hiro notes, “[S]talemate suited the US: two unlikeable regimes were battering each other, and in the process dividing the Arab world and diverting Arab attention from the Palestinian problem.”

However, despite Iranian disarray, “the Iraqi invasion,” according to Kenneth Pollack, “proved to be one of the most incompetent military operations of the twentieth century.” Beyond conquering Khuzestan and Shatt al-Arab, the Iraqis apparently gave little thought to further military plans or political aims. Saddam expected that an Iraqi invasion would touch off an Arab uprising in Khuzestan, which would spread throughout Iran and cause the downfall of the Islamic revolutionary regime. He, therefore, did not plan beyond October. Rather, the invasion temporarily ended infighting in Tehran and focused the Iranians on defeating the external enemy. Khomeini was able to quickly mobilize a new revolutionary army, alongside the official Iranian military, to confront the Iraqi forces. The Iraqis were further weakened by Shia mutinies and coup-plotting, whose disaffection from the Ba’athist regime was exacerbated by the military leadership’s glaring incompetence. By November 1980, Iran had effectively halted the Iraqi advance. In January 1981, Iran went on the offensive, and by the spring, Baghdad expressed support for a Saudi-initiated cease-fire, but Tehran rejected anything short of Saddam’s downfall.

31 Hiro 1989, 121. Senator Harry Truman advocated a similar policy towards Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union after the outbreak of war between the two in June 1941: “If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia, and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany, and that way we let them kill as many as possible.” Quoted in Mearsheimer 2001, 155.
32 Pollack 2005, 186.
33 Ibid., 186-188; Gause 2010, 64-67; Hiro 1989, 40-50.
The American position changed as Iranian victory appeared more likely. By June 1982, Iraqi forces had largely withdrawn from Iran, and Saddam once again sought a cease-fire. Tehran, however, again made clear that there would be no cease-fire while Saddam remained in power. Iranian forces then launched an offensive into Iraq, and while it was not as successful as Tehran hoped, it was enough to swing American sentiment towards Baghdad. In February, the Reagan administration removed Iraq from the list of state sponsors of terrorism, which allowed Washington to sell Iraq dual-use technology and provide export credits. Iraq received roughly $1 billion in credits to buy US agricultural goods from 1983-1984 alone.\textsuperscript{34} The US also encouraged its Arab and European allies to provide Iraq with military supplies, reversing its earlier policy. Through Saudi Arabia, the US also provided Iraq with satellite intelligence on Iranian positions. Finally, in November 1984, Iraq and the United States officially restored diplomatic relations, which were severed in 1967 following the Six Day War.\textsuperscript{35}

Despite the clear American ‘tilt’ toward Baghdad, US-Iraqi relations were relatively distant. The US refused to provide Iraq direct military aid, due to its official neutral stance. There was also significant domestic opposition in the US towards Reagan administration policy, largely due to Saddam’s horrific human rights record. This became especially problematic after Saddam ordered the use of chemical weapons against both Iranian forces and Iraqi Kurds. The Reagan administration blocked Congressional attempts to sanction Iraq, but this domestic opposition still hindered relations between the two countries.\textsuperscript{36} Other countries were much more willing to provide Iraq with the aid it desperately needed. The Gulf regimes were determined to prevent Iranian victory, especially Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which also had significant Shia populations. These two countries agreed to give Iraq all the oil proceeds from the Saudi-Kuwait

\textsuperscript{34} Jentleson 1994, 42; Resnick 2011, 162.
\textsuperscript{35} Jentleson 1994, 47-48.
\textsuperscript{36} Allawi 2007, 37-38; Jentleson 1994, Ch. 2.
“Neutral Zone,” which totaled about $9 billion from 1983-1985. They further agreed to guarantee the balance of all foreign contracts to Baghdad and provide 10% of the down payment. Egypt and Jordan provided Baghdad with direct military aid, which Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were unwilling to do. Egypt provided Iraq with $2.7 billion in munitions from 1981-1983 alone, and over 15,000 Egyptian “volunteers” trained and fought alongside Iraqi forces. In 1983, Moscow signed a new agreement with Baghdad for direct military aid worth $2 billion, which included missiles and highly advanced aircraft and tanks. Moscow, like Washington, originally believed the best outcome was a stalemated cease-fire, with a return to pre-war borders. However, once Tehran rejected any calls for a cease-fire, including a joint US-Soviet UN resolution, Soviet support swung back towards Iraq. By war’s end, total Soviet aid was estimated to be as high as $20 billion. France likewise provided Iraq with $5 billion worth of highly advanced aircraft and weaponry, with Riyadh agreeing to finance the jet fuel for all French aircraft sold to Iraq. The level of French support was such that the US, Great Britain, and West Germany balked at the excessive amount. Thus, US support, while unquestionably helpful to the Iraqi war effort, was on par with or beneath that of others.

American ambivalence towards Iraq was best illustrated by the ensuing Iran-contra affair. From March 1985 to October 1986, members of the Reagan administration illegally sold weapons to Tehran in exchange for the release of American hostages in Lebanon and then used the proceeds to fund Nicaraguan rebels. The US provided Iran with anti-tank and surface-to-air missiles, replacement parts for US-made weaponry and vehicles, and intelligence regarding the Iraqi military. These all proved critical for Iran’s successful offensive on the al-Faw Peninsula in January 1986, in which Iran finally established a strong foothold inside Iraq and directly

threatened the city of Basra.\footnote{Pollack 2005, 213-220.} Iran-contra also exposed Washington’s deeper strategic perspective. Many in the Reagan administration still viewed Iran as the more natural US ally and hoped this covert support would win over moderates in Tehran. Khomeini was nearly ninety years old, and they hoped to make inroads with his would-be successors. They also feared Moscow had established better relations with the Iranian revolutionaries, and that a post-Khomeini regime would be more Soviet-friendly.\footnote{Freedman 2008, 176-177; Yet,i vi 2008, 58-59.} US policy, therefore, while outwardly tilting towards Baghdad, did not genuinely favor either side.

The exposure of the Iran-contra deal marked a critical turning point in US-Iraqi relations. For the US, it finally led to the genuine establishment of an “alliance of convenience” with Baghdad. Motivated by international embarrassment and continued Iranian intransigence, the US now unequivocally supported Iraqi military efforts, if not outright victory. In 1987 alone, Washington sent Baghdad over $1 billion in aid, the greatest single amount in the history of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC).\footnote{Brands 2010, 112.} In addition, the US directly confronted Iranian forces in the Persian Gulf. In order to threaten Iraq’s allies and force Baghdad to capitulate, Tehran had mined Gulf waters, placed Chinese Silkworm missiles at the Strait of Hormuz, and targeted Saudi and Kuwaiti oil tankers. In response, Kuwait asked the permanent members of the Security Council to reflag Kuwaiti ships and provide naval protection. The US readily agreed, seeing this as an opportunity to repair its tarnished international image and keep Soviet forces out of the Persian Gulf.\footnote{Gamlen and Rogers 1993, 125-129.} Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger stated, “This is an opportunity to recoup some of our standing the region and regain credibility with the Arab
This ultimately led to direct conflict with Iranian forces, resulting in the American sinking of several Iranian vessels. There was no longer any question about American commitment to Baghdad.\textsuperscript{45}

For Saddam, however, the exposure of Washington’s secret dealings with Tehran confirmed his suspicions about US intentions. He viewed the US as solely committed to Arab weakness and “Western-Zionist” domination. This included perpetuating the war between Iraq and Iran.\textsuperscript{46} Saddam, nevertheless, recognized that defeating Iran would be impossible without US support, so he downplayed his anger toward Washington. The US Ambassador to Baghdad noted with amazement, “I never thought Iraq would be in a position to take the high road with us, but they did.”\textsuperscript{47} This stance paid off. The increase in international support allowed Iraqi forces to retake the al-Faw Peninsula, and US naval forces dealt a devastating blow to the Iranian navy. Seeing no path to victory, Tehran finally and very reluctantly accepted the UN cease-fire in August 1988.\textsuperscript{48}

\textit{Rival Bids for Hegemony}

The US hoped better relations with Iraq would extend into the postwar period. With the end of the Cold War in Europe, the new Bush administration became proclaiming a “new world order” based on greater international respect and cooperation. President Bush described the new world order as one “where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind—peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law.”\textsuperscript{49} However, it was the first point that was of particular importance. While unquestionably valuing

\begin{footnotes}
\item[44] Quoted in Brands 2010, 111.
\item[46] Brands 2010.
\item[47] Quoted in Ibid., 111.
\item[48] Freedman 2008, Ch. 10; Hiro 1989, Ch. 10; Ward 2009, 277-296.
\end{footnotes}
democracy and the domestic rule of law, the new world order was to be primarily based on principles of transparency, peaceful conduct, and the international rule of law. Instead of Cold War bipolarity and brinkmanship, there would be mutual cooperation among the great powers to ensure peace and stability. The Bush administration expressed little regard for internal politics, preferring stability and evolutionary change over instability and radical change. Bush did not believe that internal transformation was necessary to be responsible members of the new order. His administration’s cautious view of the Eastern European revolutions, the Tiananmen Square protests in Beijing, and Soviet collapse all demonstrate this tendency. This likewise applied to Iraq and the Middle East. Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh note, “Bush’s new world order did not require the restructuring of the Iraqi political system (or for that matter, any other domestic system), but was related to the international rules of the game.”

Saddam, however, still maintained his goal of undisputed leadership of the Arab world. This first meant shoring up his rule at home. The Iran War forced Saddam to allow the Iraqi military greater operational liberty, so that it could more effectively confront the Iranian existential threat. Nonetheless, Saddam was loath to leave military power unchecked. He therefore expanded the capacity and personnel of the loyalist Republican Guard. The Republican Guard was originally established as a Baghdad-based military brigade to protect the regime from the regular military. To ensure its loyalty and efficacy against military coups, Saddam stacked the Guard with Sunnis with close tribal ties and provided them with more advanced weapons than the regular military. When Saddam decided to grant the military greater liberty during the Iran War, he also expanded the Republican Guard from one brigade to seven to twenty-five

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50 Sparrow 2010.
51 Freedman and Karsh 1998, 413.
while also maintaining the Guard’s weapon superiority.\textsuperscript{52} After the war, Saddam defeated a series of coup attempts, both real and fabricated. The Iran War created grievances in the military and even the Republican Guard concerning Saddam’s military and political incompetence. They now desired greater prestige and a greater role in governance. Saddam, however, refused to share power or prestige with anyone. In the immediate years following the war, there were a series of failed coup attempts and pre-emptive purges. These ultimately allowed Saddam to re-establish his absolute authority over Iraq.\textsuperscript{53} These series of rival eliminations would prove critical when Saddam suffered an even more crushing defeat in the Persian Gulf War.

Once secure again at home, Saddam moved to assert Iraqi leadership in the Arab world. Saddam presented himself as the leader best suited to finally expel Israel from the occupied territories of Gaza, the West Bank, and Golan Heights. He openly rejected the Camp David model, in which Egypt officially recognized Israel in exchange for the return of occupied territory. This model required American cooperation and goodwill, which Saddam claimed was both impossible and unnecessary. Rather, once Iraq achieved nuclear parity with Israel, the Arab world could either dictate terms to Israel or launch a united assault on the Zionist entity. Saddam’s aim of achieving nuclear parity with Israel suffered a serious setback after the Israeli attack on the Iraqi Osiraq nuclear facility in June 1981. Saddam was now focused on reconstituting Iraq’s nuclear program, along with further developing Iraqi chemical and biological arsenals.\textsuperscript{54} Saddam recognized that developing nuclear capabilities was “a dramatic way of demonstrating technological prowess and achieving status in the international hierarchy. The first Arab country to acquire nuclear weapons … would be in a natural leadership

\textsuperscript{52} Al-Marashi and Salama 2008, 156-157, 167-168.  
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 174-175.  
\textsuperscript{54} Brands and Palkki 2011.
Saddam’s argument held appeal among many Arab countries, including Jordan, Libya, Yemen, and the Palestinians. King Hussein of Jordan, often one of the most Western-friendly Arab leaders, became frustrated by US unwillingness to condemn Israeli aggression and occupations and feared that the new influx of Soviet Jews into Israel would further increase Israeli strength and intransigence. Other Arab states, however, were wary of Saddam’s plan and bid for leadership, including Egypt, Syria, and the Gulf states. Syrian President Hafiz Assad, despite being Israel’s most implacable adversary, believed a lasting settlement was not possible without US support. By advocating nuclear weapon development and nuclear coercion against Israel, Saddam was clearly courting conflict with the United States.

By February 1989, only six months after the Iran-Iraq cease-fire, Washington officially declared that Iraq was seeking to become a nuclear power. In March, US intelligence reported that Iraq had placed Scud missile launchers within range of all of Israel and Syria. That same month, CIA Director William Webster declared Iraq to be the largest producer of chemical weapons in the Third World. These announcements made Saddam doubly afraid: afraid that Israel would launch another preventive attack, and afraid that the US and European countries would respond by suspending their wartime aid. Saddam, therefore, publicly threatened that “we will make fire eat half of Israel if it tries to do anything against Iraq,” while privately assuring American and European officials that these words were intended for domestic audiences, and that he had no offensive plans against Israel.

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Command (CENTCOM), which directs US military operations in the Middle East, designated Iraq as the most likely military threat in the Middle East.\textsuperscript{59}

The Bush administration, while increasingly concerned about Saddam, believed “constructive engagement” was the best approach to extending US influence into Baghdad. Following its war with Iran, Iraq was the strongest military power in the Middle East. US officials believed it was critical to have Baghdad’s support in any future Arab-Israeli peace settlement.\textsuperscript{60} During the war, Saddam greatly moderated his anti-Western, anti-Zionist rhetoric and developed close ties with Egypt, who he previously castigated for signing the Camp David Accords. The Bush administration believed this moderate stance could be solidified if Iraq received sufficient support to rebuild its battered economy. US aid was directed through the Agriculture Department’s Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), which designated $1 billion in loans to Baghdad to buy agricultural products from US companies.\textsuperscript{61} This program had the support of many agricultural businesses and representatives from agricultural states. During a Congressional trip to Baghdad, Senate Republican Leader Robert Dole of Kansas personally assured Saddam that this aid would continue, despite increasing calls by some US officials that Saddam’s regime be sanctioned.\textsuperscript{62}

Many in Washington, however, could no longer ignore the use of CCC loans to develop an Iraqi WMD program. Saddam established several transnational dummy corporations to purchase weapons development technology from the United States and Europe. In addition, he received over $2 billion in unsecured loans, a large percentage of which went to weapons

\textsuperscript{59} Keaney and Cohen 1993, 29.
\textsuperscript{61} Karabell 1995, 29.
\textsuperscript{62} Freedman and Karsh 1993, 37. Senate Republican Whip Alan Simpson of Wyoming told Saddam that the US unfortunately suffered from a “haughty and pampered press.”
acquisition. As his illegal transactions became publicized, Saddam responded by once again attacking American imperialists and Zionist aggressors for spreading lies about his regime and seeking his overthrow. The Bush administration, most notably the State and Agriculture Departments, fought hard to both push back against calls for cutting support to Iraq and to convince Saddam to change his hostile rhetoric and behavior. In both areas, the administration was unsuccessful. In June 1990, the CCC loans were suspended, which constituted the cornerstone of the American constructive engagement policy. The Bush administration still hoped there would be other means to maintain positive relations with Baghdad, but it would soon become apparent that that would not be the case. Washington never established substantive ties to Iraqi constituencies, preventing it from identifying members of a reliable successor regime that could implement regime change in Baghdad if necessary.

**Persian Gulf Crisis**

The US crisis with Iraq began following the latter’s invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990. Saddam’s ostensible reason for the invasion was the perennial claim that Kuwait rightly belonged to Iraq. Yet, Saddam had made little noise about this dispute in the months, and even years, preceding the invasion. Indeed, when Saddam explained his reason for the invasion to Saudi King Fahd, the king responded, “If it were really [about] part of Iraq returning to Iraq, what were we talking about yesterday or the day before yesterday?” Rather, in the months prior to the Iraqi invasion, the Arab countries were discussing a series of economic disputes between Iraq and its Gulf state neighbors, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Iraq

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64 Gordon and Trainor 1995, 12-14; Heikal 1992, Ch. 11.
66 Quoted in Heikal 1992, 198.
ended its war with Iran $100 billion in debt, much of it owed to its erstwhile Gulf state allies, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. Not only did Saddam demand that they cancel these debts, but he further requested Kuwait give Iraq another $10 billion “loan” for reconstruction and permanent use of Buibyan and Warba Islands. Saddam asserted Iraq was owed debt forgiveness and reconstruction compensation, since Iraqi war efforts were in defense of all Arab Gulf states.\textsuperscript{67} Even more significantly, Saddam accused Kuwait and the UAE of violating OPEC quotas on oil production, thus severely undercutting Iraqi reconstruction efforts. Saddam was pushing OPEC to lower its production quota, hoping to drive up oil prices and recreate the economic situation that fueled Iraq’s financial boom in the 1970s. Saddam further accused Kuwait of “slant-drilling” in the Iraqi part of the disputed Rumaila oilfields. Kuwait denied these charges of overproduction and slant-drilling, opposed any changes to OPEC production quotas, and made settlement of these issues conditional on official Iraqi recognition of its current borders with Kuwait.\textsuperscript{68}

\textit{Failure of US Deterrence}

Washington witnessed these mounting tensions with increasing concern, but without developing a coherent response. The Iraqi-Kuwaiti dispute occurred, perhaps not coincidentally, as Iraqi-US relations were likewise deteriorating. Indeed, Saddam accused Kuwait and the United States of engaging in a “conspiracy to make us live in famine.”\textsuperscript{69} Having just suspended the CCC loans, Washington was sensitive to such charges and reluctant to have a direct confrontation with Iraq. Yet, Saddam’s decision to send two Republican Guard divisions to the

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 140; Freedman and Karsh 1993, 45. Even during the Iran-Iraq war, Saddam complained about the lack of direct military aid he received from Kuwait and Saudia Arabia, as compared to Egypt and Jordan, who provided Iraq with both arms and troops. Though Saddam prevented such grievances from creating a rupture with the Gulf states, he nevertheless declared in the summer of 1981 that there was “some bitterness in the hearts of Iraqis” over the insufficient level of Gulf state support. Quoted in Goldberg 1993, 125.

\textsuperscript{68} Hiro 1992, 90-91.

\textsuperscript{69} Quoted in Heikal 1992, 176.
Kuwaiti border further heightened American concerns. Therefore, throughout July, US officials made a series of conflicting statements, expressing a commitment to defend Kuwait, but then making retractions and qualifications. The UAE asked Washington to make some deliberate display of Gulf state commitment. Washington agreed, and from July 21-23, the US and UAE air forces and navies engaged in joint exercises. Kuwait rejected an American invitation to also participate in these exercises, fearing such a move might provoke Iraq and believing the prior US reflagging of Kuwaiti ships was a sufficient signal of US commitment.

Nonetheless, these joint maneuvers got Saddam’s attention and led him to invite US Ambassador April Glaspie to have their first face-to-face meeting on July 25. This meeting has since been considered the greatest, though by no means only, example of the US failure to deter Saddam. Saddam insisted at the beginning of their discussion that Ambassador Glaspie relay his comments directly to President George Bush. Saddam began by issuing a long statement listing his grievances against Kuwait and the UAE and insinuating that US officials (though not the President or Secretary of State personally) were conspiring with these states to instigate a revolution against him, like those that recently toppled the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe. He further blamed the US for encouraging Kuwaiti-UAE obstinacy by holding joint maneuvers in the Persian Gulf. Saddam then issued a warning to the US, “a society,” he asserted, “which cannot accept 10,000 deaths in one battle,” as opposed to what the Iraqi military recently endured. Going even further, Saddam hinted that Iraq may resort to using terrorism against the US, warning, “[W]e too can harm you. … We cannot come to you all the way in the

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71 Stein 1992, 150-152.
73 The following description of the meeting between President Saddam Hussein and Ambassador April Glaspie comes from “The Glaspie Transcript: Saddam Meets the U.S. Ambassador,” in Sifry and Cerf 1991.
United States, but individual Arabs may reach you.”75 He then concluded his long opening statement by again insisting Glaspie relay this message directly to Bush and not leave it in the hands of the “gang in the State Department.”76 Glaspie first responded by reminding Saddam that Bush opposed any sanctions against Iraq and sharing Saddam’s criticism of the American media (Diane Sawyer, in particular) for its attacks on his regime. She then declared, “[The US has] no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait. … We hope you can solve this problem by using a suitable method via [Arab League Secretary Chedli el-] Klibi or President [of Egypt Hosni] Mubarak. All that we hope is that these problems are solved quickly.”77 Critics later blamed Glaspie for not clearly stating that the US would use force if Iraq attacked Kuwait. However, Glaspie’s statement rightly reflected Washington’s preference for a peaceful Arab solution. Moreover, the US only believed this to be a dispute over oil revenues and possibly the Buibyan and Warba Islands and thus had no inclinations about Saddam’s broader aims. Finally, most Arab countries, including Kuwait, discouraged US involvement, believing this would only inflame the situation.78

Furthermore, it seems that Saddam neither expected a strong American warning, nor did he need one. Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, who was present during the Saddam-Glaspie meeting, later admitted that Saddam simply “wanted [Glaspie] to carry a message to George Bush—not to receive a message through her from Washington.”79 Saddam was apparently already convinced that the United States would eventually become involved. Rather, his primary goal was to avert through both threats and assurances an American response in the immediate

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75 “The Glaspie Transcript,” 125.
76 Ibid., 128. Saddam excluded from the State Department “gang” Secretary of State James Baker and Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs John Kelly, the latter having been the staunchest proponent of maintaining the CCC program to Baghdad.
77 Ibid., 130.
term: the threat of Iraqi retaliation through terrorism and assurance that American neutrality would make a peaceful resolution come more quickly. To that latter end, Saddam assured Glaspie that he would do nothing until he met with the Kuwaitis again, and hopefully they could resolve this issue. According to Andrew Killgore, former US Ambassador to Qatar, Saddam told Glaspie that, along with a planned Iraq-Kuwait meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, he had invited Kuwaiti Crown Prince Saad al-Abdullah to Baghdad for one-on-one negotiations. This made it seem as though Saddam was still far from considering an attack on Kuwait. Nevertheless, Saddam warned Glaspie at the conclusion of their meeting, “[I]f we are unable to find a solution, then it will be natural that Iraq will not accept death, even though wisdom is above everything else.” Glaspie apparently took little notice of this warning, assuming, like all other officials in Washington and the Arab world, that these issues would be resolved peacefully. Even Saddam ended the meeting by saying, “There, you have your good news.” Glaspie, therefore, followed through with plans to return to the US for a vacation and saw no reason to warn the State Department or the White House of any impending conflict. She, like most others, believed Iraq and Kuwait would arrive at a mutually agreeable settlement.

What she and nearly everyone in Washington and the Arab did not count on was Kuwaiti obstinacy. Most Arab countries acknowledged that some Iraqi grievances against Kuwait were indeed valid, particularly regarding Kuwaiti slant-drilling in the Rumaila oilfields. At the conference at Jeddah, King Fahd and other Arab leaders advised Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Jaber al-Sabah to accede to at least some Iraqi demands. The Emir, however, refused to compromise,

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80 Killgore 2002.
81 “The Glaspie Transcript,” 133.
82 Richard Haass, then National Security Council aide for Near East and South Asian affairs, claims that he wrote a memo to President Bush, urging him to issue a strong warning to Saddam, backed up by further military maneuvers. However, upon receiving Glaspe’s optimistic report, he tabled his memo, believing aggressive action would only provoke Saddam. Haass 2010b, 57.
believing that ultimately Saddam would not dare attack and that Kuwait could hold out for better terms. At another meeting between the Kuwaiti Crown Prince and Iraqi Vice President Ezzat Ibrahim, the Kuwaitis again stalled on making any concessions. For Saddam, this was the final straw. He not only decided that this problem could only be solved militarily, but that it would require deposing the al-Sabah family. Merely seizing Buibyan and Warba Islands or the Rumaila oilfields, which many Arab leaders expected Saddam to do in the event of attack, would allow the Emir to invite US forces into Kuwait and establish a permanent base there. By taking control of the whole country, Saddam planned to present the United States and the Arab world with a fait accompli. He believed Iraqi military strength would deter any challenges from the weaker Arab states or the casualty-averse United States. He further believed that no other Arab regime would dare invite US forces onto their soil, making it impossible for the US to launch a counter assault. Saddam, therefore, launched his invasion of Kuwait, firmly convinced that this venture was worth the risks.

*Failure of Iraqi Regime Change in Kuwait*

The Iraqi invasion was a tactical success, but an overall strategic failure. Iraqi forces invaded on August 2, 1990 at 2:00 am and by 11:00 am were in control of Kuwait City. However, they failed to achieve their most critical strategic objective: capturing Emir Sheikh al-Sabah and his family. As the threat of attack increased in the week following the Saddam-Glaspie meeting, the Kuwaiti government activated a plan that the royal family would be evacuated to Saudi Arabia in case of attack, and most Kuwaiti forces would withdraw to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Thus, Iraqi forces faced little resistance in taking Kuwait City, but they

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failed in their primary goal of capturing the al-Sabah family.\textsuperscript{85} This initial failure ultimately destroyed Saddam’s hope of handing the United States and the other Arab powers a \emph{fait accompli} concerning Kuwait’s future. Ultimately, restoring the al-Sabah family to power became a focal point for international mobilization against Iraq.

The initial Gulf War crisis can be best viewed as dueling regime change operations in Kuwait. There is some evidence that Saddam’s initial intent was not to annex Kuwait, but rather to impose a puppet regime there that would submit to Baghdad’s authority. Saddam believed that, given Kuwait’s internal political conditions, this would not be too difficult. Kuwait was host to many disenfranchised Bedouins and foreign Arab laborers from Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine who resented Kuwaiti wealth and opulence. Furthermore, the al-Sabah regime had recently disbanded the National Assembly, which provided some representation to Kuwaiti elites, and arrested those who demanded new elections and National Assembly restoration.\textsuperscript{86} Saddam believed that these grievances created interest alignment between Baghdad and much of the Kuwaiti population. Many middle-rank military officers did, in fact, defect to the Iraqi side and helped form the Provisional Free Kuwait Government (PFKG), composed of Kuwaiti Bedouin colonels and majors denied the right to vote or own land under the previous regime. The new government granted citizenship to all non-Kuwaiti Arabs, hoping to gain the support of the many expatriate laborers. It also formed a new Popular Army of Kuwait, which also invited any Arab to join, allowing 100,000 Iraqis to enlist immediately.\textsuperscript{87} Ultimately though, this new government did not receive much support from the Kuwaiti elite or general population. It was clear the PFKG would not be a genuine democracy, and rampant Iraqi looting and raping alienated the Kuwaitis and expatriate Arabs and ruined any potential interest alignment with

\textsuperscript{86} Kostiner 1993, 107-108.  
\textsuperscript{87} BBC World Service 1991, 5; Hiro 1992, 104-106.
Baghdad. Instead, Kuwaitis engaged in an insurgency against the Iraqi forces, which proved much fiercer than the original Kuwaiti resistance.\textsuperscript{88}

The international community demanded regime restoration in Kuwait. The issue of al-Sabah restoration prevented Baghdad from consolidating its position. Had Iraqi forces captured the al-Sabah family, they would have had greater opportunity to reinforce the new Kuwaiti Popular Army, suppress the insurgency, and establish Iraqi authority over Kuwait. Instead, restoring the al-Sabah family became a rallying point that allowed the United States to gain Arab support, which was necessary for any substantive action. The United Nations passed Resolution 660, which condemned the invasion and called for immediate and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal. The permanent Security Council members also agreed to suspend all arms sales to Iraq and freeze all Iraqi and Kuwaiti accounts.\textsuperscript{89} Yet, without Arab agreement, there was little else the international community could do. Most Arab countries did in fact condemn the invasion in the immediate aftermath, including Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and the Gulf states.\textsuperscript{90} Nevertheless, it was not immediately evident whether these condemnations would lead to action. However, Fahd and Mubarak made al-Sabah restoration a non-negotiable condition for any broader Arab resolution. For Mubarak, this was an issue of pride. Saddam had personally assured Mubarak that he had no aggressive intentions towards Kuwait, and that he would alert him if he had a change of heart. Mubarak had in turn relayed this message to Washington, a main reason US officials were largely caught off-guard. Mubarak felt Saddam’s decision to invade and occupy Kuwait without at least giving him prior notice made him look like a fool internationally. In addition, Baghdad now seemed to be the center of

\textsuperscript{89} BBC World Service 1991, 1-2, 6.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 4; Heikal 1992, 210.
the Arab world, not Cairo. Mubarak was still committed to finding an Arab solution to the problem, but he made Iraqi withdrawal and al-Sabah restoration non-negotiable conditions.\footnote{Hiro 1992, 202-203, 206; Lesch 1991, 38.}

For Fahd, this was increasingly becoming an issue of survival. Both Cairo and Riyadh felt Saddam’s decision to invade and occupy Kuwait ruined any previous credibility he had with them. Saudi Ambassador to the United States Prince Bandar commented to both King Fahd and those in Washington, “He who eats Kuwait for breakfast is likely to want something else for lunch.”\footnote{Heikal 1992, 200; Lesch 1991, 38.} US intelligence suggested that Saudi oilfields were next on the menu. US officials informed Bandar that Iraq had 140,000 troops in Kuwait, presumably more than necessary to occupy the small emirate, and that those on the Saudi border were equipped with offensive arms and supplies. They also presented him with a plan to deploy about 200,000 US troops to defend Saudi Arabia.\footnote{Freedman and Karsh 1993, 88.} Yet, accepting American help was incredibly difficult. It meant inviting foreign infidels into the holiest Muslim land to defend it against other Muslims. Fahd feared this might spark an Islamic revolution in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, he feared that once the United States had a foothold in the Middle East, it would seek to establish a permanent base there.\footnote{Heikal 1992, 200, 212.} Nevertheless, he and other Saudi officials recognized the need for American support. To assure Fahd of American commitment to both defend Saudi Arabia and withdraw once the crisis was over, Bush sent a high-ranking delegation to Riyadh, led by Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney. This finally convinced Fahd to invite US forces. Furthermore, the Saudis decided to also seek a broader Coalition that included other Arab and Muslim countries as an “Islamic cover.”\footnote{There are differing accounts on the origin of this idea. Bush and Scowcroft present this as King Fahd’s idea, but Mohammed Heikal claims that the idea originally came from Washington, specifically from White House Chief of Staff John Sununu. Bush and Scowcroft 1998, 335, 339; Heikal 1992, 217.} In a very divisive vote on August 10, the Arab League narrowly passed a resolution that condemned Iraqi
aggression against Kuwait, affirmed Kuwaiti independence and al-Sabah legitimacy, censured Iraq for its troop concentration near the Saudi border, and called on all Arab League states to deploy troops to Saudi Arabia for its defense. Most notably, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria voted for the resolution, Iraq and Libya voted against, and Algeria, Jordan, and Yemen abstained.96

The affirmation of al-Sabah legitimacy was the most critical component of the resolution. No other part of the resolution genuinely threatened Iraq’s long-term control over Kuwait. Most Arab countries had already condemned the Iraqi invasion. The deployment of foreign troops to Saudi Arabia was in and of itself purely defensive. And until August 8, Baghdad continued to affirm Kuwaiti independence. Iraq was already ostensibly withdrawing, displaying photographs at the Arab League conference of two divisions returning to Iraq.97 The survival of the al-Sabah family, however, remained the critical obstacle to PFKG legitimacy and Iraqi victory. Even King Hussein continued to recognize them as the rightful rulers of Kuwait.98 Had Iraqi forces successfully captured and eliminated the Emir and his family, Baghdad could have pressed for recognition of the PFKG. The Arab League would then have faced the option of either accepting the PFKG or deposing this government and establishing Yet, another successor regime. The latter would have required fighting and defeating the powerful Iraqi military, along with establishing Yet, another regime in Kuwait. Defeating Iraqi forces would have been impossible without American help, but Arab countries would have been loath to allow the United States to establish a new regime in Kuwait. American involvement was already highly unpopular among the Arab populace. In addition, there likely would have been division over the type of regime

96 Heikal 1992, 233-235; Lesch 1991, 37. Jordan’s vote was unclear, and King Hussein refused to explicitly state Jordan’s position. The recorders, therefore, officially marked the vote as an abstention.
98 Lesch 1991, 45.
established in Kuwait. Cairo, Damascus, and Riyadh would have likely opposed imposing a
democratic regime in Kuwait. Yet, it would have been difficult to gain American public support
for fighting a war against Iraq, only to establish another authoritarian regime in Kuwait. The
survival of the al-Sabah family provided a ready-made regime, which minimized the need for
post-conflict occupation and focused the issue on regime legitimacy rather than regime type.

The Arab League resolution ended all hopes of an Arab solution and handed management
of the crisis to the United States. Even prior to the passage of the Arab League resolution, Bush
made several public condemnations of Iraqi aggression and the puppet PFKG regime. In an
impromptu statement to American reporters, Bush boldly declared, “This will not stand, this
aggression against Kuwait,” a comment that caught even his advisors off-guard.99 He followed
this with a televised statement on August 8, demanding Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and
deriding the PFKG’s legitimacy.100 That same day, Iraq formally annexed Kuwait. Saddam
believed Iraqi forces would only defend Kuwait against US forces if it were officially part of
Iraq.101 Annexation was perhaps Saddam’s original and ultimate aim, but given the widespread
Arab opposition to Iraqi aggression, he seemed content to allow the PFKG to remain as an
independent puppet government. However, once it became clear that none of the Arab powers
would recognize the PFKG and that Washington was taking over crisis management, Saddam
apparently decided there was nothing left to lose.

Failure of US Compellence & Iraqi Deterrence

The deployment of a multi-national Coalition to Saudi Arabia seemingly ended the Iraqi
threat to that country, at least in the short-term. Iraqi forces on the Saudi border adopted a more

100 Bush and Scowcroft 1998, 341.
101 Heikal 1992, 226. Iraqi annexation of Kuwait was done at the “request” of the PFKG. Freedman and Karsh
defensive position, and the Republican Guard and armored divisions largely withdrew.\textsuperscript{102} The Coalition then moved from deterring an Iraqi attack on Saudi Arabia to compelling Iraq withdrawal from Kuwait. Coalition compellence strategy depended largely on imposing sanctions on Iraq. The UN passed Resolution 661, which called for states to prevent the sale or purchase of any products to Iraq, except medical supplies or any food deemed necessary for humanitarian reasons.\textsuperscript{103} Nevertheless, there was significant debate over whether sanctions would be sufficient. Some argued that, given heavy Iraqi dependence on oil revenues, Iraq was particularly vulnerable to sanctioning. Moreover, the costs of sanctions was much less than the costs of fighting.\textsuperscript{104} Many in the Bush administration, however, were skeptical, because sanction effectiveness required full international commitment and significant patience.\textsuperscript{105}

Saddam recognized this and focused his efforts on breaking up the Coalition. His clearest targets were the Arab members. Arab inclusion in the Coalition was crucial for logistical and legitimating reasons. Bush admitted, “We couldn’t have a solo effort in the Middle East. We had to have our Arab allies with us, particularly those who were threatened the most—the Saudis.”\textsuperscript{106} Saddam, therefore, made a series of divisive gestures, rather than divisive concessions. He accused the regimes in Riyadh, Cairo, Damascus, and the Gulf states of betraying their Arab brethren to the West. He further called on their populaces to overthrow these “emirs of oil” and their apostate regimes.\textsuperscript{107} Saddam also played on general fears that the United States was using this crisis as a pretext to establish a permanent base in the Middle East. Algiers, even as it condemned Saddam’s aggression, declared that its greatest fear was US forces

\textsuperscript{102} Al-Marashi and Salama 2008, 177; Freedman and Karsh 1999, 94.
\textsuperscript{103} BBC World Service 1991, 8; Freedman and Karsh 1993, 83-84.
\textsuperscript{104} Elliott, Hufbauer, and Schott 1990.
\textsuperscript{105} Bush and Scowcroft 1998, 331.
\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 321.
stationed in an Arab country.\textsuperscript{108} As noted above, Secretary Cheney had to personally assure Fahd that US forces would withdraw once the crisis ended. Beyond Riyadh, however, Washington had to give reassurances to numerous world leaders that it had no intention of permanently stationing forces in the Middle East.\textsuperscript{109}

Saddam also accused the United States of manufacturing and escalating this crisis, in order to weaken the one Arab regime strong enough and bold enough to challenge Israel. This argument had appeal throughout the Arab world, including in countries that were part of the Coalition.\textsuperscript{110} To this end, Saddam proposed that Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait be part of a comprehensive Middle East settlement, in which Israel agreed to withdraw from the Palestinian territories and Syria withdraw from Lebanon. Saddam argued that he was being unjustly singled out, as the United States implicitly supported the Israeli occupation and turned a blind eye to Syrian occupation in exchange for its support against Iraq. This argument also found wide support within and beyond the Arab world, including among many in Europe.\textsuperscript{111} Though most viewed Saddam’s proposal as a cynical stalling tactic, Bush nevertheless had to provide constant reassurance to his allies, Arab and European, that the United States would address the Arab-Israeli dispute. To signal its commitment to a just Arab-Israeli settlement, Washington supported a UN resolution deploaring an Israeli attack on Palestinian Arabs at the Temple Mount.

\textsuperscript{108} BBC World Service 1991, 10.
\textsuperscript{110} Khalidi 1991; Telhami 1993.
and calling for an independent investigation. Nonetheless, the American and Middle Eastern Coalition members agreed that a comprehensive settlement would only happen after Iraq withdrew from Kuwait, lest Saddam receive undo credit.

Saddam’s continued threats and intransigence led to considerations about the future of Iraq. Even if Iraqi forces withdrew from Kuwait, Iraq still had the most powerful military in the Middle East and still controlled the second-largest supply of oil in the Middle East. Moreover, there was no indication that Saddam would become any less belligerent. During the first week of the crisis, Saddam warned Joseph Wilson, the US charge d’affaires in Baghdad, that he would permanently disrupt US interests in the Middle East if the United States did not relent. He also called on Arabs in Egypt, Syria, and the Arabian Gulf to overthrow their regimes. Since US forces could not remain to defend these vulnerable regimes, most notably the Gulf monarchies, Saddam would remain a threat as long as he was in power. There was general agreement that, even if Saddam agreed to withdraw from Kuwait, Iraq needed to be significantly weakened and WMD program dismantled. King Fahd asserted that this crisis went beyond the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, arguing that “if we accept the status quo ante, there is no guarantee in two years he won’t repeat his aggression at a time [when] he will have much greater weapons. We must not enter this with the rationale of [only] cleaning up Kuwait, but use this as an opportunity to clean up his unconventional weapons.”

Yet, most members of the Coalition identified Saddam personally as the critical problem. Bush opposed “dismembering or destroying Iraq,” believing “Iraq without Saddam Hussein

114 Bush and Scowcroft, 337-338; Heikal 1992, 245-249. Wilson was the leading US official in Baghdad during the pre-war crisis, as Ambassador Glaspie was unable to return to the country.
could play a constructive, stabilizing role.”¹¹⁶ Both Fahd and Turkish President Turgut Ozal consistently referred to Saddam as crazy or unbalanced, and Bangladesh President Hussain Mohammed Ershad noted with astonishment, “Saddam has 99 names, such as Saddam the Creator, Saddam the Great. He’s gone mad.”¹¹⁷ Yet, Bush was initially reluctant to include regime change in the Coalition mission. Saddam was very popular among much of the broader Arab population, and the Arab Coalition would likely fracture if US aims expanded to regime change. This would also spark fears of US occupation and permanent military presence, which were strongly opposed in the Arab world and the United States. Bush, therefore, came down hard on US officials who publicly suggested the mission extended to militarily imposing regime change. During an interview following a trip to Saudi Arabia, Air Force Chief of Staff Michael Dugan stated that, in the event of military conflict, the US would seek to decapitate the Iraqi leadership by bombing downtown Baghdad. The Bush administration immediately disavowed his comments, and Cheney fired him the following day. Ironically, this ultimately became the actual Coalition strategy.¹¹⁸ Still, the administration placed its hopes in a military coup or popular uprising.

Nevertheless, by October, Coalition planning was moving increasingly towards offensive military options. Bush confessed in a conversation with Mubarak, “I wish his people would throw him out. That would make it perfect.”¹¹⁹ Fahd and Mubarak were convinced that Saddam would never withdraw voluntarily, arguing that that would likely mean political suicide. They noted that he had recently reinstated the 1975 Algiers Accords with Iran in order to minimize the

¹¹⁹ “President’s Call to President Mubarak of Egypt,” February 2, 1991.
threat on that border and possibly solicit Iranian support against the US-led Coalition. Saddam was able to argue that this concession was necessary given US aggression, but the Arab Coalition members asserted that another significant international capitulation would likely be a bridge too far. Fahd told President Bush, “I believe … that as soon as he withdraws from Kuwait …, he will come to an end … by a coup or other means.” Both Paris and Moscow made individual efforts to reach a mediated solution, based on a sequential tradeoff of Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, followed by an international conference concerning a broader Middle East settlement. These plans met resistance in both Baghdad and Washington. Saddam insisted that Iraq would only consider withdrawal after an international conference and full Israeli and Syrian withdrawal from the Palestinian occupied territories and Lebanon, respectively. Bush, on the other hand, remained insistent that Iraqi withdrawal must be unconditional, lest the international community reward interstate aggression. On November 8, Washington announced it was doubling its force levels in Saudi Arabia in preparation for likely offensive action. That same day, Baker travelled to Moscow to gain Soviet support for a UN resolution authorizing a deadline for offensive action. While Soviet Foreign Minister Edvard Shevardnadze quickly came around, President Mikhail Gorbachev sought one further opportunity to persuade Baghdad to back down. Gorbachev invited Aziz to Moscow to see if there was any change in the Iraqi position. Finding none, the Soviet leader agreed to support UN Resolution 678, which authorized UN action against Iraqi forces if they did not withdraw from Kuwait by January 15, 1991. While Saddam was willing to make divisive gestures, he refused to make divisive concessions that could have split the Coalition.

122 Freedman and Karsh 1993, 228-234; Herrmann 1994, 244-246.
Immediately after the UN Security Council passed Resolution 678, Bush made one final effort for a peaceful settlement. Announcing that the US would go the “extra mile for peace,” Bush offered to either invite Aziz to Washington or send Baker to Baghdad to determine if there was a peaceful means to resolve the conflict. This move was directed more at US domestic audiences than Baghdad. Bush sought to assuage those in Congress and amongst the American public that if war came, it would be due to Iraqi intransigence not American impatience. The two sides agreed that Aziz and Baker would meet in Geneva. However, there had been no change in either side’s position since the previous August, so the summit’s failure was a foregone conclusion. Nevertheless, Bush had successfully demonstrated to the US public and much of the world community that it was Baghdad that was the critical hindrance to peace. On January 12, Congress passed a joint resolution approving the use of force against Iraq. Following the Geneva conference, French President Francois Mitterand and UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar both made direct appeals to Saddam, but likewise met with failure. In the last remaining days before the January 15 deadline, Arab members of the Coalition made frantic efforts to convince Saddam to withdraw from Kuwait. Assad, despite his long-time rivalry with Saddam, assured the Iraqi President that if he agreed to withdraw from Kuwait, Syrian forces would join Iraqi forces in fighting any attacks from foreign forces. All these appeals were of no avail, and on January 16, the US aerial campaign against Iraq began.

Regime Change Strategy and Failure

In a televised speech on January 16, 1991, President Bush announced the beginning of aerial attacks on Iraq and stated the aims of the United Nations Coalition: the withdrawal of Iraqi

124 Herrmann 1994, 252.
125 Freedman and Karsh 1993, 294-299.
forces from Kuwait, the restoration of the Kuwaiti royal family, and the destruction of Iraq’s WMD capabilities and programs. However, there was also another implicit goal: encouraging an Iraqi military coup against Saddam Hussein. Secretary of State James Baker later recounted, “Strategically, the real objective was to eject Iraq from Kuwait in a manner that would destroy Saddam’s offensive capabilities and make his fall from power likely.” The months of failed coercive diplomacy convinced Coalition leaders that Saddam would remain a menace as long as he remained in power. Syrian Defense Minister Mustafa Tlas declared that Damascus would not tolerate an Iraq ruled by Saddam Hussein once the crisis was over. Turkish Minister of State Kamran Inan stated that the first condition of any post-conflict agreement must be regime change in Baghdad. British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd declared, “Iraq cannot be expected to be readmitted to the community of nations while it has a delinquent regime. Iraq needs leadership which will respect her commitments as a member of the United Nations and the Arab League.” In a conversation with Czechoslovakian President Vaclav Havel, Bush admitted, “Though we have not stated the goal of Saddam’s removal, it will be complicated if this arrogant man stays in power.” Even Tehran preferred an outcome in which Saddam was removed from power, as long as that did not include or require a long-term American presence in the region.

Nevertheless, the Coalition did not adopt a direct regime change strategy. In his memoirs, Bush listed the numerous reasons for this decision:

I firmly believed that we should not march on Baghdad. Our stated mission, as codified in UN resolutions, was a simple one—end the aggression, knock Iraq’s forces out of Kuwait, and restore Kuwait’s leaders. To occupy Iraq would instantly shatter our Coalition, turning the whole Arab world against us, and make

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130 Quoted in Freedman and Karsh 1993, 415.
a broken tyrant into a latter-day Arab hero. It would have taken us beyond the
imprimatur of international law bestowed by the resolutions of the Security
Council, assigning young soldiers to a fruitless hunt for an entrenched dictator
and condemning them to fight in what would be an unwinnable urban guerilla
war. It could only plunge that part of the world into greater instability and destroy
the credibility we were working so hard to reestablish.  

While Arab Coalition members strongly desired regime change in Baghdad, they could not
endorse an American-led assault on Baghdad. Their support of foreign troops in the Arabian
Peninsula and participation in a US-led Coalition against a fellow Arab country already caused
these regimes significant domestic grief. Supporting an assault on Baghdad would likely have
been a bridge too far. Furthermore, removing Saddam was outside the United Nations
mandate for military action. The Soviet Union was one of the few countries that hoped Saddam
would survive the crisis and would have vetoed any resolution calling for his removal, despite
Moscow’s frustrations with him. Going beyond the UN mandate would have undercut the
international legitimacy the Bush administration worked so assiduously to cultivate. Baker
argued, “Diplomatically, pressing on to Baghdad would have caused not just a rift, but an
earthquake within the Coalition.” Administration concerns were not merely international.
Many in the United States, particularly in the military, were very afraid that Iraq could become
“another Vietnam.” In the lead-up to Desert Storm, numerous Vietnam veterans testified before
Congress to express their fears about another costly and divisive war. Chairman of the Joint
Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell, himself a Vietnam veteran, pushed back on comparisons to
Vietnam, insisting that the US government was better prepared this time with a strategy of

135 “Telcon with President Havel of Czechoslovakia,” February 16, 1991, Presidential Telcon Files; “Telephone
overwhelming force and a clear exit plan.\textsuperscript{137} When the Bush administration was later criticized for not deposing Saddam, Powell strongly defended his Commander-in-Chief, declaring that Bush “promised the American people that Desert Storm would not become a Persian Gulf Vietnam, and he kept his promise.”\textsuperscript{138} Bush recognized the need for regime change in Baghdad for long-term stability, but he sought to impose without paying the concomitant costs of international opposition and postwar governance.

Ultimately though, Bush did not believe foreign military forces were necessary to remove Saddam. Arab Coalition members expressed confidence that Saddam’s past military failures, the humiliation of another military defeat, and Iraq’s ostracism from the international community would all be sufficient to encourage an internal military coup.\textsuperscript{139} Indeed, Bush believed a military coup would be sufficient and even preferable, as another nationalist strongman could keep internal order while adopting more responsible international policies, as was the case with other US-aligned regimes in the Middle East. Bush was an externally focused President and did not believe Iraq required societal transformation to become peaceful and compliant. Freedman and Karsh claim that Bush “showed little interest in the effect of Saddam’s regime on the Iraqi people. He would have been prepared to turn a blind eye to the internal repression … if Saddam had been prepared to play a more responsible role in regional affairs. … The problem with Saddam was that he was aggressive.”\textsuperscript{140} Washington preferred “some public-spirited General changing his government in the traditional Iraqi manner, with Saddam suffering the normal fate—a ‘conventional’ coup d’état rather than a popular revolution, … which required no outside support.” In a diary entry on January 31, 1991, Bush clearly expressed this hope:

\textsuperscript{137} Means 1992, 276.
\textsuperscript{138} C. Powell 1995, 526.
\textsuperscript{140} Freedman and Karsh 1993, 217, 415.
I just keep thinking the Iraqi people ought to take care of [him] with the Iraqi military. Seeing their troops [and] equipment getting destroyed—they’ve got to do something about it. I wish like hell we could. … But it seems to me the more suffering the people of Iraq go through, the more likely it is that somebody will stand up and do that which should have been done a long time ago—take the guy out of there—either kick him out of the country or do something where he is no longer running things.141

However, the Bush administration did not designate who somebody was. Specifically, US officials did not actively organize or facilitate a coup against Saddam. The Coalition hoped to delegate to the Iraqi military, but did not coordinate with them. Rather, the Coalition strategy focused on disrupting and destroying Saddam’s coercive apparatus, thereby creating the conditions for a military coup. However, the Coalition failed to actively coordinate with any potential members of a reliable successor regime within Iraq. Moreover, Saddam successfully eliminated and co-opted any reliable successors in the wake of military defeat. Instead, military defeat led to sectarian uprisings. Unfortunately, these were not the Coalition’s preferred successor agents. The Coalition, therefore, remained neutral while Saddam once again brutally suppressed sectarian uprisings and reconsolidated his authority in Baghdad. Regime change failed, because the Coalition failed to cultivate a preferred successor and failed to support the available ones.

*Failure of Operation Instant Thunder*

Operation Instant Thunder was the initial Coalition aerial campaign against Iraq, which mainly targeted Baghdad. Its aims were to destroy Iraq’s WMD capabilities, establish air superiority, cripple communication between Baghdad and the Kuwaiti battlefield area, compel Iraqi troops to withdraw from Kuwait, and encourage conditions conducive for a military coup or urban uprising in Baghdad. The primary targets were WMD facilities, Scud missile launchers, Iraqi strategic air defense, the Iraqi National Command Authority, Republican Guard Forces, and

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141 Bush and Scowcroft 1998, 464. Emphasis on “we” in the original; emphasis on “somebody” mine.
all roads, railroads, bridges, and telephone communication. Yet, among these, the Iraqi leadership and particularly Saddam Hussein were the main targets. CENTCOM Commander Norman Schwarzkopf stated, “Because of Iraq’s highly centralized system of command and control, Saddam was what military theorists call an enemy center of gravity—an aspect of the opposing force that, if destroyed, will cause the enemy to lose its will to fight.” The summary report of the Gulf War Air Power Survey likewise states, “The most important center of gravity was the ability of Saddam Hussein to lead and control his nation, so attacks on telecommunication sites and command centers would isolate him from the Iraqi people and his armed forces.” Targeting Iraqi leadership was not merely for logistical reasons. The Coalition’s apparent strategic thinking was that targeted aerial attacks could destroy the Ba’athist leadership’s coercive capabilities. This would compel internal regime change the fear of Ba’athist reprisals with the fear of further US aerial punishment. The successor regime would then agree to withdraw from Kuwait. Military planners hoped that “a national-level psychological warfare campaign directed against the Ba’athist regime … would disable or even fatally weaken the regime. […] Planners counted on most of these strikes to end the war by air power alone. The strikes, in coordination with others, would not just neutralize the government but change it by inducing a coup or revolt that would result in a government more amenable to Coalition demands.”

However, this plan had critical strategic and tactical flaws. Strategically, it is very difficult to encourage a coup or uprising through military coercion alone, particularly in a totalitarian state such as Iraq. Robert Pape states, “Instant Thunder failed to overthrow Saddam’s

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143 Schwarzkopf 1992, 319.
144 Keaney and Cohen 1993, 36.
146 Keaney and Cohen 1993, 36, 44-45.
regime, by either coup or popular revolt. ... Instant Thunder assumed that Saddam’s regime rested on its ability to provide secure leadership areas and telecommunications to support forces that were vulnerable to air attack. In fact, it rested on a political structure that air attack could not alter.”

Saddam had previously consolidated his absolute authority over Iraq by purging any and all potential rivals, promoting those with close ethnic and familial ties, and providing social services and business subsidies through oil revenues. His post-Iran War purging of the Iraqi military further solidified his control during a very vulnerable period and likely deterred any surviving would-be conspirators. Those most likely to rebel against Saddam, the Kurds and Shia, were far from Baghdad. Shia troops made up the bulk of the force occupying Kuwait and guarding the Iraqi border with Saudi Arabia. By focusing its attacks on Baghdad, US aerial attacks targeted those most invested in Saddam’s continued rule: Tikritis, Ba’athists, Sunnis, and the patronized business class.

Given Saddam’s absolute control over political authority, killing him directly was perhaps the only means of accomplishing regime change. The Bush administration was hesitant about making this an explicit aim, as it violated stated US policy against assassinating world leaders. Yet, if Saddam was killed “accidentally” during aerial strikes, Coalition forces could claim plausible deniability. Bush remarked, “This is a war, and if he gets hit with a bomb in his headquarters, too bad.” Schwarzkopf likewise noted, “For our purposes, it was sufficient to silence Saddam—to destroy his ability to command the forces arrayed against ours. If he’d been killed in the process, I wouldn’t have shed any tears.” Nonetheless, Schwarzkopf admitted,

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147 Pape 1996, 232, 236.
148 Some even suggest that the invasion of Kuwait was as much about occupying battle-hardened Shia soldiers as it was about conquering Kuwait. Al-Marashi and Salama, 175-176.
149 Pape 1996, 233-236. Pape further notes that even if anyone in Baghdad had hoped to organize a coup, the destruction of most communication facilities likely made coordination too difficult.
150 Keaney and Cohen 1993, 45.
“[T]he United States was not trying to kill Saddam Hussein—President Bush said so himself—and that was true, to a point. But at the very top of our target list were the bunkers where we knew he and his senior commanders were likely to be working.”\textsuperscript{152} This served the military-strategic aim of decapitation and the geopolitico-strategic aim of regime change. One US colonel bluntly put it: “Not to imply that we were trying to assassinate Saddam, but we were trying to kill him.”\textsuperscript{153} Nevertheless, the efforts at aerial decapitation failed, severely hindering Coalition regime change efforts, just as Iraq’s failure to capture and kill the al-Sabah family precluded successful regime change in Kuwait.

Tactically, however, this campaign was hampered by the desire to keep Iraqi civilian casualties low. Coalition leaders reiterated throughout the crisis that their grievance was with Saddam Hussein, not the Iraqi people. Fear that innocent Iraqi civilians would suffer for Saddam’s aggression fueled much of the international anti-war movement. This was especially problematic in the Muslim world, which viewed Coalition efforts as US bombs killing innocent Arabs to insure low oil prices.\textsuperscript{154} Nevertheless, it is very difficult to avoid civilian casualties when conducting a bombing campaign. Besides Saddam and the Ba’athist leadership, Coalition attacks targeted transportation routes, oil refineries, and electrical, telecommunication, and weapons facilities, all of which increased the likelihood of civilian casualties. Bombers also faced the problems of faulty intelligence, technological failure, and intentional Iraqi misdirection. Moreover, Saddam made sure CNN, most notably Peter Arnett, had access to many bombed civilian sites. This severely constrained the aerial campaign. Fearing negative publicity, Powell and Schwarzkopf vetoed any bombings near CNN facilities or areas that would

\textsuperscript{152} Schwarzkopf 1992, 318-319, emphasis in original.
\textsuperscript{153} Gordon and Trainor 1995, 313-314.
\textsuperscript{154} Freedman and Karsh 1993, 326.
disrupt CNN reporting.\textsuperscript{155} Arnett reported that Coalition forces bombed an Iraqi milk factory, mistakenly believing it manufactured biological weapons.\textsuperscript{156} The worst incident came on February 13, when US forces bombed the Al Firdos bunker, a hideout and command center for the Iraqi leadership. Al Firdos, however, also served as a civilian shelter. Over 300 Iraqis were killed in the aerial attack. Washington blamed Saddam for purposely putting Iraqi civilians in harm’s way for propaganda purposes. Nonetheless, aerial bombing was forbidden in Baghdad thereafter unless commanders received direct permission from Washington. This effectively ended all efforts of encouraging regime change through aerial attacks.\textsuperscript{157}

\textit{Failure of Iraqi Deterrence}

Though Saddam survived the Coalition air campaign, he nevertheless failed to deter the Coalition ground campaign. He again adopted a strategy of trying to divide the Coalition and stoke US fears of suffering high casualties. He tried to divide the Coalition by launching Scud missiles against Israel, which he hoped would force Arab Coalition members to decide between supporting Israel or a brother Arab country. By attacking Israel with Scud missiles, Saddam was backing up his claim that he was the only Arab leader with both the military capacity and personal courage to directly confront Israel. Many Arabs enthusiastically supported these attacks on Israel, particularly in Damascus, which had long been the center of Arab anti-Zionism. However, Saddam’s plan depended on Israeli retaliation, which would then create a grave dilemma for Arab Coalition regimes over which side to support. Bush and Mubarak worked tirelessly to convince the Israeli right-wing Likud government to show restraint. In a strong display of unity, the opposition Labor Party publicly supported the Likud government’s policy of

\textsuperscript{155} Olsen 2003, 252.
\textsuperscript{156} Bush officials asserted even after the war that the factory did, in fact, manufacture biological weapons, and that Arnett was clearly biased towards Baghdad. Bush and Scowcroft 1998, 457-459.
non-retaliation. In addition, the US provided Israel with anti-ballistic Patriot missiles. Seeking to reverse the situation on Saddam, Assad attacked him for drawing the United States and Israel closer together at a time when Arab regimes had worked assiduously to foster greater American even-handedness. Both the Egyptian and Syrian governments stated publicly that they would not attack Israel, even if Israel retaliated against Iraq. Once again, Saddam tried to divide the Coalition by turning the crisis into a wider anti-Zionist crusade, and once again he failed.\(^{158}\)

Saddam next moved to arouse the United States’ notable aversion to taking casualties. The US reputation for casualty aversion was first established after US withdrawal from Vietnam. However, it gained strong traction in the Middle East following US retreat from Lebanon in 1984. The US deployed Marines to Lebanon in early 1983 to help enforce a tenuous cease-fire in the country’s internationalized civil war. In October, Hezbollah members drove a car loaded with explosives into the Marines’ barracks, killing nearly 300 Marines. After further bombings and several skirmishes with various Lebanese militia, US forces withdrew in February 1984.\(^{159}\) Given this, Saddam originally believed that the US could be deterred by deeply entrenching Iraqi forces in Kuwait, which would turn any ground combat into a drawn-out war of attrition. However, the aerial campaign significantly weakened the Iraqi military and led to a great number of Iraqi defections. Saddam feared he would lose the war if it remained strictly aerial.\(^{160}\) He, therefore, launched a pre-emptive military offensive against Coalition forces at Khafji, Saudi Arabia on January 29, 1991, initiating the first ground confrontation of the Persian Gulf War. Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor called the Battle of Khafji “the most important clash of the six-week Persian Gulf War,” because it exposed the limited fighting capability and resolve of

Iraqi forces and demonstrated the tactical importance of Coalition air forces in the ground campaign.\textsuperscript{161} With the advantage of surprise, Iraqi forces were initially able to take Khafji, but Coalition forces quickly recovered and within days, Saudi, Qatari, and US forces reclaimed the town. Again, Saddam’s deterrence efforts backfired; rather than encouraging the US to withdraw, he exposed Iraqi military weakness.\textsuperscript{162} 

Finally, Saddam failed to deter through divisive concessions. The devastating aerial campaign and the failed Khafji offensive apparently convinced Baghdad that defeat was inevitable. Though the regime originally sought to play down the extent of Iraqi devastation, it ultimately admitted that the aerial campaign caused about $200 billion in damages, with 20,000 Iraqis killed and 60,000 injured.\textsuperscript{163} The Soviets, hoping to forestall total Iraqi collapse, once again offered to broker a negotiated settlement. Gorbachev called on Bush to end all military action, now that Iraq was militarily incapable of threatening its neighbors. Bush, however, rejected the idea that Iraq’s forces had been significantly weakened, or that Saddam would withdraw peacefully. While Saddam remained in power, he remained a threat.\textsuperscript{164} Nonetheless, after a meeting between Saddam and Soviet envoy Yevgeny Primakov, the Ba’athist Revolutionary Command Council announced on February 15 that it would comply with UN Resolution 660, calling for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. However, the Ba’athist Council soon added several stipulations to a final agreement. These included the nullification of all subsequent UN resolutions against Iraq and any prior debts Iraq owed, recognition of Iraqi “historical rights” in Kuwait, the inclusion of “nationalist and Islamic forces” in a reconstituted Kuwaiti regime, reparations from Coalition members for the aerial bombings, the complete

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\textsuperscript{161} Gordon and Trainor 1995, 286.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., Ch. 13.
\textsuperscript{163} Hiro 1992, 371.
\textsuperscript{164} “Telephone Conversation with President Mikhail Gorbachev of the USSR,” February 18, 1991, Presidential Telcon Files.
\end{flushleft}
withdrawal of all foreign forces from the Middle East and any weapons or equipment they provided to regimes during the crisis (i.e., Israel), and Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and the occupied territories, and if not, Israel would suffer the same sanctions currently imposed on Iraq. These conditions would return the Gulf region to the status quo following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait but prior to the arrival of Coalition forces and Iraqi annexation. Iraqi “historical rights” presumably included access to the Buibyan and Warba Islands and control over Kuwaiti oilfields, and the inclusion of pro-Iraqi forces in the Kuwaiti government would essentially re-establish the PFKG. Furthermore, Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and the occupied territories would solidify Saddam’s position as champion of the Palestinian cause and the Arab world. Finally, Iraq would be compensated for having invaded Kuwait. Altogether, this proposed settlement would result in the establishment of Iraqi authority in the Middle East, despite the apparent likelihood of Iraqi military defeat.

Not surprisingly, this offer was met unfavorably in Washington and amongst nearly all of the Coalition members. When Baghdad first announced its willingness to comply with Resolution 660, Bush admitted that “my emotion is not one of elation. … How do we guarantee the future peace? I don’t see how it will work with Saddam in power, and I am very, very wary.” Once Baghdad declared all its conditions, however, US officials were actually relieved that Saddam had drastically over-reached. Scowcroft noted, “The conditions made it easy to say no. … It has continued to baffle me that Saddam never made a plausible overture or proposal that would have allowed him to wiggle free. He could have tied us in knots.” Bush responded more angrily, declaring in a press conference that Saddam’s offer was a “cruel hoax” and further stating, “[T]here is another way for the bloodshed to stop and that is for the Iraqi military and the

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166 Bush and Scowcroft 1998, 471.
167 Ibid.
Iraqi people to take matters into their own hands to force Saddam Hussein, the dictator, to step aside, and to comply with UN resolutions, and then rejoin the family of peace-loving nations. We have no argument with the people of Iraq. Our differences are with that brutal dictator in Baghdad." Bush now publicly expressed his aim of Saddam’s overthrow by Iraqi forces, but his in specific designation of US successor preferences would come back to haunt him. Nevertheless, all Coalition members agreed that Baghdad’s proposal was unreasonable, and they once again demanded unconditional and immediate withdrawal.

Gorbachev presented another peace proposal, which called for an immediate cease-fire and release of all prisoners of war, Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait beginning the day after the cease-fire to be completed at a Yet,-to-be determined time frame, the cessation of UN sanctions on Iraq once 2/3 of Iraq forces had withdrawn from Kuwait, and the deployment of UN forces not composed of Coalition members to enforce the cease-fire. Once Iraq withdrew from Kuwait, all other UN resolutions regarding Iraq would be nullified. These conditions were not nearly as favorable to Iraq, but they still left Saddam in power, Iraqi military power intact, and the Kuwaiti regime composition unresolved. Saddam agreed to these terms reluctantly, as it meant relinquishing ownership, if not control, of Kuwait and abandoning the Palestinian cause. Washington, however, was reluctant to agree to a militarily powerful Iraq still ruled by Saddam Hussein. Scowcroft asserted, “If Saddam withdrew with most of his forces intact, we hadn’t really won. There were other problems with the plan: no mention of restoring the royal family, or of fulfilling other resolutions like reparations.”

Bush was now committed to the defeat and weakening of Iraqi military forces, which he believed would lead to Saddam’s downfall. In a notable exchange, Bush asked Powell whether

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he preferred a negotiated settlement without the use of military force. Powell answered, “If they met our conditions, totally, yes.” Bush responded, “If they crack under force, it is better than withdrawal.” Bush wanted not just military withdrawal, but regime collapse. Saddam saw the handwriting on the wall and began preparing for the Coalition ground offensive. He launched further Scud missile attacks against Israel and Saudi Arabia and set the Kuaiti oilfields on fire. This was both tactical, creating inhospitable battlefield conditions for Coalition forces, and vindictive, denying Kuait the oil that Iraq was denied. Saddam also ordered the withdrawal of Iraq’s best forces from Kuait, minimizing the loss of Iraqi military power and preparing for a possible invasion. Bush used Iraq’s Scud missile attacks and oilfield fires to claim that Saddam was disingenuous about a peaceful withdrawal, invalidating Gorbachev’s final attempt at a negotiated settlement. Ultimately then, Saddam failed to achieve deterrence through divisive concessions, because the Soviet Union was no longer the superpower it once was. Saddam apparently hoped Gorbachev would present his proposal to the Security Council, which would either force the US to relent or at least temporarily stymie Coalition efforts. However, Bush rejected Gorbachev’s efforts outright, and Gorbachev was no longer in the position to offer meaningful resistance. Bush was now committed to weakening Iraq and removing Saddam from power, albeit indirectly, and no action short of complete Iraqi capitulation could change that.

Failure of Indirect Regime Change

Coalition aims were fourfold: expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuait, restoration of the al-Sabah regime, decimation of Iraqi military forces, and the encouragement of regime change in Iraq. The Coalition accomplished the former two more easily than expected. Indeed, Operation

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
  \item Ib, 477.
  \item Hiro 1992, 371, 381-382.
\end{itemize}}
Desert Sabre, the Coalition ground offensive, was over almost as soon as it began. Desert Sabre began on February 24 with Coalition forces attacking from both the left and right flanks in the Saudi and Kuwaiti deserts, with the intention of completely enveloping the Iraqi army. Powell boldly laid out the military strategy: “Our strategy in going after this army is very simple. First we are going to cut it off, and then we are going to kill it.” However, this plan quickly proved unnecessary in reclaiming Kuwait, as unexpected Marine success and Iraqi strategic retreat drastically changed the battlefield dynamics. According to the original plan, US Marines were to launch a minor assault on Iraqi entrenchments in preparation for the major assault by heavily armored forces already positioned in the Saudi desert. However, the Marines went beyond their pre-determined goals and came close to conquering Kuwait City by themselves. They only relented in order to wait for Egyptian forces, as the Coalition agreed that Arab forces should liberate Kuwait City. The Marine assault led Iraqi troops to retreat even faster, while the other Coalition forces were still moving along the pre-established time table. It now appeared that the retreating Iraqi military would be defeated but remain intact.

This, in fact, was Saddam’s plan. On February 24, the day that Desert Sabre began, Saddam announced that Iraq would comply with UN Resolution 660 and withdraw from Kuwait, though he refused to renounce Iraqi sovereignty over Kuwait. Bush rejected this appeal, since it did not include acceptance of all the UN resolutions, including renunciation of sovereignty over Kuwait and recognition of the previous regime. Nonetheless, as Iraqi troops withdrew from Kuwait, accelerated by Marine success, the Coalition was losing its rationale for further aggression. Aerial forces, therefore, began targeting retreating Iraqi forces. Bush declared that aerial forces would not fire upon any retreating troops who abandoned their weapons and

military vehicles, but otherwise they were still considered threats and thus legitimate targets.\textsuperscript{177} The subsequent attack on retreating Iraqi forces led many to accuse the Coalition of engaging in a “turkey shoot” against fleeing Iraqi “sitting ducks” on the “Highway of Death.”\textsuperscript{178} There was increasing international pressure for a cease-fire, and Moscow threatened to introduce a resolution to the Security Council demanding an end to the fighting.\textsuperscript{179} Powell warned the President, “We don’t want to be seen as killing for the sake of killing.” Bush agreed and ordered Powell to consult with Schwarzkopf regarding an immediate cease-fire.\textsuperscript{180} Schwarzkopf, in response, held a briefing, in which he declared the Coalition had achieved its military objectives, stating, “We almost completely destroyed the offensive capability of the Iraqi forces in the Kuwait theater of operations. The gates are closed. … That doesn’t mean that civilian vehicles are not escaping, that innocent civilians aren’t escaping, or unarmed Iraqis. … I’m talking about the gate being closed on their military machine.”\textsuperscript{181} This ended up being a gross exaggeration with severe consequences, but it nevertheless convinced the White House that it was safe to declare a cease-fire, which it did on February 28, 1991.

Arab Coalition predictions that Iraqis would rebel against Saddam following defeat quickly came to pass. Riyadh even had a successor regime, composed of former Ba’athists and army officers and led by a Sunni Tikriti, ready to fill the void once an army uprising occurred.\textsuperscript{182} The uprising did, indeed, begin among soldiers stationed in Kuwait and on the Iraqi-Kuwait border who had deserted or surrendered to Coalition forces. However, these were Shia soldiers, who had faced the brunt of the Coalition ground offensive and were most exposed to Coalition

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{177} Hiro 1992, 385.
\item \textsuperscript{179} Gordon and Trainor 1995, 396.
\item \textsuperscript{180} C. Powell 1995, 521.
\item \textsuperscript{181} Quoted in Gordon and Trainor 1995, 417.
\item \textsuperscript{182} Heikal 1992, 317.
\end{itemize}
propaganda explicitly calling on Iraqis to overthrow Saddam.\textsuperscript{183} Those Shia who surrendered linked up with Shia deserters and began an uprising in southern Iraq against the Ba’athist regime on March 2. The uprising was quickly co-opted by Iraqi Shia recently returned from Iran and funded and equipped by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. Within a week, they had taken control of most of the southern Shia cities, including Basra, Karbala, and Najaf, and Iranian President Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani called on Saddam to step down.\textsuperscript{184} Kurdish military forces, who remained loyal to Baghdad during the fighting, believed the regime was about to fall and launched an uprising in northern Iraq as well. They quickly took over many of the provinces in Kurdistan. Within two weeks of the cease-fire, the Ba’athists only controlled the three provinces of the Sunni Triangle in central Iraq: Baghdad, Mosul, and Anbar.\textsuperscript{185}

Nonetheless, Saddam was able to hold onto power, due to Sunni fears of ethnic encirclement and direct actions taken by his regime. The uprisings in northern and southern Iraq were not only threats to Saddam’s personal hold on power, but also to the privileged position Sunnis held in Ba’athist Iraq. This was especially true of the Republican Guard, composed almost entirely of Sunnis and led by Tikritis. While Shia forces were sent to occupy and defend Kuwait, the Republican Guard was stationed in the Iraqi interior to combat invading Coalition forces. The Republican Guard was, therefore, spared when Coalition forces stopped short.\textsuperscript{186} It was now ready and able to defeat the anti-Ba’athist uprisings. Yet, it was not only Sunnis who opposed the insurrections. Secular Shia soldiers, particularly those who neither deserted nor were captured, remained loyal to the regime and opposed what they saw as foreign Iranian encroachment. These Shia forces had previously resisted Iranian calls for Shia solidarity during

\textsuperscript{183} Gordon and Trainor 1995, 317; Mackey 2002, 284.
\textsuperscript{186} Al-Marashi and Salama 2008, 184; Gordon and Trainor 1995, 412.
the Iran-Iraq War, privileging their Iraqi Arab identity over their religious one. Sandra Mackey suggests, “Perhaps to the surprise of the army itself, Baghdad’s decades of nation-building … and the long war with Iran had aroused within the army a genuine desire to hold together the country the British had so poorly conceived.” In addition, Saddam employed his standard combination of pay-offs, promotions, and purges. He increased food rations and pardoned all deserters, hoping to further win over disaffected Shia. He gave raises to all security force members in reflection of their importance to the regime, with army conscripts receiving an extra 20 dinars, security services 50 dinars, and the Republican Guard 100 dinars. Saddam also reshuffled the government, promoting those considered most loyal and brutal and purging those he deemed incompetent or feared would launch a coup. With his regime consolidated and his Sunni-secular Shia base behind him, Saddam could now focus on combating the greatest internal threat his regime had ever faced.

Saddam was greatly assisted by unexpected Coalition neutrality. In his speech announcing the cease-fire, President Bush made an oblique reference to regime change in Iraq, saying, “Coalition forces … look forward to the day when Iraq is led by people prepared to live in peace with their neighbors.” Writing in his diary, Bush was more direct: “[Saddam’s] got to go[,] … Obviously when the troops straggle home with no armor, beaten up, 50,000 … and maybe more dead, the people of Iraq will know [they were defeated].” Yet, when returning Iraqi soldiers did straggle home and revolt, Coalition forces did nothing to support them. The Coalition expected the uprising to be Baghdad-centric, removing Saddam and possibly his top cohort, but still maintaining the overall bureaucracy under the leadership of a new moderate

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188 Mackey 2002, 296.
189 Freedman and Karsh 1993, 419.
military government. The Saudi government-in-waiting was only intended as a focal point in case of a chaotic military coup. However, it was the outer provinces that revolted, while the military and Baghdad bureaucracy remained loyal to Saddam. Ankara and Riyadh feared that the respective uprisings in northern and southern Iraq would spark similar uprisings among Kurds and Shia in their countries. Shia contagion was particularly threatening to the US, as it was clearly supported and financed by Tehran, with the stated aim of creating an Iranian-style Islamic republic in Iraq. Saddam sent the Republican Guard first to southern Iraq, where in a week’s time, the Guard suppressed the Shia rebellion with horrific brutality and destroyed many of the Shia’s most sacred shrines. The Republican Guard then turned north to defeat the Kurdish insurgency. The Kurds, who had very recently been victim to the Ba’ath regime’s chemical warfare, fled Iraq for Iran and Turkey. Over one million Kurds risked the mountainous borderlands rather than face Ba’athist vengeance. The Iraqi rebels expected Coalition support against a wounded and battered Ba’athist regime, but instead found themselves fighting alone against a well-equipped and largely unscathed military force seeking retribution after the humiliating loss to the West. Powell later callously commented, “Neither revolt had a chance. Nor, frankly, was their success a goal of our policy. … [O]ur practical intention was to leave Baghdad enough power to survive as a threat to an Iran that remained bitterly hostile towards the United States.”

Once Iraqi forces were out of Kuwait, the US was most intent on declaring victory and going home. When Schwarzkopf met with Iraqis to discuss a permanent cease-fire, he mainly focused on the return of all Kuwaiti and Coalition prisoners of war and promised the Iraqis that

195 C. Powell 1995, 530-531.
Coalition forces would soon withdraw from Iraq. Schwarzkopf also granted the Iraqi request to use helicopters for transport, on the condition that they not use any fixed-wing aircraft and that no Iraqi helicopters be allowed in Coalition-held territory. Helicopter use would soon prove instrumental in defeating the insurgencies.\footnote{Gordon and Trainor 1995, 443-450; Schwarzkopf 1992, 485-490. Heikal (1992, 319) claims that “it was obvious that the Iraq government was also likely to use the helicopters in the civil war. Schwarzkopf’s decision to grant the request reflected pressure from the Saudi government, which was growing alarmed at the large amounts of Iranian aid being given to the Shia rebels.” This seems unlikely, however, since these negotiations took place only one day after the revolts began, when it was still largely driven by former Shia soldiers, and Iranian influence was not that pronounced. Schwarzkopf likely gave little thought to the condition, as his main focus was the release of Coalition POWs. In fact, he apparently hoped that returning Iraqi soldiers would encourage a military revolt, which further explains Saddam’s decision to pardon all deserters.} In addition, Baghdad agreed to the recently passed UN Resolution 686, which called on Iraq to renounce its annexation of Kuwait, recognize the 1963 borders, pay reparations for all damage caused during the occupation, and return all Kuwaiti prisoners and property transported to Iraq.\footnote{Freedman and Karsh 1993, 418.} In a sense, Saddam again adopted a strategy of divisive concessions towards the Coalition, conceding all of the important external issues, so he could have a free hand regarding internal matters. It is unclear what the Coalition would have done had Saddam not agreed to their terms, but Coalition forces were certainly well placed to cause him further problems. In the final hours before the cease-fire took effect, the US had reinitiated aerial assaults on Baghdad in one last attempt to topple Saddam’s regime.\footnote{Gordon and Trainor 1995, 408-411.} Coalition forces were positioned to further reinitiate air and ground operations if Baghdad failed to comply with Coalition conditions. Indeed, in July, Bush threatened to reinitiate aerial bombing when Baghdad tried to limit UN access to its WMD facilities.\footnote{Heikal 1992, 322.} Saddam apparently believed total concession was necessary to pre-empt further Coalition attacks and possible support for the rebels, which likely was correct.
Saddam’s survival posed a problem strategically and diplomatically. Despite Iraq’s battlefield defeat, Iraq was still had one of the strongest militaries in the Middle East, along with its stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons and its plans for the development of nuclear weapons. Once US forces withdrew from the Middle East, Iraq would again be able to threaten its neighbors. Moreover, the brutal suppression of the sectarian uprisings was both a human rights catastrophe and a terrible embarassment for the UN Coalition, which heretofore favored regime change in Iraq. The Coalition’s neutrality now made it appear complicit in the Ba’athist slaughter. UN responded to both problems with Resolutions 687 and 688, respectively. Resolution 687 reiterated many of the points of Resolution 686 and further demanded the unconditional destruction or removal of all materials related to the WMD production. In addition, Baghdad had to provide a full list of the amount and types of weapons produced and their facility locations, so that international observers could verify their complete destruction and removal. If Saddam was to remain in power, then Iraq would need to be drastically weakened, so as to pose no threat to its neighbors. Baghdad agreed to this resolution as well, though it declared the resolution a violation of its sovereignty and an institutionalization of American hegemony in the Middle East.\(^{200}\) Baghdad was much more resistant to Resolution 688. This resolution condemned Baghdad’s repression of the Iraqi uprisings and commission of other human rights abuses and demanded that international humanitarian organizations be given access to those in need of assistance. The European Community proposed a plan to go even further, creating a UN-enforced safe haven in northern Iraq for returning Kurdish refugees and making the lifting of the economic blockade conditional of a cessation of all atrocities against Iraqi civilians. Baghdad refused to comply with Resolution 688, but the United States and Great Britain still sent a force of 5,000 troops to northern Iraq to clear the Kurdish cities of Iraqi forces

\(^{200}\) Hiro 1992, 408.
and provide the Kurdish refugees safe re-entry. The Iraqi forces put up no resistance, the Kurds safely returned to their cities, and Anglo-American forces withdrew peacefully later that year.\footnote{Ibid., 408-410; Freedman and Karsh 1993, 421-425; Heikal 1992, 321; Pollack 2002, 51.} The crisis, nonetheless, demonstrated that Saddam would remain a problem as long as he was in power. The US decided to put sanctions on Iraq until Saddam Hussein stepped down or was removed from power. For the remainder of Bush’s time in office, US policy towards Iraq was indirect regime change through sanctions. Even this went beyond Bush’s original wish to remain uninvolved in Iraqi internal affairs, but this still did little to destabilize Saddam’s totalitarian rule. Having failed to impose regime change through military coup, the US reverted to an indefinite strategy of regime change through coercive sanctions.\footnote{Freedman and Karsh 1993, 426; Hiro 2001, 52}

**Conclusion**

Beginning with his war initiation against Iran in July 1980, Saddam Hussein demonstrated a relentless aggression in his goal of establishing Iraqi authority over the Middle East. Following the Iran-Iraq War and the end of the Cold War, the Bush administration hoped to integrate Iraq into the new US-led “new world order.” The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and subsequent Iraqi obstinacy ended the already tenuous “alliance of convenience” between Iraq and the United States and reinforced the traditional adversarial relationship. The brief US “alliance of convenience” did not provide sufficient time for Washington to make substantive connections with any potential members of a reliable successor regime. Regime change in Baghdad, therefore, required the US to engage in a military overthrow operation, postwar governance, and future enforcement. These concomitant costs of regime change were too great for the Bush administration, given fierce Arab and American opposition to a US foreign
occupation, along with the administration’s own apprehensions. Yet, it appeared that there would never be peace in the Middle East while Saddam remained in power. Iraq had a near-unlimited supply of oil wealth, which could finance his goals to develop WMD programs, disrupt any plans for an Arab-Israeli peace settlement, and achieve Iraqi hegemony in the Middle East. This did not pose an existential threat to the United States per se, but the Bush administration still believed Saddam’s survival created a grave dilemma requiring a more permanent solution.

The Bush administration, therefore, adopted an indirect regime change strategy, in which Coalition military victory would likely lead to a coup in Baghdad. The Coalition focused their military strategy on targeting Saddam’s leadership and coercive apparatus, a strategy that simultaneously decapitated Iraqi military command structure and weakened the regime’s coercive controls. The Arab Coalition members assured Bush that another military defeat would cause the disgruntled military leadership to depose Saddam and establish a moderate military regime in the model of other US-aligned regimes in the Middle East.

Nevertheless, despite Iraqi military defeat, Saddam and the Ba’ath regime survived. The United States could not overcome the agency problems created by the US-Iraqi adversarial relationship. Given these weak connections, the US was unable to actively coordinate with any potential members of a reliable successor regime inside Iraq and instead believed that the destruction of Saddam’s coercive network would be sufficient to inspire a coup. Yet, the Coalition was also unsuccessful at destroying Saddam’s loyalist Republican Guard, since Saddam wisely withdrew them from Kuwait to protect his power center in Baghdad. Mackey notes that Saddam “fought the Gulf War like a Bedouin. … As the sheikh of Iraq, Saddam Hussein never sent his best troops to Kuwait. Instead, he held important units of the well-armed, lavishly paid, and fiercely loyal Republican Guards in reserve to ensure his personal protection
Moreover, Saddam co-opted those who the Coalition hoped would launch a coup. It is possible that the assurances from Middle East Coalition members about a likely military coup were initially correct, but Saddam successfully pre-empted such efforts. Saddam was more skilled at domestic intrigue and survival than foreign military ventures. Nonetheless, Saddam did face an existential threat from simultaneous sectarian uprisings in the Shia south and the Kurdish north, but this only further solidified the military and the secular Arabs behind his regime. Nevertheless, these uprisings still may have succeeded had they received Coalition support. To the Coalition, though, the uprisings’ success posed a greater threat than Saddam’s survival. The strong Shia ties to Iran and the likelihood of a destabilizing civil war made clear that these uprisings would not result in the installation of a reliable successor regime. Bush and Scowcroft state in their joint memoir, “While we hoped that a popular revolt or coup would topple Saddam, neither the United States nor the countries of the region wished to see the breakup of the Iraqi state.”

The US, therefore, shifted to more limited aims of stripping Iraq of its military strength and WMD programs. Following the Republican Guards’ brutal defeat of the two uprisings, the UN passed resolutions to inspect and dismantle all of Iraq’s WMD programs. Without a reliable regime in Baghdad, future enforcement became all the more important. Yet, there was still a consensus in the Bush administration that Iraqi regime change was necessary for Middle East peace. Washington recognized that regime change failure was due to its own failure to cultivate a reliable successor regime. Going forward, US policymakers worked to rectify that mistake.

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Chapter Six
Operation Iraqi Freedom: The Triumph and Trials of US Regime Change in Iraq

[1] If you are asked a question, “Can you disarm Iraq without changing its regime?” your answer would have to be, “No, of course you can’t,” because if Saddam was actually to come into compliance 100% ... he would have had a personality transplant, a soul transplant. He would not have been Saddam Hussein.

Sir Christopher Meyer, British Ambassador to the United States

It has been rightly said that no war plan survives first contact with the enemy. It is also true that no postwar plan is likely to survive first contact with the former enemy.

RAND study of US occupation of Iraq

Introduction

In the years following the Persian Gulf War, the relationship between the United States and Iraq became even more overtly and intensely adversarial. Yet, Washington learned from its failed regime change experience in 1991 and worked to cultivate an Iraqi opposition to depose Saddam Hussein. Saddam still did not pose an existential threat worth bearing the costs of directly imposing regime change, but the US still sought to cause his downfall. Nonetheless, the Ba’athist security network continually defeated all attempts at indirect regime change, which seemed to ensure Saddam’s survival. Then, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, drastically altered the threat calculus for George W. Bush administration. It turned the possibility of Iraqi cooperation with terrorist non-state actors into an existential threat and finally led to considerations of directly imposed regime change. Initially, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Secretary of State Colin Powell convinced Bush to once again use coercive diplomacy through the United Nations to convince Saddam to allow the inspectors to return. However,

1 Quoted in Coughlin 2006, 224.
2 Dobbins et al. 2009, xliii.
when the inspection teams did not find the expected WMD, Bush and Blair were convinced that regime change was necessary to enforce international authority.

Given the intensely adversarial relationship between Iraq and the United States and US perception of Saddam as an existential threat, the theory would predict that the US would impose regime change directly and bear the concomitant costs. This is ultimately what happened. However, the Bush administration still sought to avoid paying the full costs of regime change. US cultivation of several Iraqi opposition groups during the previous decade convinced many in the Bush administration, including the President, that they could impose transformative regime change without a significant postwar commitment. They believed their connections to these opposition groups obviated the agency problems involved in imposing regime change on a long-time adversary. These groups had connections to security forces in Iraq, and their long ties to the US provided assurance about successor regime compliance. However, these opposition groups were likewise ignorant about the true conditions in Iraq, having been in exile for many years and even decades. Their reports and those from other CIA sources suggested that Iraq was a well-functioning state living under Ba’athist tyranny. If outside forces removed the regime, the state ministries and the police and military forces would remain functional, but Iraq would be rid of its domestic oppression and foreign aggression. Furthermore, Iraqi exiles assured the Bush administration that Coalition forces would be “greeted as liberators” by thankful Iraqis. Brandeis Professor and renowned Iraqi dissident Kanan Makiya, whose book *Republic of Fear* first exposed the Ba’athist totalitarian state, assured President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney that the Iraqi people would greet Coalition troops “with flowers and sweets.”\(^3\) Finally, Bush feared that a long-term foreign occupation would spark fears of Western imperialism and provoke domestic and regional hostility. The administration plan, therefore, called for

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\(^3\) Woodward 2004, 259.
significant regime change but at a rapid pace with minimal troop deployments. According to National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, “The concept was that we would defeat the army, but the institutions would hold, everything from ministries to police forces. You would be able to bring new leadership, but we were going to keep the body in place.”

Actual regime change proved much different than Coalition expectations. Coalition forces ultimately faced what CENTCOM Commander Tommy Franks called a “catastrophic success,” in which Iraq’s governing and security apparatus disintegrated, leaving a security vacuum that Coalition forces were unprepared to fill. The subsequent weeks of devastating looting caused irreparable material and psychological damage to the liberated Iraqis. Even worse, Ba’athist paramilitaries, foreign jihadis, and the Shia-Sadrist Mahdi Army began a series of insurgencies that engulfed significant parts of Iraq. The unexpected chaos in Iraq caused a dramatic reassessment in Washington. The US established the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), which one study called “at one and the same time, an element of the Defense Department, a multi-national organization, and a foreign government.” The CPA was tasked to govern Iraq and construct a reliable successor regime with governing competence and aligned interests. It focused its efforts on reconstituting the Iraqi regular military and police forces after they “self-demobilized” and were then officially dissolved. The US also remained committed to establishing a liberal democratic successor regime, but CPA officials made sure to constitutionally strengthen the position of the pro-Western Kurds at the expense of the pro-Iranian Shia. The United States and the full international community recognized the imposed Iraqi successor regime in June 2004, but Coalition forces remained for another six years to help stabilize the country. Despite attempts at prior successor selection, the agency problems

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4 Gordon and Trainor 2006, 163.
5 Bensahel et al. 2008, 8.
involved in adversarial regime change still led to a long-term occupation and costly enforcement investments.

This remainder of this chapter proceeds as follows. The next section details the decade of adversarial relations between the United States and Iraq from the end of the Persian Gulf War to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The US enforced UN sanctions against Iraq and cultivated numerous opposition groups in order to indirectly impose regime change. Saddam, however, developed an intricate intelligence and paramilitary network, which stymied these attempts. The third section explains how the September 11 attacks ultimately led to Operation Iraqi Freedom, the military operation to overthrow the Ba’ath regime. While there is great controversy concerning the motives and rationality of the key decision-makers, namely Bush and Saddam, I present a more strategic account involving rational deception and misperception and enduring commitment problems.\footnote{Cf. Duelfer and Dyson 2011; Harvey 2012; Lake 2010/11; Thrall and Kramer 2009.} The fourth section details US regime change preparation, operation, and aftermath. Postwar planning was marked by bureaucratic infighting and an emphasis on short-term humanitarian crises rather than long-term governance. The rapid defeat and overthrow of the Ba’ath regime quickly exposed the erroneous prewar assumptions about the postwar environment. The US and Great Britain were forced to endure a much longer occupation period than they originally expected. Nevertheless, they did establish a nascent democratic regime that was led, at least initially, by Western-leaning secular nationalists. The final section provides a concluding summary.

**Iraq and US “Containment Plus” Policy**

Saddam’s unexpected survival following his defeat in the Persian Gulf War did not change US preference for regime change in Baghdad. Deputy National Security Advisor Robert
Gates testified before Congress in October 1991, “Saddam’s leadership will never be accepted by the world community. Therefore, Iraqis will pay the price while he remains in power. … Any easing of sanctions will only be considered when there is a new government.” Following Bill Clinton’s election in November 1992, the rhetoric regarding regime change changed, but the goal did not. The US adopted a two-pronged strategy: maintaining the Gulf War sanctions regime and cultivating a reliable Iraqi opposition to overthrow Saddam. Sanctions were meant to keep the pressure on the Ba’ath regime to fully disarm and hopefully inspire a coup or uprising against Saddam. The Clinton administration adhered to the Bush policy, outlined in Gates’ statement, that the Iraqi people would pay the price for Saddam’s continued rule. It, therefore, was up to them to end their own suffering. Yet, unlike during the Gulf War, Washington would not wait passively while a home-grown opposition inevitably materialized. Instead, the US worked to cultivate a united movement of Iraqi opposition groups to overthrow Saddam and compose a reliable successor regime. The UN-mandated no-fly zone over northern Iraq provided a base of operations for the CIA and the Iraqi opposition within Iraqi territory. To most observers, Saddam’s days in power appeared numbered.

However, in the decade following his Gulf War defeat, Saddam was once again able to survive US regime change efforts. His security and intelligence forces defeated a series of coup attempts, and Iraqi opposition groups fractured due to internal divisions and insufficient US commitment. Moreover, as Saddam’s hold on power appeared unbreakable, international support for continued sanctions began to unravel. The sanctions regime did in fact bring great suffering to the Iraqi people, as Gates suggested, but the strength of Saddam’s security forces prevented any uprisings. Instead of blaming the Ba’ath regime for Iraqi suffering, many blamed the US for valuing absolute security over innocent lives. Occasional Anglo-American military

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strikes, culminating in Operation Desert Fox in December 1998, only further turned international opinion away from the US and the sanctions regime. In addition, many countries wanted to restore business ties with Iraq and purchase Iraqi oil industry. By the end of the Clinton administration, Baghdad had developed an elaborate smuggling network that allowed it to get around the UN sanctions, even while the Iraqi people continued to suffer. Saddam had surprisingly survived another US President.

*Saddam’s Regime*

The Persian Gulf War and the subsequent Shia and Kurdish uprisings were the greatest challenges to Saddam Hussein’s rule since he became President in July 1979. Though Saddam survived these twin crises, he recognized his control over power had become tenuous. Ba’athist regime members, the military, and the Sunni and secular Shia population rallied around him, because of their fear of sectarian encirclement, Iranian expansionism, and loss of power. Once the uprisings were defeated, however, Saddam needed to secure his own position. He began by drastically reducing the size of the armed forces and the Republican Guard, eliminating several corps and divisions and decommissioning nearly 100,000 soldiers. This was done to eliminate excess expenditures and weaken the military in the face of ongoing coup threats. These threats were not imagined. Iraqi security agencies uncovered coup plots in May 1991 and in June 1992, both of which included high-ranking generals in the regular army and Republican Guard and involved foreign support from Washington, London, and Tehran.

Saddam responded by creating even more intelligence agencies and paramilitary organizations, or, as some scholars called them, “anti-armies.” These all had overlapping responsibilities of military surveillance, intelligence gathering, and dissent suppression. This

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diluted the strength of any one particular military force and instead broke them up into competing security forces, each reporting directly to Saddam. Furthermore, to prevent coups from developing within these organizations, Saddam constantly rotated the leadership of these organizations, so no leader ever became too comfortable or too confident. He also learned over time to spread leadership of these organizations to different tribes and different segments of the Ba’athist Party, so no particular base within his regime had too much power.\textsuperscript{12} This did not, however, apply to the Special Security Organization (SSO) and the Fedayeen Saddam, which were each led by one of Saddam’s two sons. Qusay Hussein, Saddam’s second son and heir presumptive, led the SSO, which supplanted the Republican Guard in providing personal protection for Saddam and the high-ranking Ba’athist leadership and coordinating all of the surveillance concerning the military. Udayy Hussein, Saddam’s oldest son, led the Fedayeen Saddam.\textsuperscript{13} The Fedayeen Saddam began as a paramilitary that was involved in creating a general sense of state terror among the population. However, it gradually took on responsibility for discovering and disrupting potential uprisings among the general population, particularly the Shia, and regulating the black market system that developed due to sanctions. Udayy later became head of the Ministry of Religious Endowment as well, as part of the increased religiosity of the Ba’athist regime that began with the Iran-Iraq War and greatly accelerated following the Persian Gulf War. The Fedayeen, therefore, became enforcers of Islamic societal standards, publicly deforming and beheading those accused. By 2002, the Fedayeen were among the most loyal, fanatical, and best-equipped paramilitaries in Iraq.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{12} Hiro 2001, 55-57; Post and Baram 24-25, 28-29; Woods et al. 2006, viii, 27, 48-55.
\textsuperscript{13} Saddam temporarily dismissed Udayy as head of the Fedayeen Saddam in the wake of the Hussein Kamil defection, discussed below.
\textsuperscript{14} Pollack 2002b, 121; Post and Baram 2002, 25-26, 53; Woods et al. 2006, 51-55.
Sanctions Regime

The Clinton administration ostensibly changed US policy from seeking regime change in Iraq to merely seeking policy change in Iraq, that is, compliance with all UN resolutions. However, in practice, Clinton administration policy differed little from the Bush policy of regime change through coercive sanctions. Under UN Resolution 661, passed during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, Iraq could neither buy nor sell goods internationally, except for medical or humanitarian purposes, until it was compliant with all relevant UN resolutions. UN Resolution 670 restricted all flights to and from Iraq carrying non-humanitarian cargo. Washington interpreted this resolution broadly, forbidding all passenger flights to and from Iraq. Most notably, UN Resolution 687 called for the unconditional destruction or removal of all materials related to the WMD development and ballistic missile technology. Saddam considered these resolutions violations of Iraqi sovereignty, but reluctantly consented to them in order to prevent Coalition support of the sectarian uprisings. Sanctions were to be lifted once inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) verified that Iraq no longer contained any WMD-related materials and missile-related technology. Inspections from July through September 1991 revealed that Iraq had several kilograms of undisclosed natural and enriched uranium, over 1,000 tons of liquid never gas, over 11,000 chemical warheads, 2.2 tons of heavy water for nuclear reactors, and several trunks of documents detailing the existence of a secret nuclear weapons program. The UN was shocked by these discoveries, and the Security Council passed Resolution 707, demanding the inspection teams have “immediate, unconditional, and unrestricted access” to all designated sites, with flyover rights using their own aircraft. Saddam once again accused the UN of violating Iraqi

15 See Chapter 5.
sovereignty, but again relented. Nevertheless, he formed the Concealment Operations Committee, with Qusay at the head, to hinder further discoveries by UNSCOM and the IAEA.\textsuperscript{16}

The sanctions failed to cause Saddam’s downfall, but they did cause great damage to Iraqi society. Iraqi infrastructure was greatly damaged by the war, and Iraqi inability to sell oil crippled reconstruction efforts. Scarce goods and government rationing caused hyper-inflation, which further weakened the Iraqi economy and created an illicit black market economy. There were also severe limits on the amount of food that could be imported, which proved devastating as Iraq suffered a series of bad harvests. Humanitarian agencies began reporting on the detrimental effects among the Iraqi population, particularly children. Iraqi medical services and sanitation processes were also hindered by the inability to rebuild Iraqi infrastructure, which caused the spread of various diseases. Altogether, the sanctions proved devastating to Iraq society, but nevertheless failed to topple the ruling Iraqi regime.\textsuperscript{17} Indeed, Saddam purposely forestalled alleviation of the suffering to maintain his hold on power. In particular, he refused to sell Iraqi oil under the auspices provided by UN Resolutions 706 and 712, passed in August and September 1991. These resolutions established the oil-for-food program, which allowed Iraq to sell $1.6 billion worth of oil during a sixth month period and use those profits to purchase food. Baghdad condemned the oil-for-food program as a violation of Iraqi sovereignty, since it required that Iraqi oil revenues be placed in a UN-controlled escrow account. The Ba’ath regime nationalized Iraqi oil in 1972 and viewed UN control as a form of de-nationalization.

Moreover, Saddam hoped international outrage over Iraqi suffering would force UN to end sanctions and feared that acceptance of oil-for-food would make these restrictions permanent. Iraqi suffering did, in fact, create increasing international sympathy for Iraq.

\textsuperscript{17} Cordesman and Hashim 1997, 140-143; Hiro 2001, 64-66; Pollack 2002b, 127-133.
Reports of widespread disease and malnutrition convinced the China, France, and Russia to seek a less stringent oil-for-food plan. France and Russia had long-standing commercial and military ties to Iraq, and China sought to purchase Iraqi oil to fuel its rapidly growing economy. Moreover, these three countries opposed what they saw as Anglo-American intransigence and bullying. They, therefore, introduced Resolution 986, in response to Iraqi complaints that $1.6 billion in revenues was not sufficient to feed Iraqi population. Resolution 986 allowed for $1 billion in oil sales every three months over a year-long period. However, Iraq would only receive 45% of those proceeds. The rest was allocated for Gulf War reparations to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, humanitarian aid to the Kurdish areas, and UN operational costs. Baghdad balked at this well, viewing any level of UN control as a violation of Iraqi sovereignty. Nevertheless, concurrent events would ultimately force Baghdad’s hand.18

Since the end of the Gulf War, Baghdad continually resisted compliance with the UN resolutions. Qusay’s Concealment Operations Committee had successfully convinced UNSCOM that Baghdad had revealed all its WMD stockpiles and concomitant technology, and by 1994, UNSCOM was ready to report that Baghdad was in compliance with Resolution 687. At Baghdad’s request, Moscow proposed a resolution to lift the oil embargo on Iraq. Washington, however, resisted these efforts, as its ultimate goal was Saddam’s downfall. On October 7, Saddam responded by ordering two Republican Guard divisions into southern Iraq within twenty miles buffer zone with Kuwait. He then called on the UN to set a date for lifting the oil embargo. Washington responded by mobilizing all its nearby forces, including Marines and aircraft carriers, into the Persian Gulf to make absolutely clear US resolve. There would be no repeat of August 1990. Saddam immediately backed down and withdrew Iraqi forces. At Moscow’s urging, Saddam even personally signed a new UN resolution recognizing the current

Iraqi-Kuwaiti border. Russia hoped in exchange for this Iraqi concession, the Security Council would set a date for ending the embargo. However, the United States again nixed such efforts.\(^{19}\)

The defection of Hussein Kamel on August 8, 1995 dealt Baghdad an even greater blow. Kamel was the director of the Military Industrialization Establishment and Saddam’s son-in-law. He apparently fled because of an ongoing familial power struggle with Udayy.\(^{20}\) Kamel not only brought with him his brother and Saddam’s two daughters (his brother was married to Saddam’s other daughter), but also thousands of documents detailing Iraq’s hidden WMD cache. In particular, Kamel revealed Qusay’s Concealment Committee and the development of a biological weapons program. Baghdad responded by blaming this deception on Kamel and expressed its willingness to fully cooperate with UNSCOM. When the inspectors returned to Iraq later that month, officials revealed that they had developed biological weapons and installed them on both bombs and warheads. They also “discovered” over a half-million documents detailing Iraq’s illicit weapons program, including nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Iraqi officials reported that Kamel hid these documents in a chicken coop, where they were uncovered following his defection.\(^{21}\) The UN discovered that Iraq’s weapons program was even more advanced than believed in 1991. A chastened Saddam agreed to destroy all further WMD caches and enter into negotiations concerning the oil-for-food program. The UN Food and Agricultural Organization reported that over a quarter of the Iraqi population was severely malnourished, and Iraq was in danger of experiencing a famine. Because the Kamel revelations upended much of the previous international goodwill, Saddam had little choice but to consent to Resolution 986, which Iraq

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\(^{19}\) Hiro 2001, 79-81; Pollack 2002b, 68-70. Amatzia Baram suggests that Saddam initiated this crisis to distract Iraqi attention from newly instituted ration cuts. See Baram 1998, 68-69.


officially did on May 20, 1996. These concessions encouraged Washington and the Iraqi exile opposition in the belief that Saddam’s days were numbered.

**US Opposition Cultivation and Indirect Regime Change Failure**

The US learned two important lessons from the Persian Gulf War. First, it must respond immediately and overwhelmingly to any Iraqi military provocation. Hence, the US responded strongly when Republican Guard divisions moved south towards Kuwait in October 1994. Second, imposing regime change indirectly would require cultivating a reliable successor regime. US policymakers still favored a Baghdad coup orchestrated by Sunni Ba’athists and military officers, believing this was the best means of maintaining a stable Iraqi state and an anti-Iranian Iraqi regime. However, Saddam’s proliferation of anti-armies made coup success unlikely, as the failure of coup attempts in May 1991 and June 1992 made clear. Washington, therefore, decided to organize all the disparate Iraqi opposition groups into an umbrella organization secretly funded by the United States to better coordinate regime change strategy. In October 1992, many of the leading Iraqi opposition groups met in Saluddin in northern Iraq, protected by the UN-mandated no-fly zone, and formed the Iraqi National Congress (INC). The vision for the INC was like that of the United Nations, in which disparate groups would settle their internecine disputes and better coordinate their efforts to depose Saddam. This would also allow the US to better align the Iraqi opposition’s goals with American interests. Washington handpicked Ahmad Chalabi to serve as head of the INC. Chalabi was the scion of an exiled Iraqi Shiite family long opposed to the Ba’athist regime. He was ousted as head of the Petra Bank of Jordan in 1989, which he claimed was due to pressure from Baghdad. Washington selected him as head of the INC, because of his deep managerial experience and shallow

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connections with the different opposition groups. The Americans hoped Chalabi would be an objective, competent, and controllable manager of the INC. He ultimately proved to be none.\textsuperscript{24}

American efforts at indirect regime change were severely crippled by intractable divisions within the Iraqi opposition. The opposition was composed of five major groups. The two most enduring opposition groups were the rival Kurdish parties, the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), led by Masud Barzani, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), led by Jalal Talabani. The KDP led the Kurdish insurgency of the 1970s that ended with the Iranian betrayal at Algiers, while the PUK led the 1980s insurgency defeated by Baghdad’s use of chemical warfare.\textsuperscript{25} Both parties fought against the Ba’athist regime during the postwar Kurdish uprising in March 1991. Though initially defeated by Ba’athist forces, the KDP and the PUK gained joint control of Kurdistan following the UN creation of a northern safe haven. Yet, Kurdish leaders also signed an accord with Saddam in April 1991 granting the Kurds autonomy, while still recognizing Baghdad’s ultimate sovereignty.\textsuperscript{26} Kurdistan, thus, became the Iraqi base for the INC and the different Iraqi opposition groups. However, along with fighting Baghdad, the KDP and PUK fought each other for control of Kurdistan, especially regarding governance over the capital city Irbil and division of smuggling revenues from the Turkish border.\textsuperscript{27} This infighting was particularly problematic, as the KDP and PUK were the most well-armed and battle-tested among the opposition groups. Their unity was crucial to achieving any military victory against Ba’athist forces.

The opposition also included Shia Islamists with close Iranian ties. The leading Shia group was the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution on Iraq (SCIRI), founded in Tehran

\textsuperscript{24} Allawi 2007, 40-42; Pollack 2002b, 63; Roston 2008, 52-63, 85-92.
\textsuperscript{25} Allawi 2007, 34, 37-38.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 49-50; Hiro 1992, 410-411.
in 1982 to foster an Islamist Shia uprising in Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War. SCIRI played a major role in the post-Gulf War Shia uprising, but its involvement convinced the UN Coalition and most Iraqis that the uprising’s success would increase Iranian influence. SCIRI was embittered by the absence of international support during the uprising and skeptical about working with any US-backed opposition groups. Washington, on the other hand, was skeptical about working with any Iranian-backed groups and questioned the extent to which SCIRI had support among Iraqi Shia, considering the many Shiites who sided with Baghdad during the uprising. Nevertheless, both sides gradually saw the advantage of working together. SCIRI was invited to the inaugural session of the INC and, in turn, moderated its anti-US rhetoric and calls for an Islamic Republic.  

The Iraqi National Accord (INA), on the other hand, was composed of disaffected Ba’athists and military officers staunchly opposed to the expansion of Iranian influence. The INA was founded by Ayad Allawi, a former Ba’athist official who fell out with Saddam in the 1970s. Allawi formed the INA in December 1990 during the height of the Persian Gulf crisis. The UN Coalition hoped for a coup from those within the Ba’athist regime, but once this failed, the INA received a great amount of support from MI6, the CIA, and the Middle Eastern Coalition states. The INA came closest to what the UN Coalition envisioned in 1991: a Ba’athist regime dedicated to Iraqi unity and stability, hostile to Iranian expansion, and opposed to the domestic and international extremes of Saddam’s rule. Ali Allawi (no relation) states, “The INA’s theory of regime change coincided with—or reflected—the CIA’s own biases for clandestine work with existing power elites inside Saddam’s Iraq. It was based on controlling the process by co-opting potential dissidents within the regime’s power structures, buttressed by tribal and Ba’ath party elements, and working through military and intelligence officers who had

28 Katzman 2002b, 3; Allawi 43-45, 53, 74; Hiro 2001, 36-37, 60.
The INA had offices in Amman and London and maintained close connections to officers and officials within Iraq. To demonstrate its high-level contacts within Iraq and potential for achieving regime change, the INA orchestrated a series of terrorist bombings in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities in 1994 and 1995.\footnote{Allawi 2007, 51-52, quote on 63. Ali Allawi should not be confused with Ayad Allawi. Ali Allawi is, in fact, the nephew of Ahmad Chalabi, Ayad Allawi’s main rival within the Iraqi opposition.}

The final major opposition group was the INC itself. Though the INC was created to serve as an umbrella organization to coordinate disparate opposition efforts, Chalabi had greater pretensions. He hoped to claim the paramount position among the other Iraqi opposition groups. This put Chalabi at loggerheads particularly with Allawi, as both were Shiites who sought leadership of the secular Arab opposition. Unlike Allawi and the INA, Chalabi advocated a more complete break with Iraq’s Ba’athist past. Allawi opposed Saddam’s tyrannical rule, but, as a former Ba’athist, was more amenable to maintaining the Ba’ath regime. The Chalabi family, on the other hand, opposed the Ba’ath regime since its inception in 1968, and Chalabi was more committed to democratic transformation in Iraq. Allawi had support among Sunnis and Ba’athists in Iraq and in exile, while Chalabi had closer ties to Iran and Shia Islamist groups. The INA had greater support from Western foreign service and intelligence agencies, who shared its strategic vision for regime change in Iraq. Chalabi, therefore, sought support from neoconservatives in conservative think-tanks and the Republican-controlled Congress, who believed in more substantive socio-political change in Iraq.\footnote{Hiro 2001, 102.}

In 1995 and 1996, the Iraqi opposition made two major attempts at regime change. They both failed, due to the efficacy of Ba’athist security and intelligence forces and crippling divisions among the opposition. These setbacks allowed Saddam to reclaim the offensive

\footnote{Allawi 2007, 63, 65-66, 77-78.}
following the Kamel defection and expel the INC and CIA from their bases in Iraqi Kurdistan. The first regime change attempt occurred in March 1995, following the defection of Wafiq al-Samarra’i, head of Mukhabarrat, the Iraqi intelligence services. Al-Samarra’i provided critical intelligence regarding Iraq’s secret weapons program and current military strength. He also had contacts throughout Iraq, particularly in the Shia south. This, along with intelligence the INC and CIA had already gathered, convinced the INC that Saddam’s regime was near collapse. Chalabi and al-Samarra’i convinced the CIA branch in Iraq that a coordinated attack involving Iraqi ground forces and US air power would catch Baghdad off-guard, severely weaken the regime, and lead to uprisings throughout the country. When those in Washington learned of this plan, they tried to put a halt to it. The KDP backed out, but PUK and INC forces launched a military offensive on March 6 and initially met with success against the demoralized and poorly equipped Iraqi division that guarded the Kurdish border. However, US intelligence warned of an oncoming counter-assault from Republican Guard divisions and informed them that Iraqi security forces had already learned of the wider plot and arrested most of al-Samarra’i’s compatriots. Washington further reiterated that US assistance would not be forthcoming, which convinced the opposition forces to cease their offensive. While it is debatable whether the opposition forces could have overthrown Saddam, they were nevertheless bitter about US reluctance. They also believed that their initial success demonstrated their efficacy and Saddam’s internal weakness.\(^\text{32}\)

Part of the reason for Washington’s reluctance was that they believed the INA had developed a better regime change plan. Like the INC plan, this began with the secret defection of a retired Republican Guard general, Muhammad al-Shahwani, now living in Amman. Unlike al-Samarra’i, al-Shahwani did not publicly break with Baghdad, which allowed his sons to

\(^{32}\) Baram 1998, 55-56; Katzman 2002b, 3; Pollack 2002b, 71-73.
remain part of the Republican Guard and organize a coup from within. The plot ultimately included over a hundred members of the Republican Guard and SSO and received backing from Washington, London, Amman, and Riyadh. The INA set up offices and training camps in Amman, and CIA officers were embedded among the UNSCOM inspection teams, so they could directly coordinate with Republican Guard and SSO officers. However, Iraqi intelligence services quickly became privy to the plot, though it is not clear when, as coup planning took place from January 1995 to June 1996. Much evidence suggests that the intelligence services knew for many months, but allowed the plot to continue, so as to learn about the extent of opposition infiltration. In mid-June, three days prior to the coup’s intended launch date, Iraqi forces arrested over 120 officers from the Republican Guard, the security services, and the regular military. Following the string of arrests, the Mukhabarrat then sent a message to the CIA station at the US embassy in Amman, stating, “We have arrested all your people, so pack up and go home.” With their plans in tatters, the CIA team followed the Mukhabarrat’s advice and returned to the United States.33

Nevertheless, the CIA and INC still maintained their major headquarters in Iraqi Kurdistan, which was protected by the UN-mandated no-fly zone. However, Kurdistan was teetering towards civil war between the KDP and PUK, which by late 1995 had claimed over 3,000 casualties.34 The KDP opposed the PUK’s control over Irbil, while the PUK claimed that the KDP refused to equally divide the revenues from Turkish border trade, as agreed to in the 1994 US-negotiated cease-fire. The imbalance in revenues allowed the KDP to secretly purchase illegal arms from Baghdad. To balance this threat, the PUK sought military support from Iran, and on August 17, 1996, the PUK launched an offensive against the KDP. KDP leader Barzani

appealed to the United States to send peacekeepers to Kurdistan for protection. While the CIA station in Iraq promised assistance, the State Department in Washington was internally divided. Ultimately, US help never came. Barzani, therefore, appealed to Saddam personally, seeking assistance and acknowledging Baghdad’s sovereignty over Kurdistan. On August 31, three Republican Guard divisions invaded Kurdistan in support of the KDP, captured Irbil, and executed over a hundred PUK and INC members. Just as happened in Amman, CIA and INC officials were forced to flee, this time from their headquarters within Iraq. By September 2, Iraqi forces began to withdraw from Kurdistan, so as not to provoke a full US military response. Washington did, in fact, want to militarily respond, claiming Baghdad violated Resolution 688 by sending military forces into a UN-protected region. However, Ankara, Amman, and Riyadh all refused to allow the US use of its bases, based on fears of Kurdish independence and growing Middle Eastern discontent regarding the sanctions regime. The US, nevertheless, responded by increasing the *southern* no-fly zone and firing some cruise missiles at known targets within Iraq, but these actions were considered a feeble response. Saddam was universally deemed the winner of this crisis. The US previously had a strong base in northern Iraq, which allowed the CIA and Iraqi opposition to infiltrate the Ba’athist bureaucracy and security forces and launch several (albeit unsuccessful) coup attempts. Now, the CIA and INC were driven out, the Kurdish opposition divide, and Baghdad’s sovereignty over northern Iraq partially restored. This win also restored much of Saddam’s prestige within the government and the country following his humiliating retreat from the Kuwaiti border zone and his concession regarding the oil-for-food program. By December 1996, when Saddam officially agreed to the full terms of the oil-for-food program, he did so from a position of strength and reaped the domestic rewards of a slackening of the sanctions.\(^{35}\)

\(^{35}\) Ibid., 108-113; Pollack 2002b, 80-84; Post and Baram 2002, 30-31; Wright 1998, 59-60. Saddam scored an
Containment Breakdown and Military Action

Following the series of failed regime change attempts, Saddam became even more convinced that cooperation with UNSCOM was unnecessary. Saddam recognized that the United States and Great Britain would never support the removal of sanctions while he was in power. Secretary of State Madeline Albright stated as much. In a speech in March 1997, she declared, “[T]he evidence is overwhelming that Saddam Hussein’s intentions will never be peaceful. … Clearly, a change in Iraq’s government could lead to a change in U.S. policy. Should that occur, we would stand ready, in coordination with our allies and friends, to enter rapidly into a dialogue with the successor regime.” If cooperation did not come with an assurance of sanctions relief, then he had no reason to cooperate. Furthermore, it was increasingly evident that UNSCOM inspectors were gathering intelligence for the United States. Indeed, UNSCOM depended on American U-2 surveillance flights to determine likely weapon sites. The US also used UNSCOM inspections to coordinate with regime opponents within Iraq. UNSCOM inspectors served as critical intermediaries between the Iraqi security coup plotters and the INA and CIA during the 1995 coup plot. They also passed on intelligence about potential military targets for future attacks. Therefore, in November 1997, Saddam suspended further inspections and expelled all the American UNSCOM members, citing their collection of intelligence for the CIA and their recruitment of and coordination with regime earlier domestic victory in February 1996 when Hussein Kamel, Kamel’s brother, and Saddam’s two daughters returned to Iraq. Though Kamel’s defection was initially greeted with international excitement, he ultimately failed to receive support from either the Iraqi opposition or the CIA, who concluded that Kamel was “a megalomaniac, a thug, and a dullard” (Pollack 2002b, 79; cf. Hiro 2001, 98-99). Kamel, therefore, agreed to return to Iraq after he received assurances from Saddam that all was forgiven. However, immediately upon returning, Qusay’s forces seized Saddam’s daughters, who immediately sued for divorce. Kamel and his brother were then killed by their own relatives for dishonoring their family and jeopardizing their valued position. Saddam, who maintained his distance from the actual slaying, later commented, “Had [Kamel’s relatives] asked me, I would have prevented them, but it was good that they did not” (Quoted in Hiro 2001, 100).

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37 Katzman 2002a, 15.
38 Hiro 2001, 104-105.
opponents. Saddam demanded that the UNSCOM inspection teams have more diverse international representation. This tactic won sympathy from other Security Council members, who noted that 40% of the inspectors were either American or British, with the rest coming from the remaining fifteen members of the Security Council.\footnote{Ibid., 135.} Washington wanted to threaten Baghdad with a military response if it did not allow the inspections to recommence, but it received little support either internationally or domestically. Internationally, only Great Britain and Kuwait supported military action against Iraq. Most other countries viewed the United States as a trigger-happy bully, responsible for the daily starvation of millions of Iraqi children.\footnote{R. Clark 1998.}

The Clinton administration also received little support at home. To increase public support and demonstrate US resolve, Albright, Defense Secretary William Cohen, and National Security Advisor Sandy Berger held a CNN-sponsored town hall event at Ohio State University in February 1998. In what Albright called her “roughest day in office at that point,” the three leading US foreign policy officials were heckled and shouted down by college students and other participants, who accused Washington of imposing murderous sanctions and itching for a military confrontation. The Ba’ath regime broadcast the full event throughout Iraq.\footnote{Albright 2003, 359-360; Hiro 2001, 139.}

The next day, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan flew to Baghdad and, with open support from Paris and Moscow, negotiated directly with Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz. They negotiated a memorandum of understanding, by which inspections would recommence, the inspection teams would have a broader international representation but would still include Americans, and certain Iraqi “Presidential” sites would be off-limits. Most members of the UN lauded this agreement, and the US was forced to accept it. However, Washington scored a minor victory by officially codifying the agreement into UN Resolution 1154. The resolution stipulated that if Baghdad
further stymied UNSCOM inspections, it would face severe consequences. The US made clear that this meant military action, though China, France, and Russia denied the resolution gave the UN such authority. Nevertheless, the Clinton administration believed it could not tolerate further Iraqi resistance.\textsuperscript{42}

Within months the agreement began to collapse. Saddam hoped that his public display of cooperation would finally lead to the removal of all sanctions by the end of 1998. However, in August, UNSCOM leaked part of its planned October report, which claimed that Baghdad was still engaging in bait-and-switch methods and was hiding certain programs. Baghdad responded by obstructing further inspections. This impasse led to two notably different responses. Annan in an interview in mid-October stated, “I personally believe … that Iraq being full disarmed is never going to be possible. … [T]he Security Council must decide whether Iraq is disarmed to the extent that it is not a threat to its neighbors … and that it has no capacity to make weapons of mass destruction. … What do you do when the will [to use force] is not there, the council is divided, when you don’t have public support?”\textsuperscript{43} The US Congress, however, demonstrated that Washington did have to use force. On October 6, it passed the Iraq Liberation Act (ILA), which allocated $97 million for funding opposition activities in Iraq. Chalabi and his growing network of Washington supporters lobbied many Republicans in Congress for this bill, with hopes of funding another INC army. One strong opponent of ILA was CENTCOM Commander Anthony Zinni, who testified that such an army would lead to a “Bay of Goats” fiasco in Iraq. Nevertheless, Clinton reluctantly signed the bill on October 31, officially making regime change in Baghdad American stated policy.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{43} Combined quotation from Hiro 2001, 155; and Litwak 2007, 134.
On the same day that Clinton signed ILA, Saddam again announced he would not allow further inspections until sanctions were lifted. This time Washington won permission from Riyadh to use Saudi bases to launch air strikes in Iraq. However, on November 14, while American and British were in-flight, Aziz announced that Baghdad would allow the inspection teams to return. Annan immediately held a press conference to publicly accept Baghdad’s offer. Faced with the potential public relations disaster of bombing a country after it had already conceded, the US and Great Britain very reluctantly cancelled the mission. However, during the first week December, when Baghdad once again denied the inspection teams full access to all desired sites, UNSCOM head Richard Butler decided to leave Iraq and report these obstructions directly to the Security Council. Again, China, France, and Russia opposed any military action against Iraq, but this time, the US and Great Britain decided to take independent action. On December 16, the two powers launched Operation Desert Fox, a four day campaign of aerial and cruise missile attacks on Iraqi targets. Desert Fox was largest military campaign in the Middle East since Desert Storm. From December 16-19, American and British forces fired over 400 cruise missiles and launched over 600 sorties from American aircraft carriers and bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Rather than targeting likely weapons sites, the Allies instead focused on Iraqi security offices in hopes of weakening the Ba’athist regime and potentially encouraging an internal uprising. British planes even dropped leaflets in southern Iraq, calling on Shia to rise up against the regime. Washington and London ended the attacks after four days, stating they did not want to continue attacks into Ramadan, particularly given the high amount of opposition in the Arab and Muslim world to the unilateral Western aggression. While the attacks themselves did not appear to inspire much public upheaval, the Ba’athist regime nevertheless responded by ordering large-scale arrests of suspected opposition members and coup plotters. In January

1999, security forces uncovered yet another military coup plot, though it did not appear to be foreign-inspired. For Chalabi and his US supporters, this demonstrated the weakness of the Ba’athist regime and further fueled the belief that only a small-scale US military commitment was necessary to overthrow Saddam. However, to others, including Zinni and many in the State Department, this demonstrated that sanctions were in fact working, and thus the United States should maintain its current policy. This split between the “neoconservatives” and the “realists,” respectively, would continue into the incoming administration of George W. Bush.\(^{46}\)

Despite any damage inflicted on the Ba’ath regime, Operation Desert Fox dealt an even more severe blow to US containment strategy. The precision of Anglo-American attacks on Iraqi security offices fully exposed US collusion with UNSCOM. Saddam forbade all further inspections, and an incensed and humiliated UN abolished UNSCOM altogether. The US lost its greatest intelligence asset inside Iraq.\(^{47}\) Moreover, most other countries agreed with Annan that Saddam would likely never consent to full disarmament. These countries had tacitly accepted Washington’s regime change efforts following the Gulf War, but after nearly a decade, Saddam appeared stably ensconced in power, despite UN sanctions and occasional Anglo-American military strikes. Since the US was clearly unwilling to commit the ground forces necessary to depose Saddam, most countries thought it best to accept the Baghdad status quo and welcome Iraq back into the community of nations. There was also a widespread desire to establish or restore lucrative contracts with Iraqi businesses and widespread opprobrium regarding the degradation of Iraqi society and standard of living.\(^{48}\) While Great Britain was willing to maintain sanctions, the other three permanent members of the Security Council favored lifting them. In December 1999, the Security Council passed Resolution 1284, which eliminated any

\(^{46}\) Pollack 2002b, 93-94; Ricks 2007, 19-20.
\(^{47}\) Jervis 2006, 29; Malone 161-163, 165.
further restrictions on the amount of revenue Iraq could receive from selling oil. All three had negotiated oil development deals with Iraqi companies, but had agreed not to activate them until the UN officially declared Iraq to be fully compliant. However, it was clear they wanted sanctions lifted sooner rather than later. Moreover, Russian ministers broke protocol in August 1999 by flying directly to Baghdad, in violation of UN Resolution 670. The resolution forbade any flights to or from Iraq carrying cargo, which heretofore included commercial flights. The Russian flight, however, began a flood of “flight-busting,” as numerous foreign officials flew directly to Baghdad to reestablish business ties and, in some cases, diplomatic relations with the Ba’ath regime.

This sentiment was especially felt amongst Middle Eastern countries. Most leaders in the Middle East hoped Saddam would fall following the Gulf War, even Jordanian King Hussein, who largely sided with Baghdad throughout the crisis. They initially agreed to the sanctions, because they believed Saddam would fall soon. This was especially costly for Iraqi neighbors Jordan and Turkey, who depended on Iraqi oil shipments and export purchases. However, by 2000, these governments consistently condemned the sanctions and openly flouted UN regulations by assisting in and profiting from Iraqi smuggling. Jordan, Turkey, and Syria all facilitated the smuggling, working directly with members of the Ba’ath regime and Iraqi criminal organizations. These countries also bought Iraqi oil at discounted rates, which they paid directly to Baghdad. This allowed Saddam to work around the oil-for-food program and control oil revenues. Washington was well aware of these violations, but it never applied the attendant sanctions, because US policymakers recognized that these neighboring countries needed Iraqi trade to keep their economies afloat. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states, all members of

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49 Duelfer 2004, 56.
the Gulf War Coalition, also favored lifting the sanctions. They scorned US indirect regime change efforts and had particular contempt for Chalabi and the INC. They believed that the US would never fully commit to overthrowing Saddam and, therefore, it was best to make some accommodation with him. Only Kuwait favored the maintenance of sanctions.\textsuperscript{51}

By the end of the Clinton administration, containment policy had nearly collapsed. The costs of containment now appeared to outweigh the benefits, as US allies increasingly defected from the sanctions regime. Indeed, even US companies were buying black market Iraqi oil.\textsuperscript{52} Furthermore, by the end of 2000, the United States had spent around $8 billion since the Gulf War containing Baghdad and providing humanitarian relief to the Iraqi Kurds.\textsuperscript{53} This no longer seemed sustainable for the long-term. Hawks within the administration now pushed for a more comprehensive regime change plan, though they recognized that major military action was still not possible. Regardless, Clinton’s attention was elsewhere. Diplomatically, he was more focused on obtaining a final Israeli-Palestinian peace deal. Many Arab countries made clear that this was a bigger priority to them than Saddam’s downfall, and future cooperation on Iraqi sanctions and regime change depended on a fair Palestinian peace settlement. Domestically, Clinton was hampered by the aftermath of the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal and the impending government transition. The Iraq problem would not be settled before the 2000 election, and both the Bush and Gore campaigns took more hawkish positions that the current administration.\textsuperscript{54}

The election of George W. Bush, after a contentious vote-counting debacle, set the stage for a new fight between those favoring a renewal of containment policy versus those favoring a stronger commitment to regime change.

\textsuperscript{52} Hiro 2001, 182.
\textsuperscript{53} Another $1.1 billion was spent in 2001. Katzman 2002a, 15.
\textsuperscript{54} Harvey 2012, Chs. 2-3; Pollack 2002b, 96-104; Rice 2000.
9/11 and the Regime Change Debate

The Bush campaign suggested during the 2000 Presidential campaign that it would adopt a tougher position towards Saddam Hussein. Yet the Bush team avoided specifics over how its policy would differ from Clinton’s. Condoleezza Rice wrote an article for *Foreign Affairs* in January 2000 outlining the Bush campaign’s foreign policy agenda. In the section concerning rogue regimes, Rice wrote, “The Clinton administration has failed here, sometimes threatening to use force and then backing down, as it often has with Iraq.” Yet regarding Iraq, she proposed a continuation of Clinton policy, stating, “Saddam Hussein’s regime is isolated, his conventional military power has been severely weakened, … [so he] is therefore determined to develop WMD. Nothing will change until Saddam is gone, so the United States must mobilize whatever resources it can, including support for the opposition, to remove him.” Indeed, Rice adopted a rather sanguine approach to Iraq and the other rogue regimes potentially seeking WMD: “[T]here need be no sense of panic about them. Rather, the first line of defense should be clear and classical deterrence—if they do acquire WMD, their weapons will be unusable, because any attempt to use them will bring national obliteration.”55 This was the general policy line for Iraq in the first months of the Bush administration, despite the oft-noted divisions between the realists in the State Department and the CIA and neoconservatives in the White House and the Pentagon. Secretary of State Colin Powell pursued a new “smart sanctions” policy towards Iraq, which essentially meant adopting a new sanctions regime amenable to the concerns of other countries, with the hope that that would lead to less international defections. The UN replaced UNSCOM with the UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), with Hans Blix, the Swedish former head of the IAEA, as its leader. The UN was given much greater independent control over inspector recruitment, and UNMOVIC would only receive intelligence

55 Rice 2000, 60, 61.
from other sources, not share it. Regardless of these changes, Baghdad still refused to allow any further UN inspections. Powell, nevertheless, hoped these changes would garner greater international support for the sanctions regime.\textsuperscript{56} Neoconservatives inside and outside the administration decried this as a continuation of Clinton’s ineffective policy, and they bemoaned the tepid support given to the Iraqi opposition. While White House and Pentagon neoconservatives won policy skirmishes regarding North Korea and China, Middle East policy was still dominated by the State Department realists.\textsuperscript{57}

Then came “the day of fire.” The September 11 attacks caused a drastic change in Bush administration global threat perception. Most notably, it demonstrated the extent of American vulnerability. This point in particular had a strong impact on Bush personally and many in his administration.\textsuperscript{58} Bush lamented, “Prior to September 11, … a president could see a threat and contain it or deal with it in a variety of wars without fear of that threat materializing on our own soil.” 9/11 broke that illusion.\textsuperscript{59} Even Cheney, who was already attuned to the threat of high-casualty terrorism, was greatly affected by the terrorist attacks. Early in the administration, Cheney adopted the role of “self-appointed examiner of worst-case scenarios,” focusing on the threat of global terrorism and WMD proliferation. 9/11 exceeded his worst fears. He thus became the main force behind the “1% doctrine,” in which even a one percent chance of surprise attack required an overwhelming US response.\textsuperscript{60} In addition, 9/11 converted Bush and Rice to the neoconservative belief that democratic transformation was necessary for US security. Authoritarian regimes were considered dangerous, because their ability to suppress domestic opposition made them less susceptible to international punishment and created negative

\textsuperscript{58} Jervis 2003; Litwak 2007; Renshon 2007.
\textsuperscript{59} Woodward 2004, 12.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 29-30; Suskind 2006.
externalities. Specifically, concerning the latter, Bush, Rice, and others argued that people frustrated by domestic oppression and economic stagnation (which they also considered an outgrowth of authoritarianism) become susceptible to radical, anti-American terrorist groups. Rice warned, “When the citizens of [authoritarian countries] cannot advance their interests and redress their grievances through an open political process, they retreat hopelessly into the shadows to be preyed upon by evil men with violent designs, … lead[ing] people to strap suicide bombs to their bodies and fly airplanes into buildings.” Bush told Bob Woodward following his “Axis of Evil” speech on January 29, 2002, “I believe the United States is the beacon for freedom in the world. And I believe we have a responsibility to promote freedom that is as solemn as the responsibility is to protect the American people, because the two go hand-in-hand.”

The immediate focus following 9/11 was on capturing Osama bin Laden and destroying al-Qaeda bases in Afghanistan and its network worldwide. When the Taliban regime refused to give the United States unrestricted access to Afghan territory, the mission expanded to overthrowing the Taliban regime as well. Nevertheless, Iraq soon appeared on the American radar. The 9/11 attacks increased Bush’s concerns about “Saddam Hussein’s capacity to create harm.” Bush was much more skeptical about conventional deterrence in general and Iraqi containment policy in particular. Reflecting on the threat posed by Saddam Hussein, Bush stated, “The options in Iraq were relatively limited when you are playing the containment game. … Keeping Saddam in a box looked less and less feasible to me.” Iraq’s assumed WMD arsenal now appeared much more threatening, and the desire for regime change became much

61 Enterline and Greig 2005; Zonis 2007. See also Chapter 1.
62 Rice 2005.
63 Woodward 2004, 88, emphasis in original.
64 Litwak 2007, 302-303.
65 Woodward 2004, 27.
more urgent. Baghdad’s response to the 9/11 attacks only exacerbated the situation. Unlike every other leader around the world (including Moammar Qaddafi of Libya) and despite his advisors’ counsel, Saddam refused to condemn the terrorist attacks but instead lauded those responsible. Unlike every other leader around the world (including Moammar Qaddafi of Libya) and despite his advisors’ counsel, Saddam refused to condemn the terrorist attacks but instead lauded those responsible. 

Officials in the White House and the Pentagon began discussing Iraq as a potential target within days of the attacks. On September 15, in a war cabinet meeting at Camp David, Rumsfeld and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz discussed the possibility of targeting Iraq rather than Afghanistan, believing the Ba’ath regime would be easier to topple than the Taliban. The rest of those present, including Bush and Cheney, argued that the initial target must be Afghanistan. Nevertheless, both the President and Vice President agreed that Iraq would require redress sooner rather than later.

Regardless, neither the 9/11 attacks nor the Bush administration’s belligerent stance made war between the United States and Iraq inevitable. Indeed, there was an eighteen month gap between 9/11 and the onset of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). That gap included internal debates within the Bush administration, public debates within the United States, and international debates within the UN concerning the right course of action regarding Iraq. Bush went before both the US Congress and the UN General Assembly outlining his determination use military force if necessary to disarm Iraq. These should have served as credible signals of US resolve to impose regime change. Even more importantly, Saddam had already destroyed much of his WMD stockpiles during the late-1990s in compliance with UN regulations. Even after expelling the UNSCOM inspection team, Saddam was unable to reconstitute these stockpiles, due to the sanctions constraints.

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66 The Ba’ath regime later nominated Osama bin Laden as Iraq’s “Man of the Year 2001.” See G.W. Bush 2010, 228; Coughlin 2006, 212; and Duelfer 2004, 33, 61.
68 Duelfer 2004.
US attack, and convince the UN to lift the remaining sanctions. Saddam’s refusal to reveal this information has been one of the great puzzles of the Iraq War. Bush expressed his own confusion and frustration over this issue in his memoirs:

I am not sure what I could have done to show Saddam I meant what I said. I named him part of the axis of evil in my State of the Union address. I spoke to a packed chamber of the United Nations and promised to disarm him by force if diplomacy failed. We presented him with a unanimous Security Council resolution. We sought and received bipartisan backing from the U.S. Congress. We deployed 150,000 troops to his border. I gave him a final forty-eight hours’ notice that we were about to invade his country. How much clearer could I have been? … For all his deception of the world, the person Saddam ultimately deceived the most was himself.69

Yet, Saddam did ultimately allow UN inspectors into Iraq in November 2002, which suggests that he did ultimately bow to US coercion. However, this did not prevent the United States from launching a military invasion to impose regime change. It is, therefore, important to understand why Saddam waited so long allow the inspectors to return and why Bush chose to militarily impose regime change regardless.

_Saddam’s Strategy of “Deterrence by Doubt”_

Saddam had, in fact, ceased the development of WMD in compliance with UN demands, possibly as early as 1996. He hoped this, along with increased economic ties to France, Russia, and China, would encourage the Security Council to finally lift the sanctions. Yet, he did not want to fully reveal the termination of Iraq’s WMD programs, because he believed the Ba’ath regime “lived in a very dangerous global neighborhood where even the perception of weakness drew wolves.”70 He also wanted to maintain some ambiguity over whether Iraq still had WMD, in order to deter both domestic and regional threats. Republican Guard General Raad Majid al-

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69 G.W. Bush 2010, 269.
Hamdani referred to this strategy as “deterrence by doubt.” The logic behind Saddam’s thinking was not completely ill-founded. Experience suggested that regional and domestic adversaries posed a greater threat to his regime than the United States and that WMD were necessary to deter and defeat those threats. The Ba’ath regime used chemical and biological weapons against Iranian invading forces and Kurdish insurgents during the Iran-Iraq War and against the sectarian uprisings following the Gulf War. In each case, the Ba’ath used these weapons when they felt outmatched and overwhelmed, and these weapons helped tip the balance in the Ba’ath’s favor. In the years since, these threats had not gone away. Iraqi Shia still made up a majority of the Arab population, and they remained restless throughout the 1990s. After the uprising’s defeat, the Shia developed a new distinct consciousness as a separate and oppressed people within the Iraqi state. The Ba’ath’s brutality in suppressing the uprising, which included destroying many Shia shrines, created widespread resentment and opposition, though memories of that brutality also made the Shia quiescent. When the British dropped leaflets in southern Iraq during Desert Fox, calling on the Shia to rise up against the Ba’ath regime, the Shia scoffed, remembering the last time they revolted in expectation of Saddam’s downfall. Yet this demonstrated the importance for Saddam maintaining this ambiguous posture. Once the Shia knew the regime no longer had chemical or biological weapons, they may feel safer to rebel.

Saddam also feared external aggression from Iran and Israel. The Duelfer Report, which documented the history of Iraq’s WMD programs, states, “While it appears that Iraq, by the mid-1990s, was essentially free of militarily significant WMD stocks, Saddam’s perceived requirement to bluff about WMD capabilities made it too dangerous to clearly reveal this to the

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71 Gordon and Trainor 2006, 74.
72 Allawi 2007, 73-76.
73 Hiro 2001, 163.
international community, especially Iran.\textsuperscript{74} Again, Saddam’s fears were founded in experience. Unlike the United States or the UN coalition, Tehran actually tried to overthrow Saddam through direct military force. It is important to remember that Saddam genuinely viewed Tehran as the aggressor in the Iran-Iraq War. He initially reached out to the revolutionary regime, but Khomeini responded by trying to foment rebellion amongst the Iraqi Shia. He truly viewed the war as defensive, rather than aggressive.\textsuperscript{75} Saddam and nearly all members of the Ba’ath regime believed that the Iraqi threat to launch missiles with chemical warheads against Iranian cities during the “war of the cities” led to the 1988 cease-fire and remained Iraq’s most effective deterrent against Iranian aggression. Most Iraqis, including Shia, also believed that Iran intended to annex southern Iraq. Iran’s geographic and population size made it naturally stronger than Iraq, but Iraq’s WMD capabilities leveled the playing field. Iraqi military planners determined that they would once again need to use WMD to halt more than two waves of Iranian invading forces.\textsuperscript{76} Since their armistice in 1988, Iran and Iraq remained in a near state of war. Each hosted and funded insurgent groups against the other’s regime. In 1994, 1996, and 2001, Iran bombed training camps of the Mujahedin-e-Khaliq inside Iraq.\textsuperscript{77}

Iran was also in the process of developing its own nuclear capabilities, with assistance from Russia, China, and North Korea. Though the United States also imposed sanctions on Iran, they were not as multilateral or devastating as those imposed on Iraq, nor did they include intrusive inspections.\textsuperscript{78} Saddam feared that revealing the dismantlement of Iraqi WMD would invite future Iranian aggression, though admittedly he believed this to be more of a long-term

\textsuperscript{74} Duelfer 2004, 34-35.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 34-39; Gause 2002; Karsh and Rautsi 1991, 144-149.
\textsuperscript{76} Duelfer 2004, 24-26, 29-30.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 29; Pollack 2005, 268.
\textsuperscript{78} Katzman 2001.
threat than short-term.\textsuperscript{79} Saddam further believed that Iraq’s strategic ambiguity also deterred a possible attack from Israel. He did not consider Israel as threatening as Iran, since Israel could not launch a ground invasion. However, the Israeli bombing of the Osiraq nuclear facility demonstrated Israeli resolve to prevent an Arab country from developing WMD. Iraq had secretly reconstituted its nuclear program, but it was exposed and dismantled after the Gulf War. Nevertheless, Saddam believed that ambiguity over the extent of nuclear dismantlement allowed Iraq to maintain a deterrent against further Israeli attacks. This provided Iraq protection while it reconstituted its WMD program, which Saddam hoped to do once sanctions were fully lifted. Saddam feared that if Israel learned of current Iraqi weakness, Tel Aviv would form an alliance of convenience with Iraq’s non-Arab neighbors, Iran and Turkey, and launch a joint preventive attack against Iraq before Baghdad could reconstitute its program.\textsuperscript{80} Ultimately, Saddam’s fear returned to Iranian aggression, which he considered more credible than American.

The Duelfer Report further states, “Throughout the 1990s, Saddam and the Ba’ath Regime considered full-scale invasion by US forces to be the most dangerous potential threat to unseating the Regime, \textit{although Saddam rated the probability of an invasion as very low}.\textsuperscript{81} Saddam was not ignorant about US military superiority, but he strongly doubted US military resolve. He continued to view the United States as an overly risk-averse and casualty-averse superpower, who weakly withdrew from Vietnam and Lebanon and stopped short of capturing Baghdad. American actions in the decade following the Persian Gulf War only confirmed this view. Throughout the 1990s, the United States sought regime change through heavy sanctions and support for Iraqi opposition groups and coup attempts, but refused to commit US ground forces to achieve these aims. When the Republican Guard launched a counter-offensive against

\textsuperscript{79} Duelfer 2004, 29-30.  
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 31; Woods et al., 92; cf. Brands and Palkki 2011.  
\textsuperscript{81} Duelfer 2004, 31, emphasis added.
INC and PUK forces in March 1995, the US refused to help its allies and instead ordered them to stand down. When Republican Guard forces illegally entered Kurdistan in support of the KDP and expelled the INC and CIA, the US responded weakly and ineffectively, due to UN pressure. Even during Desert Fox, when the United States and Great Britain attacked Iraq with UN approval, these attacks lasted for only four days and again depended on an internal Iraqi uprising to bring regime change. Saddam responded by launching a series of domestic arrests and executions and expelling UNSCOM inspectors. Moreover, Saddam viewed US policy in Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo in the same light: the US was willing to use distant military force to achieve its goals, but became frightened and feckless once ground troops became necessary. Even Bush agreed that the US had established a reputation for timidity during the Clinton administration and acknowledged that the US needed to strongly demonstrate its resolve to use ground forces. Yet, US reliance on the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan further convinced Saddam that the United States was unwilling to commit large ground forces under any circumstances, despite the terrorist attacks.

To Baghdad, Bush’s bellicose statements initially appeared to be more of the same. Saddam recognized that Washington wanted to depose him, but did not believe the US would suffer the significant casualties to do so. He, therefore, believed that allowing the inspection teams to return would pose a greater personal threat, since it would once again provide a means of intelligence gathering and coup coordination. He even feared that the CIA would plant assassins within the inspection teams. Militarily, most Ba’ath officials expected, at worst, that the US would once again launch a series of aerial and cruise missile attacks to encourage

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83 Woods et al. 2006, 16.
84 Duelfer 2004, 64; Pollack 2004, 9.
sectarian uprisings, and possibly even occupy southern Iraq for a temporary period.\textsuperscript{85} A senior Iraqi official commented, “No one is as good at absorbing U.S. precision munitions as Iraq. So if that’s all that the Americans have got, it’s not a threat to our national survival.”\textsuperscript{86} Saddam’s actions, therefore, were reasonable given the constraints of his strategic environment and the record of past US behavior. The report from the Iraqi Perspectives Project (IPP), which interviewed senior Ba’athist officials and collected internal Iraqi documents after the war, stated it best: “While in Western eyes the choices Iraq made may appear dysfunctional and even absurd, the regime’s responses to the threat and then the invasion were logical within the Iraqi political framework, even if later proven counterproductive.”\textsuperscript{87}

\textit{US Coercive Diplomacy}

Though Pentagon officials suggested targeting Iraq within a week of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Bush held off at first. However, on November 26, Bush made his first public demand since September 11, calling on Saddam to allow the inspectors to return. When journalists asked what the consequences would be if Saddam refused, Bush simply replied, “He’ll find out.”\textsuperscript{88} Bush followed up two months later with his State of the Union address, in which he labeled Iran, Iraq, and North Korea an “axis of evil.” While Bush only included one line about Iran and North Korea each, he had five lines devoted to Iraq, stating in part, “Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward American and support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax and nerve gas and nuclear weapons for over a decade. … This is a regime that agreed to international inspections—then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from

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\textsuperscript{86} Gordon and Trainor 2006, 76.
\textsuperscript{87} Woods et al., vii.
\textsuperscript{88} Woodward 2004, 36.
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the world.”89 Yet, just as before the 9/11 attacks, there was little desire within the international community to take strong action against Iraq. Though Washington had unanimous global support for its war in Afghanistan, there was great unease in many capitals about extending the “war on terror” to Iraq. Many in Congress, particularly Democrats, shared this unease. Bush determined that the first key ally to win over was British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Blair was a liberal hawk akin to former Secretary of State Albright, who referred to Blair as “Churchillian,” because of his fervent advocacy of using military force to stop Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic’s atrocities in Kosovo.90 Blair believed strongly in the use of military force in response to international aggression and humanitarian crises and fought hard to convince Clinton to stand against Milosevic.91 Yet Blair also believed in the legitimating importance of international institutions and global consensus. He agreed with Bush that Saddam posed a threat that required international action, but he stated publicly in autumn 2001 that a military attack on Iraq was unjustified without evidence linking Baghdad to the 9/11 attacks.92 However, by early 2002, Blair’s position began to change, in great part due to the successful war in Afghanistan. The ease of Coalition victory convinced Blair that a war in Iraq may not be as difficult as he initially feared. In addition, Coalition forces found a large trove of documents detailing al-Qaeda’s vast network and planning. None of these documents connected al-Qaeda to Iraq, and the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) was in fact emphatic that there was no connection. Nonetheless, soon after Bush’s “Axis of Evil” speech, SIS produced a report that Iraq had stocks of chemical weapons and was developing a nuclear program. One senior Blair advisor recalled, “We were all clear in our minds that Saddam was not implicated in 9/11. But by the same token,

89 G.W. Bush 2002c.
90 Albright 2003, 529.
92 Coughlin 2006, 206-207.
we knew Iraq had to be resolved one way or another. The sanctions were clearly not working, …
and we were receiving intelligence that he had revived his interest in acquiring nuclear technology.”

Blair himself told many of his aides, “Look, if Bush hadn’t been exercised after 9/11 about these issues, I would have been worried about them, and I raised them with him before 9/11.”

Blair and Bush met at Bush’s ranch in Crawford, TX in April to discuss many international issues, with Iraq at the top of the agenda. Blair fought hard to convince Bush to adopt a multilateral approach and seek a new UN resolution. Sir Christopher Meyer, British Ambassador to the US, stated that Blair’s consistent message to Bush was, “You could do this on your own. … But our advice to you is, even a superpower like the United States needs to do this with partners and allies. And the best way of trying to get a coalition together is to exhaust the processes which the UN offers.”

Powell supported the British in these efforts. Like Blair, Powell agreed that Saddam posed a problem, but he feared that administration hard-liners were hastily pushing the President to war. At first, the hard-liners appeared to have the upper hand. During a press conference with Blair at Crawford, Bush declared, “[T]he policy of my government is the removal of Saddam, and that all options are opened.” Blair stiffly responded, “The threat is real. How we deal with it, that’s a matter we discuss.”

Two months later, at the commencement speech at West Point, Bush laid out his administration’s new pre-emption doctrine, in which America “must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge. In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the
path of action, and this nation will act.”97 In preparation for possible military action against Iraq, the Pentagon deployed two brigades to Kuwait, with another two to be sent in three weeks. By the end of the summer, the military expected to have over 100,000 troops in Kuwait.98

Throughout the spring and summer, Powell feared the US was headed rashly towards war. So on August 5 he arranged a sit down with Bush and Rice only, without Rumsfeld or the ever-present Cheney. Powell expressed his concern that if the United States attacked Iraq without international support, the US would be stuck occupying Iraq, “becom[ing] the government until you get a new government. … You are going to be the proud owner of 25 million people. You will own all their hopes, aspirations and problems. You’ll own it all.” The Secretary of State strongly recommended getting UN support first. However, he did caution the President that this would mean abiding by a UN solution that would at least initially preclude war. Bush listened intently to Powell’s argument, yet still remained non-committal.99 Bush received similar pressure to go back to the UN from many in Washington. Brent Scowcroft, National Security Advisor for President George H.W. Bush, expressed the skepticism of many in the Republican and Democratic establishment. Rather than adopting a unilateral strategy, Scowcroft “get[ting] the UN to insist on an inspection regime that is no notice, anytime, anywhere, and so on. The administration says Saddam would never agree to it. But if he doesn’t agree to it, that gives you the casus belli that we don’t really have right now.”100 This position was held by most of those in Congress, both Democratic and Republican. Like Blair and Powell, they were concerned about international legitimacy and the difficulties of postwar governance. Republican Senator Chuck Hagel expressed his concerns in a television interview in August:

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99 Ibid., 149-152, quote on 150; DeYoung 2006, 401-402.
100 Quoted in DeYoung 2006, 401.
“[W]hat’s the urgency of the threat? … What comes after Saddam Hussein? Would we do this in a unilateral way with no allies? What would we hope to gain? What would be the reactions—economic, political, diplomatic reactions—to whatever action we take?” The Democrats ultimately made Congressional support conditional on getting a UN resolution. Such concerns added further impetus to seeking UN approval.

A week after the White House meeting between Bush and Powell, Rice convened a meeting of all the foreign policy principals except Bush, who was vacationing at his Crawford ranch. Powell convinced Cheney and Rumsfeld that the UN was the best route, because without it, the US would have no support from Great Britain or their Middle East allies, from who bases the US would need to dispatch their military forces. Cheney reluctantly consented, with the condition that the UN itself would be put on notice that this was a test of its own authority in a post-9/11 world. The next day, the principals held a teleconference with the President, where they all agreed that he should go to the UN. Given the unanimity of opinion, Bush consented.

On September 12, Bush went before the UN to express US impatience with Iraqi intransigence, especially following the 9/11 attacks, and to challenge the UN to enforce its own resolutions.

Delegates to the General Assembly, we have been more than patient. We have tried sanctions. We have tried the carrot of oil for food and the stick of coalition military strikes. But Saddam Hussein has defied all these efforts and continues to develop weapons of mass destruction. … The conduct of the Iraqi regime is a threat to the authority of the United Nations and a threat to peace. Iraq has answered a decade of UN demands with a decade of defiance. All the world now faces a test, and the United Nations a difficult and defining moment. Are Security Council resolutions to be honored and enforced, or cast aside without consequence? Will the United Nations serve the purpose of its founding, or will it be irrelevant?

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101 Quoted in Ibid., 400.
102 Harvey 2012, 136-139, 142-144.
Bush called for a new resolution that would result in the “immediate and unconditional” disclosure, removal, and/or destruction of “all weapons of mass destruction, long-range missiles, and all related material.” Bush agreed that the US would “work with the UN Security Council for the necessary resolutions,” but he clearly stated, “the purposes of the United States should not be doubted. The [prior] Security Council resolutions will be enforced … or action will be unavoidable. And a regime that has lost its legitimacy will also lose its power.”

Four days after Bush’s speech, Iraqi Foreign Minister Naji Sabri sent Annan a letter inviting UN inspectors to return without conditions. Bush’s speech before the UN finally convinced Saddam of US resolve. Neither the “Axis of Evil” nor the West Point speeches strongly affected Saddam. Indeed, he assumed the latter was directed more at Kim Jong-II, believing the North Korean dictator better fit the mold of an irrational tyrant. Moreover, unlike Pyongyang or Tehran, the Ba’ath regime had never signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and therefore could not be accused of violating its terms. He, of course, ignored the numerous UN resolutions concerning Iraq. Most significantly, Saddam believed this to be more of the same bluff from the United States as he had experienced over the past decade. He believed that the US would maintain its policy of permanent sanctions and military diffidence. However, Bush’s UN speech finally convinced Saddam that it was best to allow the UNMOVIC and IAEA inspection teams, headed respectively by Hans Blix and Mohammed El-Baradei, to return. Saddam was hopeful that he could continue his game from the previous decade. Baghdad still sought to restrict “Presidential sites” from inspections, though this may have been partially due

104 G.W. Bush 2002b.
105 Blix 2004, 74-75.
106 Duelfer and Dyson 2011, 91.
to Saddam’s continued fears about assassination attempts. However, the UN passed a much more stringent resolution. All sides agreed that inspectors would be given “unimpeded, unconditional, and unrestricted access” to all designated sites. They also agreed that Baghdad would have to provide a detailed report accounting for all its chemical, biological, nuclear, and missile programs. The major sticking point, however, concerned the issue of “automaticity.” Would Iraqi non-compliance automatically authorize a military response? Washington favored an automatic trigger, while Paris and Moscow insisted that a second resolution would be required for further action. There was also debate on what sufficiently constituted non-compliance.

As the Bush administration negotiated over a UN resolution, it also pushed for a Congressional resolution giving Bush authority “to use all means he determines to be appropriate, including force” in confronting Iraq. Bush believed that Congressional approval would strengthen the threat of US unilateralism, which would in turn put greater pressure on the UN to pass a strong resolution. A week after the UN speech, Powell testified before Congress, “I have been known as a reluctant warrior. … But the threat of war has to be there.” Reluctant Democratic Senators responded in kind and voted on October 11 to grant Bush coercive authority against Iraq. Senator John Kerry, Bush’s Democratic opponent in 2004, defended his vote, stating, “I voted to authorize, … [because i]f there wasn’t a legitimate threat, Saddam Hussein was not going to let the inspectors in. … And if we hadn’t voted the way we voted, we would not have been able to have a chance of going to the UN.” Soon after, the Security Council members settled on language that stated that if Baghdad included any omissions or false statements in its declaration and failed to fully cooperate with the inspection teams, it would

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109 DeYoung 2006, 409.
111 Quoted in Harvey 2012, 143.
“face serious consequences,” though these consequences were left unstated. After weeks of negotiation, on November 8, the Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1441. Baghdad condemned Washington and London as a “gang of evil,” and even Blix acknowledged that Resolution 1441 was “a draconian resolution that would have not been accepted by any state that was not under direct threat of armed attack.” Yet that threat of attack caused Baghdad to consent to the resolution. Many hoped that war had been averted.

*Enduring Information and Commitment Problems*

On December 17, in accordance with Resolution 1441, Baghdad submitted a 12,000 page report detailing the status of its chemical, biological, nuclear, and missile programs. Despite its great volume, the report was largely a retread of data submitted to UNSCOM in 1996 and 1997. Many who expected Iraq to be at least minimally forthcoming were surprised and disappointed. Blix noted that the report did not include any “material or evidence that solved any of the unresolved disarmaments issues,” which meant “UNMOVIC was neither in a position to confirm Iraq’s statements, nor in a position to disprove them.” Even France and Russia were disappointed by Baghdad’s continued intransigence. Blix testified before the Security Council that the report was “rich in volume but poor in new information about weapons issues and practically devoid of new evidence of such issues.”

Iraqi intransigence was due to at least three factors. First, Iraq simply did not have the WMD stockpiles that most countries believed that it had. Numerous international intelligence agencies, besides the CIA, said Iraq had existing WMD programs that in fact had been dismantled. SIS reported that Iraq had ongoing biological,

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113 Coughlin 2006, 261.
114 Blix 2004, 89.
115 Ibid., 107-111, quotes on 108 and 111.
chemical, and nuclear programs, facilitated by mobile laboratories.\textsuperscript{116} Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak likewise reported that Iraq had WMD.\textsuperscript{117}

The intelligence failure was due to limited and questionable sources and reasonable but incorrect inferences. The expulsion of UNSCOM and IAEA inspectors in 1998 inhibited further intelligence collection and solidified the impression held by the UNSCOM teams and most observers that Iraq still had and was pursuing WMD programs.\textsuperscript{118} Intelligence services never questioned this assumption and relied on human intelligence that confirmed these beliefs, not all of which was reliable.\textsuperscript{119} Chalabi has been particularly implicated for providing bad intelligence to the US, though the CIA and State Department often disregarded his sources.\textsuperscript{120} Yet “Curveball,” the most notorious intelligence source of Iraq WMD, was not an American contact, but rather was German.\textsuperscript{121} Most US intelligence officers were, in fact, skeptical about Curveball’s information, but he helped convince the German services of Iraqi WMD production. Robert Jervis, in a review of postwar intelligence analyses, finds, “\textit{All} intelligence services believed that Iraq had active WMD programs, even those countries that opposed war. At minimum, this shows that political pressure was not necessary to reach conclusions that the American and British [intelligence services] did.”\textsuperscript{122} French President Jacques Chirac expressed his own skepticism about international intelligence service consensus, believing these services “intoxicate each other” and become susceptible to global groupthink.\textsuperscript{123} Though this ultimately proved to be the case, it would have been difficult to recognize that at the time. Indeed, even Blix believed that Iraq had undisclosed WMD programs that the Ba’ath regime refused to reveal.

\textsuperscript{116} Coughlin 2006, 214, 242-244.
\textsuperscript{117} Woodward 2004, 312.
\textsuperscript{118} Duelfer and Dyson 2011, 97.
\textsuperscript{119} Jervis 2006, 22-27.
\textsuperscript{120} Roston 2008.
\textsuperscript{121} Jervis 2006, 30; cf. Ricks 2006, 90-91.
\textsuperscript{122} Jervis 2006, 35.
\textsuperscript{123} Blix 2004, 128.
He admitted, “My gut feelings, which I kept to myself, suggested to me that Iraq still engaged in prohibited activities and retained prohibited items, and that it had the documents to prove it.”\textsuperscript{124}

Second, despite Blix’s intuition, it is not altogether clear whether Baghdad had the documents to prove the dismantlement of its WMD program. The Ba’ath regime was so compartmentalized and disorganized that it was near impossible to collect all the necessary data. The evidence suggests that once Saddam decided to disarm around 1996, those tasked to do so destroyed the records haphazardly, without thought to whether they would be needed later. Because of the fractured nature of the regime and Saddam’s desire to keep even parts of his own leadership in the dark, no particular department was specifically tasked with keeping such records. Indeed, Saddam himself seemed unclear about the extent of Iraq’s existing WMD programs.\textsuperscript{125} Kenneth Pollack further notes that many of those tasked to destroy the records were likely semi-literate, with little ability to discern which documents should be destroyed and which should be kept.\textsuperscript{126} Third and finally, Saddam was still engaging in “deterrence by doubt.” Though now partially convinced of US resolve, he still had to deter domestic and regional threats, and his beliefs about American “Vietnam syndrome” still remained.\textsuperscript{127} Moreover, Bush’s decision to work through the UN suggested that Saddam could still elude full compliance by currying favor with Paris and Moscow.\textsuperscript{128} Initially, therefore, Baghdad continued its resistance. Blix reports that at the first inspection site, the Iraqis refused to allow the inspectors to enter. Only when the chief inspector finally became frustrated and began to leave did the Iraqis let the team enter.\textsuperscript{129} The Ba’athists were similarly unwilling to allow interviews with

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 112.
\textsuperscript{125} Duelfer 2004, 62-63.
\textsuperscript{126} Pollack 2004, 86.
\textsuperscript{127} Duelfer 2004, 67.
\textsuperscript{128} Woods et al. 2006, 90-91.
\textsuperscript{129} Blix 2004, 96.
those most knowledgeable about the development and disposal of the WMD programs, finally providing access to them “only during the last period of our inspections—too late to be helpful.” These actions only perpetuated Saddam’s reputation for “cheat and retreat.” Jervis ultimately concludes that the “fundamental reason for intelligence failure in Iraq was that the assumptions and inferences were reasonable, much more so than the alternatives. … [T]he best-supported conclusion was that Saddam was actively pursuing all kinds of WMD and probably had some on hand. … [W]hile it would be nice to believe that better analysis would have led to a fundamentally different conclusion, I do not think this is the case.”

Along with the severe information problem, there was also the looming commitment problem of unsustainable military coercion and containment. By early 2003, the US was approaching a ‘now or never’ moment. Regardless of the outcome, this crisis would likely mark the end of UN containment policy. The passage of Resolution 1441 was an implicit admission that the previous decade’s containment strategy had failed. There would likely be great pressure to lift the sanctions and minimal possibility of reinstating them in the event of Iraqi non-compliance. The United States could not indefinitely maintain its large military presence in Kuwait. Prior to the recent deployments to Kuwait, the US was already spending over $1 billion a year on containing Iraq. By early 2003, the US had over 200,000 US troops deployed in Kuwait, and these additional deployments further increased the costs. In addition, the best window for attack was during the winter, from December to February. As the year moved into spring and summer, Iraqi forces would be in a greater state of readiness, and the heat would be unbearable for US forces. The US would likely have to draw down soon if no action was

130 Ibid., 113.
131 Jervis 2006, 42.
132 Woods et al. 2006, 91.
133 Katzman 2002a, 15.
taken. Most observers considered US military pressure to be the main reason Saddam allowed the inspectors to return. Without this pressure, Baghdad could continue to obfuscate without fear of punishment. Yet, most feared that if Saddam remained in power, he would work to reconstitute Iraq’s WMD programs and once again pose a security threat. These fears were not unjustified. The Duelfer Report states that Saddam was preparing to reconstitute these programs once the inspection teams were gone and the sanctions were lifted.

Finally, there was a question of US credibility. Saddam’s belief in US diffidence was common in the Middle East, especially among Iraqi exiles who had long experience with Washington’s wavering commitment to regime change in Baghdad. Since Desert Fox, SCIRI had distanced itself from the INC, arguing that the US was not genuinely committed to overthrowing Saddam. CIA operatives had to work very hard to convince their contacts inside Iraq that Washington was serious this time, and those who did agree to work with the US did so at great risk. These risks included “arrest, probably watching his wife and daughter raped in front of him, the murder of his sons, the bulldozing of his house, [and] other unimaginable tortures.”

Rumsfeld told the President, in the words of journalist Bob Woodward, “The real threshold for war was when people and countries put themselves as risk in this way on behalf of the United States. … The point of no return is approaching.” This sentiment was shared by Washington’s Arab allies. American deployments to Kuwait raised hopes that the US would finally commit its own ground forces against Iraq, and failure to do so threatened America’s long-term credibility with its regional allies. In January 2003, Prince Bandar, Saudi Ambassador to the US, warned President Bush, “[I]f [Saddam’s] attacked one more time by America and he

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136 Allawi 2007, 68.
138 Ibid., 261.
survives, he will be larger than life. If he survives and stays in power after you’ve finished this, whatever it is, yes, everybody will follow his word. If they say attack the American embassy, they will go and attack it.”\textsuperscript{139} Henry Kissinger likewise warned Rice, “You can’t cock the gun as you have and not pull the trigger.”\textsuperscript{140} Even Blix, who sought to avert a military conflict, acknowledged privately at the time, “There is presumably a momentum built into the great buildup of troops. Can Bush refrain from letting the coiled spring jump without losing face? He will need some manifest action by the Iraqis to hold the spring down.”\textsuperscript{141} Ultimately, Saddam’s reputation for aggression and non-compliance and America’s reputation for diffidence made American inaction far too dangerous.

\textit{From UN to “Coalition of the Willing”}

By January 2003, Bush had decided upon war against Iraq. He previously rejected Cheney’s call for war in December immediately after Blix presented the disappointing Iraqi declaration before the Security Council. However, on January 13, Bush told Powell that he had decided to go forward.\textsuperscript{142} In his State of the Union address on January 28, Bush repeated the charges against Saddam and cited the intelligence incriminating him, much of which was later proven erroneous. He also declared, “America’s purpose is more than to follow a process—it is to achieve a result: the end of threats to the civilized world. … [W]e’re asking [all free nations] to join us, and many are doing so. Yet the course of this nation does not depend on others.”\textsuperscript{143} Bush also announced during the speech that Powell would make the case before UN regarding Iraqi non-compliance and the imminent threat that it posed. The latter was especially important, since most states agreed that Baghdad likely had not revealed its entire WMD programs.

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 267.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 375.
\textsuperscript{141} Blix 2004, 110.
\textsuperscript{142} DeYoung 2006, 428-429; Woodward 2004, 269-274.
\textsuperscript{143} G.W. Bush 2003c.
However, there was widespread concern that the US was rushing into war. In preparing for his presentation, Powell and his staff did a complete review of all the available intelligence regarding Iraqi WMD. To save time, Powell ordered that all White House and INC-derived intelligence be ignored, and they should instead focus on CIA intelligence, which largely came from satellite and U-2 photos, audio transmissions, and testimony from defected Ba’ath officials.144 Powell presented the American case before the UN on February 5, presenting the best collected evidence and emphasizing the danger of continued hesitancy. In closing, Powell pleaded, “Given Saddam’s history of aggression, given what we know of his grandiose plans, … should we take the risk that he will someday use these weapons at a time and a place and in a manner of his choosing, at a time when the world is in a much weaker position to respond?”145

Nevertheless, most countries remained unconvinced that war was necessary. A week after Powell’s presentation, Chirac, Russian President Vladmir Putin, and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder issued a joint statement calling for continued weapons inspections and decrying any calls for war.146 Still, at Blair’s very strong urging, Bush decided to seek another UN resolution authorizing the use of force, but he insisted that the resolution must be passed by mid-March to avoid the harsh Middle East heat.147

The proposed second resolution called for full disclosure by March 17. Blix was cautiously optimistic, hoping that Saddam would make a last-ditch speech fully opening all potential depots to inspection.148 However, Chirac announced France would veto any resolution

144 DeYoung 2006, 441-445. Ironically, some of the most compelling evidence for Iraq’s ongoing WMD programs were recordings of Iraqis discussing the transfer of nerve agents. Yet, rather than discussing hiding these nerve agents, these officials were actually discussing the best way to dispose of them. Woods et al. 2006, 93.
145 Quoted in DeYoung 2006, 449-450, emphasis added.
147 Coughlin 2006, 280.
148 Ibid., 285; Blix 2004, 213.
that suggested war authorization, making the substance of any second resolution moot.\textsuperscript{149} Having lost in the UN, Bush, Blair, and their respective governments made plans to go forward with their “coalition of the willing.” Blair and Bush met at a US base in the Portuguese Azores Islands with Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar on March 16 to determine the final timetable for war.\textsuperscript{150} Though Blair was reluctant to go to war, he was unwavering in his belief that UN resolutions required enforcement, declaring in one interview, “I am truly committed to dealing with this, irrespective of America. If the Americans were not doing this, I would be pressing them to do so.”\textsuperscript{151} Later that week, Blair received a vote of confidence from a majority of Labour MPs, removing last hindrance for British participation.\textsuperscript{152} In his final pre-war speech on March 17, Bush lamented that “some permanent members of the Security Council … share our assessment of the danger, but not our resolve to meet it. Many nations, however, do have the resolve and fortitude to act against this threat of peace[.].” … The United Nations Security Council has not lived up to its responsibilities, so we will rise to ours.” Bush then warned Saddam that he and his sons had 48 hours to leave Baghdad, and he appealed to the Iraqi military and paramilitaries to not resist Coalition forces, lest they too be targeted.\textsuperscript{153} Unsurprisingly, neither Saddam nor his family heeded this call for voluntary exile. Rather, Saddam told his military commanders “to hold the Coalition for eight days, and leave the rest to me,” insinuating that he did, in fact, have a secret store of chemical and biological weapons to combat the invading forces.\textsuperscript{154} This may explain why none of his commanders attempted to launch a coup against him in these last remaining days. On March 19, two days after his public warning to Saddam

\textsuperscript{149} Coughlin 2006, 288; DeYoung 2006, 456.
\textsuperscript{150} Coughlin 2006, 292; Woodward 2004, 357-360.
\textsuperscript{151} Quoted in Coughlin 2006, 284.
\textsuperscript{152} Coughlin 2006, 296-298; Woodward 2004, 375.
\textsuperscript{153} G.W. Bush 2003b.
\textsuperscript{154} Duelfer 2004, 66. One former minister noted bitterly that the commanders “thought he had something, but it was all talk.”
and the Iraqi people, Bush announced that the United States and its coalition partners had commenced Operation Iraqi Freedom.\textsuperscript{155}

**Regime Change Preparation, Operation and Aftermath**

The US decision to impose regime change was largely due to the US perception of an existential threat from Iraq and the enduring information and commitment problems regarding Iraq’s WMD program. US policymakers believed that imposing a successor regime would be relatively easy, but it is likely that Bush would have advocated for regime change even if he had rightly foreseen the difficulties ahead.\textsuperscript{156} Despite Saddam’s apparent recognition of US resolve, Iraq was still insufficiently forthcoming with the expected information regarding its WMD programs. The Bush administration believed that rogue state WMD posed an existential threat to the US, and that Baghdad’s refusal to be compliant even in the face of US threats meant that the only solution was war.

Just as the road to war was marked by infighting among international allies, so the planning for peace was marked by infighting among domestic bureaucracies. The fighting centered on beliefs and assumptions regarding the reliability of the Iraqi successor regime and the need for a long US occupation. The original CENTCOM plan for “Phase IV,” the postwar reconstruction and governance of Iraq, called for over 400,000 troops to guarantee security and guard the borders. However, the civilian leadership in the Pentagon and the White House pushed

\textsuperscript{155} G.W. Bush 2003d.
\textsuperscript{156} Kenneth Pollack advocated for regime change even as he recognized the likely difficulties and the need for a substantial postwar commitment. Drawing on the US experience in Bosnia, Pollack predicted a decade-long occupation with an estimated cost of $5-15 billion per year and requiring 250,000-300,000 troops. He did expect yearly draw-downs, though still with 100,000 troops in Iraq after five years (Pollack 2002b, 398-399). Less than a year after the overthrew of the Ba’ath regime, Pollack defended the decision to overthrow Saddam, but decried “the appalling handling of postwar planning[,] … At the very least we should recognize that the Administration’s rush to war was reckless even on the basis of what we knew in March 2003. It appears even more reckless in light of what we know today.” Pollack 2004, 90, 92.
back on such high troop numbers. Rather, they assumed that a reliable successor regime with competent leadership and aligned preferences could be easily established with little US commitment, given their long-established relationship with the Iraqi exile leadership. Moreover, they assumed Coalition forces would be “greeted as liberators” by an oppressed Iraqi population, and that the Iraqi military and police force would remain in place to provide domestic security. Coalition planners prepared for humanitarian assistance, but little beyond that. Finally, US civilian leadership assumed that a long foreign occupation would antagonize the Iraqi population, so it was best to maintain a light footprint. This final assumption was the only one that would prove to be correct.

It became clear within weeks of the fall of Baghdad that Coalition forces would, in fact, have to establish a more long-term presence in Iraq and put much greater effort and resources into developing a reliable successor regime. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) focused on reconstituting Iraqi security forces, which “melted away” near the end of combat operations, and establishing a democratic successor regime with Western-aligned interests. To that end, the CPA designed a constitution that established balance between the three major sectarian groups, strengthened the position of the pro-Western Kurds, and limited the power of the pro-Iranian Shia. When the Coalition officially ceded authority to the Iraqis in June 2004, they had established fragile coalition government of secular nationalists with tepid domestic support. The failure to truly prepare for an adversarial transformation cost the Coalition dearly.

*Phase IV Planning*

Planning for Phase IV was dominated by internecine fighting between the military, the Defense Department, and the State Department, with the Defense Department coming out on top. Both the State and Defense Departments developed plans for postwar Iraq. The State
Department initiated the “Future of Iraq” project, bringing together department experts on the Middle East and nation-building and Iraqi exiles affiliated with INA, though some were more democratic-leaning (including Kanan Makiya). The Future of Iraq project ultimately produced a 2,000-page report that, despite its size, provided little guidance for actual postwar operations. Nevertheless, it provided a thoughtful assessment of ground conditions in Iraq and brought together many who would later work together during the Iraqi occupation.\(^\text{157}\)

Not trusting the State Department, the Defense Department developed its own postwar planning operation. It converted the Office of Northern Gulf Affairs, which coordinated defense policy for Iran and Iraq, into the larger Office of Special Plans (OSP), with responsibility for coordinating all postwar plans. Rumsfeld appointed Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith to head the OSP, and he appealed to Bush to give the Pentagon sole control over postwar policy. He argued that Afghan reconstruction had been hampered by conflicting State and Pentagon authority, and since US forces would be the first in-country, it would be best if the Pentagon had sole command.\(^\text{158}\) Powell consented to this arrangement and in fact agreed with Rumsfeld’s logic. He also preferred that Defense carry the likely headache of postwar operations.\(^\text{159}\)

Yet, despite the oft-noted rivalry between the Defense and State Departments, policymakers in both departments and throughout the Bush administration held a number of similar assumptions regarding postwar operations. First, they assumed the Iraqi military would either be decisively defeated on the battlefield or, more likely, surrender en masse to the superior Coalition forces. The Iraqi exile opposition claimed that there was great discontent within the military, and that most would not sacrifice themselves to save Saddam.\(^\text{160}\) Therefore, Coalition

\(^{159}\) DeYoung 2006, 458; Gordon and Trainor 2006, 171; Woodward 2004, 282.
\(^{160}\) Bodansky 2004, 171.
forces should focus their efforts on leadership targets and Iraqi paramilitary forces, such as the Republican Guard and Fedayeen Saddam, but avoid infrastructural targets to limit the amount of postwar reconstruction. Second, US policymakers expected the Iraqi regular military and police forces to remain cohesive and intact following their surrender. The CIA reported that the Iraqi police, in particular, were highly professional and largely divorced from the Ba’ath Party. The US planned to depoliticize and diversify the military leadership to make it more reliable, but largely planned to keep it intact as well, so that it could maintain security within Iraq and guard the borders. Third, they assumed that the major postwar problem would involve humanitarian crises, specifically the incineration of Iraqi oilfields and the use of chemical and biological weapons against any domestic uprisings. This assumption came from US experience in the previous war with Iraq, in which Saddam set Kuwaiti oilfields on fire and used chemical weapons to suppress sectarian uprisings. With his regime and his life in the balance, Saddam would be even more likely to adopt such extreme measures. Finally, US policymakers believed that Coalition forces would be greeted as liberators, but a long occupation would elicit domestic and regional hostility. Bush was insistent that foreign forces maintain a light footprint in Iraq, and sovereignty be restored to a reliable Iraqi successor regime as quickly as possible. The White House even rejected a suggestion from the Justice Department that the Coalition recruit international constabularies to provide police assistance in the immediate postwar aftermath. The NSC instead argued that “long-term US interest would be served best by empowering Iraqis and developing indigenous capacity to perform law enforcement and justice functions.”

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163 Ibid., 23, 58, 81-82; Gordon and Trainor 2006, 175-176; Woodward 2004, 206, 276-278.
164 Quoted in Gordon and Trainor 2006, 185.
leadership, believing such a regime would be seen as illegitimate. Bush instead called for an integrated leadership of pro-US exiles and democratically elected local leadership, with an expectation that this leadership would likewise be friendly to US interests.165

The OSP established the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) to implement Coalition relief efforts and lay the groundwork for successor regime imposition. Feith appointed retired Lieutenant General Jay Garner as head of ORHA. Garner previously served as the commander of Operation Provide Comfort, which provided humanitarian aid to Kurdish refugees in the summer of 1991 following the failed uprising.166 Yet, even prior to Garner’s appointment in January 2003, the OSP already had a clear vision of the postwar environment. After the fall of Baghdad, the major problems would likely be food and energy shortages and refugees fleeing WMD attacks. ORHA would be ready to provide aid, while the Iraqi military and police would provide security under the auspices of Coalition command. Elliott Abrams of the NSC and Robin Cleveland of the Budget Office developed a comprehensive postwar humanitarian operation, telling the President it was “the best humanitarian relief effort anybody’s ever planned.”167 The Iraqi military leadership would be downsized and purged of Ba’athist loyalists and those responsible for crimes against humanity. The army would be retrained and depoliticized, but, outside of leadership purges, it would maintain its structure. All postwar operations would be paid for by Iraqi oil revenues. After a few months, when these crises were sufficiently settled, ORHA would turn authority over to a civilian administrator, who would begin the process of crafting a constitution. Iraqi exiles and trusted locals would run the ministries under Coalition authority. Once a suitable constitution

165 Woodward 2004, 258-260, 340. Bush showed some concern about general Iraqi preferences. He asked an Iraqi doctor from Saddam’s hometown of Tikrit if Iraqis are hostile to Israel. The doctor reassured him that they were more concerned about their own affairs.
166 Bensahel et al. 2008, 53.
167 Woodward 2004, 276-278, quote on 276.
was crafted that guaranteed democratic rights and civil liberties, free elections would be held. Once a democratic government was elected, power would be turned over to the Iraqi successor regime.\textsuperscript{168}

Despite this apparently well-crafted plan, Garner soon recognized some serious problems regarding ORHA staffing and authority. The NSC called on government agencies to fill the vacant positions in ORHA, but many were slow to respond. ORHA maintained a skeletal staff even following deployment to Baghdad. This staffing shortage made it difficult for ORHA to develop substantive plans for their actual mission.\textsuperscript{169} The problem was largely due to continued hostility between the Defense and State Departments. Garner tried to recruit State Department members of the Future of Iraq project, and Powell recommended some Arabist experts as well. However, Rumsfeld and Feith vetoed them, based on their perceived hostility to the INC. After Powell strongly protested, Rumsfeld relented, but many of these potential recruits ultimately demurred.\textsuperscript{170} Garner was also concerned that ORHA had no authority over or even overlapping ties with US military forces. The Joint Staff originally proposed a plan in which there was one unified command, which would relieve CENTCOM of command once combat operations ceased and would then be responsible for both providing security and governance. Rumsfeld, however, divided this authority into two separate pillars, with both separately reporting to the Defense Department.\textsuperscript{171} Garner warned that this bifurcation of authority would cause logistical problems, but he was largely ignored.\textsuperscript{172}

\textsuperscript{169} Bensahel et al. 2008, 54-55. Garner hoped that once ORHA deployed to Kuwait, other departments would be forced to cooperate with it, but this did not happen. Ibid., 65-66.
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., 63; Gordon and Trainor 2006, 182; Woodward 2004, 283-284.
\textsuperscript{171} Gordon and Trainor 2006, 160-161.
\textsuperscript{172} Bensahel et el. 2008, 55.
It was, however, the conflict between the Defense Department and the military that proved the most significant. Following Desert Fox, CENTCOM Commander Anthony Zinni developed a nascent plan for post-Saddam Iraq, which included nearly 400,000 troops and coordination with numerous US agencies. Yet Rumsfeld, supported by Wolfowitz and Feith, believed such large numbers were a reflection of Cold War thinking and military risk aversion. Rumsfeld put great pressure on Zinni’s successor, Tommy Franks, to downsize what Rumsfeld derisively called “Desert Storm II-plus.” Franks was largely amenable, as he did not want CENTCOM to be saddled with postwar governance, but this significant downsizing met resistance from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In particular, Army Chief Eric Shinseki expressed his concern about the minimal troop numbers and the quick march to Baghdad. On February 25, 2003, while testifying before Congress, Shinseki was asked the number of troops he thought necessary to secure Iraq following regime change operations. He responded that it would take at least several hundred thousand, causing a strong backlash from the civilian Pentagon leadership. Rumsfeld told reporters that it was “ludicrous” to believe that it would take more troops to secure a country than it did to defeat it. Wolfowitz likewise testified before Congress that such high estimates were “outlandish,” and that only those commanders leading the mission were justified in making such declarations. Shinseki’s public flogging effectively silenced any further resistance from the military. Nevertheless, the Third Army, which had been designated to lead Phase IV operations, held a series of war games, which suggested that the military would likely face “an influx of terrorists into Iraq, the rise of criminal activity, probable actions of former

173 CENTCOM Commander Tommy Franks complained that in working with Feith, “I have to deal with the [expletive] stupidest guy on the face of the earth almost every day.” Woodward 2004, 281.
175 Gordon and Trainor 2006, passim; Woodward 2004, passim.
177 Gordon and Trainor 2006, 117-118; Ricks 2007, 96-98.
regime members, and the loss of [any weapons of mass destruction] that was believed to exist.” Yet, recognizing Rumsfeld’s position would likely remain unchanged, Franks and Third Army Commander Lieutenant General David McKiernan ignored these findings and focused primarily on the military mission of overthrowing the Ba’ath regime.  

**Phase IV Failure**

Beginning on March 7, American and British aircraft had launched a series of bombing raids in southern Iraq and dropped leaflets warning Iraqis to stay clear of major cities, especially Baghdad. Yet major combat operations officially began on March 19, when the CIA reported that they were “99.9% sure” that Saddam and his sons were meeting at Dora Farms, a family compound just outside Baghdad. Bombing Dora Farms would decapitate the regime, and Coalition forces could then hopefully come in without resistance. Bush had already affirmed publicly and privately that even if Saddam and his sons were internally deposed or went into exile, Coalition forces would still enter to search for WMD and ensure the succession of a stable and friendly regime. Yet a quick decapitation would likely remove the need for war. Though bombing Dora Farms would give away an element of surprise if the intelligence was wrong, Bush decided the reward was worth the risk. Nevertheless, the intelligence turned out to be wrong, a harbinger of things to come. Even so, the Iraqi military was ill-matched against the US military, let alone the combined Coalition forces. In less than a month, Coalition forces entered Baghdad. The Iraqis were defeated by a combination of three factors. First, the Coalition “shock and awe” strategy of simultaneously launching air and ground operations did,

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178 Bensahel et al. 2008, 10-14, quote on 12; Gordon and Trainor 2006, 118-120.
180 Gordon and Trainor 2006, 194.
181 Woodward 2004, 147, 315-316.
182 Ibid., 382-399; Bodansky 2004, 166-167; Gordon and Trainor 2006, 194-204. There is some evidence that the intelligence was purposely planted by Baghdad, so the Coalition would reveal its hand.
in fact, shock the Iraqi military. They expected a repeat of Desert Storm, in which Coalition forces first initiated long aerial bombing campaign to weaken Iraqi forces, and then engaged in a massive a ground campaign of hundreds of thousands of Coalition troops. They did not expect an immediate and simultaneous air-ground campaign. Second, Saddam changed the battle plan at the last minute, re-arranging Iraqi forces in a series of ever-stronger concentric circles, with Baghdad at the center. Saddam’s most trustworthy and best equipped troops would protect Baghdad, while the more suspect regular army would protect the periphery. Saddam announced this plan only a few weeks before the Coalition launched Operation Iraqi Freedom, so it gave the Iraqi military leadership little time to prepare. It also placed less equipped forces to first fight the better equipped Coalition ground forces, making the march to Baghdad all that much easier. Finally, as Coalition forces approached Baghdad, Iraqi morale began to falter, and there was much infighting among the paramilitary groups assigned to protect Baghdad. Rumors spread that Saddam and his sons had made plans with Moscow and Cairo to flee, and the head of the Special Republican Guard defected to the Coalition and ordered them not to resist. Thus, despite some early and ferocious engagements between Iraqi and Coalition forces, direct combat operations had effectively ceased by April 10, when Coalition forces took control of Baghdad.183

Yet this quick victory created almost immediate problems for the Coalition. The US found that all of its prewar assumptions, save one, were false. First, none of the expected humanitarian crises occurred. There were no sectarian uprisings, so there was no Ba’athist retaliation, so there were no refugee problems or food crises near the border areas. Saddam did order the incineration of Iraqi oilfields, but Coalition forces secured these areas before the orders were carried out. Thus, while ORHA was well-prepared to confront these crises, they

fortunately did not occur.\textsuperscript{184} Second, Iraqi military forces in Baghdad did not surrender en masse to Coalition forces, but rather “melted away,” as the US military later reported. Coalition forces announced beforehand that any soldiers seen wearing their uniforms or carrying their weapons would be considered combatants. Iraqi soldiers, therefore, responded by taking off their uniforms, keeping their weapons, and going into hiding.\textsuperscript{185} Iraqi police forces likewise abandoned their posts, disconfirming the positive CIA assessments. US plans depended on Iraqi forces to maintain internal security within Iraq, while foreign forces focused on humanitarian crises and then successor imposition. Given the security vacuum, severe looting broke out throughout Baghdad, devastating Iraq’s infrastructure, which was already dilapidated after a decade of sanctions. To make matters worse, Saddam decided in the weeks prior to release numerous prisoners, increasing the potential for domestic chaos and lawlessness. Looters went on a rampage in the wake of the security vacuum, stealing luxury goods, electronic equipment, computers, and office supplies. Many critical ministries were stripped bare, though Coalition had stationed themselves to protect the Ministry of Oil. Looters also targeted the electrical infrastructure, stealing copper and aluminum wiring and transmission lines, and in the process wrecking the city’s electrical system. It would take weeks before electricity was even partially restored. Finally, Ba’athist bureaucrats and police officers purposely destroyed their own facilities, so as to eradicate any evidence of abuses and regime connections. The widespread Baghdad looting caused irreparable structural and psychological damage. Coalition victory in Baghdad became associated with chaos rather than liberation and made the reestablishment of order that much more difficult.\textsuperscript{186}

\textsuperscript{184} Bensahel et al. 2008, 78-84.
\textsuperscript{185} Dobbins et al. 2009, 53.
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid., 110; Allawi 2007, 115-117; Bensahel et al. 2008, 68-69, 88, 161; Gordon and Trainor 2006, 533-534, 536, 542.
The one US prewar assumption that ultimately proved correct was that Iraqis would view a long foreign occupation unfavorably. Coalition forces initially acted accordingly. Upon arriving in Baghdad, Franks announced that he expected combat forces to be fully withdrawn within 120 days to be replaced by international peacekeepers. Moreover, Rumsfeld convinced Franks to cancel the deployment of the First Cavalry Division, since “victory” was already assured. Yet this contributed even more to the security vacuum in Iraq. ORHA, which was tasked with governing Iraq in the immediate postwar environment, was ill-equipped to deal with the current situation. The original plan was to co-opt Iraqi security forces, but the unexpected disintegration of Iraqi forces and the destruction of Iraqi police facilities made this impossible. Furthermore, once the Iraqi police force was partially reassembled, ORHA officials were dismayed to learn that prewar CIA assessments regarding Iraqi police professionalism were wildly off the mark. Rather, ORHA found the Iraqi police to be “little more than traffic cops” and were, in fact, “corrupt, unprofessional, and untrustworthy, … despised by the population and without any investigative competence.” Garner, therefore, was forced to rely on Coalition forces, but Rumsfeld and Franks were still intent on maintaining their withdrawal timeline. Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor note that in the weeks following the fall of Baghdad, “[t]here was a vicious circularity to the military and civilian planning. CENTCOM was hoping that the success of Garner’s team would speed the withdrawal of US troops; Garner was hoping that CENTCOM would provide the security he needed to fashion a new Iraqi military … and begin to rebuild the country.” Nonetheless, it became increasingly clear to those in

188 Ibid., 528-529; Bensahel et al. 2008, 15.
190 Ibid., 533.
Washington that a quick withdrawal and an immediate hand-off to the Iraqis would not be possible. Despite their fears of a long occupation, it now appeared unavoidable.

**Coalition Provisional Authority**

Garner became the initial scapegoat for the problems in Iraq. He was neither popular with the military or the Iraqis, both of whom considered him well-meaning but overwhelmed and unprepared.\(^1^9\) John Sawer, the lead British representative in Iraq, complained, “ORHA is an unbelievable mess. No leadership, no strategy, no coordination, no structure, and inaccessible to ordinary Iraqis. … Garner and his team of retired 60-year-old generals are well-meaning, but out of their depth.”\(^1^9\) More broadly, the structure and purpose of ORHA were ill-suited to the actual postwar situation. A RAND study of the postwar occupation states that ORHA was “structured in the belief that Iraqi administration would remain in place, any American occupation would be short-lived, and the main challenge would be dealing with the consequences of the use of weapons of mass destruction and other war-related damage.”\(^1^9\) Once these assumptions were all proven false, a new plan was necessary. On May 6, Bush appointed Paul Bremer as the new civilian administrator for Iraq. Bremer was a long-time assistant to Henry Kissinger and former ambassador to the Netherlands, but had no experience in Iraq or the Middle East in general. Yet, Ali Allawi suggests that Bremer was “selected precisely because of his lack of prior involvement in the Iraq. He apparently straddled two antagonistic camps—the realists and the neoconservatives—who vied with each for the making of Iraq policy.”\(^1^9\) Bremer did, however, have a much more authoritative demeanor than Garner, and his one of first orders upon arriving

\(^{1^9}\) Allawi 2007, 101-103; Bensahel et al. 2008, 66-68.
\(^{1^9}\) Quoted in Gordon and Trainor 2006, 541. One high-ranking ORHA official referred to his team as “the Department of Defense’s version of *Space Cowboys*—the Clint Eastwood movie in which aging astronauts return to space for one final mission.” Bensahel et al. 2008, 53-54.
\(^{1^9}\) Dobbins et al. 2009, xiv-xv.
\(^{1^9}\) Allawi 2007, 107-108.
in Iraq was for US forces to shoot looters on sight. Hundreds of looters were subsequently shot or arrested, diminishing at least open thievery and demonstrating a change in US resolve. Furthermore, on May 8, Powell announced that the United States and Great Britain would seek official UN recognition of their occupation of Iraq. They needed UN approval in order to access Iraq’s revenues to finance its reconstruction. The exile Iraqi leadership, heretofore working with Garner and expecting a rapid turnover, was shocked by the turn of events, but ultimately acquiesced in the face of foreign pressure and the undeniable security problems in Iraq. Nevertheless, there were now growing concerns about US intentions. On May 22, the UN passed Resolution 1483, officially recognizing the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) as the governing authority in Iraq. Many Iraqis saw the CPA as akin to the British mandate authorized by the League of Nations almost a century prior, a similarity Washington had hoped to avoid.

The CPA’s first two official orders focused on ensuring future alignment and competence. CPA Order No. 1, issued on May 16, initiated the de-Ba’athification of the Iraqi government. ORHA had already outlawed the Ba’ath Party, but Garner had still worked with many in the bureaucratic leadership, given the dire situation. Bremer, however, reversed this policy and announced all members of the top four levels of the Ba’ath Party were to be excluded from any public employment. He further ordered background checks for the top three levels of all government ministries and affiliated corporations. While Garner recommended to Bremer that he only target the very top leadership, many in the Iraqi exile leadership, particularly the INC, called for even deeper purges. The CPA, however, wanted to avoid the perceived excesses of de-Nazification following World War II, and ultimately the order only affected about .01% of

197 Al-Marashi and Salama 2008, 199-201.
the Iraqi population. Nevertheless, Bremer delegated de-Ba’athification to the newly appointed High National De-Ba’athification Commission, headed by Chalabi and Nuri al-Maliki of the Da’wa Party. The Commission immediately expanded de-Ba’athification to include civil society institutions, such as the media, and ended all exemptions for fourth level Ba’ath members.\footnote{Allawi 2007, 148-153; Dobbins et al. 2009, 112-119.} Though de-Ba’athification was later criticized, it was widely popular when first announced. The RAND study notes, “Polling subsequently supported this [positive] assessment. Initial Iraqi support for the policy appears to have transcended sectarian divisions, making this the most widely supported action by the CPA during its 14-month lifespan.”\footnote{Dobbins et al. 2009, 115.}

CPA Order No. 2 proved much more controversial. On March 23, Bremer announced the dissolution of the Iraqi army. Unlike the Ba’ath Party, which was largely seen as a tool of totalitarian oppression, the Iraqi army was the unifying institution of the Iraqi state. Feith and Rumsfeld first discussed dissolving the Iraqi army prior to combat operations, despite their ostensible plan for a rapid Iraqi handover of power. They were on the fence about keeping the Iraqi army, since it had the necessary skills and equipment to keep order, but was considered “corrupt, brutal, and anti-democratic.” Nonetheless, they ultimately decided to maintain it.\footnote{Ibid., 52.} However, the subsequent chaos in Iraq caused a change of heart in Washington. From their perspective, the Iraqi army had already “self-demobilized.” Feith later commented, “The pros—the arguments for keeping the army intact—had largely disappeared. For example, there was no discipline left in the army, and it had, in fact, disbanded. And all of the cons remained.”\footnote{Ibid., 57.} Moreover, the barracks, bases, and arsenals had been stripped and destroyed in the looting. Finally, like de-Ba’athification, it would send a very strong signal that the old regime was no
more. The Iraqi army had a bloat of Sunni, Ba’athist generals and colonels who would be removed with de-Ba’athification regardless, so dissolving the army altogether was seen as wiping the slate clean. As with de-Ba’athification, Garner argued against dissolving the army, but to no avail, though he did convince Bremer not to abolish the Interior Ministry. Sunnis were especially embittered, as they saw this and the concurrent de-Ba’athification as assaults on historic Sunni dominance and a destruction of their treasured institutions. Even the Shia were ambivalent about the dissolution of the Iraqi army, given their long association with the military. Army dissolution caused the over 400,000 unemployed soldiers to start rioting and join the developing insurgencies, though when the CPA announced that they would resume paying nearly 250,000 of these soldiers, the rioting ceased.202

These policies helped fuel the growing insurgencies that developed following the fall of Baghdad. The original core of the insurgency was the Ba’athist paramilitary groups, particularly the Fedayeen Saddam. They had originally prepared to combat potential sectarian uprisings, but quickly adapted to the downfall of the Ba’ath regime. The Ba’athist paramilitaries had large arsenals throughout Iraq, many of which were bypassed by Coalition forces on their way to Baghdad.203 These Ba’athist groups were soon joined by foreign jihadis, some of whom, like Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, were already living in Iraq when the Operation Iraqi Freedom began. Zinni’s original battle plan allocated US forces to guard the borders, but the reduction of troop numbers created a very porous Iraqi border. Syria in particular became the main entryway for foreign fighters, though a majority came from Saudi Arabia (an estimated 55%).204 The CPA largely blamed Ba’athists and foreign jihadis for the insurgency, but it became clear over time that it had spread into the wider Sunni community. The Sunnis were greatly dismayed by their

202 Ibid., 52-60; Al-Marashi and Salama 2008, 201-210; Allawi 2007, 155-159; Bremer 2006, 54-56.
fall from political dominance. As noted, they viewed both de-Ba’athification and army dissolution as an attack on their political position, which to a great extent it was. They also saw Shi’ism as an alien Persian belief and viewed Shia ascendancy as the gateway to Iranian dominance of Iraq. Sunnis saw the Ba’ath Party and especially the army as unifying, modernist bulwarks against Iranian theocratic expansionism. From the Sunni perspective, the abolition of both spelled the destruction of the Iraqi nation. These fears fueled Sunni participation in the anti-Coalition insurgency.205

Yet, this perception of CPA favoritism towards the Shia did not guarantee Shia alignment with the CPA. Given Ba’athist oppression of Iraqi Shia and Kurds, US policymakers expected a favorable reception from these populaces. This proved to be the case in Kurdistan, where both Garner and Bremer were truly greeted as liberators.206 Yet the Shia were wary of the Western forces, particularly due to the close ties between Iraqi Shia and the Iranian regime. Interwar cooperation between Washington and SCIRI was always tepid, though SCIRI officially received support from Washington under the Iraqi Liberation Act.207 Nevertheless, Washington much more preferred secular Shia, like Chalabi and Ayad Allawi, who were more clearly committed to a united Iraqi state independent of Iranian influence. However, US reliance on the secular, exile Shia leadership made them oblivious to the strengthened Shia fundamentalism that had become even more distinctive during the interwar period, as a result of the Ba’ath regime’s increased religiosity and the Shia’s sense of distinctiveness following the uprising suppression. The leader of this movement was Ayatollah Mohammed al-Sadr, who was largely ignored by the exile community but obtained a huge following among the poverty-stricken Shia on the outskirts of Baghdad. His popularity and power became such that the Ba’ath regime assassinated him in

205 Allawi 2007, 177, 182.
206 Ibid., 134.
207 Katzman 2002b, 5.
1998, and the Shia began to refer to their part of Baghdad as Sadr City in his honor. His son Moqtada fled to Iran, but returned to Iraq soon after the fall of Baghdad.\textsuperscript{208} While the Coalition and the exiles were largely unaware of the Sadrist movement, they did recognize that they needed some outreach to the Shia religious hierarchy, headed by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani in Najaf. They, therefore, recruited Sayyid Abd al-Khoei, son of a renowned Ayatollah who helped lead the 1991 uprising and was later tortured and killed by the Ba’ath regime. Khoei went into exile in London, and the SIS and CIA convinced him to return to Iraq and appeal to al-Sistani to cooperate with Coalition forces. Khoei was successful, and in early April Sistani issued a fatwa calling on all Iraqi Shia to cooperate with Coalition forces. Tehran, who already had plans of fostering an anti-Western and anti-Sunni insurgency in Iraq, had Khoei brutally killed outside of a mosque, and Sistani quickly rescinded his fatwa.\textsuperscript{209} Sistani, nonetheless, still refused to adopt the harsh opposition favored by Tehran, believing that the Shia could only achieve political dominance by cooperating with the foreign occupiers. However, he also refused to meet directly with CPA officials. As Bremer worked to develop an Iraqi successor regime, he was forced to negotiate with Sistani through intermediaries. Bremer also had to contend with Moqtada Sadr’s Mahdi Army, which took over security in Sadr City in the wake of the police vacuum and had pretensions to become an Iraqi Hizballah.\textsuperscript{210}

\textit{Crafting an Iraqi Successor Regime}

Coalition forces began developing an Iraqi successor regime almost as soon as combat operations ended. ORHA hosted a “big tent” meeting in Nasiriya of Iraqi leaders on April 15, two-thirds of which was indigenous and one-third exile. They produced a 13-point memorandum, which called for a democratic and pluralist government and declared that Iraqi

\begin{footnotes}
\item[208] Allawi 2007, 54-61, 267-268.
\item[209] Ibid., 91-93; Bodansky 2004, 254-255.
\item[210] Allawi 2007, 205-213.
\end{footnotes}
leadership would not be externally imposed. Washington further announced that a transition government would be established by the end of May with responsibility over “nonsensitive issues,” such as healthcare and education. A provisional government would then be established within the next six months to two years. Yet, the national unrest and Sunni alienation caused a reassessment. It was clear that SCIRI and the Iranian-aligned Da’wa Party would sweep any elections, derailing Coalition plans for a secular, Western-aligned Iraq. Therefore, soon after his appointment, Bremer announced that elections would be delayed and instead appointed a seven-person council composed almost entirely of exile leadership, including Chalabi, Ayad Allawi, liberal-secular Sunni Adnan al-Pachachi, and SCIRI leader Ayatollah Baqir al-Hakim, who advocated cooperation with the CPA. Bremer hoped to integrate more indigenous and particularly Sunni leadership. However, the CPA was simply unaware of much of the indigenous leadership, especially those without Ba’athist affiliations. On July 13, Bremer announced the creation of the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), composed of twenty-five members, sixteen of which were either from exile leadership or Kurdistan, which was unabashedly pro-Western. The IGC was immediately considered an illegitimate puppet by nearly all of the Iraqi population outside Kurdistan. Much of the IGC leadership was unknown nationally, and it was clear that its most important constituencies were in Washington and London. Furthermore, the IGC held little real authority. Most of the “sovereign” ministries, including interior and oil, remained strictly under CPA authority. Ali Allawi noted that when the IGC sought to direct more substantive policy, the CPA adopted a “‘we know best’ attitude, with a profoundly anti-democratic ethos[.]”

On June 28, Sistani issued another fatwa, demanding the direct elections of any Iraqi leadership and thus implicitly deeming the CPA-appointed Iraqi leadership illegitimate. The IGC was further weakened by the lack of indigenous support, and it was clear that its most important constituencies were in Washington and London. Furthermore, the IGC held little real authority. Most of the “sovereign” ministries, including interior and oil, remained strictly under CPA authority. Ali Allawi noted that when the IGC sought to direct more substantive policy, the CPA adopted a “‘we know best’ attitude, with a profoundly anti-democratic ethos[.]”

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212 Allawi 2007, 195.
leadership unrepresentative of the Iraqi people.\textsuperscript{213} This legitimacy deficit was transnational. The Arab League refused to recognize the IGC as the legitimate Iraqi representative. The UN was similarly apprehensive, but under pressure from Great Britain and the United States passed Resolution 1551, which made the IGC the official Iraqi representative to the UN, but also maintained its recognition of the CPA as the overall authority in Iraq. Thus, even according to the UN, the IGC was effectively a subsidiary of a foreign entity.\textsuperscript{214}

On September 5, without consulting with Washington beforehand, Bremer announced a seven-point “path to sovereignty” in an Iraqi national radio address.\textsuperscript{215} These points were: (1) the creation of a 25-member Governing Council; (2) the designation of a preparatory commission to determine the best means of drafting a constitution; (3) turning over day-to-day operations to the GC; (4) drafting the constitution; (5) constitutional ratification through a full adult suffrage popular referendum; (6) elections for constitutionally designated positions; and (7) dissolution of the CPA.\textsuperscript{216} The first two points had already been accomplished (the latter in early August), but it was clear that accomplishing all seven points would require a minimum of two years. This was anathema to Iraqi Arabs, Sunni and Shia, who wanted full power turned over to Iraqis as quickly as possible. This timeline seemed to the Iraqis like imperial mission creep. Moreover, this process gave the CPA greater control over drafting the constitution. Sistani’s fatwa demanded that elections be held immediately, and those elected would then draft a constitution. However, Bremer and the CPA leadership’s greatest concern was that the Shia majority would elect Islamists, who would draft an Iranian-style constitution. This threat of a Shia theocracy enabled Bremer to convince many moderate Sunnis to support his plan over the

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\textsuperscript{215} He repeated them in an op-ed in \textit{The Washington Post}, the link to which is: \url{http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/yeariniraq/documents/bremerplan.html} (last accessed on April 24, 2012).
\textsuperscript{216} Dobbins et al. 2009, 267.
call for immediate elections. Yet Bremer also faced pressure from Washington to devise a speedier handover. The Bush administration shared his apprehension regarding a Shia Islamist takeover, but there was increasing domestic pressure for US withdrawal, especially with a Presidential election on the horizon.217

On November 15, CPA announced a timeline for an independent Iraqi government, which included: (1) the establishment of a Basic Law by February 28, 2004, which would serve as the constitutional blueprint; (2) the creation of a Transitional National Assembly by May to replace the IGC; (3) the dissolution of the CPA by July 1; and (4) the election of an interim government, with full elections held by the end of 2005. It also included a provision for a status-of-forces agreement between Iraq and Coalition forces.218 While this shortened the timeline for the CPA-Iraqi power transition, it maintained the policy of creating a proto-constitution before holding elections. Moreover, the November 15 proposal also included a caucus system, in which the CPA-appointed governates and local councils would appoint the representatives to the national assembly. This would essentially allow the CPA to dictate the Iraqi constitution. Sistani and SCIRI again voiced their objection, but the IGC nevertheless approved the November 15 agreement. Pro-Sistani and anti-CPA protests broke out throughout southern Iraq, threatening the fragile accord between the Shia religious leadership and the CPA. Both groups, therefore, appealed to the UN to mediate, even as the IGC and the CPA went forward in drafting the Basic Law.219

Annan agreed to send a negotiating team to determine whether Iraq could structurally handle elections. This placated Sistani temporarily. The IGC moved quickly to complete the Basic Law, now called the Transition Administrative Law (TAL), by Bremer’s deadline of

217 Ibid., 271-275; Allawi 2007, 213-216.
February 28, 2004. The UN team arrived on January 23, and Sistani and SCIRI decided to abstain from the TAL negotiations. This, however, further strengthened Bremer’s position. Most understood that the TLA would likely be the foundation for a future constitution. With Shia abstention, it was effectively written by the IGC Kurds and the secular nationalists, who were most aligned with Western interests. Only in the final week of negotiations did the Shia Islamists realize their tactical mistake, but it was too late. Ali Allawi noted that the TLA “talked about pluralism, gender rights, separation of powers and civilian control over the armed forces—none of which were even remotely familiar terms in Iraq. The TAL embodied western, specifically American notions, and was carefully supervised by the CPA. Each significant point had been pre-cleared with the NSC in Washington.”220 While these alien western ideas were given a prominent place in the TLA, the role of Islam was significantly downgraded. It was recognized as a source of legislation, but not the source, as the Shia hierarchy preferred. Bremer made clear that any clause designating Islam as the main source of Iraqi law would elicit a CPA veto.221 Yet, the most controversial aspect of the TLA was a clause that stipulated that if a constitution draft failed to get two-thirds of the vote in at least three provinces, it would be rejected. This effectively gave the Kurds veto over any future constitution. This especially worked in US favor, as the Kurds were their one reliable constituency in Iraq. Kurdish autonomy had already been agreed upon by all sides, but this guaranteed the Kurds a pre-eminent role within the Iraqi state.222 In addition, the TAL could only be amended by a three-quarters majority vote of the future national assembly and a unanimous vote of the three-person Presidential Council. This made any amendments to the TAL near impossible. The Sunni, seeking to balance against the majority Shia, supported this clause. The Shia acquiesced, but

220 Allawi 2007, 222.
221 Ibid., 224-225.
222 Ibid., 73, 136.
nevertheless condemned the TAL as “a flawed document, written by a foreign occupier with Iraq fellow-travelers in tow.” The UN arbitration provided a more favorable outcome for Sistani. Led by Lakhdar Brahimi, a former Algerian foreign minister who led UN efforts in post-Taliban Afghanistan, the UN team rejected the CPA-proposed caucus system in favor of national elections. Nevertheless, the Brahimi team also determined that national elections could not feasibly be held until December 31, 2004 at the earliest. Sistani reluctantly accepted Brahimi’s assessment.

Brahimi’s assessment, however, created a problem. If the CPA was to keep with its deadline of a power handover by June 30, they would need to determine an alternative means of successor regime selection. The IGC again appealed to the UN for assistance, and Brahimi again returned. The selection of the interim Iraqi government, thus, became reduced to back-door negotiations between Bremer, representing the CPA, Brahimi, representing the UN and (implicitly) the Arab League, and White House envoy Robert Blackwill, representing the Bush administration. Iraqis, exile and indigenous, were excluded from the negotiations. Bremer, Brahimi, and Blackwill selected the members of the Presidential Council, appointing Sunni Sheikh Ghazi al-Yawer as President and Shia Ibrahim al-Jafaari of the Da’wa Party and Kurdish Rowsch Shaways of the KDP as Deputy Presidents. The most important selection was Prime Minister. Bremer, who had long been informally aligned with the realist wing of the Bush administration, had successfully marginalized Chalabi and instead promoted INA head Ayad Allawi as Prime Minister. Allawi’s reputation as a secular Shia nationalist, security-oriented and ill-disposed towards Iran, made him the consensus choice among all major constituencies, particularly those in Washington and London. Bremer, Brahimi, and Blackwill also agreed to

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223 Ibid., 222-226, quote on 224.
stack the Cabinet with neutral technocrats, decreasing the number of Islamists that heretofore served in the IGC and including some former Ba’athists. Allawi was given veto over their selections, but no actual input.225 Sistani again reluctantly supported this foreign-orchestrated selection process, lamenting that “the option of holding [early] elections was rejected for many well-known reasons. … Thus, the process has become one of appointment, in order to form a new government, without achieving the legitimacy of having been elected.”226 The Arab League also grudgingly accepted the new interim government as the legitimate Iraqi representative, seeing the Allawi government as the best bulwark against Shia ascendancy and Iranian dominance. On June 8, the Security Council passed Resolution 1546 granting the interim government full sovereign control over Iraq and ending the CPA mandate. Yet, given the ongoing insurgencies and the threat of Iranian encroachment, the US made sure to include a clause in Resolution 1546 maintaining Coalition forces in Iraq, independent of Iraqi control though present at the behest of the Iraqi government.227 Even as the CPA was officially dissolved on June 30, 2004, the US maintained its role of protecting its new client regime.

**Conclusion**

Regime change in Iraq was a key US foreign policy goal, overtly or covertly, since the Persian Gulf War. Following the Gulf War, the US actively cultivated a viable opposition to facilitate indirect regime change and install a more reliable successor regime. The acumen of Saddam’s intelligence and paramilitary forces, however, defeated every attempt. Nevertheless, despite US efforts, Saddam Hussein was considered a manageable threat, and therefore the US did not seriously contemplate directly overthrowing him. The terror attacks of September 11,

226 Quoted in Allawi 2007, 286-287.
227 Ibid., 288; Bensahel et al. 2008, 176, 178.
2001 changed that. Iraq’s supposed WMD arsenal and history of aggression and non-compliance now posed an existential threat to an administration that now viewed US vulnerability in a much different light and had become obsessed with more catastrophic attacks.\textsuperscript{228} Prime Minister Tony Blair shared these concerns, but convinced his close friend and ally President George W. Bush to once again engage in coercive diplomacy through the United Nations. Bush agreed, and Saddam allowed the inspectors to return, but the inspectors failed to find the WMD that all international intelligence agencies reported were there. Saddam had legitimate reasons for initially adopting a strategy of “deterrence by doubt,” but it ultimately created “a diplomatic and propaganda Catch-22” for the Ba’ath regime.\textsuperscript{229} Nonetheless, despite nearly all countries believing Saddam was hiding WMD, the Security Council refused to authorize any military action against his regime. Therefore, the United States, Great Britain, and their “coalition of the willing” decided to impose regime change without UN approval. As Condoleezza Rice told a group of skeptical Congressional Democrats, “We tried sanctions, we tried limited military options, we tried resolutions. At some point war is the only option.”\textsuperscript{230}

Given the long adversarial relationship between the United States and Iraq, the US did not have sufficient ties to Iraq to quickly identify and recruit a reliable successor regime. Rather, militarily imposing regime change would also include paying the concomitant costs of postwar governance ad future enforcement. However, because of its decade-long cultivation of a viable Iraqi successor regime, many US policymakers believed it could easily impose transformative regime change without a significant long-term US commitment. Some in the military advised otherwise, especially regarding troop numbers. Secretary of State Colin Powell privately warned

\textsuperscript{228} Suskind 2006; Woodward 2004, 45-48.
\textsuperscript{229} Woods et al. 2006, 91.
\textsuperscript{230} Woodward 2004, 308.
Bush of the ‘Pottery Barn Rule’: “You break it, you own it.” Yet, Bush and many others were reassured by Iraqi exiles that Iraqis would at least initially greet Coalition forces as liberators, though they would be hostile to an indefinite occupation. Moreover, limited CIA intelligence suggested that the Iraqi regular military and police did not have close Ba’athist affiliations and would maintain security immediately following regime overthrow. Therefore, the Bush administration planned diligently for many potential humanitarian crises, but gave short shrift to the issues of long-term governance.

Unfortunately, the theory’s predictions about the agency problems of adversarial transformation proved correct. US assumptions and expectations turned out to be wildly off-base. Iraqi military and police forces, rather than being cohesive and compliant, “melted away” after the fall of Baghdad, leaving a security vacuum that Coalition forces were unprepared to fill. The Coalition ultimately recovered and belatedly formed the CPA, but only after weeks of devastating looting and the onset of a series of insurgences. These insurgencies plagued Iraq and the CPA for years to come. Nevertheless, the CPA did ultimately establish a liberal democratic regime in Iraq led by secular nationalists and favoring the pro-Western Kurds. However, this regime remained on fragile foundations and required six more years of US military presence in order to help ensure stability, defeat the insurgencies, and counter Iranian influence. Economists Joseph Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes estimated the full costs to the US for regime change in Iraq will ultimately surpass three trillion dollars. It is likely US forces would still be in Iraq today, were it not for the recent ascendancy of the radical, anti-American Sadrists, who demanded US withdrawal. This further suggests the risks of imposing a democratic regime, since a foreign-

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231 Ibid., 150.
232 Stiglitz and Bilmes 2008. This, of course, does not include the incalculable losses the Iraqis themselves have suffered.
233 Davis 2011; Shadid 2011.
imposed authoritarian regime may have better resisted these advances. Ultimately, US long-term goals were hampered by poor planning regarding the successor regime. Though, the threat motivating regime change was great, so too were the costs involved. The Bush administration only recognized the former, and thus was woefully unprepared for the latter.

\[234\] Many, including Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, tried to convince Bush to support a delay in the elections dated for January 2005. This would have given Allawi time to solidify his ties with moderate Sunnis and possibly establish more “hybrid democratic” regime. Bush, however, for reasons both ideological and domestic-political, supported the January 2005 date, in which Allawi’s party was defeated. Allawi 2007, 388-389.
Chapter 7
Conclusion

It was assumed that the dramatic ouster of Saddam would create a “Wizard of Oz moment” in Iraq, recalled Carl Strock, the two-star general from the Army Corps of Engineers[...]. After the wicked dictator was deposed, throngs of cheering Iraqis would hail their liberators and go back to work under the tutelage of [American advisors].

Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor

The movie The Wizard of Oz provides an indelible image of regime overthrow, in which liberated people sing, “Ding Dong, the Witch is dead!” and hail the young Kansan girl Dorothy as their savior. Yet, subsequent books in L. Frank Baum’s classic series expound on the story of Oz after overthrow, in which appointed successors the Scarecrow and the Tinman face the unexpected difficulties of post-conflict governance. Even classic American fiction could not escape the full costs and responsibilities of foreign-imposed regime change.

In this dissertation, I provide a theory explaining how states decide what strategy to choose when confronting a hostile foreign regime. I assert that imposing regime change indirectly is the most optimal strategy, because regime change is an absolute means of conflict resolution, and imposing it indirectly allows the foreign imposer to delegate the responsibilities of regime change and thus reduce the concomitant costs. Regime change costs and responsibilities include the overthrow operation, post-conflict governance, and future enforcement. If the foreign imposer can select a reliable successor regime with aligned interests and governing competence, then it can impose regime change indirectly by delegating many of these responsibilities to the successor regime. However, if the foreign imposer cannot identify a reliable successor regime, then it must bear these costs if it chooses to impose regime change. The decision then greatly depends on the foreign imposer’s threat perception of the target

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1 Gordon and Trainor 2006, 531.
2 Fleming 1939; Sherman 2005.
regime. If the foreign imposer regards the target regime as an existential threat, then it will impose regime change and bear the concomitant costs. If, however, the foreign imposer regards the target regime as a manageable threat, then the foreign imposer will choose not to impose regime change. However, given the influence of motivated biases on threat perception, the availability of a reliable successor regime may, in fact, affect threat perception, further demonstrating the importance of successor selection.

Successor selection introduces agency problems, the severity of which is affected by the prior relationship between the imposing and target countries. If their relationship was previously amicable, then this mitigates the agency problems of the regime change. The foreign imposer will have close ties to target constituencies with governing competence and aligned interests. The foreign imposer, therefore, can easily identify, recruit and delegate to a reliable successor regime, which greatly reduces the costs of regime change. Target constituencies may even have invite foreign regime change in order to restore the previous relationship. If, however, the relationship was previously adversarial, then the foreign imposer will have weak ties to target constituencies and little information about those who could compose a reliable successor regime. Imposing regime change, therefore, would include bearing all the concomitant costs of regime change. Indeed, these costs would be ever greater, because regime change by a long-time adversary would be viewed particularly unfavorably in the target country. An imposed successor regime would likely be considered a traitorous puppet and would lack domestic legitimacy, further increasing the need and exacerbating the costs of post-conflict governance and future enforcement.
Altogether, this theory produced five hypotheses:

**Hyp1:** If the foreign imposer selects a reliable successor regime, then it will seek to impose regime change by delegating the overthrow operation, long-term governance, and/or future enforcement to the successor regime.

**Hyp2:** If the foreign imposer does not select a reliable successor regime but considers the target regime to be an existential threat, then it will impose regime change directly and pay the concomitant costs of post-conflict governance and future enforcement.

**Hyp3:** If the foreign imposer does not select a reliable successor regime and considers the target regime to be a manageable threat, then it will adopt a more limited strategy to resolve the conflict.

**Hyp4:** If the imposing and target countries previously had an amicable or beneficial relationship, then this will mitigate agency problems, and the foreign imposer will not have to greatly invest in the overthrow operation, long-term governance and future enforcement.

**Hyp5:** If the imposing and target countries previously had an adversarial relationship, then this will exacerbate agency problems, and the foreign imposer will have to invest greatly in the overthrow operation, long-term governance and future enforcement.

However, the target regime can deter regime change by eliminating interval rivals that would likely compose a reliable successor regime. Target incumbents can eliminate rivals through arrest, execution, exile and assassination, and also through marginalization and co-optation. Target incumbents can marginalize rivals and deter defection by stigmatizing anyone who would cooperate with a foreign power, even if that is the international patron. Target incumbents can also offer better benefits and payoffs to potential defectors than the foreign imposer is in the position to offer. The most effective target regime strategy is likely a combination of these. Eliminating the option of a reliable successor regime forces the foreign imposer to bear the concomitant costs if it seeks regime change. Ultimately then, foreign-imposed regime change involves a triadic interaction between the foreign imposer, the target regime, and the successor regime.
Case Study Evidence

The table below lays out the proposed variables, the predicted strategy choices, and the ultimate choices made by the foreign imposer in each case study dyad. I then review each of the cases, the predicted strategy choices, and the decision-making and mechanisms behind the ultimate choices.

Table 7.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict Dyad</th>
<th>Relationship Type</th>
<th>Successor Availability</th>
<th>Threat Perception</th>
<th>Predicted Strategy Choice</th>
<th>Ultimate Strategy Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allies-Axis, Post-WWII</td>
<td>Adversarial</td>
<td>Unreliable</td>
<td>Existential</td>
<td>Regime change + Costs</td>
<td>Regime change + Costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain/US-Iran, 1953</td>
<td>Amicable</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
<td>Manageable</td>
<td>Delegated Regime Change</td>
<td>Delegated Regime Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US-Iran, 1979</td>
<td>Amicable</td>
<td>Unreliable</td>
<td>Manageable</td>
<td>Limited Strategy</td>
<td>Limited Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US-Iraq, 2003</td>
<td>Adversarial</td>
<td>Unreliable</td>
<td>Existential</td>
<td>Regime change + Costs</td>
<td>Regime change + Costs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Allies-Axis, post-World War II_

The democratic Allies, the United States, Great Britain, and France, and the former Axis powers, Germany and Japan, unquestionably had extremely adversarial relationships. The two sides had just fought the most devastating war in human history, which culminated in the

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3 Table 7.1 does not include the various decisions made in each case study domain, but these are all reviewed in the case descriptions.
American detonation of two atomic bombs on Japan. The theory, therefore, would predict that the Allies would be either unwilling or unable to identify and recruit a reliable successor regime. Furthermore, the Allies clearly regarded the Axis regimes as existential threats. Prior to the war, Japan and Germany demonstrated that they were completely untrustworthy; during the war, they demonstrated that they were relentlessly aggressive. The theory, therefore, would predict that the Allies would impose regime change directly and bear the concomitant costs.

This is ultimately what happened. The Allies sought full adversarial transformation and rejected overtures from German military officers who offered to overthrow the Nazi regime in exchange for peace (and maintaining the 1939 borders). The Allies governed Germany and Japan for many subsequent years and established new democratic institutions and practices. Ultimately, the difficulty of training new officials and the exigencies of the oncoming Cold War forced the Allies to rehabilitate much of the former bureaucracies in both countries. Nevertheless, the democratic Allies did not depend on “democratic pacification,” the belief that imposing democracy is sufficient to guarantee of peace and compliance. Rather, the Allies enacted additional measures to change Axis popular preferences, permanently weaken Axis capabilities, and monitor their future behavior. These measures included banning all militarist and revisionist organizations, denying the former Axis countries offensive military forces, and establishing permanent US military bases in both countries. Though the United States began to trust both successor regimes as the Cold War intensified, the Axis countries’ neighbors/former victims were less confident and forgiving. They insisted on the maintenance of many of these enforcement measures that continue to the present day.
**Great Britain/United States and Iran, 1953**

The relationship between Great Britain and Iran was amicable, with Britain having first established its authority over Iran in the early nineteenth century. The theory, therefore, would predict that the British could easily identify and recruit a successor regime and impose regime change indirectly, unless the Iranian regime successfully eliminated any potential rivals. In that case, the British and Americans would have to decide whether Tehran posed an existential or manageable threat. If Tehran was deemed an existential threat, then Great Britain and the United States would impose regime change and bear its concomitant costs. If Tehran was deemed a manageable threat, then they would adopt a more limited strategy.

Despite their unpopularity in much of Iran by 1953, the British still had close connections to Iranian businessmen and the military and were, therefore, well-positioned to organize a coup. Mosaddeq believed he had eliminated his rivals upon his return to power by marginalizing the Shah and purging the military of royalists. He further believed that he had the support of the Iranian opposition and was more fearful of a backlash from them if he compromised with the British. Mosaddeq also believed he had US support for a compromise settlement. He, therefore, believed he had successfully deterred British-imposed regime change and refused to accede to British demands. However, because of British connections to Iranian constituencies and US financing and promises of a more equitable oil settlement, the Western powers were able to organize a coup that overthrew Mosaddeq and establish a reliable successor regime.

**United States and Iran, 1979**

The relationship between the United States and Iran was amicable, after the US supplanted Great Britain as Iran’s international patron following the 1953 coup. The theory, therefore, would predict that the United States could easily identify and recruit a reliable
successor regime and impose regime change indirectly, unless the Iranian regime successfully eliminated any potential rivals. In that case, the United States would have to decide whether Tehran posed an existential or manageable threat. If Tehran was deemed on existential threat, then the United States would impose regime change and bear its concomitant costs. If Tehran was deemed a manageable threat, then the United States would adopt a more limited strategy.

Despite its amicable relationship with Iran, the United States was unable to identify a reliable successor regime. The Shah, after witnessing first-hand the dangers of foreign connections to domestic constituencies, worked diligently to limit US intelligence about and connections to Iranian constituencies who might conspire with Washington to overthrow the Pahlavi regime. When the Shah abdicated in January 1979, the United States tried to organize a preventive coup in the event that a hostile leftist-Islamist coalition appeared likely to take power. However, the US found the military to be surprisingly incompetent, due to the Shah’s successful coup-proofing of the Iranian state. When Khomeini did take power in February 1979, Washington debated whether to directly impose regime change, but ultimately opted against it because of the concomitant costs involved. The Carter administration consoled itself by noting the potential for cooperation with the moderates in Khomeini’s coalition. This suggests that domestic constraints may have influenced threat perception. Despite US hopes, Khomeini purged the government and society of royalists and American supporters, particularly after Washington invited the Shah to the US for medical treatment. Iran was swept with fears of a 1953 repeat and attacked the US embassy, took American hostages, and fiercely targeted those who would compose a reliable successor regime. The US responded with heavy economic sanctions against Iran, but still refused to directly impose regime change on Tehran.
The United States and Iraq had an adversarial relationship, despite their temporary “alliance of convenience” during the latter part of the Iran-Iraq War. Washington, therefore, had no significant connections to Iraqi constituencies who could compose a reliable successor regime. If Baghdad was deemed on existential threat, then the United States would impose regime change and bear its concomitant costs. If Baghdad was deemed a manageable threat, then the United States would adopt a more limited strategy.

Baghdad was considered a regional threat, but not an existential threat to the United States, given US distance and military preponderance. The Bush administration, therefore, rejected the idea of directly imposing regime change. Nevertheless, the US did seek to coerce the Iraqi military into imposing regime change indirectly. Coalition forces heavily bombed Baghdad as a means of coercion and targeted the Ba’athist coercive apparatus in order to allow the regular Iraqi military to launch a coup against Saddam following Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. Arab Coalition members assured the Bush administration that the regular Iraqi military would launch a coup against Saddam after he engaged in another failed military venture. The military would then compose a moderate military government in the mold of other US-aligned regimes in the Middle East. Despite this plan, there was no coordination between Coalition and internal Iraqi forces, because the prior adversarial relationship did not provide opportunities for such connections. Moreover, prior to the Kuwaiti invasion, Saddam had purged the military of many of his opponents, and following Kuwaiti withdrawal, he instituted a series of payoffs and additional purges to further prevent coup attempts. When widespread sectarian uprisings threatened Saddam’s regime, the Coalition deemed then unreliable, because their victory would likely result in the breakup of the Iraqi state, the expansion of Iranian influence, and the wider
destabilization of the region. Therefore, Coalition forces remained neutral, while the Republican Guard brutally suppressed these uprisings.

*United States and Iraq, 2003*

The United States and Iraq had a notably adversarial relationship following the Persian Gulf War. Washington, therefore, would not be expected to have close ties to Iraqi constituencies to compose a reliable successor regime. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Bush administration developed a much different view of American vulnerability. Now, the administration greatly feared that hostile states with weapons of mass destruction could ally with non-state terrorist actors to strike the United States directly. The US, therefore, deemed Iraq an existential threat. The theory, therefore, would predict that the United States would impose regime change and bear the concomitant costs.

Learning the lesson from the regime change failure in 1991, Washington actively cultivated an Iraqi opposition that could overthrow Saddam and compose a reliable successor regime. Though these efforts to remove Saddam indirectly failed, the existence of a reliable successor regime convinced the Bush administration that it had a reliable successor regime ready following the direct overthrow of the Ba’ath regime. The Bush administration, therefore, only prepared for the overthrow operation and immediate postwar humanitarian needs and did not sufficiently prepare for long-term governance. The immediate postwar situation, therefore, proved to be a fiasco, with terrible ramifications during the subsequent years. The United States was forced to invest very heavily in postwar governance and future enforcement at the estimated cost of three trillion dollars. The Bush administration could not overcome the agency problems and concomitant responsibilities of adversarial regime change.
Analysis

These cases all strongly verify the hypotheses and mechanisms presented in the theory. Anglo-American regime change against Iran in 1953 was a case in which there was an *amicable* relationship between the imposing and target countries, which facilitated successor selection and allowed for indirectly imposed regime change. The US attempt at regime change against Iran in 1979 was a case in which there was an *amicable* relationship between the United States and Iran, which should have facilitated successor selection and indirect regime change to stall or depose the incoming Khomeini regime. However, in this case, US efforts were hindered by target regime *elimination of potential rivals* from both the Iranian revolutionaries and, ironically, from the Shah. Allied-imposed regime change against the Axis powers and US-imposed regime change against Iraq in 2003 were both cases in which there was prior *adversarial* relationship, and the target regimes were considered an *existential* threat. In both cases, the foreign imposers chose to impose regime change and had to bear the high concomitant costs. US consideration of regime change against Iraq in 1991 was a case in which there was a prior *adversarial* relationship and the target regime was considered a *manageable* threat. Ultimately, the US decided to adopt a more limited strategy of sanctions and disarmament.

Beyond simply verifying the hypotheses, the case study evidence illustrates the persistence of the underlying mechanisms despite actor intentions. In the two cases of US consideration of regime change in Iraq, US policymakers sought to overcome the agency problems created by the adversarial relationship between the two countries. In the 1991 case, the US believed that destroying Saddam’s coercive network and dealing him a humiliating military defeat would be sufficient to encourage regime change. However, this could not make up for the poor intelligence about and connections to critical Iraqi constituencies. Egyptian, Saudi, and
Turkish connections to Iraqi constituencies could have provided better connections, but Saddam had been diligent about targeting any potential rivals who would cooperate with foreign actors. This case demonstrates both the importance of the prior relationship and the target regime’s agency in deterring regime change. In the subsequent years, US policymakers sought to rectify this mistake by cultivating a US-aligned opposition movement. While Washington developed substantive ties with much of the Iraqi opposition, these groups also lacked strong connections to internal Iraqi constituencies, due again to Saddam’s thorough security network and to the opposition groups’ long time in exile. Therefore, the US once again failed to overcome the agency problems of the prior adversarial relationship, and this time paid a much greater price.

Learning also played a major role in actor decision-making and brought dynamism to the strategic process, while still remaining consistent with the hypothesized mechanisms. Allied reticence about unfettered democracy in the former Axis countries was based on lessons from the interwar period. They recognized the potential for militarist revival through democratic elections and unregulated speech. The democratic Allies, therefore, were careful how they imposed democracy following World War II, prioritizing pacification and compliance over full democratic freedom. Following the “Mosaddeq mistake” of 1953, both the Shah and Iranian revolutionaries learned that targeting potential rivals was critical for deterring foreign-imposed regime change. Ultimately though, only the revolutionaries profited from that lesson. Finally, despite the consequences, the Americans did, in fact, learn from the regime change failure in 1991 and worked to cultivate a reliable successor regime through Iraqi exiles. Unfortunately, these lessons did not obviate the regime change agency problems and ultimately resulted in a “catastrophic success” in Iraq.
Implications and Future Research

This research has clear implications for future research regarding similar regime and interstate affinity, intervention decision-making, and the international politics of domestic regime transitions. Shared regime type is not a guarantor of interstate affinity, nor is imposing a similar regime type a guarantor of interest alignment. Joseph Stalin famously stated at the close of World War II, “Whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach. It cannot be otherwise.” Stalin’s prescient statement about the postwar world suggests that imposing a similar regime type guarantees interest alignment. Yet, his own actions demonstrate the limits of shared regime type. Following World War II, Moscow established communist regimes in East-Central Europe and North Korea, while communist partisans gained control of Yugoslavia under Josip Broz Tito and China under Mao Zedong. Yet, communist takeovers in Yugoslavia and China did not guarantee policy alignment between these respective regimes and Moscow. Importantly, both Tito and Mao came to power without direct Soviet military intervention and thus avoided a Soviet selection process. Conflicting Soviet ambitions with Tito in the Balkans and Mao in Asia ultimately led to Soviet splits with both regimes. Following his split with Tito, Stalin initiated extensive purges throughout East-Central Europe, expelling and executing any leader who demonstrated independence from Moscow. Following the Belgrade-Moscow split, Stalin initiated further leadership purges within the communist regimes of East-Central Europe. The later Beijing-Moscow split created a further split between communist regimes in Beijing and

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4 Djilas 1962, 114.
5 Judt 2005, Chs. 5-6; Tismaneanu 2009. Stalin’s statement quoted above comes from a conversation between Soviet and Yugoslav Communists, including Tito, in April 1945, in which Stalin is already voicing complaints about Yugoslav independence and regional ambitions. For the full context, see Djilas 1962, 107-117.
Hanoi during and following the Vietnam War.\textsuperscript{6} Shared regime type is not a guarantor of amicable relations or successor reliability.

The same is true for foreign-imposed democracies for reasons discussed in Chapter 3. Imposing democracy does not inherently provide the benefits that proponents of “democratic pacification” suggest. The hypothesized mechanisms of the democratic peace do not transfer when democracy is foreign-imposed. In typical democracies, interstate commitments undergo an institutional selection process, in which democracies only ratify commitments it is willing to honor. Foreign-imposed settlements subvert this process, which obviates the democratic commitment effect. Furthermore, the public may in fact be willing to pay the costs of war in order to rectify what they may consider to be an unjust settlement. Ultimately, democracy exacerbates the agency problems associated with regime change. This does not mean foreign-imposed democracy is impossible, but rather that foreign imposers must enact additional measures to align popular preferences with their own before democracy is fully imposed.

This dissertation also suggests new avenues for research on intervention decision-making, by analyzing how states decide between different intervention strategies. Much of the current research on intervention decision-making focuses primarily or solely on military interventions. This is understandable, given the high stakes and the high costs involved. Moreover, it is often difficult to learn the extent to which foreign actors intervene in domestic affairs unless it is very overt, as in the case of military interventions.\textsuperscript{7} Nevertheless, this dissertation demonstrates that military interventions are one end of a continuum of different types of foreign intervention. Many works on intervention recognize this point, but few integrate it into their theory development. I demonstrate the costs of intervention are affected by the

\textsuperscript{6} Christensen 2011.
\textsuperscript{7} This is the major reason why the table of foreign-imposed regime changes provided in the Appendix is limited to militarily imposed regime changes. I plan to expand the list in the future.
current and expected interactions with target country constituencies. These interactions are critical to intervention onset and strategy. Future research on intervention decision-making must actively consider the list of intervention options policymakers have beyond military intervention. In addition, future research should consider how target state actors strategically anticipate possible foreign intervention. This dissertation illustrates that target regimes understand the importance of rival elimination in deterring foreign intervention as well consolidating domestic power. This research provides a bridge between domestic coup-proofing and intervention decision-making.

In addition, this research has strong implications for research concerning regime transitions and the important role of international actors. While this dissertation focused on foreign imposition of domestic regimes, it also touched upon the international causes and effects of domestic political transitions. International orders rise, fall, and survive based on the political stability of domestic regimes. Dissidents seeking political change must also contend with international actors invested in the status quo. If dissidents hope to succeed, they must focus on obtaining support from the regime’s international patron as well.\(^8\) These dynamics recently played out in the Arab Spring of 2011, as many Arab protestors made direct appeals to the United States. The Muslim Brotherhood struck a moderate international posture and promised not to field a Presidential candidate in the next election. Instead, the opposition presented Mohammed el-Baradei as their spokesman, who had a small base within Egypt but was internationally renowned as a Nobel Peace Prize winner and former head of the IAEA. Yet, protestors also challenged Washington to stand by its Bush-era stance of promoting Middle East democracy and called on President Barack Obama to stay true to his Cairo speech of June 2009. The Obama administration’s move away from Mubarak in many ways provided the final death

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\(^8\) McKoy and Miller 2012.
knell for Mubarak’s reign.\textsuperscript{9} The foreign role in Libya regime change was even more overt and is, in fact, the most recent example of foreign-imposed regime change. It is likely that without NATO involvement, Moammar Qaddafi would still be in power in Tripoli. International actors assert themselves in many ways in domestic political transitions, and this is an area that international relations and comparative scholars alike must pursue in the years ahead.

**Conclusion**

Foreign-imposed regime change is an integral part of international and domestic politics. Foreign powers have great say over the downfall and resilience of many regimes, and they often make their voices heard through force. Domestic actors, on the other hand, are the ones who recognize and rebel against international authority, and their role in the downfall and resilience of international orders requires further attention and analysis. In this dissertation, I sought to bring these two areas together. I developed a theory of strategic decision-making with a particular focus on foreign-imposed regime change and performed some initial theory-testing through case studies of US regime change deliberations. However, there is a great need for further research geographically and temporally. US difficulties in Afghanistan and Iraq have clearly demonstrated the need to understand regime change beyond regime overthrow. Before considering regime change, foreign imposers must be deeply knowledgeable about the target regime and society, which requires years and perhaps even decades of direct experience. While victory may cause foreign forces to be greeted as liberators, foreign powers can only fully provide liberation if they are prepared to take on the responsibilities of regime change or wisely select those to whom they can delegate these responsibilities. Much of the true costs and benefits of foreign-imposed regime change take place after overthrow.

\textsuperscript{9} Ghosh 2011.
Appendix

Below is a list of regime changes, in which foreign military forces were either partially or solely responsible for the overthrow of the incumbent target regime, and the foreign imposer designated the successor regime or established/re-established the institutions that would designate the successor regime.

**Militarily Imposed Regime Changes, 1789-2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreign Imposer(s)</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Year+</th>
<th>Motive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prussia, Russia</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>Restore absolute monarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>United Provinces</td>
<td>1793</td>
<td>Convert government to French-style republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Italian Kingdoms</td>
<td>1797</td>
<td>Unite Northern Italian kingdoms into French-style republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>Convert government to French-style republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Naples</td>
<td>1799</td>
<td>Convert government to French-style republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain, Russia</td>
<td>Naples</td>
<td>1799</td>
<td>Restore monarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Naples</td>
<td>1806</td>
<td>Establish Bonapartist monarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1808</td>
<td>Ferdinand VII defected from Continental System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>Sicily</td>
<td>1811</td>
<td>Secure Mediterranean Sea access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1813</td>
<td>Restore monarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, Russia</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>1814</td>
<td>End Napoleon’s conquests, hegemony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, Russia</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Overthrow Bonapartist monarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Naples</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Overthrow Bonapartist monarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria, Great Britain, Prussia, Russia</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Restore canton system</td>
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<td>Austria</td>
<td>Two Sicilies</td>
<td>1821</td>
<td>Restore absolute monarchy</td>
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<td>Sardinia</td>
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<td>France</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1823</td>
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<td>Spain</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>1826</td>
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<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
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<td>Restore liberal monarchy</td>
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<td>Austria</td>
<td>Italian Kingdoms</td>
<td>1831</td>
<td>Restore absolute monarchy in Modena, Parma, Rome</td>
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</table>

* Sources for this table include Clapham 1996; J. Clark 2002; Cleveland and Bunton 2009; Downes and Krmcaric 2011; Fazal 2007; Grab 2003; Henderson, Delpar, and Brunardt 2000; Munro 1950; Owen 2010; and Westad 2005.

* The Year column includes the year of target regime overthrow and the year of successor regime imposition. In instances when those are the same year, only one year is listed. Countries who experience regime overthrow but not successor regime imposition are considered “state deaths” and are not listed here.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Result</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>1838</td>
<td>Remove Argentine influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>1840</td>
<td>Establish regional hegemony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>1840</td>
<td>Establish regional hegemony</td>
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<td>Austria, France, Sicily</td>
<td>Papal States</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>Restore Papal authority</td>
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<td>Austria</td>
<td>Tuscany</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>Restore Grand Duchy authority</td>
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<td>Prussia</td>
<td>Baden</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>Restore Grand Duchy authority</td>
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<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>Overthrow liberal government</td>
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<td>Brazil, Uruguay</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>1852</td>
<td>End Argentine bid for regional hegemony</td>
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<td>Guatemala</td>
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<td>Overthrow liberal government</td>
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<td>Guatemala, Nicaragua</td>
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<td>Overthrow liberal government</td>
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<td>France</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Establish friendly monarchy</td>
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<td>Argentina, Brazil</td>
<td>Paraguay</td>
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<td>Overthrow aggressive regime</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>1881</td>
<td>Gain control of Peruvian nitrate deposits</td>
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<td>Chile</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Gain control of Peruvian nitrate deposits</td>
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<td>Great Britain, Russia</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Remove anti-foreign liberal regime</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>1915-1931</td>
<td>Obtain control of Haitian financial institutions, preclude German influence</td>
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<tr>
<td>France, Great Britain</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>1916-1917</td>
<td>Maintain Greek allegiance during World War I</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>1916-1924</td>
<td>Prevent coup from pro-German general</td>
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<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Overthrow Communist regime</td>
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<td>Germany, Italy</td>
<td>Spain</td>
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<td>Iran</td>
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<td>Gain access routes to USSR</td>
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<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Maintain access to air bases</td>
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<td>1944</td>
<td>Maintain wartime alliance</td>
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<td>France</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Restore Third Republic</td>
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<td>Establish Soviet satellite</td>
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<td>Remove expansionist threat</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Gabon</td>
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<td>Central African Republic</td>
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<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
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<td>Settle communist infighting</td>
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<td>End Panamanian drug-trafficking</td>
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<td>Iraq</td>
<td>Kuwait</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Obtain more favorable oil deal</td>
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<td>Haiti</td>
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<td>Restore democratic government</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>End Zaire as base for ethnic conflict and rebel attacks</td>
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<td>Rwanda, Uganda</td>
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<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Restore democratic government</td>
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<td>Destroy al Qaeda safe haven</td>
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<td>Iraq</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Destroy WMD programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Prevent regime-backed massacre</td>
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