American Grand Strategy in the Middle East, 1972 – 2018: Toward a Neoclassical Realist Appraisal of Strategic Adjustment

Anthony Ricketts

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of The Australian National University

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Authorship Declaration

I hereby declare and confirm that this thesis is entirely the result of my own work except where otherwise indicated, and has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a higher degree or qualification at this or any other university or institution.

Anthony Ricketts
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The transition from professional squash player to writing a thesis on United States strategy in the Middle East did not happen easily nor without significant input and influence from others. A 'team' of individuals has helped steer me through the painstaking madness of doctorate studies. Similarly to my former high functioning sports team, my PhD journey has been reliant on the team working on my strengths, building on my weaknesses, investing time and energy in the 'training', and gradually guiding me towards this end goal, or should I say product. This team consists of:

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Abstract

How do we understand American strategic adjustment in the Middle East? In the discipline of strategic studies, answers to this question are regularly found within realist theoretical literature. The realist canon has long argued that the anarchic international system forces states to adopt "self-help" strategies for their survival. Systemic factors push and pull states in directions according to shifts in the global distribution of power. When one state acquires more economic and military power, realists argue, other states will balance against this rising power to restore the equilibrium. As a result, American strategic adjustment in the Middle East is regularly understood to have occurred in response to an alteration in the regional balance of power.

This thesis agrees with part of this realist explanation. It acknowledges that the anarchical international system has socialised the United States to adopt balancing behaviour in the region. Yet the thesis builds on this realist assumption to argue unit-level variables are necessary to explain the various strategies the United States has deployed with respect to balancing the region. While not dismissing the importance of the international realm, it is interested in how ideologies, ideas, and interests interpret systemic factors to produce a distinct military strategic adjustment. Therefore, this thesis does not isolate systemic and unit-level variables, as realist scholarship advises, but instead positions domestic factors as the explanatory variable in America's strategic adjustment in the Middle East.

Through the deployment of a neoclassical realist framework, this thesis identifies five distinct cycles of American strategy in the Middle East: (i) 1972 – 1979, offshore balancing; (ii) 1980 – 2000, selective engagement; (iii) 2001-2008, pre-emption; (iv) 2009-2016, retrenchment; and (v) 2017-2018, selective engagement. The independent variable that produced these five phases of adjustment are traced to the four traditions identified by Walter Russell Mead in his *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How it Changed the World.* Specifically, I suggest that: (i) the offshore balancing strategy has an affinity with the *Hamiltonian* tradition of integrating America into the global economy; (ii) the selective engagement strategy has its origins in the *Jacksonian* tradition of the protection of American security interests through the use of military force abroad; (iii) the strategy of pre-emption can be traced to the *Wilsonian* tradition of democracy building abroad; and (iv) the strategy of retrenchment is connected to the *Jeffersonian* tradition of safeguarding American liberty and democracy, through the rejection of foreign entanglements.

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Introduction: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Strategy

> Foreign influence is truly the Grecian horse to a republic. We cannot be too careful to exclude its influence
>
> Alexander Hamilton

> Peace, above all things, is to be desired, but blood must sometimes be spilled to obtain it on equable and lasting terms
>
> Andrew Jackson

The purpose of this thesis is to examine American strategy in the Middle East over the course of the 1972-2018 period, with a particular focus on understanding change through "strategic adjustment" over time. According to Stephen Walt, for the bulk of this period "U.S. leaders knew who their friends and enemies were and had a fairly clear sense of what they were trying to accomplish". But more recently, he lamented "there is greater uncertainty about U.S. interests in the region, more reason to question the support it gives its traditional partners, and no consensus on how to deal with the dizzying array of actors and forces that are now buffeting the region".[1] For Walt, the root of U.S. strategic failure in the region can be traced to what he regarded as Washington jettisoning a "prudent" Cold War strategy of offshore balancing, in favour of a series of approaches since the early 1990s that have privileged American interventionist and democracy promotion agendas.

Yet Walt has arguably oversimplified U.S. strategy in the region. In contrast this thesis identifies five distinct cycles of American strategy in the region across the period under review: (i) 1972 – 1979, offshore balancing; (ii) 1980 – 2000, selective engagement; (iii) 2001-2008, pre-emption; (iv) 2009-2016, retrenchment; and (v) 2017-2018, selective engagement. The five phases of adjustment in U.S. strategy in the Middle East however cannot be readily explained by changes in the global or regional

[1] Stephen Walt, 'The United States should admit it no longer has a Middle East Policy', *Foreign Policy* (January 29, 2016). Accessed at http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/01/29/the-u-s-should-admit-it-has-no-middle-east-policy-obama-cold-war-israel-syria/

balance of power alone. Rather, I argue that the intellectual origins of each of the four periods of adjustment can be traced to the four "traditions" of American foreign policy identified by Walter Russell Mead in his *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How it Changed the World*.[2]

Specifically I suggest that: (i) the offshore balancing strategy has an affinity with the *Hamiltonian* tradition of integrating America into the global economy; (ii) the selective engagement strategy has its origins in the *Jacksonian* tradition of the protection of American security interests through the use of military force abroad; (iii) the strategy of pre-emption can be traced to the *Wilsonian* tradition of democracy building abroad; and (iv) the strategy of retrenchment is connected to the *Jeffersonian* tradition of safeguarding American liberty and democracy, through the rejection of foreign entanglements.

I make this argument utilising a neoclassical realist theoretical framework. Neoclassical realists argue that in grand strategic design, structural factors supply the raw data, but domestic factors (such as institutions and ideology) act to process this information to produce the foreign policy behaviour of a given state.[3] In the context of U.S. strategy in the Middle East, it is the historically-informed traditions of American foreign policy identified by Mead that have been a key intervening variable shaping U.S. strategic adjustment.

Thus, this thesis develops the realist approach that often accompanies grand strategic discussion. According to this realist view, international politics takes place within an anarchical system where state survival is never assured. As Kenneth Waltz, the architect of structural realism, has put it, "the state among states, it is often said,

[2] Walter Russell Mead. *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

[3] For a good outline of the neoclassical realist research approach, see Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey Taliaferro, and Steven Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (New York: Oxford University press, 2016).

conducts its affairs in the brooding shadow of violence. Because some states may at any time use force, all states must be prepared to do so – or live at the mercy of their militarily more vigorous neighbours".[4] Indeed, the fluctuating growth rates of a country's material capability incorporating "the size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence" compels states to adopt internal or external balancing strategies.[5]

The discipline of strategic studies has largely accepted this logic. Barry Buzan, for instance, has argued that "Strategic Studies is for the most part an offspring of Anglo-American, and more broadly Western, defence policy needs, and as such it bears conspicuous signs of its parentage" whereby the "field exists largely within the confines of the Realist model of the struggle for power".[6] Emily Goldman and John Aquila have similarly suggested that the "dominant portrayal" of a states' strategy-making is one in which the agents of the state are "attuned above all to the external balance of power".[7] David Anderson, meanwhile, has observed that realism "is not beyond criticism, but since the time of the Greek historians it has provided a behavioural paradigm of rational cost-benefit calculations of the national interest in an essentially anarchical international environment".[8]

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[4] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1979), p. 102.

[5] Kenneth Waltz, 'The Emerging Structure of International Politics', *International Security* 18 (2) (1993), p. 50. For similar discussions on the role of material capability, within the context of power transition theory, see, for instance, Jacek Kugler and A.F.K Organski, 'The Power Transition: A Retrospective and Prospective Evaluation,' in Manus I. Midlarsky (ed.), *Handbook of War Studies* (Unwin Hyman, 1989); and Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[6] Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, (2nd ed.) (Colgester, England: ECPR Press, 2007), p. 31.

[7] Emily Goldman and John Arquila, 'Structure, Agency, and Choice: Toward a Theory and Practice of Grand Strategy ', in *The Politics of Strategic Adjustment: Ideas, Institutions and Interests*, ed. Peter Trubowitz, Emily Goldman, and Edward Rhodes (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 306.

[8] David L. Anderson, 'Paradigm Lost', *Diplomatic History* 25 (4) (2001), p. 700.

Although this thesis accepts that the international system is an important variable in states decision-making, it nonetheless finds problems with the structural realist approach.[9] First, measurements of state power are not as *objective* as many realists would have us believe, but are *interpreted* by policymakers according to their particular interest. For instance, as Barry Posen has noted, "The Soviet Union was only barely in the league of the United States for most of the Cold War in terms of economic capacity, yet we think of the era as a bipolar order. Likewise, the United States was far and away the most economically capable state in the international system on the eve of World War II, yet we view that period as one of multipolarity".[10] Such a comparison clearly suggests that American assessments of the material balance of power alone cannot solely explain grand strategic choices. Second the disagreements between realists over how a state will structure its strategy negates the role that the distribution of power has on state behaviour. Here, offensive realists like John Mearsheimer have tended to claim "states maximize relative power, with hegemony as their ultimate goal".[11] Defensive realists, meanwhile, have argued "states should not seek to maximise their power but only to maximise their security".[12]

This thesis, then, is an attempt to understand the role of unit-level variables in determining the United States decision to choose either an offensive, defensive, deterrence, or coercive doctrine in their quest to balance the Middle East region. The

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[9] Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell have four 'problems with external determinism: (i) perception and misperception; (ii) the clarity of systemic signals; (iii) problems of rationality; and (iv) the need to mobilise state resources. See Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey Taliaferro, and Steven Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (New York: Oxford University press, 2016), pp. 19-25.

[10] Barry Posen, 'Emerging Multipolarity: Why Should We Care', *Current History*, November 2009, p. 348.

[11] John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014), p. 22.

[12] Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 16.

decision to adopt one of these strategies cannot be explained by the material distribution of power alone, but is instead adopted in accordance with domestic unit-level variables, particularly the administration's ideology and interests. In other words, while the anarchical nature of the international system explains the United States decision to adopt a balancing strategy in the Middle East, unit-level variables, such as interests, values, and outlook, explains the distinct military strategy used toward that end.

Steve Lobell has stated that the "bulk of the literature on grand strategy ignores the influences of domestic politics on international relations".[13] This thesis is a contribution toward rectifying this shortfall via its incorporation of unit-level variables into analysis of American strategy in the Middle East. It does not accept that the distribution of material power that underpins structural realism provide a satisfactory answer to questions of strategic adjustment. While adhering to many aspects of the realist paradigm, this thesis argues that structural factors have been "interpreted" differently across successive U.S. administrations, each eliciting a distinct strategy according to the "moral and political values" of the administration "as well as socioeconomic and political interests".[14]

The conjecture surrounding the veracity (or otherwise) of the dominant strains of realism has manifested itself in the empirical discussion concerning the extent that America has pursued an offensive or defensive realist strategy in the Middle East. Christopher Layne, for instance, argues that "the story of American grand strategy over the past six decades is one of expansion, and that strategy's logic inexorably has driven the United States to attempt to establish its hegemony in the world's three most important regions outside North America itself: Western Europe, East Asia, and the

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[13] Steven Lobell, '*The Challenge of Hegemony: Grand Strategy, Trade, and Domestic P*olitics (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. 3.

[14] Mead, *Special Providence*, p. 87.

Persian Gulf".[15] Stephen Walt, in contrast, has argued that between 1945 – 1990, America pursued a strategy of *offshore balancing* in the Middle East, whereby "America relied on local allies for the most part, and it kept its own military forces out of the region".[16] Steve Yetiv, in turn, disagrees with each of these positions, arguing instead that America has never pursued an "active balancing" strategy in the Middle East, but has instead adopted a strategy of "reactive engagement", whereby "the United States did not pursue grand strategies of a realist or hegemonic variety….it engaged most often in reaction".[17] Each of these perspectives privilege, either explicitly or implicitly, shifts in the balance of power as the key explanatory variable for U.S. grand strategic change in the Middle East. Indeed, the Middle East as a region of analysis is important toward an understanding of these conceptions of strategic adjustment, and balancing behaviour more broadly, given the blood and treasure that America have spent in the region across time.

The Rise of Neoclassical Realism

Melvyn Leffler noted three decades ago, the 'great divide' between predominantly realist international relations scholars, who suggest that a state's behaviour responds (or should) mainly to changes in the international distribution of power, and diplomatic historians, who emphasise the importance of domestic political, economic and social forces in shaping how a state's policymakers respond to the external environment.[18] In an effort to bridge this divide, Leffler suggested that a national security approach which focused on 'the dynamic interaction' of these two sources of

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[15] Layne, *The Peace of illusions*, p. 3.

[16] Stephen Walt, 'U.S. Middle East Strategy: Back to Balancing', *Foreign Policy*, 21 November 2013. Accessed at http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/11/21/u-s-middle-east-strategy-back-to-balancing/

[17] Steve A. Letiv, *The Absence of Grand Strategy: The United States in the Persian Gulf 1972 – 2005* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008), pp, 12-13.

[18] Melvyn P. Leffler, 'National Security', *Journal of American History* 77 (1) (1990): 143– 144.

foreign policy behaviour (i.e. system-level dynamics and unit-level variables) offered the best way forward.[19] For Leffler, a state's grand strategy approach not only:

> acknowledges that power plays a key role in the behavior of nations and the functioning of the international system [but] that a nation's power depends on its political stability, social cohesion, and economic productivity as well as the number of its troops, tanks, planes, ships, missiles, and nuclear warheads. It recognizes that an overarching synthesis must integrate political economy, military policy, and defense strategy. It assumes that fears of foreign threats are a consequence of both real dangers in the external environment and ideological precepts, cultural symbols, and mistaken images.[20]

Since Leffler made this case, international relations scholarship has seen the emergence of neoclassical realism as a major modification of realist approaches. As Nicholas Kitchen has observed, "neoclassical realists regard the structure of the international system as providing states with information about the costs and benefits of particular courses of actions, but how that information is processed and weighed depends on the way states understand the world, their preferences, their ideas and their ethics".[21] Neoclassical realism is influenced by classical realism's acceptance of the normative influences on policymaker's perceptions. Emerging after the onslaught of two world wars, classical realists built upon the previous works by Thucydides, Hobbes, and Machiavelli, to provide a foothold into understanding not only notions of the balance of power in international politics, but also the role that human nature plays, and more critically, the limited capacity for human reason to prevail in foreign policy design.[22] In particular, Hans Morgenthau, while declaiming that "all politics is

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid, p. 143.

[21] Nicholas Kitchen, 'Systemic pressures and domestic ideas: a neoclassical realist model of grand strategy', p. 152.

[22] Nicholas Kitchen, 'Systemic pressures and domestic ideas: a neoclassical realist model of grand strategy', *Review of International Studies* 36 (1) (2010), p. 123. See also, Hans J Morgenthau, *Scientific Man*

power politics"[23], nonetheless emphasized the role that ideas could have in the formation of state identity, and how this could inform the construction of particular national interests.[24] For other classical realists too, such as E. H. Carr and Reinhold Niebuhr, while power remained the defining feature of their analysis, morality was also understood as an important intervening variable that could critically shape the manner in which statesmen may respond to the imperatives of power politics.[25]

Neoclassical realism has sought to build on this insight via the development of a research program that systematically explores how ideational and normative variables interact with the structure of the international system to produce foreign policy variation.[26] Thus, and as discussed above, neoclassical realism affords primacy to systemic levels of investigation, and then tracks precisely how, in individual cases,

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Vs. Power Politics (Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1946); and Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (new York: Columbia University Press, 1959).

[23] Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*. 4th ed. (New York: Knopf, 1967), p. 27

[24] Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1948). For a good discussion of the influence of classical realist scholar, see, for instance, Michael C. Williams. 'What is the National Interest? The Neoconservative Challenge in IR Theory', *European Journal of International Relations* 11(3) (2005); Michael C. Williams, 'Why Ideas Matter in International Relations: Hans Morgenthau, Classical Realism, and the Moral Construction of Power Politics' *International Organization* 58 (3) (2004), p. 634.

[25] Edward Hallett Carr and Michael Cox, *The Twenty Years Crisis, 1918-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study of Ethics in International Relations* (New York: Scribner, 1949).

[26] The best current overview of neoclassical realism is Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell, and Norrin M Ripsman, *Neoclassical Realism, the State and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge University Press, 2009). Examples of neoclassical realist works include Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947–1958*, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996); Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca, N.Y.; London: Cornell University Press, 2006); Randall L. Schweller, *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest* (New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1998); William Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions During the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

relative state power is transformed into the behaviour of state actors. Largely built upon Gideon Rose's *Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy*, neoclassical realism has begun to bridge a gap between systemic (neorealism) and unit-level explanations (domestic politics) of international relations.[27] By drawing on classical realist scholarship, neoclassical realists define their research agenda by making 'relative power' the dependent variable, and unit–level intervening variables, such as decision-makers perceptions and domestic state structures, as the independent explanatory variable.[28] From this perspective, neoclassical realism is concerned with understanding the *behaviour* of individual states, and not simply the *patterns* of state interaction.[29]

The Puzzle

Realist theory provides some explanation toward our understanding of United States strategy in the Middle East. For instance, the anarchical structure of the international system provides incentives for the United States to adopt balancing strategies to ensure their interests and security are protected in the region. Similarly, realism also explains how the international system is structured in accordance with the distribution of material capabilities between nation states and how this distribution impacts states balancing decision-making. However, several key questions remain unanswered in this realist analysis. First, under what conditions will a "status quo" power adopt either a defensive or offensive doctrine? Second, when will a "unipolar" power adopt a deterrence strategy and when will they seek to refashion the international system in their image? Third, what distribution of power do states prefer to operate in and will they attempt to shift this overall distribution of power according

[27] Gideon Rose, 'Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy', *World Politics*, 51:1 (1998), pp. 144-172.

[28] Ibid, p152.

[29]Ibid, p145.

to their preferences? Fourth, when will a state adopt a strategy of offshore balancing, selective engagement, pre-emption, or underbalancing?

This thesis acknowledges that several of these questions have been explored by realist scholars. Broadly speaking, in a unipolar world order, realists argue, a state will pursue more power and influence across the globe to further exploit its security and interests;[30] in a bipolar world order, a state will limit its strategic focus to its peer competitor, showing limited concern for finding new allies, but will nonetheless be concerned with any moves the other may have due to the impact this might have on the global balance of power;[31] and finally, in a multipolar world order the overall military balance is the defining concern of a state, whereby the necessity to align with other powers exceeds the desire to build one's own military capability.[32] This analysis is embodied in the literature attempting to explain the causes of international stability. William Wohlforth, for instance, argues that a unipolar world order is the most stable due to "the raw power advantage of the United States" curtailing "hegemonic rivalry" that is a present in other systems."[33] Kenneth Waltz, on the other hand, famously asserted that a bipolar world is the most stable "for within a world in confusion there is one great certainty, namely, the knowledge of who will oppose whom".[34] And defensive realists argue that a multipolar world order provides the foundation for a

[30] See, for instance, Robert Jervis, 'Unipolarity: A Structural Perspective', *World Politics* 61 (1) (2009), pp. 188-213.

[31] See, for instance, Kenneth Waltz, 'The Stability of a Bipolar World', *Daedalus* 93 (3) (1964), pp. 881-909.

[32] For a good overview, see, for instance, Barry Posen, 'Emerging Multipolarity: Why Should We Care? *Current History* (November 2009), pp. 347 – 352.

[33] William Wohlforth, 'The Stability of a Unipolar World', *International Security* 24 (1) (1999), p. 7.

[34] Kenneth Waltz, 'The Stability of a Bipolar World', *Daedalus* 93 (3) 1964: p. 884; See also, John J. Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War', *International Security*, 15 (1) (Summer 1990), pp. 5-56.; and Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

stable world order due to "the number of restraints" limiting any power from dominating the international system.[35]

However, the above scholarship does not purport to answer questions about *how* a state will respond to changes in the structure of the international system. While each make claims regarding the expected behaviour of a state when operating within a particular distribution of power, they do not attempt to provide an explanation for how a state will react to adjustments in the balance of power. The reason for this is not hard to understand. The balance of power logic within realist scholarship predisposes its analysis to balance formations rather than necessarily a focus on how this process might be ultimately achieved. A cursory examination of realist scholarship exhibits this point. Kenneth Waltz, for instance, has argued that states will balance against power;[36] Stephen Walt has argued that states will balance against threat;[37] Randall Schweller has suggested that states will bandwagon for profit;[38] while Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder have posited that states will buckpass in accordance with their defensive or offensive position.[39] Each of these theories are connected through their bid to explain the different motives that undergird balancing behaviour, without attempting to understand how balancing is performed, and why this particular course was ultimately adopted.

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[35] Robert Jervis, 'From Balance to Concert: A Study of International Security Cooperation', *World Politics* 38 (1) (1985), p. 59.

[36] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 119.

[37] Stephen Walt, *Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

[38] Randall Schweller, 'Bandwagoning for Profit: Brigining the Revisionist State Back', *International Security* 19 (1) (1994), pp. 72-107.

[39] Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, 'Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity', *International Organisation* 44 (2) (1990), pp. 137-168.

This has important implications for our understanding of United States strategic adjustment in the Middle East. The above realist scholarship provides insight into the structural causes that spur various balancing tendencies, but they do not endeavour to explain how balancing is actualised, particularly with respect to the role of military force. Balancing, according to these theorists, is loosely defined as the build-up of military force or the forming of coalitions against belligerent states. Steven Lobell, for instance, suggests "states balance by building up their military capabilities through some combination of internal mobilization, military innovations, emulating successful practices and technologies, and forming counter-balancing alliances".[40] And Randall Schweller has suggested that "balancing means the creation or aggregation of military power through internal mobilization or the forging of alliances to prevent or deter the territorial occupation or the political and military dominance of the state by a foreign power or coalition".[41] Meanwhile, Christopher Layne has similarly defined balancing in general terms when he stated that it is "using military power, alliances, or both to stop a hegemon".[42] Realist scholarship, therefore, is able to explain the underlying reasons why the United States has balanced in the Middle East, and the reason why certain coalitions might have been formed, but is not concerned with explaining why one particular strategy was adopted over another toward that end. This creates difficulties in our quest to understand United States strategic adjustment in the Middle East, particularly with respect to understanding why various military strategies have been deployed toward a consistent and overarching goal of balancing in the region. In short then, this thesis is an attempt to refine realist scholarship to understand the

[40] Steven Lobell, 'A Granular Theory of Balancing', *International Studies Quarterly* 62 (3) (2018), p. 595.

[41] Randall Schweller, *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints and the Balance of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 9.

[42] Christopher Layne, 'The Unipolar Illusion Revisited: The Coming End of the United States', *International Security* 31 (2) (2006), p, 8.

underlying reasons why the United States adopted distinct military strategies to balance, or under balance, in the Middle East.

Military force has played a defining role in the various guises of balancing that the United States has undertaken in the Middle East. In the 1970s, for instance, President Nixon sold advanced weapons to Iran and Saudi Arabia to balance against Iraq and the Soviet Union's influence in the region, which accounted for over one-third of U.S. weapons sales to the world through this period.[43] While the United States remained physically detached from the Middle East, the sale of advanced weapons to states with similar perceptions of threat underscored their balance of power strategy. In the years 1979-2000, military force was more prevalent in the United States quest to balance the region. President Reagan intervened in Lebanon in what Micah Zenko labelled a "cut and run" strategy that was guided by loosely defined political objectives.[44] This was followed by Reagan's use of air strikes again Colonel Muammer el-Qadaffi's military bases in Libya. While achieving no clear strategic objective, President Reagan nonetheless labelled this a "success" in deterring the Libyan leader from his "reign of terror".[45] And President George H. W. Bush deployed American military might to turn back Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Bush's use of force however was designed to return to the status quo ante leading some to argue that Operation Desert Storm ultimately "accomplished next to nothing".[46] However, such criticism misses the wider point that

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[43] Steve Yetiv, *The Absence of Grand Strategy: The United States in the Persian Gulf, 1972-2005* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008), p. 31.

[44] Micah Zenko, 'When Reagan Cut and Run', *Foreign Policy* (February 7, 2014). Accessed at https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/02/07/when-reagan-cut-and-run/

[45] Bernard Weinraub, 'U.S. Jets Hit Terrorist Centre in Libya: Reagan Warns of New Attack if Necessary', *The New York Times* (April 15, 1986). Accessed athttps://www.nytimes.com/1986/04/15/politics/us-jets-hit-terrorist-centers-in-libya-reagan-warns-of-new-attacks.html

[46] Andrew Bacevich, *America's War for the Greater Middle East* (New York: Random House, 2016), p. 134.

from 1979 to 2000 the United States used military force, or the threat thereof, as a means to deter belligerent states and to uphold the regional balance of power.

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks changed the United States strategy in the Middle East. The use, or threat to use, military force was no longer conceived of as a means of deterrence but rather was now conceived of as an instrument through which to facilitate long-term strategic change in the Middle East. President George W. Bush's administration came to office critical of the previous Clinton administration's "dual containment" toward Iraq and Iran. The events of 9/11 convinced the George W. Bush administration that previous status quo-oriented balancing strategies were no longer capable of ensuring U.S. security and strategic interests due to the potential for Iraq to strike the United States with Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) or pass on such technologies to terrorists such as al Qaeda. The United States determined the region would be more stable under a reconstituted balance of power with the United States at the helm (hegemony), as opposed to the maintenance of the regional status quo.[47]

Across his two terms in office President Obama attempted to reassemble the regional balance of power through a decision to draw-back the United States military force. The Obama administration adopted a "leading from behind approach" operationalised through a strategy of "surrogate warfare" that relied on other states to maintain the regional balance of power in the region.[48] This "under-balancing" strategy was premised on the assumption that off-setting the draw-down of U.S.

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[47] While this does not accord directly with the balance of power logic, this chapter will directly address realist scholarship to conceptualise the decision to overthrow Saddam's regime and reconstitute the balance of power in the region. Indeed, a case could be made that United States hegemony accounted for "aggregate balancing" described by Steven Lobell in his recent 'A Granular Theory of Balancing', *International Studies Quarterly* 62 (3) (2018), pp. 593-605. Note, Lobell did not attempt to make this argument.

[48] Kevin Marsh, 'Leading from Behind: Neoclassical Realism and Operation Odyssey Dawn', *Defense and Security Analysis* 30 (2) (2014), pp. 120-132. See, also, Michael Clarke and Anthony Ricketts, 'Did Obama have a Grand Strategy', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 40 (1-2) (2017), pp. 295-324; and Michael Clarke and Anthony Ricketts, 'Shielding the Republic: Barack Obama and the Jeffersonian Tradition of American Foreign Policy', *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 28 (3) (2017),pp. 494-517.

military deployments in the region through greater assistance to regional allies would both decrease the costs of a decade-long commitment but also permit the emergence of regional order not predicated on continued American hegemony. And finally, the election of Donald Trump in November 2016 has arguably resulted in a return to the punitive strategy of the 1980 and 1990s whereby retaliatory strikes were adopted in response to threats. President Trump's decision to use air strikes against the Syrian regime in response to their use of chemical weapons, in addition to the deployment of the Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAM) bomb on an Islamic State tunnel in Afghanistan, resembles the previous strategy of demonstrating credibility and power against those that threaten American interests.

In short, the deployment of military force has clearly played a major role in the various balancing strategies the United States has pursued in the Middle East. Yet, realist scholarship not only does not account for the operationalisation of balance of power theory in general but also does not explain in the specific case of U.S. grand strategy in the Middle East and the causes of variation over time. Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell capture the essence of the questions driving this thesis when they ask, "when do states respond to external threats by balancing and when do they employ other strategies, such as bandwagoning? When states do balance under what conditions are they more likely to do so internally and when will they rely on others?"[49] These questions thus focus attention not only on how power shifts within the international system may influence state behaviour, but also on how this interacts with state interests and values, and the nature and purpose of American power. Thus, the primary research question asked in this thesis is:

> *How can we explain American strategic adjustment in the Middle East between 1972-2018?*

[49] Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey Taliaferro, and Steven Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (New York: Oxford University press, 2016), p. 141.

The aim in this thesis is to demonstrate a causal connection between (a) the various historically evolved American understandings of its role in the world and; (b) the different strategies that American administrations have implemented in the Middle East between 1972 – 2018. As such it is focused on explaining how and when structural incentives are translated into foreign behaviour.[50] This is consistent with the central thrust of the neoclassical realist research program to both explain cases that deviate from neorealist expectations and more fully explore the connections between international politics and foreign policy behaviour.[51]

The Argument

The argument in this thesis is threefold. First, I argue that realist conceptions of U.S. strategy in the Middle East, either in their offensive or defensive variants, cannot fully account for the various strategies that America has adopted, or the various interests and values that have driven such agendas. Instead, the argument here is that while "relative power" is the primary dependent variable, the unit-level variables, such as decision-maker's perceptions and ideologies, are the critical intervening variables that have influenced how the United States military has been deployed in the Middle East.

The second argument this thesis makes is that these unit-level intervening variables, which determine the strategy in accordance with the interests and values to be protected, can be identified through the four traditions of American foreign policy identified by Walter Russell Mead: the Hamiltonian, Jacksonian, Wilsonian, and Jeffersonian tradition. These worldviews, I argue, have shaped and constructed America's understanding of the international system, and their role in it. As Adam Quinn has argued, this approach combines realist assumptions about the centrality of material and external factors in shaping a state's foreign policy with "the parallel principle that ideological convictions, once formed, shape and constrain subsequent

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[50] Rose, 'Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy', p. 158.

[51] Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, pp. 26-31.

strategic choices".[52] Mead's typologies are summarised here and, for precision, are drawn directly from Mead's introductory chapter:

> *Hamiltonians* regard a strong alliance between the national government and big business as the key both to domestic stability and to effective action abroad, and they have long been focused on the nations need to be integrated into the global economy on favourable terms. *Wilsonians* believe that the United States has both a moral obligation and an important national interest in spreading American democratic and social values throughout the world, creating a peaceful international community that accepts the rule of law. *Jeffersonian* hold that American foreign policy should be less concerned about spreading democracy abroad than with safeguarding it at home; they have historically been sceptical of Hamiltonian and Wilsonian policies that involve the United States with unsavoury allies abroad or increase the risk of war. *Jacksonian* believes that the most important goal of the U.S. government in both foreign and domestic policy should be the physical security and the economic well-being of the American people…..Jacksonian's believe that the United States should not seek out foreign quarrels, but when other nations start wars with the United States ….there is no substitute for victory.[53]

In short:

- A strategy of "offshore balancing" has an affinity with the Hamiltonian tradition of integrating America into the global economy.
- The strategy of "selective engagement" has an affinity with the Jacksonian tradition of providing physical security for the American people.
- The strategy of "primacy" has an affinity with the Wilsonian tradition of spreading democracy and social values abroad.

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[52] Adam Quinn, *US Foreign Policy in Context: National Ideology from the Founders to the Bush Doctrine*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), p.3.

[53] Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How it Changed the World*. (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. xvii.

- The strategy of "retrenchment" has an affinity with the Jeffersonian tradition of safeguarding American democracy at home.

The third argument that this thesis makes is that each tradition can help explain the way in which the U.S. military has been deployed in the Middle East. For instance, the Hamiltonian tradition seeks to avoid the deployment of military force, and instead will afford primacy to the role of the "open door" to create order and stability in the region. The Jacksonian tradition uses the U.S. military to appeal to a domestic audience, and seeks to maintain a regional status quo without reordering the regional distribution of power. The Wilsonian tradition uses the military to bring about regime change that respects democratic governance and adheres to western notions of human rights and liberty. Finally, the Jeffersonian tradition prefers not to use military force, but if it is required, it will be deployed in conjunction with other actors, with the U.S. "leading from behind".

With that said, this thesis does not attempt to offer any grandiose casual statement that suggests each of Mead's typologies align *directly* with each of the four strategy's described above. Indeed, Mead himself argues that "at any given moment" American foreign policy "is more likely to be the product of a wide and diffuse coalition rather than of a single unitary vision".[54] Rather, the goal of this thesis is to demonstrate that debates with respect to American strategy, and the extent that America has sought to exercise these in the Middle East, has fluctuated according to how U.S. administrations "understand the world, their preference, their ideas, and their ethics".[55]

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[54] Mead, *Special Providence*, p. 95.

[55] Nicholas Kitchen, 'Systemic Pressures and Domestic Ideas: A Neoclassical Realist Model of Grand Strategy Formation', *Review of International Studies* 36 (1) (2010), p. 152.

Contribution to Knowledge

This thesis contributes to international relations and strategic studies scholarship in four key areas.

1. It develops realist theory to provide both *explanatory and predictive power*.
2. It contributes to our understanding of the interaction between *national interest and strategic choice*.
3. It contributes to our understanding of the interaction between *systemic orders and strategic choice*.
4. It uses Mead's typologies, for the first time, towards our understanding of *America's strategic choices*.

First, it develops the realist theoretical framework to provide both *explanatory and predictive power*. As we will see in the next chapter, Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* is not a theory of foreign policy (as he himself repeatedly stressed), but is instead limited to interactions within the international sphere. As Waltz stated:

> Despite the disclaimers, structural theory is sometimes judged as a theory of foreign policy and found wanting. Alexander George, for example, takes structural realism to be a 'theory of foreign policy' that 'includes only a few casual variables'. It is not, however, a theory of foreign policy at all, as anyone who looks at the cover or title of my *Theory of International Politics* surely can see".[56]

Thus, through the deployment of neoclassical realism this thesis is able to adapt foreign policy decision-making into the realist framework, along with a platform to more fully explain a state's strategy according to their unique definition of the national interest.

Second, the thesis also contributes to our understanding of the interaction between *national interest and strategic choice*. The American military can be used, broadly

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[56] Kenneth Waltz,' The Validation of International Political Theory' (paper prepared for delivery at the 1994 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association). Cited in, Colin Elman, 'Horses for Courses: Why nor Neorealist Theories of Foreign Policy', *Security Studies* 6 (1) (1996), p. 9.

speaking, in four distinct ways: offshore balancing, selective engagement, pre-emption, and retrenchment.[57] The defining variables between these strategic options are the interests, ideology, and overall objectives of the state and how they interpret systemic factors. Therefore, the interaction between American national interest and strategic choice allows us to better understand the role and purpose of American military power.

Third, the thesis contributes to our understanding of the interaction between *systemic orders and strategic choice*. The interaction between these two variables are important for not only explaining how key players interpret the international system, but also for our understanding of whether these orders are important, or not, in influencing state behaviour. The distribution of power in the international system, as Charles Kupchan has noted, is largely determined by "how the key players behave" and the "characteristics of that system are to some extent determined by political choice – the practice and conduct of foreign policy".[58] Therefore, this thesis furthers our understanding of both stability of systemic orders and the extent that different distributions of power serve the interests of the state.

Finally, this thesis is the first attempt, as far as I am aware, to explicitly and systematically use Walter Russel Mead's typologies toward an investigation of America's strategic engagement in the Middle East. While Mead's traditions have recently been deployed toward an understanding of the Trump and Obama administration, there has been no systematic analysis of how these typologies frame

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[57] Nuno Monteiro argues that the military can be used for offensive dominance, defensive dominance, and disengagement. See, Nuno Monteiro, *Theory of Unipolar Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 65. Barry Posen, on the other hand, suggests that military power can be used offensively, defensive, or for deterrence. See Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

[58] Charles Kupchan, 'The False Promise of Unipolarity: Constraints on the Exercise of American Power', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 24 (2) (2011), p. 166.

our understanding of America's engagement with the Middle East.[59] Taken to its logical conclusion, then, this thesis raises important questions with respect to realist concepts such as balance of power, bandwagoning, and internal and external balancing. This thesis challenges the realist assumption that these strategies take place in response to changes in the international system, and instead, consider them as domestic choices framed by Mead's typologies.

Methodology

How, then, do we first test the veracity of realist explanations for America's strategic adjustments in the Middle East and, second, develop an alternative theoretical framework in its place? This question plays into the familiar ontological and epistemological debates that have regularly bedevilled international relations scholarship. At its core, these debates are concerned with the capacity for research to deliver universal "truths" about international politics and state behaviour. This ongoing contention is mapped by Hollis and Smith:

> The basic ontological question is whether there is a real-world difference in kind in what systems-terms and unit-terms refer to. If so, how do systems relate to units? If not, is the shared referent primarily that of the system-terms, the unit-terms or (in a spirit of what philosophers call neutral monism) neither? The basic epistemological question is how statements about international relations can be known, or at least rationally believed, to be true or false. How, for example, can claims about real but unobservable systemic pressures be justified? The basic methodological question is what forms of explanation or understanding are to be attempted and how they are to be achieved. For instance, what criteria must causal and interpretative analyses of international affairs satisfy? Do we need both?[60]

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[59] See, for instance, Michael Clarke and Anthony Ricketts, 'Shielding the Republic: Barack Obama and the Jeffersonian Tradition of American Foreign Policy', *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 28 (3) (2017), pp. 494-517; Michael Clarke and Anthony Ricketts, 'Understanding the Return of the Jacksonian Tradition', *Orbis* 61 (1) (2017), pp. 13-26; Michael Clarke & Anthony Ricketts, 'Donald Trump and American foreign policy: The return of the Jacksonian tradition', *Comparative Strategy* 36 (4) (2017), pp. 366-379.

[60] Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, 'Beware of Gurus: Structure and Action in International Relations', *Review of International Studies* 17 (4) (1991), p. 394. For other discussions on the agent-structure debate

Thus, the ongoing debate between the primacy of agency or structure in international relations scholarship has ultimately been reduced to "many empiricists favouring the epistemological and scientific realists favouring the ontological".[61] Although constructivist theorists have sought to overcome these ontological challenges through their mutual constitution of agents and structures, the disciplinary divide remains as to how we are able to deem "facts" through international relations research design.[62] Hence, the "structuralists" continue to broadly deny human agency, whereas "intentionalism" (or *Innenpolitik*) completely ignores the structures upon which agents' activities are located.

These debates are manifested in this thesis vis-à-vis the integration between "system-level" and "unit-level" analysis. In order to overcome such challenges, this thesis adopts the position that international relations is about human endeavour and thus cannot be reduced to casual scientific investigation analogous to the natural sciences.[63] However, and as discussed above, neoclassical realism does accept that the world exists "out there" removed from human agency, and can therefore be observed and tested for "contingent casual inferences about observable phenomena".[64] This creates

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see, for example, Alexander Wendt, 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory', *International Organization* 41 (3) 1987,pp. 335-370; Alexander Wendt, 'Bridging the theory/meta-theory gap in international relations, *Review of International Studies* 17 (4) (1991), pp. 383-392; Andreas Bieler and Adam David Morton, 'The Gordian Knot of Agency-Structure in International Relations: A Neo-Gramscian Perspective, *European Journal of International Relations* 7 (1) (2001), pp. 5-35; Vivienne Jabri and Stephen Chan, 'The Ontologist rings twice: two more stories about structure and agency in reply to Hollis and Smith, *Review of International Studies* 22 (1996), pp. 107-110

[61] Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, 'Beware of Gurus: structure and action in international relations', *Review of International Studies* 17 (4) (1991), p. 394

[62] See, for instance, Audie Klotz and Cecelia Lynch. *Strategies for Research in Constructivist International Relations.* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 2007)

[63] See, for instance, Ido Oren, 'Can Political Science Emulate the Natural Sciences: The Problem of Self-Confirming Analysis', *Polity* 38 (1) (2006), pp. 72-100.

[64] Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey Taliaferro, and Steven Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (New York: Oxford University press, 2016), p105.

a dilemma for the development of a neoclassical realist theory. On the one hand, neoclassical realism acknowledges that the methodologies and techniques of the natural sciences are not able to be replicated in the social science discipline, but nonetheless, believes that hypothesis testing is both desirable and achievable.

To overcome this dilemma, this thesis subscribes to what Ripsman, Taliafero and Lobell call a "soft positivist epistemology".[65] This tests the casual effect of independent variables on the dependent variable, but nonetheless takes a cautious approach in its findings. As Ripsman, Taliafero, and Lobell state, "a probabilistic theory seeks to explain as much of the DV's variance as possible with the IVs and IVVs it identifies but does not claim to explain 100 percent of the variance".[66]

In keeping with a soft positivist epistemology, this thesis uses a process-tracing methodology. The benefits of process-tracing for a study of this kind is that it allows "a greater number of effective observations, in spite of a small number of case studies involving multiple variables".[67] Stephen van Evera has stated that, "in process tracing the investigator explores the chain of events or the decision-making process by which initial case conditions are translated into case outcomes. The cause-effect link that connects independent variables and outcomes is unwrapped and divided into smaller steps; then the investigator looks for observable evidence of each step".[68] Similarly James Mahoney connected the expectations of soft positivist epistemology with process tracing when he stated that, "researchers using process tracing may treat causes as contributing conditions: factors that contribute to an outcome or increase the

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[65] Ibid. p. 106.

[66] Ibid. p. 107.

[67] Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[68] Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1887), p. 64.

probability of an outcome. With this conceptualization, the removal of the cause will not eliminate the outcome, and thus the causal factor is not necessary for the outcome".[69]

The thesis uses a mixture of primary and secondary sources. Primary documents have been accessed primarily from three digital archives: The *Foreign Relations of the United States* at the Office of the Historian in the State Department;[70] the *National Security Archive* at George Washington University;[71] and *The National Archives and Records Administration*.[72] The thesis also draws from the digital archives of presidential libraries, and uses secondary source literature including the Official Histories of American military campaigns, and academic literature.

The case studies have been chosen according to periods when U.S. strategic adjustment in the Middle East occurred. This includes the build-up in US military assets in the region, either through the exportation of military equipment to external partners or the deployment of U.S. military assets; a change in the manner that military force was used, including to coerce or deter belligerent states, or to bring about regime change in the region. Thus, the five case studies in this thesis are as follows:

1: 1972-1979: offshore balancing

2: 1980– 2000: Selective engagement

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[69] James Mahoney, 'Process Tracing and Historical Explanations', *Security Studies* 24 (2) (2015), p. 203.

[70] Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, United States Department of State. Accessed at https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments

[71] The National Security Archive, Gelman Library, George Washington University. Accessed at https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/

[72] The National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed at https://www.archives.gov/

3: 2001 – 2007: Pre-emption

4: 2008-2016: Retrenchment

5: 2017-2018: Selective Engagement

It is worth noting that these areas of strategic adjustment are not commonly accepted. Indeed, apart from Steve Yetiv's *The Absence of Grand Strategy: The United States in the Persian Gulf 1972-2005* there has been no systematic theoretical investigation into U.S. grand strategy in the region. Although Andrew Bacevich's *America's War for the Greater Middle East* analyses the role of U.S. military force in the region, it largely purports to undertake an historical analysis, foregoing the distinct international relations or strategic studies approaches to understanding strategic adjustment. More precisely, the neoclassical realist disciplinary perspective provides us with a more detailed and complete explanation of United States strategic adjustment over time.

Chapter Outline

The thesis is divided into the following six chapters.

Chapter One*:* Developing a Conceptual Model of Strategic Adjustment

This opening chapter provides the framework for a neoclassical theory of strategy. This is necessary because Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* did not seek to provide a falsifiable theory used towards the prediction of foreign policy behaviour. Instead, Waltz limited himself to the international sphere, and dependent-level outcomes, excluding the influence of independent unit-level variables on state behaviour. Notwithstanding Waltz's purpose, many have found explanatory power in Waltz's structural theory – including Stephan Walt, Barry Posen, and Jack Snyder. Thus, the goal in this chapter is to further this discussion and develop a coherent neoclassical realist theory "that makes predictions for dependent variables which measure the behaviour of individual states".[73]

[73] Colin Elman, 'Horses for Courses: Why No Neorealist Theories of Foreign Policy', *Security Studies* 6 (1) (1996), p. 9.

Chapter Two: Offshore Balancing and the Hamiltonian Tradition (1972-1979). This chapter begins the first of the five case studies. It focuses on President Nixon's "Twin Pillars" strategy that relied on Iran and Saudi Arabia to protect American interest in the crucial oil reserves located in the Persian Gulf. This strategy will be conceptualised as "offshore balancing" that has its roots in the Hamiltonian tradition of American foreign policy. The Hamiltonian tradition is a foreign policy that is "fundamentally commercial", eschewing zero-sum games of military rivalry and replacing them instead with the expansion of trade. Freedom of the seas is the defining feature of the Hamiltonian tradition of American statecraft, which can be achieved via a strategy that outsources responsibility to third parties. Thus, protection of the geo-strategically important Straits of Hormuz, which is the world's only maritime chokepoint that carries over thirty percent of worlds crude oil supply, was the overarching objective pursued by President Nixon. This was achieved by the United States remaining offshore, renouncing the direct use of the military for moral (Wilsonian) or domestic audiences (Jacksonian).

Chapter Three: Selective Engagement and the Jacksonian Tradition (1980-2000). Chapter three examines the first significant strategic adjustment in U.S. grand strategy in the Middle East, 1980-2000. In this chapter, I explore the factors that contributed to the replacement of the "twin pillars" strategy with the forward basing of the American military in the Middle East. In 1979, the U.S. moved swiftly away from a policy of relegating responsibility of the region to external actors, and instead ushered in the policy of the "dual containment" of Iraq and Iran. President Carter's famous 1980 State of the Union address was a precursor to this strategic shift. Encapsulating what would be referred to as the "Carter Doctrine", the President stated that, "An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."[74] This strategy is best

conceptualised by the strategic notion of selective engagement. While not calling for the spread of democracy, selective engagement is premised on a belief that U.S military muscle will deter and compel belligerent states from challenging the U.S. preeminent position in the Middle East. To make this argument, the chapter considers three military episodes in the Middle East: President Reagan's interventions in Lebanon and Libya, and President George H. W. Bush's war to oust Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. In short, this chapter understands the role of military force as a "show of strength" to "shock and awe" belligerent states to comply with United States interests. While the thesis will not directly address President Clinton's strategy in the Middle East, it is important to note here that the Clinton administration maintained a level of continuity with the previous selective engagement strategy. Indeed, Martin Indyk remarked in 1993:

> Continuity stems from the fact that many of America's vital interests in the region remain unchanged. Despite the dramatic developments in the global arena in the past four years, we still have an abiding interest in the free-flow of Middle Eastern oil at reasonable prices. We have an abiding interest in reciprocating the friendship of those in the Arab world who seek good relations with the United States.[75]

Chapter Four: Pre-emptive Strike and the Wilsonian Tradition (2001-2008). Chapter four examines the next strategic adjustment in the Middle East. This period saw a sharp break from the previous strategies of "offshore balancing" and "selective engagement" with a commitment to use the United States military to alter the balance

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[74] For the quotation, see Carter, 'U.S., Interests and Ideals,'9 May 1980,U.S., *Department of State Bulletin* 80(June1980); See also Carter, 'Hostages in Iran, Invasion of Afghanistan,' 8 January 1980, ibid. (March 1980): 33-34; and Carter, interview on "Meet the Press," 20 January 1980, ibid., p. 29; A transcript and video of the 1980 State of the Union Address is available on the website of the University of Virginia's Miller Centre Public Affairs, http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/speeches/detail/3404, accessed 11-11-2015.

[75] Martin Indyk, 'The Clinton Administration's Approach to the Middle East', *The Washington Institute* (1993). Accessed at https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-clinton-administrations-approach-to-the-middle-east

of power in the region and to undertake regime change in Iraq. It focuses exclusively on President George W. Bush's 2003 Iraq War to demonstrate that US military force was deployed in support of a Wilsonian strategy designed to remake the region in America's image. In this sense, military force was used as a tool not to advance economic interests or demonstrate military strength, but was used directly toward the objective or advancing American morals, values, and interests.

Chapter Five: Retrenchment and the Jeffersononian Tradition (2009-2016). This chapter analyses the U.S strategic adjustment in the Middle East under the Obama administration. The chapter argues that President Obama viewed the deployment of military force as a limited instrument through which to achieve U.S. strategic objectives in the region. It argues that President Obama pursued a strategy to draw down the U.S. forces stationed in the Middle East and undertake domestic rejuvenation of the United States.[76] These strategic objectives were perhaps best captured by Obama's deputy national security advisor for strategic communications, who said to the *New Yorker*, "If you were to boil it down to a bumper sticker, it's 'Wind down these two wars, re-establish American standing and leadership in the world, and focus on a broader set of priorities, from Asia and the global economy to a nuclear-non-proliferation regime".[77] This chapter will connect the intellectual origins of this strategy with the Jeffersonian tradition of American foreign policy. The Jeffersonian tradition seeks to minimise conflicts with other powers in order to reduce the costs and risks of American foreign policy.[78]

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[76] Daniel W. Drezner. 2011. 'Does Obama have a grand strategy: Why we need doctrines in uncertain times'. *Foreign Affairs* 90(4): p, 64.

[77] Ryan Lizza, 'The Consequentialist: How the Arab Spring Remade Obama's Foreign Policy', *The New Yorker* (May 2, 2011). Accessed at https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/05/02/the-consequentialist

[78] Walter Mead. *Special Providence*. p, 212.

Chapter Six: President Trump and the Return of the Jacksonian Tradition (2017-2018).

This chapter concludes the case studies. The aim of this chapter is to provide a partial examination of the strategic adjustment that is currently underway within the Trump administration. It makes two core arguments. First, President Trump is channelling a recrudescence of the Jacksonian tradition as a consequence of his inherent belief that the liberal order (in both its Hamiltonian and Wilsonian manifestations), which is underwritten by American leadership, manifestly "rips off" the American "folk community". The second argument this chapter makes is that as a consequence of this Jacksonian outlook, President Trump's strategy in the Middle East resembles that of President Reagan before him in that American military force is deployed as a means of demonstrating strength to both a domestic audience and to core regional actors.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a roadmap that will guide the delivery of this thesis. It framed the research puzzle and provided a partial response to the question. That is, it has identified that realist theory is unable to fully account for America's strategic adjustment in the Middle East. While providing some explanation toward our understanding, particularly regarding the tendency for states to balance against power or threat, realist theory, nonetheless, leaves many aspects of strategic adjustment unexplained. For instance, realist theory cannot adequately explain whether a "status quo" power will adopt a defensive or offensive doctrine? Similarly, the structural realist assumption that states will balance against power or threat leaves it unable to account for a unipolar power. And realist theory does not purport to explain the various military strategies that the United States have deployed across time, which has been the primary mechanism used toward stabilising the Middle East region. Thus, these questions open the space to consider not only the international system as a force that influences strategic change, but also the importance of unit-level variables to guide strategic adjustment. This chapter has put forward neoclassical

realist theory as a salient lens through which to analyse American strategic adjustment in the Middle East. Neoclassical realists argue that in grand strategic design, structural factors supply the raw data, but domestic factors (such as institutions and ideology) act to process this information to produce the foreign policy behaviour of a given state.[79] In the context of U.S. strategy in the Middle East, the thesis will argue that it is the historically-informed traditions of American foreign policy identified by Walter Russell Mead that have been a key intervening variable shaping U.S. strategic adjustment. Mead's analysis, it will be argued, allows us to consider how various administrations have interpreted changes in the Middle East to produce distinct balancing behaviours in accordance with their interests, ideology and world outlook.

[79] Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey Taliaferro, and Steven Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (New York: Oxford University press, 2016).

Chapter One:

Beyond a Structural Theory of Foreign Policy: Developing a Structural Theory of Strategy

Abstract: This chapter provides a conceptual basis for understanding United States grand strategy. It is primarily focused on understanding America's grand strategy according to realist scholarship. Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* is used to understand how systemic factors push and pull states according to changes in the distribution of power. Yet it finds that major works that draw on Waltz's theory, such as Stephen Walt, Randall Schweller, and Jack Snyder, leave unspecified the specific "mode" of military force and lack operational clarity when understanding when states will balance, buckpass, or bandwagon. The chapter concludes by offering a unit-level variable to explain these different military postures. Drawing on Walter Russell Mead's typologies, offshore balancing will be placed within the Hamiltonian tradition of American statecraft, selective engagement will be placed within the Jacksonian tradition of American statecraft, the primacy will be placed within the Wilsonian tradition of American statecraft, and retrenchment will be placed within the Jeffersonian tradition of American statecraft.

Introduction

Can neorealist theories of international politics provide a theory of foreign policy? This question has been debated since Kenneth Waltz published his *Theory of International Politics*. Waltz advises that he did not provide a theory of foreign policy but instead explained "why states similarly placed behave similarly despite their internal differences" and demonstrated "how variations in conditions external to states push or pull them in various directions".[1] Others, however, argue that Waltz provides "insufficient reason to prevent them from making predictions of individual state's foreign policies".[2] This confusion turns on the extent one believes Waltz

[1] Kenneth Waltz, 'International Politics is not Foreign Policy', *Security Studies* 6 (1) 1996), p. 54

[2] Colin Elman, 'Horses for Courses: Why Nor Neorealist Theories of Foreign Policy?', Security *Studies* 6 (1) (1996), p. 42.

provided an "empirically falsifiable covering law" and whether structural realism is an explanatory or predictive theory.[3] An understanding of this discussion is important to this thesis for two reasons. First, realism is the primary theory used to explain strategic adjustment. Christopher Layne, for instance, argues that "although they are structural theories, offensive and defensive realism can be used to construct theories of grand strategy – theories that predict the behavior of specific states rather than systemic outcomes".[4] Colin Dueck likewise suggests that "international pressures are the primary cause of the strategic behavior of individual states".[5] Moreover, these explanations of American strategic adjustment have been invoked to explain U.S. strategy in the Middle East.[6] Second, and relatedly, a central aim of this thesis is to advance realist explanations of strategic adjustment to include unit-level variables.

This chapter will unfold as follows. First, it outlines what Waltz considered to be a "theory" of international politics. This challenges the common conception of Waltz as a "positivist" who undertook inductive research, but instead places him within the deductive school of thought. This demonstrates that Waltz's central purpose was to "construct a reality" and provide "a set of more or less helpful idealisations or oversimplifications that can be used to order the complex chaos of empirical reality into more comprehensible and manageable forms".[7] The second section outlines how this relates to a theory of foreign policy. This provides a discussion of strategies

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[3] Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and it Implications for the Study of World Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 113.

[4] Christopher Layne, *The Peace if Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 19.

[5] Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 16.

[6] Steve Yetiv, *The Absence of Grand Strategy: The United States in the Persian Gulf 1972-2005* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008), pp. 3-4.

[7] Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations*, p. 113.

including balancing, buck passing, and bandwagoning that we can expect as foreign policy behaviours of states in response to perceived shifts in the balance of power. It will conclude with the development of a "theory of strategy" to overcome the limited discussion of military force within structural theories of foreign policy and demonstrate how neoclassical realism is able to overcome these shortfalls. Drawing on Walter Russell Mead's typologies, a strategy of offshore balancing will be placed within the Hamiltonian tradition of American statecraft; a strategy of selective engagement will be placed within the Jacksonian tradition of American statecraft; the strategy of primacy will be placed within the Wilsonian tradition of American statecraft; and finally, the strategy of retrenchment will be placed within the Jeffersonian tradition of American statecraft.

Waltz's "Theory" of International Politics

Kenneth Waltz *Theory of International Politics* is perhaps the defining scholarly contribution in the discipline of international relations. Debates have circulated both within and outside the realist canon with respect to structural realism's theoretical and empirical defects, along with its prominence. While realists have long provided clarification to the various challenges that have come their way, the most recent rebuttal has come in the form of confirming the question of "what is a theory"? This includes a renewed focus on the philosophy of science and Imre Lakatos's influence on Waltz and the discipline of international relations. Recasting *Theory of International Politics* as meta-theoretical discussion has challenged many to reconsider Waltz's objectives and redefined the spheres of criticism. This has opened up old wounds about how we can assess theories, particularly between Karl Popper's "falsification" and Thomas Kuhn's "research paradigms". Falsificationists argue that the advancement of scientific knowledge is achieved through tests that "infirm" a theory, rather than "confirming" it; whereby research programs therefore look to falsify a theory rather than attempt to verify it. Research paradigms, on the other hand, argue that scientific advancement occurs when one dominant understanding of the world is

replaced by a different one.[8] Colin Elman and Miriam Elman stated that according to Kuhn, "scientific advance does not, as Popper claimed, consist of the gradual accumulation of ever truer theories that, at any given time, have yet to be falsified by failing to pass critical tests", but instead, "mature sciences were characterized by dominant paradigms, which determined both the trajectory of puzzle-solving normal science and provided paradigm-specific criteria for deciding whether such activity is successful or not".[9] In short, the debate between those that abide by falsification and those that associate with the concept of paradigm shifts has again reared its head challenging or advancing the theoretical and empirical contribution of Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*.

Although Lakatos developed a theory that struck a middle ground between Popper and Kuhn, the important point in the context of the discussion here is his argument that "there is no falsification of theory before the emergence of a better theory……and falsification cannot precede the better theory".[10] This, according to Waltz, meant that "because falsification is untenable [Lakatos] proposes that we evaluate theories by the fruitfulness of their research programs" rather than through the "ability to explain behavior".[11] This, of course, is a central argument of *Theory of International Politics*. The central concern for Waltz, particularly in his opening chapter "Laws and Theories", is to identify theory through its "explanatory" power, rather than through its relationship between two variables. Waltz stated that "if a theory is not an edifice of truth and not a reproduction of reality, then what is it? A theory is a picture, mentally

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[8] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

[9] Colin Elman and Miriam Elman, *Progress in International Relations Theory: Appraising the Field* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003),p. 23.

[10] Imre Lakataos, 'Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes', in Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, eds., Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 119, 122.

[11] Kenneth Waltz, 'Evaluating Theories', *The American Political Science Review* 91 (4) (1997), p. 914.

formed, of a bounded realm or domain of activity. A theory is a depiction of the organization of a domain and of the connections among its parts".[12] Rather than being a collection of laws, Waltz argued, "theories are statements that explain them [and] theoretical notions can only be invented not discovered".[13] Thus, a theory's explanatory power is achieved by "moving away from reality not by staying close to it", which Waltz represented as a *model* that "pictures reality while simplifying it, through omission or through reduction of scale".[14]

David Blagden has recently argued that *Theory of International Politics* "is as much a treatise on what an IR theory should look like and how it should be formulated as it is an expression of Waltz's own substantive argument".[15] Blagden (re)positions Waltz not as a "positivist" but as a "rationalist" or "systematist" as a consequence of positivism's relationship to "induction" that Waltz ultimately rejects.[16] Ole Waever has similarly argued that Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* was written in response to the "inductivist illusion" found within the "positivist tradition" of political science.[17] And Patrick Jackson has perhaps been the most explicit, stating that Waltz "was engaged in an endeavor quite distinct from the exercise of formulating theoretical propositions for comparison with some independently existing real world".[18] For Jackson, "Waltz maintains a distinctly instrumental view of theoretical

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[12] Waltz, 1979. p. 8.

[13] Waltz, 1979. *Theory of International Politics*, p. 5.

[14] Waltz, 1979. p. 7.

[15] David Blagden, Induction and Deduction in International Relations: Squaring the Circle between Theory and Practice', *International Studies Review* 18 (2016), p. 198.

[16] Blagden, p. 199.

[17] Ole Waever, 'Waltz's Theory of Theory', *International Relations* 23 (2) (2009), p. 205. See, also, Kenneth Waltz, 'Evaluating Theory', *American Political Science Review* 91 (4) (1997), p. 913.

constructs; theory does not reveal real-but-unobservable components of the world, but instead provides a set of more or less helpful idealizations or oversimplifications that can be used to order the complex chaos of empirical reality into more comprehensible and manageable forms".[19] Indeed, Waltz (re)clarified the limitations of inductive research and his conceptualization of theory stating "induction is used at the level of hypothesis and laws rather than at the levels of theories".[20] In a rejoinder piece, Waltz went further, arguing that "a theory's ability to explain is more important than its ability to predict […] success in explaining, not in predicting, is the ultimate criterion of good theory".[21]

Notwithstanding Waltz's clarifications about what a theory should consist of, many extract from Waltz a positivist research program designed for making empirical hypothesis testing. John Vasquez, most notably, discredited Waltz's approach in response to "devastating evidence" that European powers "balanced threat and not power".[22] Vasquez dismissed *Theory of International Politics* due to what he saw as its theoretical deficiencies, lamenting "under what circumstances will the realist paradigm be considered as having failed to pass an empirical test….the paradigm as a whole has failed to specify what evidence will be accepted as falsifying it – a clear violation of Popper's principle of falsifiability".[23] Ned Lebow has similarly argued that

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[18] Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and it Implications for the Study of World Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 112.

[19] Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and it Implications for the Study of World Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 113.

[20] Waltz, 1979, p. 7.

[21] Kenneth Waltz, 'Evaluating Theory', *The American Political Science Review* 91 (4) (1997), p. 916.

[22] John Vasquez, 'The Realist Paradigm and Degeneretaive versus Progressive Research Programs: An Appraisal of Neotraditional Research on Waltz's Balancing Proposition', *The American Political Science Review* 91 (4) (1997), p. 904,

[23] Vasquez, p. 905.

structural realism cannot be evaluated through "falsification" due to the "competing predictions of realist theory".[24] Lebow argued that:

> Realists have advanced a variety of sometimes contradictory propositions about international relations. Realists disagree among other things, about the relative war-proneness and stability of multipolar versus bipolar international system, the importance and consequences of nuclear weapons, and more fundamentally about the weight of power as an explanation of state behavior.[25]

Lebow likewise challenged the realist assumption that polarity influences global stability suggesting that under Waltz's criteria the international system did not "become bipolar until the mid-1950s at the earliest" and therefore "the great power peace that survived the tensest stage of the cold war – the years of the Czech coup, the first Berlin crisis and blockade, and the Korean War – cannot be attributed to bipolarity" that underpins structural realism's understanding of stability.[26]

John Gerard Ruggie, Robert Keohane, and Robert Cox have also each attempted to discredit *Theory of International Politics* in accordance with its apparent inability to "account for change" in the international system.[27] Ruggie argued that Waltz' did not appreciate "the most important contextual change in international politics this millennium: the shift from the medieval to the modern international system".[28] As Ruggie noted, "the problem with Waltz's posture is that, in any social system, structural change itself ultimately has no source *other than* unit-level processes. By

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[24] Richard Ned Lebow, 'The Long Peace, the End of the Cold War, and the Failure of Realism', *International Organization* 48 (2) (1994), p. 250.

[25] Lebow, p. 250.

[26] Lebow, p. 257. Lebow also argues that Morgenthau and Waltz have conflicting measurements of power and of the importance of nuclear weapons. Lebow also argues that Power Transition Theory was unable to explain the way that the Soviet Union declined, particularly with respect to relinquishing control of their inner-periphery.

[27] Robert Keohane, ed., *Neo-realism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

[28] Ruggie. p. 272.

banishing these from the domain of systemic theory, Waltz also exogenizes the ultimate source of systemic change".[29] Robert Keohane has similarly challenged Waltz's limited acknowledgement of the role of unit-level variables and the theory's general inability to explain change. Keohane saw an incompatibility between "balance of power" and the assumptions that states seek to "maximize power" along with the dismissal of other key variables, including institutions and economic processes.[30] Robert Cox, meanwhile, claimed that Waltz provided a theory with limited capacity to account for change in international politics. Structural realism's refusal to account for ideas and practices, according to Cox, particularly across different historical periods, placed the theory within a particular place and time. Critical theory, on the other hand, according to Cox, provided the necessary connection between human ideas and the system to explain "transformations from one structure to another".[31]

In short, even if structural realism does not account for change, as the above scholars suggest, this does not undermine the fundamental components of Waltz's theory. Waltz ultimately understood falsification (and inductivist and positivist research design) as adequate for hypothesis testing, but not for the explanatory power of the theory that he put forward. Hence, neorealist scholarship advanced in *Theory of International Politics* is not targeted at hypothesising the outcome of two variables, but has instead, the more general ambition to provide explanatory power.[32]

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[29] Ruggie, p. 285

[30] Robert Keohane, 'Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond'

[31] Robert Cox, 'Social Forces, States and World Order: Beyond International Relations Theory', Millennium: Journals of International Studies 10 (2) (1981), p.

[32] For good pieces that discuss Kenneth Waltz's normative power, see, for instance, Adam Humphrey's, 'Waltz and the World: Neorealism as International Political theory', *International Politics* 50 (6) (2013), pp. 863-879.

A "Structural Theory of Foreign Policy": Balancing, Bandwagoning, Buckpassing, and Underbalancing

Notwithstanding these debates, Waltz has been clear that structural realism does not provide a theory of foreign policy. He argued instead that the international realm is an "autonomous" sphere that is created by the interactions of states to create a structure that emboldens or constrains certain types of behaviours:

> The scope of a theory is a measure of its power, but the fact that my *Theory of International Politics* does answer some questions about foreign policy with more or less precision – usually less – does not turn it into a dual theory……The theory explains why states similarly placed behave similarly despite their internal differences. The explanation of states' behavior is found at the international, and not at the national, level…….In contrast, a theory of foreign policy would explain why states similarly placed in a system behave in different ways. Differences in behavior arise from differences of internal composition. Foreign policies are governmental products. A theory has to take the performance of governments as its object of explanation in order to be called a theory of foreign policy.[33]

Many disagree with the view that structural realism cannot predict foreign policy behavior, and instead declare that foreign policy decisions can be deduced from the underlying assumptions of structural realism. By showing how states are pushed and pulled in certain directions, according to the underlying currents of the international system, the necessary information is available to hypothesise about the foreign policies that states will pursue. Colin Elman has perhaps done the most to advance the foreign policy potential of structural realism,[34] taking on various structural realist objections to extrapolating structural realism to the domestic sphere, and concluding

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[33] Kenneth Waltz, 'International Politics is Not Foreign Policy', *Security Studies* 6 (1) (1996), pp. 54-55.

[34] Colin Elman, Horses for Courses: Why Nor Neorealist Theories of Foreign Policy?' *Security Studies* 6 (1) (1996), pp. 7-53.

that "since none of these objections hold up, I conclude that neorealist theories are suitable for making statements about individual state's foreign policies".[35]

Structural foreign policies are derived from Waltz's balance of power theory. Waltz argued that "balances of power tend to form whether some or all states consciously aim to establish and maintain a balance, or whether some or all states aim for universal domination" thereby declaring that "balancing occurs *either* through a conscious decision by the state, or that it may not".[36] This ostensibly general understanding for how balancing occurs however has been questioned by some. Daniel Nexon has suggested, for example, that Waltz's position could be taking to mean "that systemic balances of power rarely obtain in international politics" or "it might claim that systemic balances of power, although relatively frequent, emerge through dynamics unrelated to any generalized balance of power mechanisms".[37] Notwithstanding this definitional and conceptual difficulty, there is an identifiable consensus amongst realist scholars regarding the causes of balancing behaviours. In this broad view balancing is recognised as a formation of alliances to prevent the rise of other powers. The amalgamation of diplomatic and military forces are formed to counterbalance the emerging power to stop them from threatening weaker states in the international system. Joseph Parent and Sebastian Rosato have recently captured the essence of

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[35] Ibid. p, 48. Elman responds to the following four criticisms: (i) neorealism does not predict a single optimal behaviour; (ii) since unit-level factors affect state behaviour, neorealist theories cannot make predictions about any particular state's actions; (iii) neorealist theories rely on evolutionary selection mechanism, and consequently cannot be used as theories of foreign policy; and (iv) the dependent variables are substantively too general for making behavioural predictions.

[36] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 119. My emphasis.

[37] Daniel Nexon, 'Balance of Power in the Balance', *World Politics* 61 (2) (2009), p. 338-339. Such ambiguity also prompted Jack Levy to note that, "While the balance of power concept is one of the most prominent ideas in the theory and practice of international relations, it is also one of the most …intractable ones". Jack Levy, 'What do Great Powers Balance Against and When'. In Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century, edited by T.V Paul, James Wirtz, and Michael Fortmann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 29.

balance of power suggesting it is "a state's effort to amass military might so as to deter another's aggression or prevail in a conflict should deterrence fail".[38] And Randall Schweller has stated that "balancing means the creation or aggregation of military power through internal mobilization or the forging of alliances to prevent or deter the territorial occupation or political and military domination of the state by a foreign power or coalition".[39] Taken to its logical conclusion then, states balance against each other in response to an anarchical international system where there is no higher authority to govern state behaviour. It is structure, then, that forces states to adopt balancing strategies to check any state from accumulating enough power that can then threaten the survival of another state. The balance of power theory, according to Waltz, "is a theory about the results produced by the uncoordinated actions of states. The theory makes assumptions about the interests and motives of states, rather than explaining them".[40] These assumptions are based on the belief that the ultimate function of a state is to seek security, which pushes them to align with the weaker side if it is the stronger side that is threatening them.

There are four predominant theories of foreign policy that have been deduced from the balance of power logic: balancing,[41] bandwagoning[42], buckpassing[43], and

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[38] Joseph Parent and Sebastian Rosato, 'Balancing in Neorealism', *International Security* 40 (2) (2015), p. 56.

[39] Randall Schweller, 'Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing', International Security 29 (2) (2004), p. 166.

[40] Kenneth Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*, p. 122.

[41] Stephen Walt, *Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

[42] Randall Schweller, 'Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In', *International Security* 19 (1) (1994), pp. 72-107.

[43] Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, 'Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity', *International Organization* 44 (2) (1990), pp. 137-168.

underbalancing.[44] These are the principle theories that outline how states respond to a rival state and provide a predictive capability toward understanding the foreign policy decisions that states choose. While each strategy is decided upon in accordance with the distribution of power in the international system, they have each, sometimes unwittingly, been developed to incorporate unit-level variables that account for interpretations of threats and opportunities. Each of these theories are briefly canvassed below.

While we have touched on the core elements of balancing above, there are two important points that I will add here. First, balancing can take the form of either internal or external forms. Internal balancing entails the accumulation of military power through a process of developing national resources, increasing defence expenditure, and mobilising military personnel against a threatening state. This internal mobilisation of military power is taken without consultation with other powers.[45] External balancing, on the other hand, is a "diplomatic manoeuvre" to create an amalgamation of alliances to contain the rising belligerent state.[46] External balancing aggregates military strengths to counter internal weaknesses and discourage a threatening state from aggressive behaviour. This strategy, of course, has historically been the preferred strategy of the United Kingdom, which consistently opposed the rise of a Continental power and joined forces with the weaker side to provide an equilibrium on the European continent.[47] The second point worth making is states either balance against power, as Waltz argued, or balance against threat,

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[44] Randall Schweller, 'Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing', *International Security* 29 (2) (2004), pp. 159-201.

[45] See, for instance, Kenneth Waltz, Theory of International Politics, p. 118); Stephen Walt, The Origins of Alliances, p12-13; John Mearsheimer, The Tragedy of Great Power politics, p. 156-167; Steven Lobell, 'A Granular Theory of Balancing', *International Studies Quarterly* 62 (1) (2018), p. 596.

[46] John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 156.

[47] Stephen Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, p. 18.

which was the posture identified by Stephen Walt. Balance of threat theory is premised on the aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive capability, and perceived aggressiveness of another state.[48] These aggregates of power, according to Walt, explains why states have aligned with United States' power, rather than balanced against it.

Bandwagoning is a second theory of foreign policy emanating from the realist tradition.[49] This is the opposite of balancing, as threatened states join forces with the aggressor, rather than attempting to balance against it. The decision of Bulgaria and Romania to join forces with Germany in the early stages of World War II is regularly invoked as an example of this rationale.[50] The underlying logic of this strategy is the belief that a weaker state's destiny will be enhanced if they align themselves with the rising power, which is a sensible strategy to pursue if the aggressive state can "take what it wants anyway and inflict considerable punishment in the process".[51] Of course, this determines that bandwagoning is regularly understood as an inappropriate strategy for a great power to pursue because they are able to resist the rising power (in comparison to a weaker state). A great power that decided to bandwagon would undermine the realist logic of balance of power behaviour and would also increase the level of insecurity in an anarchic international system.[52] It is important to briefly note that not all realists view bandwagoning as a balancing strategy. Randall Schweller argues that bandwagoning is a strategy adopted by

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[48] Stephen Walt, *Origins of Alliances*, p. 21-26.

[49] For theories that state bandwagoning is more prominent see, for instance, Robert Kaufman, To Balance or to Bandwagon? Alignment Decisions in 1930s Europe', *Security Studies* 1 (3) (1992), pp. 417-447.

[50] John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), p. 163.

[51] Mearsheimer, p. 163.

[52] Mearsheimer, p. 162.

revisionist powers that are pursuing further gains.[53] Through Schweller's reading then, balancing and bandwagoning are motivated by different goals as balancing is undertaken to withstand a threat, and bandwagoning is pursued when states perceive they can profit and achieve unrealized ambitions under a revised international structure.

Buckpassing is a third theory of foreign policy to come from the realist approach to international relations. This states that a third party take responsibility for blocking a rising power so they can "free ride" and remain aloof from potential future wars. The alternating response by France and Britain with respect to who will take responsibility for stopping German aggression in the initial stages of World War II is regularly understood as an example of such a strategy.[54] Buckpassing acknowledges the necessity to check a threatening state, but allows others to take primary responsibility for this balancing response. Although Waltz and Walt both argued that states prefer to balance than bandwagon, Mearsheimer claimed that great powers prefer to buckpass as it is likely that as "the aggressor and the buckpasser become involved in a long and costly war, the balance of power is likely to shift in the buckpasser's favor".[55] Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, on the other hand, argue that the decision turns on the perceived length of the future war. A state will buckpass (rather than balance) when they believe their allies have a defensive advantage, so that states that perceive a quick victory will band together, whereas a protracted war will inspire states to abdicate responsibility to other states.[56]

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[53] Randall Schweller, 'Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back', *International Security* 19 (1) (1994), pp. 72-107.

[54] Barry Posen. *Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), p. 232-233.

[55] Mearsheimer, p. 160.

[56] Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, 'Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Mutlipority', *International Organization* 44 (2) (1990), pp.137-168.

What are the various strategies that a buckpasser might pursue? Mearsheimer argues there are four measures available to a buckpasser. First, they can seek a good relationship with the aggressor state with the aim of diverting its attention toward the "buck-catcher". Second, a buckpasser can seek to have "cool" relations with the buck-catcher so that they can simultaneously maintain good relations with the aggressor and avoid being dragged into a war by the buck-catcher. Third, a buckpasser can increase their defense spending so that the aggressive state is more inclined to focus on the buck-catcher. And finally, the buck-passer can facilitate the growth of the buck-catcher so they are readily equipped to defend themselves against the aggressor.

Mearsheimer presents two contradictions here. First, the distinction between "external balancing" and the "facilitation of the buck-catcher's military strength" are fundamentally equivalent. That is, while these strategies pursue different outcomes (one to balance and the other to buckpass) they are ultimately the same strategy. Similarly, "internal balancing" and the buckpassing strategy of "increasing internal defence spending" (so the aggressor focuses on the buck-catcher) are also indistinguishable. Thus, these concepts lack operational clarity whereby these two strategies are in fact one and the same, and hence nearly any foreign policy decision can be deduced from these scenarios. A state that is bandwagoning will describe their decision as balancing, and vice-versa. Paul Schroder sagely points out that Walt's intervention "actually makes it virtually impossible to distinguish between "balancing" and "bandwagoning", or to determine the real motives of actors, since any bandwagoning state is likely to claim that it is actually "balancing" against a threatening enemy".[57] Christensen and Snyder have made a similar argument, noting "for a particular state in particular circumstances, any foreign policy and its opposite can sometime be deduced from Waltz's theory".[58] Lieber and Alexander also state that

[57] Paul Schroeder, 'Historical Reality vs. Neo-realist Theory', *International Security* 19 (1) (1994), p. 119.

balancing "is much ado about nothing. Defining or operationalizing the concept is difficult; the behavior typically identified by it seems identical to normal diplomatic friction, and regardless, the evidence does not support specific predictions suggested by those advancing the concept".[59] And, finally, David Kang has noted that balancing is "virtually impossible to falsify". As Kang states, "the term balancing and the underlying theoretical argument that emphasizes power as essentially threatening can include both obvious military and political attempts to counter a known adversary as well as more subtle disagreements that fall short of war, it is almost impossible to provide evidence that could falsify this point".[60]

A lack of operational clarity around balancing has prompted significant criticism from a range of theoretical perspectives. Robert Lieber, for instance, has stated that realism's "reductive view of foreign policy behaviour…. undervalues the ideology beliefs, and interests of foreign actors and regimes".[61] Robert Jervis has similarly stated, "debates over the merits of assuming utility maximization has obscured the crucial nature of the suppositions about what goals actors seek and how they believe they can achieve them".[62] For Jervis, "arguing that states are the central actors does not tell us which interests and policies they pursue. This question looms particularly large in the security field: even though it may be true that all states want a high measure of security, some strive for other goals, especially expansion of various kinds, in addition

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[58] Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, 'Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Mutlipority', *International Organization* 44 (2) (1990), p. 138.

[59] Keir Lieber and Gerard Alexander, 'Waiting for Balancing: Why the World is Not Pushing Back', *International Security* 30 (1): pp. 109.139. Cited in David Kang, 'Between Balancing and Bandwagoning: South Korea's Response to China', *Journal of East Asian Studies* 9 (1) (2009), pp. 6-7.

[60] David Kang, 'Between Balancing and Bandwagoning: South Korea's Response to China', *Journal of East Asian Studies* 9 (1) (2009), p. 6.

[61] Robert Lieber, *Retreat and its Consequences: American Foreign Policy and the Problem of World Order* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 11.

[62] Robert Jervis, 'Realism in the Study of World Politics', *International Organization* 52 (4) (1998), p. 976.

to or even at the expense of security".[63] He therefore concludes, "it is therefore not surprising that students of security policy have been quick to see that realism needs to be supplemented by an understanding of the ideas that decision makers use to guide them to their goals".[64]

In summary, there are two key problems here that realism is unable to resolve. First, balancing leaves unspecified the role of military force. While traditional measurements of balancing behaviour include the transformation of economic and social resources into military power, either internally or externally, there remains no specific measurement to adequately test or predict balancing behaviour.[65] While Mearsheimer has come closest to operationalizing balancing behaviour, provided above, this lacks operational and definitional clarity, whereby balancing and buckpassing are fundamentally indistinguishable. Hence, operational components of balancing become impenetrable amongst the contradictory categorisation of the balancing behaviour. The use of military force, for instance, does not sit comfortably within the archetypes presented above. Unilateral missile strikes that are deployed from offshore, the undertaking of regime change to alter the regional security dynamics, the arming of external partners that have ongoing security guarantees, and the decision for great powers to pursue war aims on the behest of peripheral states, do not square comfortably with the rigid sequencing discussed above. The balance of power logic therefore, is limited to the outcome of deterring belligerent states through a process of restoring the equilibrium, rather than understanding the interests and processes that ultimately determined that outcome.

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[63] Robert Jervis, Realism in the Study of World Politics, p. 982.

[64] Robert Jervis, Realism in the Study of World Politics', p. 983.

[65] Adam Liff, 'Whither the Balancers? The Case for a Methodological Reset', *Security Studies* 25 (3) (2016), pp. 420-459.

Second, states will rarely allow the international system to push them in a particular direction if it does not align with their particular interests. For instance, realists argue that the decision to balance or buckpass is dependent on whether the hegemon is operating in a bipolar or multipolar order. The structure of the international system pushes states to either join partnerships or offload responsibility to a third-party. Therefore, the role of unit-level variables (along with the influence of a unipolar order) largely remain inconsequential to realist understanding of strategic choice. For instance, Mearsheimer argues that the decision to balance or buckpass is:

> Mainly a function of the structure of the international system. A threatened great power operating in a bipolar system must balance against its rival because there is no other great power to catch the buck. It is in multipolar systems that threatened states can – and often do – buck-pass […] Buck-passing tends to be widespread in multipolarity when there is no potential hegemon to contend with, and when the threatened states do not share common border with the aggressor.[66]

The primacy placed upon the structure of the international system therefore suggests that if two states with different interests are faced with a similar systemic threat they will adopt the same balancing strategy. Yet, the above discussion suggests that Mearsheimer overlooks the role of unit-level variables that ultimately drive the above balancing decisions. While affording primacy to the international system, we have seen above that foreign policy decisions are also shaped by a state's perceptions and judgments. For instance, states will balance against threats judged in accordance with their *perceptions* of the adversary's intentions, geographic proximity and material capability. States will bandwagon with the rising aggressive power if they *identify* greater advantages will be provided by the challenging state. And states will buckpass when they *judge* a protracted war is on the horizon.

Therefore, two variables are critical when seeking to understand balancing behaviour: first, the role and purpose of military force; and two, the state's interests and ideology that ultimately command its use. This is not to suggest that the international system

[66] Mearsheimer, pp. 267-268.

does not provide important input with respect to influencing state decision-making, but it does propose that balancing is ultimately a function of military force that is guided by state's interests and ideology. To overcome these challenges, the next section attempts to understand balancing behaviour by considering how the United States interests and ideology identified by Walter Russell Mead govern and determine the role and purpose of military force. Mead's analysis is useful as rather than characterising American foreign policy through dichotomies of realist/idealist or internationalist/isolationist, foreign policy is considered according to a recognition for enduring traditions that govern United States interaction with the world.

Balance of Power: Strategy, Military Force, and State Interests

The above discussion has opened the space to consider unit-level variables in balance of power theory. Although acknowledging the anarchical international system encourages balancing formation, it nonetheless suggests that these structural inputs are interpreted differently according to distinct ideologies and interests to produce recognisable balancing behaviour. The above discussion also suggests that a primary mechanism of balancing involves the use of military force. Balancing is contingent on the build-up of internal or external forces, including through the use (or threatened use) of military force, and therefore, military behaviour is a critical variable when attempting to understand the specific balancing response undertaken by a state. This approach emphasises that balancing behaviour does not occur independent from state decision-making, but instead must involve a willingness to use military assets in accordance with a state's ideology and interests. This realisation encourages balance of power to be considered not only within the strict discipline of international relations but to traverse into the method and practice of Strategic Studies. Strategic Studies and International Relations at times work in isolation from each other, without attempting bisect when their inquiries align. John Garnett noted that "strategic thought is so inextricably entwined with international politics that it would be misleading and

dangerous to try to separate the two subjects".[67] Michael Howard has perhaps gone further when he noted "the strategic studies approach to international relations behaved more like the parent than the offspring".[68] The important point for the discussion here is that by emphasising military force as a primary variable in balancing behaviour, the Strategic Studies literature provides a conceptual toolkit with which to unlock question pertaining to the use of force. Indeed, by affording primacy to the role of military force, we are asking similar questions as those posed by Thomas Schelling in his *The Strategy of Conflict*.[69] For Schelling, to study strategy "is to take the view that most conflict situations are essentially bargaining situations".[70] In this respect, strategy is concerned primarily with influencing the choices and decisions of the adversary so that an actor's ultimate goals can be realised. Thus, strategies of deterrence, coercion, and bargaining formed the backbone of Schelling's research agenda, which are inferred through game theory and rationalist assumptions.

The purpose here, on the other hand, is not concerned so much with how military force is used to influence other powers, but how systemic factors are interpreted by states to produce a distinct military outcome depending on how state interests are defined. Therefore, strategies of balancing, bandwagoning, buckpassing, and underbalancing are the closest international relations comes to advancing such a theory, but are nonetheless underdeveloped with respect to their specification of the role of interests in determining decisions to use military force. Thus, the aim of this section is to outline the core ingredients of strategy and canvass the various military options at a state's disposal, and understand how each is chosen when attempting to

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[67] JOHN GARNETT, 'Strategic studies and its Assumptions', In *Contemporary Strategy I: Theories and Concepts*, 2nd edn, ed. J. Baylis, K. Booth, J. Garnett, and P. Williams (London: Croom Helm, 1987), p, 5.

[68] Michael Howard, *The Causes of War and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 36.

[69] Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960).

[70] Ibid., p. 5.

balance against a belligerent state. It begins with a definition of strategy. This is important because, as we have seen above, conjecture remains about what exactly is captured within foreign policy, and what is not. Second, we canvass the various ways that military force can be deployed. This is not to suggest the need to undertake a tactical discussion. Rather I restrict my examination to the strategic level to understand the various ways that the military can be deployed toward specific purposes. Following the presentation of the different strategic options, I conclude by offering the four primary ideologies of the United States (Hamiltonian, Jacksonian, Wilsonian, and Jeffersonian) as potential explanations for why one strategy is adopted over another.

Strategy as the use of military force toward a political end

Definitions of "strategy" are regularly traced to Carl von Clausewitz's important work, *On War*.[71] Drawing inspiration from the Napoleonic conflicts, Clausewitz situated the military as a means to achieving political ends with the famous line, "war is merely the continuation of policy by other means".[72] This explanation has continued to loom large in modern definitions of strategy. Richard Betts, for instance, defined strategy as "a plan for using military means to achieve political ends." [73] Colin Gray similarly stated that strategy is "the bridge that relates military power to political purpose." Military theorist Basil Liddell Hart defined strategy as "the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfil the ends of policy".[74] And finally, Colin Gray has defined strategy as "the use that is made of force and the threat of force for the ends of policy."[75] Taken together, and according to Thomas Mahnken and

[71] Carl von Clausewitz. *On War*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

[72] Ibid., p. 28

[73] Richard Betts. 2000. 'Is Strategy an Illusion?' *International Security* 25(2): p, 6.

[74] Liddell Hart. 1967. *Strategy* (second revised edition). New York: Meridian. p, 321.

[75] Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 17.

Joseph Maiolo, Clausewitz was to provide a framework of strategy that "is based upon clearly identifying political goals, assessing one's comparative advantage relative to the enemy, calculating costs and benefits carefully, and examining the risks and rewards of alternative strategies".[76] Thus, the importance of Clausewitz's foundational definition was that "Clausewitz accepted that the military task should be set by the politicians. Once that had been accomplished, the military could expect the politicians to use a military victory to best advantage. At the time, the normal assumption was that a political victory would naturally follow from a military victory".[77]

Of course, as the Cold War advanced through the 20th Century, these definitions were built upon to add several important dimensions to the notions of strategy. The definition moved beyond the association between the military and policy environment to include diplomatic, financial, commercial, and ethical pressures in the pursuit of political objectives.[78] This, according to scholars such as Michael Howard and Liddell Hart, encompassed using all the resources at the state's disposal toward the attainment of a political goal, and is what Edward Earle has called the "highest type of strategy".[79] Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley, adopting the term "grand strategy", explain that grand strategy was different in three important ways: (i) by moving strategy beyond the military, to include the diplomatic financial economic components of a state's power; (ii) the examination of internal forces within the state, such as political structure and policies, rather than just the external factors; and (iii)

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[76] Thomas G. Mahnken and Joseph Maiolo, *Strategic Studies: A Reader*, 2nd ed. (Abingdon, Oxonford: Routledge, 2008),p. 2.

[77] Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 94.

[78] This has been understood by some as "total strategy", rather than 'grand strategy". See Michael Carver. 1986. 'Conventional Warfare in the Nuclear Age', in Peter Paret, ed., *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*. Princeton: Princeton University press, p 788.

[79] Edward Meade Earle. *Introduction Makers of Modern Strategy*. (1971) p.v111

that strategy was now conducted in times of peace, rather than just in times of war.[80] Grand strategy then, is aimed at harnessing all the resources at a state's disposal to advance the national interest.[81]

Such multifarious definitions led Eric Hamilton to suggest that grand strategy has become "all-encompassing", through which "strategy has blurred into grand strategy and grand strategy has blurred into foreign policy, creating both confusion and redundancy in the use of the three concepts".[82] Robert Art, on the other hand, has cut through this confusion and provided a distinction between these various categories. For Art:

> Grand strategy, like foreign policy, deals with the momentous choices that a nation makes in foreign policy, but it differs from foreign policy in one fundamental aspect. To define a nation's foreign policy is to lay out the full range of goals that a state should seek in the world and then determine how all the instruments of statecraft – political power, military power, economic power, ideological power – should be integrated and employed with one another to achieve those goals. Grand strategy, too, deals with the full range of goals that state should seek, but it concentrates primarily on how the military instrument should be employed to achieve them. It prescribes how a nation should wield its military instrument to realise its foreign policy goals.[83]

This definition provides greater clarity through which to measure balancing behaviour, because creating a connection between state interests and military force shifts the analytical focus away from the international system alone. It also creates systematic and definitional certainty, not only about how to identify change in

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[80] Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, Alvin Bernstein, *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War* (Cambridge: Cambridge Unversity Press), pp. 1-23.

[81] Peter Feaver, 'What is Grand Strategy and Why Do We need it?' Foreign Policy April 8, 2009. Accessed at http://foreignpolicy.com/2009/04/08/what-is-grand-strategy-and-why-do-we-need-it/

[82] Eric Hamilton. 2012. 'Redefining and Rethinking U.S. 'Grand Strategy since World War II: Some Historical-Intuitionalist Insights'. *International Studies Conference, San Diego, California*, April 1-1.

[83] Robert Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press), p. 1-2.

strategic behaviour, but also what might encourage this to occur. This suggests therefore, that military force is the dependent variable, and state interests are the intervening independent variable that alter the strategic choices states make.

For this thesis then, strategy is defined in accordance with Christopher Layne and Bradley Thayer's interpretation, which states, "Distilled to its essence, grand strategy is about determining the state's vital interests – that is, those that are important enough for which to fight – and its role in the world. From that determination springs a state's ambitions, alliances, overseas military commitments, conception of its stakes in the prevailing international order, and the size and structure of its armed forces".[84] This definition affords primacy to a state's national interest and how this governs its engagement with the world, particularly with respect to military force.

To be clear then, this definition of strategy contradicts structural realist understanding of balancing. Realists are prone to determine the deployment of military force in accordance with the distribution of military power. In this context, a realist will consider, first and foremost, these systemic factors to determine what type of military strategy a state will pursue. For instance, Barry Posen, echoing Mearsheimer's theory discussed above, suggests the "inference from balance of power theory is that military doctrines will be heterogeneous along the dimension of offensive-defensive-deterrence" doctrines.[85] The difference between these three strategies is that "offensive doctrines aim to disarm an adversary – to destroy his armed forces", while defensive doctrines "aim to deny an adversary the objective that he seeks. Deterrent doctrines aim to punish an aggressor – to raise his costs without reference to reducing its own".[86]

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[84] Christopher Layne and Bradley Thayer. *American Empire: A Debate*. (New York: Routledge, 2007). p. x.

[85] Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 69.

[86] Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 14.

According to Posen, offensive doctrines are favoured by expansionist powers, particularly when the war is likely to be long and brutal, allowing the war to be fought away from home territory. Deterrent doctrines, meanwhile, are favoured by small states, and states with uncertain security relationships, because this will make "political will" a defining feature of the decision to initiate a war. And a defensive strategy is preferred by status quo states because they are unlikely to initiate a war.[87] More importantly for Posen, and our discussion here, in a bipolar order states are more likely to undertake an "internal balancing strategy" because the "relative weakness of the third party" negates the effectiveness of a forming a coalition.[88] On the other hand, in a multipolar world order where there are more variables in play, and "nobody can be quite sure who will side with whom", a buckpassing strategy is the more likely to emerge.[89] These structural determinants are the bedrock of realist scholarship and which this thesis both rejects and attempts to rectify. Instead, and as the definition of strategy provided above suggests, unit-level variables are primary intervening variables that both govern and mitigate the deployment of military assets.

Of course, this is not the first study to suggest that unit-level variables are critical drivers in the guidance of military force. Elizabeth Saunders, for instance, has looked to the role of unit-level variables to understand why some military interventions attempt to remake the domestic institutions of targeted state, while other interventions pursue more limited ambitions such as altering the broad direction of the belligerent's foreign policy.[90] For Saunders, it is the individual leaders that are critical in determining the goals and extent of military interventions. She argues that "leaders

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[87] Ibid, pp. 78-79.

[88] Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, p. 62.

[89] Ibid, p. 63

[90] Elizabeth Saunders, *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011).

vary systematically in how they perceive threats, and that these different threat perceptions help explain when and how states intervene".[91] The causal beliefs about the origins of threats, which are developed long before the threat has manifested, influence both the way the leader understands the benefits of transforming the political structures of targeted states, and influence how resources are allocated in preparation for such an action. Thus, "internally focused leaders are more likely to undertake transformative interventions whereas externally focused leaders are more likely to undertake non-transformative interventions. Leaders' causal beliefs about the origins of threats also affect their willingness to intervene at all".[92]

Indeed, the underlying logic for state intervention has changed in accordance with shifting social structures and normative beliefs. These ideational factors suggest that balancing behaviour is not influenced by the system alone. Martha Finnemore demonstrated this finding across three case studies.[93] First, while states previously intervened to "collect debts", these types of military interventions no longer occur and have been replaced by lawyers at international conferences to mediate legal solutions. Second, humanitarian interventions are now deployed to assist non-white and non-Christian groups. This shift was manifested in response to societal structures that view this as an acceptable and warranted use of military force. And finally, drawing parallels with the realist systemic analysis above, Finnemore argues that "changes in understanding of order lead to changes in intervention behaviour" and that "the order that decision makers view as desirable in one period may not be valued in another period".[94] Thus, Finnemore argues that military interventions have changed across

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[91] Ibid, p. 2

[92] Saunders, *Leaders at War*, p. 213

[93] Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs about the Use of Force* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

[94] Finnemore, p. 140.

time, where states no longer intervene in states for reasons previously held one or two hundred years ago.

The important point here is that the discipline of Strategic Studies places military force at the behest of political direction. While international relations, particularly realist theory, is content to understand balancing behaviour as a response to systemic changes, the discipline of Strategic Studies looks to unit-level variables to explain such behaviour . The next section outlines the different military strategies that are available to a state before we consider how these are chosen according to states interests and ideology.

The Role of Military Force: Offshore Balancing, Selective Engagement, War, and Retrenchment.

For realists, military force plays an obvious and crucial function. In an anarchic international system, with no higher authority to moderate state behaviour, the military serves to protect the state and ensure its continued survival. It also serves as a tool to advance the interests of the state, in conjunction with diplomatic and economic levers. Yet, the way it can be used to achieve such ends is not as clear-cut. There are variables at play that interfere with its effectiveness and ability to influence change, including the distribution of power in the international system, geography, morale, the weather, unity of purpose, and the quality of hardware, supply chains logistics and doctrine.

Notwithstanding these challenges, various doctrines exist that seek to capture how the military can be operationalised to serve these ends. Broadly speaking, there are four ways that the military can be used toward achieving political objectives. First, it can be used as an *offshore balancing* strategy where third-party states are provided high-tech military capability to block the rise of belligerent states. Second, it can be used as a *selective engagement* strategy to deter states from pursuing a specific action or to compel a state to reverse a behaviour previously undertaken. This includes the

forward deployment of military assets with a view to ultimately avoiding entangling alliances. Third, it can be used to wage war toward the specific purpose of undertaking regime change. And finally, it can play a minor role in statecraft where by a state looks to avoid using military force to advance their interests. The remainder of this section will canvass each of these strategies, and situate them within the various balancing theories discussed above, before attempting to understand how each is chosen according to unit-level domestic variables.

The strategy of offshore balancing is regularly prescribed by realist scholars, including Stephen Walt, John Mearsheimer, and Christopher Layne. This strategy relies on regional partners to check the rise of belligerent states. The first line of defence are external forces who are responsible for maintaining a balance of power in their respective regions. These regional powers are provided with advanced military hardware so they can check the rise of threatening states. Offshore balancing therefore, has limited aspirations with respect to its overall ambition. Because it encourages external partners to take responsibility for their defence, and maintain regional stability, it inherently eschews nation building programs, the promotion of peace, and notions of exporting American morals and values abroad. The primary concern of this strategy is the maintenance of American power that many believe is threatened through the United States military overextension. Importantly though, offshore balancers believe that Europe, Northeast Asia, and the Persian Gulf remain central to United States security and prosperity, and are therefore except that it is "worth expending American blood and treasure for". Offshore balancing shares characteristics with both the buckpassing and external balancing strategy provided above. External balancing and buckpassing, while regularly conceptualised as different theories, essentially boil down to a desire to offload responsibility to a third-party in order to check the rise of a belligerent state.

Selective engagement is the second military strategy that the United States could deploy. Selective engagement is a forward defence posture that is understood as a

"preventative, precautionary strategy".[95] The forward presence of United States military can halt belligerent states, according to Robert Art, the chief architect of this strategy, because it "deters adverse military actions" and "facilitates waging war should that become necessary". Yet, at the same time, this strategy, like offshore balancing, seeks to maintain the regional status quo and does not use force to push human rights issues. Selective engagement reflects a reliance on deterrence and compellence to dissuade an adversary from taking an action not yet started, or to prevent them from doing something another state desires. Thomas Schelling notes in *Arms and Influence* that "deterrence often depends on getting into a position where the initiative is up to the enemy and it is he who has to make the awful decision to proceed to a clash".[96] Drawing on the legal term "last clear chance" Schelling demonstrates that deterrence, when successfully implemented, is developed so that the other party is left with the "last clear chance" to stop a collision from occurring. A central concern here, of course, is making your threat "credible" enough so that the adversary believes that you are willing to carry out the threat. This might include, for instance, behaving irrationally, impulsively, or unreliably so that the adversary believes "you can commit a country to an action that it might in somebody's judgment prefer not to take".[97] Schelling uses the example of the Cold War and the possibility of bequeathing responsibility for nuclear weapons to the Germans as they would be "less reluctant to use them" thereby increasing the "credibility" that nuclear weapons would in fact be used. This is similar, of course, to creating a "trip-wire" where 7000 troops were stationed in Europe with the objective of leaving "the Soviet Union in no doubt that the United States would be automatically involved in the event of an attack on

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[95] Robert Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 136.

[96] Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966). p, 44.

[97] Ibid, p. 36.

Europe".[98] In its most crude form, then, deterrence might involve "burning your escape bridges" so that your enemy knows you will have no choice but to fight leaving the ultimate decision for war in their hands.

Compellence moves the initiative of action away from the enemy and into the hands of the state wanting the particular action to cease. As Schelling states, "Compellence […] usually involves initiating an action (or an irrevocable commitment to action) that can cease, or become harmless, only if the opponent responds. The overt act, the first step, is up to the side that makes the compellent threat".[99] In other words, compellence involves initiating an initial military step that will encourage the enemy to respond positively to your demands. The appeal to the enemy to change their actions is contingent on time whereby "too little time, and compliance becomes impossible; too much time, and compliance becomes unnecessary. Thus, compellence involves timing in a way that deterrence typically does not".[100]

There are no clearly identifiable balancing theory's that aligns with a strategy of selective engagement. Selective engagement's reliance on compellence and deterrence might suggest that it is an internal balancing strategy. Yet, the forward deployment of United States military also predisposes a requirement that a state work in concert with other powers, suggesting an external balancing strategy is also in play. Moreover, elements of buckpassing are also present because of selective engagement's preference to outsource responsibility to regional powers in times of peace.

The third manner by which military force can be used is to wage war. This means, at its simplest level, that military forces are required to have expeditionary capacity to project force in other regions. John Mearsheimer argued provocatively that war can

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[98] Ibid, p. 47

[99] Ibid.p, 72

[100] Ibid, p. 72.

be used to "improve a state's power position". This is achieved, according to Mearsheimer, through the ability to "exploit a vanquished state's economy for gain" through a series of mechanisms, including either "levying taxes, confiscating industrial output, or even confiscating industrial plants".[101] A state can also take control of oil fields and natural resources, or overrun strategically important land to create a buffer zone, and even, at its most dramatic, eliminate a belligerent state to restore the balance of regional power. This can be achieved, Lawrence Freedman notes, through a strategy of annihilation or a strategy of exhaustion. The difference here turns on either annihilating the enemy's army, or a battle of attrition that might include a series of tactics, such as blockade destroying of crops, to wear the opponent out.[102] This strategy clearly diverges from the previous status quo strategies provided above, as the goal here is revisionist in nature.

Balance of power theory and war are uncomfortable partners. For instance, some scholars view war less likely if power is distributed evenly through the system.[103] While, at the same time, others consider war to be less likely when power is distributed unequally, with one power holding a preponderance of it in relation to others.[104] Steven Lobell has recently suggested that war sits outside accepted balancing behaviour and that "a narrow definition of balancing distinguishes it from others forms of resistance to domination or occupation, including soft balancing, preemptive strike, coercive diplomacy, and economic sanctions".[105] And Jack Levy has gone further suggesting that "it would not be balancing if war is forced on the potential

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[101] John Mearsheimer, The Tragedy of Great Power Politics, pp. 147-152.

[102] Lawrence Freedman, Strategy: A History (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 108-109.

[103] See, for instance, Kenneth Waltz, 'The Stability of a Bipolar World', Daedalus 93 (3) 1964), pp. 881-909. Inis Claude, Power and International Relations (New York: Random House, 1962).

[104] See, for instance, Jacek Kugler and A.F.K Oragsnaki, 'The Power Transition: A Retrospective and Prospective Evaluation', in Manus I. Midlarsky (ed.), Handbook of War Studies (Unwin Hyman, 1989).

[105] Steven Lobell, 'A Granular Theory of Balancing', *International Studies Quarterly* 62 (1) (2018), p. 596.

balancer by a direct military attack by the aggressor".[106] Of course, the decision to escalate to war ultimately turns on a perceived inequality in the distribution of power (or threat) that ultimately heightens tensions amongst states. In this respect, then, the use of military force is best conceived of as an internal balancing strategy, particularly when undertaken in a unilateral fashion.

Finally, the strategy of retrenchment is framed through an appreciation for the limited utility of military force in the pursuit of political objectives. Retrenchment, as Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein suggest, is developed from a state's perceptions of the existence of less permissive systemic and domestic conditions "to pursue expansive and expensive grand strategy".[107] Robert Lieber notes that retrenchment "provides a rationale for inaction" and is premised on the belief that the United States "can safely pull back from many of its overseas commitments".[108] In this respect, while offshore balancers believe the United States should actively stabilise Europe, Northeast Asia, and the Persian Gulf, a strategy of retrenchment is primarily concerned with isolating America from entanglement in these regions.

A buckpassing and bandwagoning theory best captures a strategy of retrenchment. These underbalancing theories are what Randall Schweller labelled "prudent and rational" allowing the state to avoid the costs of war "either by satisfying the legitimate grievances of the revisionist state, or by allowing others to do so, or by letting others defeat the aggressor while safely remaining on the sideline".[109] In this

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[106] Javk Levy, 'Balance and Balancing: Concepts, Propositions, and Research Design', in Vasquez and Elman, *Realism and the Balancing Power: A New Debate* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003), p. 135.

[107] Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein, "Beyond Realism: The Study of Grand Strategy" in Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein (eds.), *Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 19.

[108] Robert Lieber, *Retreat and its Consequences: American Foreign Policy and the Problem of World Order* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 11.

[109] Randall Schweller, 'Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalancing', *International Security* 29 (2) (2004), p. 167.

respect, a strategy of retrenchment is targeted, first and foremost, at removing the United States from all threats and involvement in future wars.

The above section has outlined four distinct military options that a state can pursue. Each of these distinct military strategies has been connected, in one way or another, with a theory of balancing. In this respect, theories of balancing are reliant on distinct military responses to adequately launch an identifiable balancing response. However, each of these military responses are not determined by shifts in power alone, but are determined in accordance with states interests and ideology. That is, each strategy can be identified through a specific purpose and objective that it attempts to realise. The aim now then is to understand the distinct objectives that military force can be used to defend, protect and advance. It does so by connecting these objectives with enduring traditons of America's foreing policy identified by Walter Russell Mead.

The United States' Ideologies: Hamiltonian, Jacksonian, Wilsonian, and Jeffersonian.

As discussed above, strategy is concerned with the operation of military force to fulfil a political objective. Strategy thus provides a framework through which the United States' interests can be advanced and protected. Yet, the national interest of the United States is a slippery concept because, understood in its simplest form, it is a term used to capture the *raison d' etre* of the state. Political leaders regularly justify their foreign policy decisions in accordance with the national interest, so that any dissenter is relegated as an unbeliever. But in this way, the national interest is devoid of meaning and is ambiguous with respect to its ultimate objective. An alternative, and perhaps more valid definition with respect to understanding the motives and objectives behind the use of force, are the various "traditions" that have governed America's engagement with the world. By using the concept of traditions we are able to consider, more fully, the different ways that the United States understands its role and purpose in the world, and, in particular, how it determines which interests are worth protecting through the use of military force. In this sense, strategic adjustment, and

balancing behaviour, is understood as a response to not only shifting currents of power but also through an alteration in American interests and perceptions for the role of military force.

While traditions have played an important role in our understanding of foreign policy, a common definition has eluded international relations. In its broader, conventional usage, a tradition has been defined as "an indefinite series of repetitions of an action, which on each occasion is performed on the assumption that it has been performed before".[110] Other definitions, with a narrower focus on the political, such as Walter McDougall's, have defined a tradition as a principle or strategy that "commanded solid bipartisan support, outlived the era that gave it birth, entered the permanent lexicon of our national discourse, and continued to resonate with a portion of the American public even during eras when it did not directly inspire policy".[111] Others, like Terry Nardin, have defined traditions as "the process of handing down from generation to generation, and the thing handed down, the belief or custom transmitted from one generation another".[112]

Each of these definitions are characterised by an ability to offer understandings about the present day political decisions, through an affiliation with the past. In this sense, Richard Ned Lebow perhaps best understood the significance of political traditions, when he stated, "American foreign policy traditions have manifested themselves to the culture, identity, and broader American approach to life and politics".[113] Through

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[110] J.G.A Pocock, 'Time, Institutions and Action: An Essay on Traditions and Their Understanding', in *Politics and Experience: Essays Presented to Professor Michael Oakeshott on the Occasion of his Retirement*, eds. Preston King and B.C. Parekh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1968), p. 212.

[111] McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*, p. 10.

[112] Terry Nardin and David R. Mapel, eds., *Traditions of International Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.6. Cited in Renee Jeffery, 'Tradition as Invention: The "Traditions Tradition" and the History of Ideas in International Relations', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 34 (1) (2005), p. 61.

[113] Richard Ned Lebow. 'Identity and International Relations'. *International Relations* 22 (4) (2008), p. 473

this observation then, and by placing 'traditions' at the forefront of analysis, we are better able to make sense of the decisions and broader political outlook of American foreign policy behaviour.

Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, published in two volumes in 1835 and 1840, is considered a classic in this domain. Here, de Tocqueville emphasized the role of democracy, arguing famously that in 19th Century America all facets of society - religion, social justice, and economic opportunity - had steadily progressed, so that the culture of the community would now be structured by democracy, providing opportunity to all its citizens.[114] Another classic work in this field, Richard Hofstadter's, The *American Political Tradition: And the Men Who Made It,* argues that while American political culture has been fraught with debate and differences, the underlying logic that binds the American political establishment together, is the role of capitalism in American life.[115] For Hofstadter, no matter the differences between the political parties in America, they all afford primacy to, and share a belief in, the ideology and role of capitalism to direct and prescribe the character of the state and broader society. This common ideological position in American politics, according to Hofstadter, has formed a guiding principle in American political life, and is a tradition that emerged under the founding fathers. Louis Hartz's *The Liberal Tradition in America* and Seymour Martin Lipset's *American Exceptionalism* traversed similar ground to that of Hoftstadter.[116] These works have offered differing accounts of the role of traditions in American political culture. Whether it be Hartz's argument that the absence of a feudal system provided the requisite conditions for a liberal tradition to take root in the United States, or Lipset's related notion that the very nature of the American

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[114] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: G. Dearborn & Co. , 1838).

[115] Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (New York: Vintage Books, 1948).

[116] Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought since the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt-Brace, 1955); Seymour Martin Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: A Double Edged Sword* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996); McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*.

revolution constructed the United States as an exceptional polity and society, they demonstrate the power of foundational ideas upon the thinking of modern American political leaders.

These works however, while important, account for only two dominant traditions of American foreign policy – the Wilsonian and Hamiltonian in Mead's terms – and dismiss other important traditions. In other words, their analyses are limited to the most commonly understood American traditions: first, the growth and integration of America into the global economy; and, second, the primacy of liberal ideology in shaping both American domestic political culture and its foreign policy.

Walter Russell Mead and Walter McDougall, on the other hand, have sought to move beyond these commonly held binaries.[117] Rather than adopting the tendency to characterise American foreign policy through realist/idealist or internationalist/isolationist dichotomies, their work helps analysts understand America's foreign policy through recognition and appreciation of enduring traditions of American foreign policy behaviour. From this perspective, a progression of comprehensible narratives about U.S. behaviour at different points in time is revealed, whereby a more indicative account of America's engagement with the world is established.

For Mead in particular, the "engine" of long established traditions in American statecraft was born in response to a number of enduring elements: "an admiration for the founding principles" and "enlightened ideas of the Revolutionary era"; and "a sober recognition that under their guidance the American Republic has enjoyed a far happier political and material existence than any other commonwealth of comparable size in the history of the world".[118] Traversing similar ground, McDougall has argued

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[117] Walter Russel Mead, Special Providence; Walter McDougall

[118] Mead, *A Special Providence*, pp. 96-97.

that the now commonly accepted dichotomy of realism/idealism or internationalism/isolationism are incorrect due to the fact that "What is often seen as a Hegelian clash in the national discourse between theses and antitheses is actually a clash between competing syntheses of what American values and national interests require".[119] Similarly, Hans Morgenthau provided a nuanced critique of American foreign policy in the 1950s, when he stated that it was filled with "intoxication with moral abstractions' and an inherent belief in the 'antithesis of national interests and moral principles".[120]

Indeed, even before Mead and McDougall, other scholars had blended American values or principles and national interests to inform their thinking about America's "encounter with the world". The preeminent U.S. historian, Samuel Flagg Bemis, writing in the midst of the Cold War in 1962, discussed the critical place of values and principles in the constitution of U.S. foreign policy:

> Can the diplomatic history of the United States strengthen our judgement in facing the problems of today which include nothing less than the survival of our nation and the principles we have stood for in the world? Only if we relate our historical experience to the successive stages of world politics and power in which American diplomacy has operated for better or worse for nearly two centuries. And *only if we measure the history of American foreign policy in terms of fundamental purposes and values of our life as a nation* and our determination as a people to preserve them.[121]

While these historians point to the convergence of these values and interests, others have noted the apparent disregard for such aggregation. Norman Graebner, writing in the closing moments of the Cold War, stated that within the sphere of foreign policy

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[119] Walter A. McDougall, 'Back to Bedrock: The Eight Traditions of American Statecraft', *Foreign Affairs* 76 (2) (1997), p. 135.

[120] Hans Morgenthau, 'The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy: The National Interest vs. Moral Abstractions', *American Political Science Review* 44 (4) (1950), p. 833 and p. 853.

[121] Samuel Flagg Bemis, 'American Foreign Policy and the Blessings of Liberty', *The American Historical Review* 67 (2) (1962), p. 292. Emphasis added.

"traditions rest lightly on the American people" and that "even intellectual conservatives revealed little respect for the nation's past".[122] According to Graebner, the "only diplomatic tradition widely recognized is that of Woodrow Wilson" and that tradition "partook of the very exceptionalism that denied the need for examination of the past for guidance".[123] Both Graebner and Morgenthau's ambition then, was to illuminate the other core foreign policy traditions that had emerged under the Founding Fathers, but had nonetheless been forgotten since the close of World War II.[124] The Founders, Graebner argued, "adapted the established principles of modern diplomacy to the peculiar needs and advantages of the American republic".[125] In particular they "argued especially against the two fundamental tendencies toward overcommitment: partiality to other people's quarrels and the inclination to enter foreign crusades beyond the country's means or real intentions".[126] Ultimately in Graebner's estimation, the Founders understood that the "international system…responded to the interests of nations, not to generally accepted codes of international behaviour' and that the United States 'would serve human society by pursuing its real interests, nothing more".[127]

For both Graebner and Mogenthau, the Founder's foreign policy is best understood through the prism of political realism. For Mead, however, this is identified as a distinctly "American realism", rather than the "continental realism" that is commonly

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[122] Norman A. Graebner, "An American Tradition in Foreign Affairs", *Virginia Quarterly Review* 65 (4) (Fall 1989), p. 600.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Morgenthau, 'The Mainsprings of American Foreign Policy: The National Interest vs. Moral Abstractions', pp. 833-854.

[125] Graebner, 'An American Tradition', p. 618.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid., p. 618.

associated with what Mead (drawing on Alterman) has dubbed the "punditocracy".[128] This "American realism", in Mead's schema, is associated with the Hamiltonian tradition whose core interests in "freedom of the seas", economic "open doors", and an open international financial system were the direct products of the country's history as a "commercial republic".[129] In this respect, these 'traditionally' cognisant scholars (such as Mead, McDougall, Bemis, and Graebner) pinpoint the historical syntheses of American values/principles and national interests as the "secret" to American foreign policy success. For Mead:

> While each generation of Americans has struggled to define the national interest and the national values, and to relate the two concepts in an overall foreign policy strategy, they have done so within a certain broad consensus about the nature of those interests and values.[130]

Mead argued that American foreign policy since the founding of the Republic has been defined by the evolution of four contrasting yet complementary traditions of foreign policy: the Hamiltonian (promotion of an 'Open Door' world), Jeffersonian (maintenance of a democratic system), Jacksonian (populist values, military strength), and Wilsonian (moral principle). A fundamental distinction amongst the four traditions is between those that that seek to perfect and protect the virtues of the Republic (Jeffersonian and Jacksonian) and those that seek to remake the world in its image (Hamiltonian and Wilsonian). In Walter McDougall's memorable terms, this

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[128] Mead, *Special Providence*, p. 35.

[129] See Mead, *Special Providence*, pp. 102-107. See also the work of Joseph Fry, who details the rich regionalist underpinnings of a number of strands of thought in American foreign policy – including the central influence of the New England merchant class in forming what Mead defines as the Hamiltonian tradition. Joseph A. Fry, 'Place Matters: Domestic Regionalism and the Formation of American Foreign Policy', *Diplomatic History*, 36 (3) (2012), pp. 451-482.

[130] Walter Russell Mead, 'Lucid Stars: The American Foreign Policy Tradition', *World Policy Journal* 11 (4) (Winter, 1994/1995), p. 13.

concerns the historical debate as to whether the United States would be a 'promised land' or 'crusader state'.[131]

These four traditions, it is suggested, animate contrasting responses to alterations in the distribution of power. The different values, morals, and outlook that underpin each of these traditions provoke divergent strategies that cannot be accounted for by changes in the system structure alone. By invoking traditions as our independent explanatory variable, the United States strategic adjustment in the Middle East, particularly with respect to the dissimilar military postures across time, can be explained more fully without relying solely in systemic changes. In short, the assumption in this framework is that systemic factors, such as changes in the regional balance of power, are synthesised through particular American traditions to produce a distinct military response.

The Hamiltonian tradition of American foreign policy demonstrates similar aspirations to an offshore balancing strategy. The Hamiltonian tradition is premised on economic advancement, eschewing other interests such as the exportation of American values and morals abroad. American interests are advanced through economic integration, rather than the zero-sum game of geopolitics, including the designation of spheres of influence. Offshore balancing therefore, is an appropriate strategy to protect these Hamiltonian economic interests. For instance, and as John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt suggest, the forward deployment of American military forces has not "produced much in the way of economic benefits. Given its protected positon in the Western Hemisphere, the United States is free to trade and invest wherever profitable opportunities exist. Because all countries have a shared interest in such activity, Washington does not need to play the world policeman in order to remain economically engaged with others. In fact, the US economy would be

[131] McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State*.

in better shape today if the government were not spending so much money trying to run the world".[132]

The Jacksonian tradition of American foreign policy demonstrates similar aspirations to the selective engagement strategy. The Jacksonian tradition is defined by principles of populism, honour, courage, and most importantly, presidential strength. This presidential strength is demonstrated through a protection of the American "folk community" through a willingness to deploy American military superiority. This Jacksonian foreign policy is not driven by the moral incentives of the Wilsonian tradition, or the quest for an economic "open door" found in the Hamiltonian tradition. Instead, the Jacksonain prefers military force to be used sparingly, but is always lurking in the background to indicate American strength. Selective engagement is therefore an appropriate strategy to advance these concerns. Selective engagement is premised on a forward deployed military to deter and coerce belligerent states from threatening American interests. This strategy is understood as a "preventative, precautionary strategy". This deters adverse military actions and facilitates waging war if this occurs. Yet, this strategy also eschews foreign entanglement and does not conceptualise the military to be used toward the advancement of Wilsonian or Hamiltonian interests; rather, it is used to protect American honour and courage.

The Wilsonian tradition of American foreign policy demonstrates similar aspirations to a strategy of war. The Wilsonian tradition is defined by the advancement of American democracy, human rights, and morals. The defining feature of the Wilsonian understanding of the world is that "democracies make better and more reliable partners than monarchies and tyrannies". [133] The spread of these overtly

[132] John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, 'The Case for Offshore Balancing', *Foreign Affairs* (July/August, 2016). Accessed at https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-06-13/case-offshore-balancing

[133] Walter Russel Mead, *Special Providence*, p. 162.

American values, according to the Wilsonian tradition, requires American leadership. Of course, many have interpreted this leadership as being indicative of American imperialism. Tony Smith, for example, has suggested that the primacy placed upon the export of American values abroad leads inevitably to imperialist adventures.[134] A strategy of war is therefore an operate strategy to advance these Wilsonian interests. As John Mearsheimer has noted, war can be used to take control of an adversary government.[135] War is a tool of statecraft that can be used to replace threatening tyrannical states with a government that is receptive to American ideals.

The Jeffersonian tradition of American foreign policy demonstrates similar aspirations to a strategy of retrenchment. While the Hamiltonian and Wilsonian tradition are grounded in the exportation of American exceptionalism, be it either economic or democratic, the Jeffersonian tradition rests on the preservation, and realisation, of these qualities at home. The protection and perfection of the American Republic, therefore, is the central thrust of a Jeffersonian foreign policy. A strategy of retrenchment is the most appropriate to advance and protect these domestic democratic concerns. Retrenchment is best understood as a strategy designed to reduce America's global commitments through the decoupling of various global obligations, particularly military engagements. This includes the reduction of defence spending and a desire for allies to defend themselves from external aggression. Retrenchment, therefore, provides a strategy for the United States to pullback its global commitments and focus on preservation and advancement of American democratic principles at home.

In short, Mead's traditions provide a lens through which to reconsider strategic adjustment and balancing behaviour. That is, while strategic adjustment is regularly

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[134] Tony Smith, 'Wilsonianism after Iraq', in *The Crisis of American Foreign Policy: Wilsonianism in the Twenty-first Century*, ed. John Ikenberry, Thomas Knock, Anne-Mafrie Slaughter, and Tony Smith (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), pp. 53-89.

[135] John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 147-152.

traced to realist conceptions of balance of power, Mead's typologies open the space to consider strategic adjustment as a decision take in response to not only changes in the distribution of power, but also in accordance with a particular outlook, ideology and interest. Thus, this can be understood as a structural theory of strategy in the same way that many have deduced from Waltz a structural theory of foreign policy. The interchange between systemic change with that of distinct American perspectives, yield categories of military responses that cannot be explained without reference to a neoclassical realist appraisal. The remainder of the thesis will apply this framework to an investigation of United States stratehic adjustments in the Middle East, beginning with President Nixon's offshore balancing strategy in 1972.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to provide a conceptual basis for understanding United States grand strategy. It focused predominately on understanding America's grand strategy according to realist scholarship. Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* was discussed to understand how systemic factors push and pull states according to changes in the distribution of power. It ultimately found that major works that draw on Waltz's theory, such as Stephen Walt, Randall Schweller, and Jack Snyder, leave unspecified the specific "mode" of military force and lack operational clarity when understanding when states will balance, buckpass, bandwagon, or underbalance. The chapter concluded by offering a unit-level variable to explain these different military postures. Drawing on Walter Russell Mead's typologies, offshore balancing was placed within the Hamiltonian tradition of American statecraft, selective engagement was situated within the Jacksonian tradition of American statecraft, the strategy of primacy was placed within the Wilsonian tradition of American statecraft, and the strategy of retrenchment was established within the Jeffersonian tradition of American statecraft.

Chapter Two

American Realpolitik: Nixon, Hamilton, and Offshore Balancing

There is no need for the United States to exercise responsibilities for security that the British exercised in the Gulf in a different era……it is not our intention to undertake an operational military role in any state in the area.

Assistant Secretary of State, Joseph J. Sisco. August 8, 1972

Abstract: This chapter begins the exploration of United States strategy in the Middle East. It focuses specifically on President Nixon's strategy of offshore balancing, which looked to Iran and Saudi Arabia to protect American interests in the region. This 'Twin Pillars' strategy was designed to counter the Soviet Union's rising influence in the region and safe-guard the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf. The chapter argues that this strategy is compatible with the influence of the Hamiltonian tradition of United States foreign policy that is concerned, first and foremost, with the economic interests of the United States, rather than moralistic values associated with Wilsonian's.

Introduction

While the Middle East was a primary fighting ground throughout the two World Wars, it was not until the latter stages of the Cold War that it emerged as a primary region of importance for the United States.[1] Except for the maintenance of America's strategic air fields in Libya[2] and Eisenhower's short intervention into Lebanon,[3] the

[1] For a good discussion of America's interest in the Middle East through the Interwar years, see; Annie Tracy Samuel, 'The Open Door and U.S. Policy in Iraq between the World Wars', *Diplomatic History* 38 (5) (2014), pp. 926-952. For a good analysis of American interests in the region after the Truman administration see, Toru Onozawa, 'Formation of American Regional Policy for the Middle East, 1950-1952: The Middle East Command Concept and Its Legacy', *Diplomatic History*, 29 (1) (2005), pp. 117-148

[2] Gretchenn Heefner, 'A Slice of their Sovereignty: Negotiating the U.S. Empire of Bases, Wheelus Field, Libya, 1950-1954'. *Diplomatic History* 41 (1) (2017), pp. 50-77

British took primary responsibility for controlling western interests in the region.[4] Although the British government had encouraged the United States to play a more active role in the Middle East, particularly to assist in slowing the spread of pan-Arabism under Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser throughout the 1950s and 1960s, these efforts ultimately fell short. The Kennedy (1961-63) and Johnson (1963-1968) administrations were concerned first and foremost with the Vietnam War and were wary of the domestic risks that came with stretching the American military to other regions of the globe.[5] Yet, the 1970s witnessed a convergence of events in the Middle East that prompted a reassessment of the region's importance to the United States and a recalibration of the strategy to secure its interests.

This chapter is an attempt to chart the crucial years that ultimately led to America's elevated commitment and engagement in the Middle East. It points to the decisive episodes that drew America into the region and seeks to unravel the thinking and logic that led America to adopt the "twin pillars" strategy. It begins by charting the British withdrawal from the Middle East in the late 1960s and early 1970s prompted by the inability of the British to control the growing wave of pan-Arabism and Marxist insurgencies and increasing economic costs of maintaining forward military deployments in the region. Second, the chapter then identifies the systemic factors that led the United States to adopt the twin pillars strategy. It is particularly interested in the apparent continuity between the British strategy before their withdrawal east of the Suez and the balance of power approach that President Nixon ultimately pursued. The final section seeks to explain the domestic variables that influenced President Nixon's strategy. This anchors President Nixon's offshore balancing strategy to the

[3] Douglas Little, 'His Finest Hour? Eisenhower, Lebanon, and the 1958 Middle East Crisis', *Diplomatic History* 20 (10 (1996), pp. 27 – 54.

[4] The U.S. Navy maintained a small force with limited combat capacity in a British base in Bahrain.

[5] Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. viii – 292; see also Tore Tingvold Petersen, *The Decline of the Anglo-American Middle East 1961-1969: A willing Retreat* (Brighton, England: Sussex Academic Press, 2006), pp. x1 – 172.

Hamiltonian tradition of American foreign policy. In short, this chapter argues that President Nixon's twin pillars policy was an offshore balancing strategy framed by the Hamiltonian tradition's emphasis on advancing the economic interests of the United States.

The Structural Inputs

By the time President Kennedy came to office in 1961, the British controlled a sequence of protectorates and dependencies throughout the Middle East; from Aden to Kuwait, the Arabian Peninsula was largely under British administration. The British hegemony in the Gulf kept a level of order in the region and dissuaded other states from unsettling the status quo. Britain's acknowledgement of Kuwait's independence in 1961, which subsequently led to Iraq's intention to advance its own territorial claims over the small Gulf state, provided an opportunity for the British to demonstrate its military capabilities following the humiliation of the Suez crisis a decade earlier. Indeed, as Tore Petersen has argued, "following the Suez crisis, British intervention in Oman between 1957 and 1959, sending troops to Jordon in 1958 and Kuwait in 1961, and counter-attacking the Yemenis from the late 1950s, Britain had acquired substantial influence".[6]

Notwithstanding this series of military successes, the failed British, French, and Israeli takeover of the Suez Canal in 1956 signalled to many that British primacy in the Middle East was beginning to wane. In the years that followed this strategic miscalculation, a mix of Arab nationalism and radical Marxism simultaneously challenged British influence in the region. The British became embroiled in the Dhofar Rebellion, a bloody counterinsurgency operation in Oman, which was eventually quelled with the support of Iranian military forces.[7] But it was the Yemeni civil war,

[6] Tore Tingvold Petersen, 'Crossing the Rubicon? Britain's Withdrawal from the Middle East, 1964-1968: A Bibliographical Review', *The International History Review* 22 (2) (2000), p. 323.

[7] The British advised and trained the forces of the Sultanate of Oman to victory in their conflict against the Marxist insurgents of the People's Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG).

triggered by a coup attempt against Muhammad al-Badr that would shift the regional balance of power and ultimately end British resolve in the Middle East. Egyptian President Nasser sent 70,000 Egyptian troops in support of Colonel Abdullah Sallah and the revolutionary forces, and undertook a bombing campaign along the Yemen-Saudi border to warn the Saudi's their support of Muhammas al-Badr came with consequences.[8] Although there was little economic value in North Yemen, it did provide Nasser with the strategic advantage of edging closer to the British protectorates that were located further south of the peninsula, and provided another step towards Saudi Arabia's crucial oil fields. This campaign, which began in 1962 and proceeded in conjunction with the operation in Dhofar, resulted in the British loss and ultimate withdrawal in November 1967. The combination of challenging terrain and the sanctuary provided to insurgents by the Egyptian military presence in North Yemen was too much for the British to overcome.

Although the British covert support to the royalists went against the wishes of both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, who had previously encouraged support for Nasser in order to draw him away from his Soviet and anti-Israeli leanings, the result in Aden would, for the first time, align British and American strategy in the Middle East. President Johnson eventually recognised the fruitlessness of attempting to curry favour with President Nasser, both diplomatically and via a food aid program, announcing that:

> We gambled that a three-year food deal, personal correspondence, and a certain amount of human respect for Nasser might moderate his revolutionary policies. We probably went too far, too fast, but we have been frankly disappointed in results. He continued clandestine organisation against the more moderate, oil rich monarchies; he ventured into the Congo Rebellion; more recently, his army has become

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See, for instance, Walter C. Ladwig III, 'Supporting allies in counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 19 (1) (2008), pp. 62-88.

[8] For a good recent outline of this civil war, see, for instance, Asher Orkaby, 'The North Yemen Civil War and the Failure of the Federation of South Arabia', *Middle Eastern Studies* 53 (1) (2017), pp. 69-83.

> increasingly Draconian in the Yemen; Radio Cairo continued to agitate "nationalism"; (and) his policies often parallels Moscow's.[9]

Within two months of losing Aden, British Foreign Secretary, George Brown, told his counterpart in Washington, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, that the British were planning to withdraw from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) area duties by 1971.[10] The announcement was not entirely unexpected. Between 1965 and 1968, the British government had released a series of Defence Reviews that had begun laying the ground work for this withdrawal. In the first review, British Defence Secretary, Denis Healey, noted "there has been no real attempt to match political commitments to military resources, still less to relate the resources made available for defence to the economic circumstances to the nation".[11] Meanwhile, the 1968 Defence Review similarly stated that "it has been a fundamental principle of the current examination that reductions in capability, whether in terms of manpower and equipment, must be accompanied by reductions in the tasks imposed by the commitments that we require the Services to undertake. We have no intention of allowing a repetition of the situation which existed in 1964 when, because of a lack of balance between military tasks and resources, our forces were seriously overstretched".[12] Notwithstanding the British signals regarding their pending withdrawal, the United States was strategically unprepared for the British exit from the Middle East. With the United States embroiled in a bloody war in Vietnam, and

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[9] Cited from Douglas Little, 'Lyndon Johnson, the Arabs, and the 1967 Six-Day War', ed. Hal Brands, *The Foreign Policies of Lyndon Johnson: Beyond Vietnam* (Texas: A & M Texas University Press, 1999), p. 157.

[10] Simon Davis, 'Book Review. A Bloody Unpleasant Meeting: The United States and Britain's Retreat from East of Suez in the 1960s'. *Diplomatic History* 34 (1) (2010), p. 229.

[11] *Statement on the Defence Estimates*, 1965, Cmnd 2592, p. 5. Cited in Tore Petersen, 'Crossing the Rubicon', p. 332.

[12] *Statement on the Defence Estimates*, 1965, Cmnd 3540, p. 2. Cited in Tore Petersen, 'Crossing the Rubicon', p. 333.

President Nixon implementing his Guam Doctrine, a power vacuum emerged in the region that the United States proved reluctant to fill.

The Emergence of the United States' Twin Pillars Policy

When the British withdrew from the Middle East, President Nixon was now in the White House and President Anwar Sadat had replaced Nasser as President of Egypt. President Sadat undertook a program of "de-nasserization" that included distancing himself from socialist agendas, accepting American military hardware over that of the Soviet's, regaining territory lost to Israel, focusing on economic development, and developing a close relationship with the United States.[13] While pan-Arabism still fermented throughout the region, influenced by Israel's stunning victory in the 1967 Six-Day War, the main source of geopolitical instability from the American perspective was communist and Soviet influence in the region. When the British withdrew, President Nixon's Middle East policy was overshadowed by global strategic concerns, and the Middle East did not factor as a priority for the administration. The 1971 Defence Program and Budget Report to Congress, written by then United States Secretary of Defence, Malvin Laird, for example, failed to mention the words "Middle East"at all.[14] Similarly, in the 1974 annual report to Congress, written by Secretary of Defence, Elliott Richardson, the Middle East was mentioned only in passing, stipulating the need for others to resolve their own regional conflicts, and stressing the limited capability and capacity for America to stabilise the region:

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[13] John Hess, 'Sadat Criticizes Communism Again', *New York Times* August 8, 1971. Accessed at http://www.nytimes.com/1971/08/08/archives/sadat-criticizes-communism-again-says-egypt-needs-unity-not-class.html. See also, Selma Botman, *The Rise of Egyptian Communism, 1939-1970*. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1998); and Donald Busky, *Communism in History and Theory: Asia, Africa, and the Americas* (Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002).

[14] Melvin Laird, *Defence Program and Budget*, FY 1971 (February 20, 1970). Accessed at http://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/annual_reports/1971_DoD_AR.pdf?ver=2014-06-24-150603-950

> In the Middle East, as in other parts of the world where we have no formal treaty commitments, our basic security interests rest in the preservation of regional peace and stability. Consequently, a primary U.S. objective in the Middle East continues to be an end to the potentially explosive Arab-Israeli conflict. Our assistance programs and limited military presence in the region are intended to help produce stability and to encourage a climate in which tensions can be reduced. However, peace and stability will be possible only if all the parties involved develop a mutual interest in accommodation and restraint.[15]

Indeed, in many ways, America's ambivalence to the Middle East echoed the British Foreign Office's report in 1967, which was approved by the Cabinet's Defense and Overseas Policy Committee in 1968.[16] The document noted that Britain would "encourage an indigenous balance of power which does not require our military presence".[17] With specific reference to Iran and Saudi Arabia, the report goes on to state:

> They are also the two best placed to bring force to bear in the area, the Saudis by virtue of their commanding geographical position and the Iranians through their growing naval supremacy in the Gulf. If they were at loggerheads with each other, local stability would be unlikely to survive our departure. Conversely if they were to act in concert, or at least with mutual understanding, they could do much to ensure a peaceful transition to whatever system follows our withdrawal.[18]

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[15] Elliot Richardson, *Annual Defence Department Report*, FY 1974 (April 10, 1973), p. 25. Accessed at http://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/annual_reports/1974_DoD_AR.pdf?ver=2014-06-24-150640-357

[16] For a good discussion on the British withdrawal see; Jeffrey Pickering, 'Politics and 'Black Tuesday': Shifting Power in the Cabinet and the Decision to Withdraw from East of Suez, November 1967-January 1968', *Twentieth Century British History* 13 (2) (2002), 144-170; David M. Court, 'What was Britain's "East of Suez Role"? Reassessing the Withdrawal, 1964-1968', *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 20 (3) (2009), pp. 453-472.

[17] "Defense Expenditure Study No. 6: Long-Term Policy in the Persian Gulf. Report by the Defense Review Working Party," June 7, 1967, Records of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and predecessors (FCO) 49/10. Cited from Roham Alvandi, 'Nixon. Kissinger, and the Shah: The Origins of Iranian Primacy in the Persian Gulf'. *Diplomatic History*: 36(2) (2012), p, 339.

[18] Ibid.

By adopting a similar strategic outlook as the one prescribed by the British government at the time of their withdrawal, President Nixon confirmed America's shift to a reliance on "others" to defend their interests abroad. Bjorn Moller has noted, "[Nixon] envisaged a semi-hierarchical world [that was] an alternative to direct intervention, with the U.S.A relying on 'regional policeman' (or subordinate regional hegemons) whom it would entrust to uphold the "regional order" and assist and equip for the job".[19] Of course, prior to President Nixon entering the White House, President Johnson was dealing with the North Vietnamese Tet Offensive and had largely neglected the Middle East. Roham Alvandi has argued, "the Persian Gulf was rather low on Johnson's list of priorities in 1968….with the State Department deferring to the [U.K.] Foreign office to such an extent on Persian Gulf matters that America and British Gulf policy became virtually indistinguishable".[20] Indeed, this detached connection with the region has led some scholars to argue that had President Johnson been more actively engaged in the Middle East, rather than Vietnam, there might not have been a war between Israel and the Arab world in 1967.[21]

The British withdrawal in 1971 created a power vacuum that the Soviet Union immediately looked to fill.[22] The British withdrawal was perceived by the Soviet's as a prelude to American ambitions in the Middle East, fearing that "Washington would either seize control of Gulf oil or use the region to undermine Soviet security."[23] This

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[19] Bjorn Moller. 2001. "Regional Security: From Conflict Formation to Security Community," in *Oil and Water: Cooprative Security in the Persian Gulf*, ed. Bjorn Moller (London: I.B Tauris & Co Ltd), 9.

[20] Ibid, p343.

[21] Michael A. Palmer. *Guardian of the Gulf: A History of America's Expanding Role in the Persian Gulf, 1833-1992*. (New York: Macmillan, Inc, 1992). p, 85.

[22] William. Roger Louis. 2003. 'British Withdrawal from the Gulf, 1967-1971'. *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*. 31:1: 83-86; see also, Simon C. Smith, 'Power Transferred? Britain, the United States, and the Gulf, 1956-71', *Contemporary British History* 21 (1) (2007), pp. 1-23.

[23] Steve A. Yetiv. *The Absence of Grand Strategy: The United States in the Persian Gulf, 1972-2005*. Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 2008). p, 30.

anxiety ultimately inspired a new era in Soviet–Iraq relations when they signed the *Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation* in April 1972. This treaty granted the Soviet Union use of the Umm Qasr military base, provided access to ports in the south of Iraq, and initiated a framework for increased military cooperation.[24] More critically, the agreement also paved the way for the Soviet Union to become Iraq's top military supplier that ultimately provided the means and resources for Iraq to invade Iran in 1980, and Kuwait in 1990. (See Appendix one for the Soviet Union's weapon sales to Iraq between 1953 and 1993).

The Iraq-Soviet partnership ultimately encouraged President Nixon to develop a more coherent Middle East strategy that was broadly consistent with the Guam Doctrine that he had enunciated in November 1969. Central to the latter was Nixon's so-called "Vietnamization" strategy, whereby the US would seek to militarily extricate itself from Vietnam by drawing down its combat presence while simultaneously expanding its military aid to the South Vietnamese military. This constituted a significant shift away from the aggressive and forward leaning grand strategy that had driven much of the United States' Cold War military strategy until that point.[25] The revision of America's role in international politics was further enunciated in President Nixon's State of the Union Address on the 22 January 22, 1970:

> Neither the Defence nor the development of other nations can be exclusively or primarily an American undertaking. The nations of each part of the world should assume the primary responsibility for their own well-being; and they themselves should determine the terms of that

[24] Department of State, Preliminary Analysis of the Iraqi-USSR Treaty (April 13, 1972). Accessed at https://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1969-76ve04/pdf/d305.pdf

[25] For a good discussion on Nixon's Vietnam policy, see; Sandra Scanlon, 'The Conservative Lobby and Nixon's "Peace with Honor" in Vietnam', *Journal of American Studies* 43 (2) (2009), pp., 255-276; Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *The Great Silent Majority: Nixon's 1969 Speech on Vietnamization* (College Station: Texas A & M University press, 2014).

> well-being. We shall be faithful to our treaty commitments, but we shall reduce our involvement and our presence in other nations' affairs.[26]

Thus, and as Nixon stated at the time, only "in cases involving other types of aggression, we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty obligations. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the primary responsibility of providing the manpower of its defense".[27] These words fundamentally reshaped America's post-World War II foreign policy first implemented by President Truman in 1947 that had committed the United States to "support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures".[28] President Nixon and his National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, would ultimately redesign American grand strategy in response to what they perceived to be "two essential truths of US foreign policy" as they assumed office: (i) the relative weakening of US military and economic predominance; and (ii) strategic over-extension.[29] Nixon and Kissinger's remedy for these dilemmas were to militarily disengage from its role as the "night-watchman" and adopt a gentler perception of Communism as a "limited adversary" that allowed America to limit its global presence and usher in a new pluralist balance of power.[30]

President Nixon was explicit about his vision to move the world to a multipolar order in an interview with *Time Magazine* in 1972. He emphasised his desire to develop and implement a strategy that moved beyond the Cold War bi-polar world order, stating

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[26] Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1969-1976 Volume 1, *Foundations of Foreign Policy 1969-1972*. Accessed at https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v01/pg_92Public

[27] Ibid.

[28] Robert Litwak, *Détente and the Nixon Doctrine: American Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of Stability, 1969-1976 (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) p,11

[29] Hal Brand, *What is Grand Strategy? Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), p. 65.

[30] Litwak, Détente and the Nixon Doctrine, p. 11..

that "I think it will be a safer world and a better world if we have a strong, healthy United States, Europe, Soviet Union, China, Japan, each balancing the other, not playing one against the other, an even balance".[31] In practical terms, President Nixon sought to act on this conception through a two-pronged strategy that "opened up China" and embarked on a strategy of détente with the Soviet Union focused primarily on the conclusion of an "arms reduction program".[32] In the context of the Middle East, however, as Henry Kissinger has recently reflected "the real issue in 1972 was that the required balance within an area essential for the security [Middle East], and even the prosperity, for all the industrialised democracies appeared in grave danger."[33] The remedy to this situation was in effect an extension of the logic of Nixon's Guam Doctrine to the Middle East whereby Washington increasingly looked to others, specifically Iran and Saudi Arabia, to serve as bulwarks of regional order.

This turn to Iran diverged from President Johnson's earlier apprehensions of being "wary of the Shah's ambition for Iranian primacy in the Gulf."[34] President Johnson's attitude to the region was consistent with all previous United States administrations agnostic attitude towards the Shah which was based on concern about the potential negative effects of Iranian hegemonic ambitions in the Middle East. As Stephen McGlinchey notes , "From the Truman years, the prevailing wisdom had been to moderate the Shah's military ambitions, which were frequently perceived as ruinous to Iran's delicate economic and political stability. As a pro-American nation in a

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[31] Earl C. Ravenal. 1989. 'Large-Scale Foreign Policy Change: The Nixon Doctrine as History and Portent'. *Institute of International Studies*. (Berkley: University of California). p, 56.

[32] Robert S. Litwak. 1984. *Détente and the Nixon Doctrine: American Foreign Policy and the Pursuit of Stability, 1969-1976*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.) p, 2.

[33] For a good discussion on the domestic imperatives of Nixon's arms control ambition, see Steven Miller, 'Politics Over Promise: Domestic Impediments to Arms Control', *International Security* 8 (4) (1984), pp. 67-90.

[34] Roham Alvandi. 2012. 'Nixon. Kissinger, and the Shah: The Origins of Iranian Primacy in the Persian Gulf'. *Diplomatic History*: 36 (2), p, 338.

sensitive geopolitical region, the focus had consistently been on keeping Iran stable rather than strong".[35] Thus, when the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, met with President Nixon and Henry Kissinger, then national security advisor, in May 1972, the Iran-United States relationship was fundamentally transformed. From the United States perspective, Iran could fill the void left by the British, enabling President Nixon to develop a Middle East regional strategy that aligned with his global vision. Kissinger also noted the importance of achieving a stable balance of power in the Middle East not only for American strategic interests but also for its economic interests and that of its major allies:

> It was imperative for our interests and those of the Western world that the regional balance of power be maintained so that moderate forces would not be engulfed nor Europe's and Japan's (and as it later turned out, our) *economic lifeline* fall into hostile hands. We could either provide the balancing force ourselves or enable a regional power to do so. There was no possibility of assigning any American military forces to the Indian Ocean in the midst of the Vietnam war and its attendant trauma. Congress would have tolerated no such commitment. Fortunately, Iran was willing to play this role. The vacuum left by the British withdrawal, now menaced by Soviet intrusion and radical momentum, would be filled by a local power friendly to us.[36]

Of course, at its core, this strategy was driven by the crucial role that oil played in American and global economic development. In 1970, President Nixon himself stated bluntly that, "The Mideast is important. We all know that 80 percent of Europe's oil and 90 percent of Japan's oil comes from the Mideast".[37] The western world's

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[35] Stephen McGlinchey, 'Richard Nixon's Road to Tehran: The Making of the U.S.-Iran Arms Agreement of May 1972', *Diplomatic History* 37(4) (2013), p. 842

[36] Henry Kissenger, *The White House Years* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, 1979), p. 1264. Cited in Michael A. Palmer. 1992. *Guardian of the Gulf: A History of America's Expanding Role in the Persian Gulf, 1833-1992*. (New York: Macmillan, Inc., 1992). p, 88. Emphasis added.

[37] Public Papers of the Presidents of the United State, Richard Nixon, 1970 (Washington D.C: U.S Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 558. Cited in Emile A. Nakhleh. 1982. *The Persian Gulf and American Policy*. (New York: Praeger Publishers). p, 99.

dependence on oil to stimulate the international system's economic engine, unlocked the Persian Gulf as not simply another global marketplace to sell American goods, but also as a region central to the improvement and progress of western civilisation. Robert Pauly Junior noted that "The development and deepening of commercial relationships with actors such as the Persian Empire and Oman coincided with the progression of the American Industrial Revolution over the latter half of the twentieth century".[38] Because of the connection between petroleum and global economic growth, the Persian Gulf was recast as a region that required greater American oversight. Toby Craig Jones stated, "Shortly after World War II it became clear that oil was more than merely a coveted industrial commodity…… It also helped forge one of the twentieth century's most important strategic relationships, in which the Saudis would supply cheap oil to global markets in exchange for American protection. A bargain was made. And so too was a future tinderbox".[39] Indeed, the importance of oil in President Nixon's Middle East strategic thinking encouraged him to "secretly" develop a contingency plan with Iran to seize control of Saudi Arabia's oil reserves in the event of instability in the house of Saud that might include an invasion by an Arab state, such as Iraq. Kissinger told the Shah, "As you develop your contingency plans for Saudi Arabia it should be discussed with no one except [Richard] Helms," (the former CIA director whom Nixon had sent to Iran to serve as his ambassador).[40] Michael Palmer has argued that this secret planning was representative of America's hierarchical partnership with Iran and Saudi Arabia, where Iran was understood as

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[38] Robert J. Pauly Jr, *US Foreign Policy and the Persian Gulf: Safeguarding American Interests through Selective Multilateralism*. (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited), p. 3.

[39] Toby Craig Jones, 'America, Oil, and War in the Middle East', *Journal of American History* 99 (1) (2012), p. 208

[40] Memorandum for the President's File: From: Henry A. Kissinger, Subject: Meeting with His Imperial Majesty Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, July 24, 1973, 10:43 a.m. – 12:35 p.m. Nixon National Security Files, Mandatory Review release, November 2007, National Archives. http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB265/

holding greater strategic importance due to Saudi Arabia's smaller population, potential instability, and strategic leverage.[41]

The 1973 oil crisis validated concerns that oil could be used as a tool to coerce American foreing policy. Between October and December of that year, a small group of Arab states working under the auspices of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) (which was formed on 14 September 1960 by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela) blocked United States access to Middle East oil. The small petro-states banded together in a quasi-alliance with the objective of diminishing America's continued and unwavering support for Israel in the Yom Kippur War. At this time, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia had restored his relationship with Egypt, fractured under President Nasser, and had provided Egypt with millions of dollars' worth of military assets to attack Israel. This two-pronged strategy, it was hoped, would finally push America to withdraw its alliance with Israel and encourage America to recognise the rights of the Arab people.[42] The result, as Andrew Bacevich notes, was not only an oil shortage that "all but paralysed the U.S. economy" but also a perception that the weaponisation of oil by foreign powers constituted an existential threat to the United States.[43]

Although some commentators began urging the United States administration to respond militarily to these provocations, President Nixon ultimately stayed firm with his twin-pillars strategy.[44] Notwithstanding OPEC's acrinomy, the Iran-U.S.

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[41] Michael A. Palmer. *Guardian of the Gulf: A History of America's Expanding Role in the Persian Gulf, 1833-1992*. (New York: Macmillan, Inc., 1992), p, 88.

[42] For a good outline of the mechanics of OPEC in the oil crisis, see Charles Issawi, 'The 1973 Oil Crisis and After', *Journal of Post Keynesian Economics*, 1 (2) (Winter, 1978-1979), pp. 3-26

[43] Andrew Bacevich, *America's War for the Greater Middle East: A Military History* (New York: Random House, 2016), pp. 5-6.

[44] As Bacevich indicates, Edward Luttwak and Robert Tucker were the primary protagonists pushing for American military intervention in response to the oil embargo. See Robert Tucker, 'Oil: The Issue of American Intervention', *Commentary* (January 1975), pp. 21-31. Accessed at https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/oil-the-issue-of-american-intervention/ and Miles

relationship provided the necessary bulwark against Soviet interference in the production and transportation of oil, and importantly, also prevented Iran from turning their allegiance to the British or the French. A January 1973 Airgram written from the United States Embassy in Iran illustrates the United States anxiety that Iran might consider looking for other security partners. It states that it would be a "foolish" and "sterile" policy to pullback American policy with Iran, as the Shah has demonstrated his willingness to "seek substitutes" for America, "notably the British and French". The Department of State document goes on to state:

> We believe that we should seek affirmatively to increase the utility of our services to the Government of Iran (GOI) so as to maintain our influence over its policy. We should be prompt and positive in handling requests and provide the best quality advice available. It will also be necessary energetically to counsel the GOI to undertake the necessary measures to improve training, management skills and systems integration, if Iran's massive building program is to succeed. Failure could lead to GOI frustrations which could be attributed to the USG and possibly be seriously damaging for the US position in this country.[45]

The Shah was cognisant of the importance of oil in American strategic design, which enabled him to leverage his negotiating position to increase Iran's importance in U.S. regional strategy. The increased importance enabled him to more actively pursue his ambition to make Iran the leading regional power via acquisition of America's most advanced military hardware. This sentiment is reflected in the following memorandum that outlines Kissinger's thoughts following a meeting with the Shah:

> There were key areas, [the Shah] stressed, which could not be neglected — such as Europe and the Middle East. The Shah gave the figures on Europe's and Japan's dependence on oil from the Middle East. Libya's oil would go dry in another decade and a half, he said. The US would

Ignotus 'Seizing Arab Oil', *Harper's* (March 1975), pp. 45-62. Accessed at https://harpers.org/archive/1975/03/seizing-arab-oil/

[45] FRUS, 1969–1976, Volume XXVII, p11. Accessed at https://s3.amazonaws.com/static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1969-76v27/pdf/frus1969-76v27.pdf

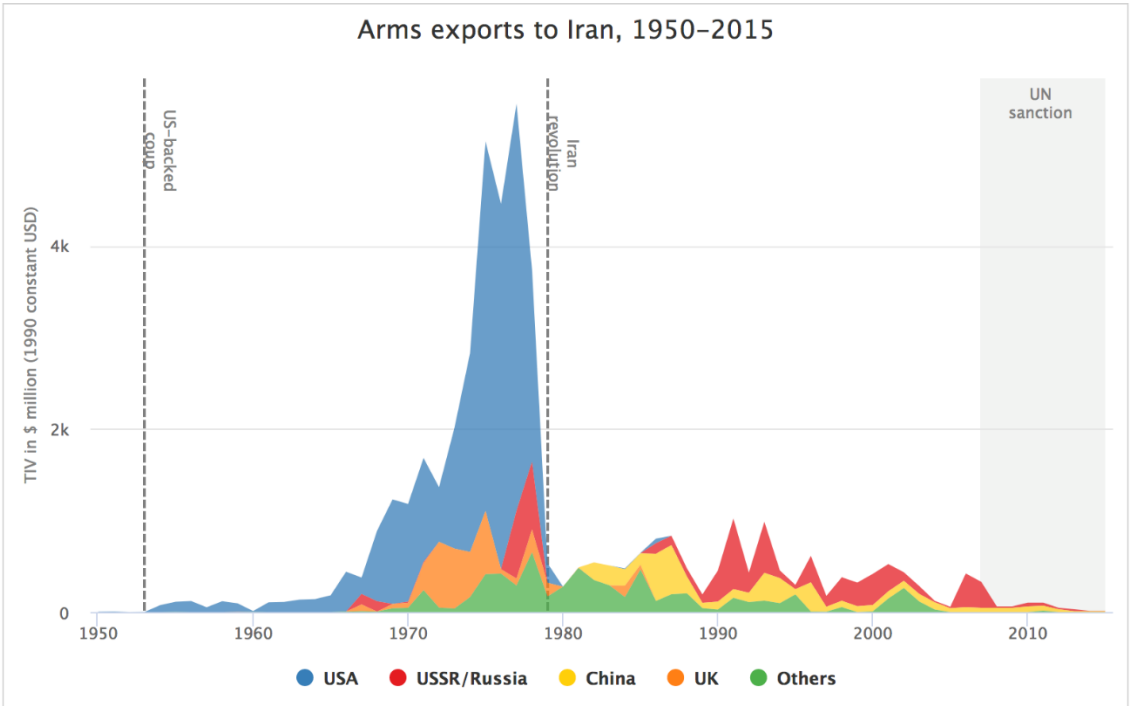
> have to get more and more of its oil from the Middle East. We could not allow ourselves to get in a position where we could be cut off.[46]

Thus, in return for Iran taking responsibility for American interests in the Middle East, President Nixon lifted the U.S. arms embargo on Iran and administered the transfer of decisive military assets that ultimately led to Iran becoming the Gulf's most dominant state.[47] As the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute graph below illustrates, at its peak in 1977, the United States provided Iran with approximately $4.5 billion dollars' worth of arms equipment.[48] This strategy was designed to provide Iran with enough hardware to block Soviet influence in a region to ensure the United States continued to enjoy access to the regions vast oil reserves. The military equipment included both offensive and defensive capability, including advanced aircraft, transport aircraft, anti-ship missiles, guided bombs, and air-to-surface missiles.

[46] FRUS, 1969–1976, VOLUME E-4, DOCUMENTS ON IRAN AND IRAQ, 1969–1972. 200. Memorandum of Conversation, Tehran, May 30, 1972, 5:35 to 6:35 p.m. https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve04/d200

[47] Roham Alvandi, 'Nixon. Kissinger, and the Shah: The Origins of Iranian Primacy in the Persian Gulf', *Diplomatic History* 36 (2) (2012), p, 338.

[48] SIPRI Arms Transfer Database, *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*. Accessed at https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers The graph was drawn from the following website https://www.pri.org/stories/2016-06-01/where-did-iran-get-its-military-arms-over-last-70-years



The State Department noted at the time that "Iran's chief strategic concern is Soviet military supply for the radical and hostile regime in Iraq which maintains irredentist claims against Iran's Arab-populated and oil-rich Khuzestan Province".[49] Such large scale military aid was envisaged as enabling Iran to combat the threat emanating from the Soviet-Iraq relationship. Therefore, the United States and Iran both achieved their strategic aims; the U.S. blocked Soviet influence in the region that guaranteed the free flow of oil to grow the global economy; while Iran received the necessary diplomatic and military means to become the regional hegemon and halt Iraq and the Soviet's bellicose behaviour. This policy fits neatly into a realist strategy of offshore balancing, which is where we will now turn.

A Strategy of Offshore Balancing

Until this point, the chapter has described how the United States took primary responsibility for the Middle East following the withdrawal of the British from the region. The chapter has focused on the similarities between the United States and British strategy, which looked to outsource responsibility to "other" key states in the

[49] FRUS, 1969–1976, Volume XXVII, p10. Accessed at https://s3.amazonaws.com/static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1969-76v27/pdf/frus1969-76v27.pdf

region. We have discussed President Nixon twin pillars strategy and how it was designed to align with his broader Guam Doctrine that sought to fundamentally rebalance the global order, including the "opening up" of China along with détente with the Soviet Union. This shift stipulated that the United States would "not undertake all the defense of the free nations in the world" and that American allies would now need to contribute more fully to their own security. At a regional level, in the Middle East, America's primary concern was its ability to access oil. Guaranteeing the free flow of oil was achieved through a strategy of arming Iran, and to a lesser extent Saudi Arabia, so that the Shah had the necessary capability to function as the regional hegemon, and importantly, would not require direct American military commitments in the region.

The next section contextualizes this twin pillar strategy as representation of an American "offshore balancing strategy". It begins by outlining the core principles of this balancing strategy. This sharpens our discussion on the role of local powers to safeguard American interests and separates it from other foreword deployed strategies that the United States might otherwise pursue. It then places this strategy within the defensive realist school of thought that ultimately seeks to maintain the status quo, rather than the accumulation of more power. Later in this chapter, I will argue that the United States offshore balancing strategy in the Middle East was distinct from those in Europe and Asia not only because of global Cold War considerations, such as reassurance to European partners and détente with the Soviet Union, but also because United States interests in the region were limited to economic considerations.

A prominent exposition of the strategy of offshore balancing is John Measrhsimer's *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics.* Mearsheimer draws on five case studies to argue that great powers seek to maximize their share of world power: Japan from the Meiji Restoration in 1868 until the country's defeat in World War II; Germany from Otto

von Bismarck in 1862 until Adolf Hitler's defeat in 1945; the Soviet Union from its beginnings in 1917 until its eventual collapse in 1991; Great Britain from 1792 until 1945; and the United States from 1800 to 1990. Importantly, however, Mearsheimer finds both the British and United States grand strategy contradicts his central thesis "because they might appear to provide the strongest evidence against my claim that great powers are dedicated to maximizing their share of world power".[50] Mearsheimer explains this paradox by providing examples of the United States and British rejecting expansionist strategies. For instance, the United States grand strategy in the mid-half of the 19th Century, where notwithstanding their economic capacity to do so, did not seek expansion until the Spanish-America war in 1898 when America gained control of Cuba, Guam, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico. Mearsheimer also points to America's reluctance in 1900 to seize territory in Europe or Northeast Asia. Despite the United States' rise as a regional hegemon in the western hemisphere, and its capacity to spread its control to other parts of the globe, the United States ultimately rejected expanding into these regions. And finally, Britain also discarded enlargement into the mainland of Europe between 1840-1860 despite controlling over three-quarters of European industrial capacity.

The reason that explains United States and British restraint, according to Mearsheimer, is that each adopted an offshore balancing strategy to "confront potential hegemons in Europe and Northeast Asia [as] they prefer[ed] to buck-pass to other great powers rather than directly confront the threat themselves".[51] The primary reason that a great power would maintain a military footprint in Europe, Asia, or the Middle East, as the United States did in Europe and Asia following World War II, is under the circumstance where no regional power is strong enough to maintain the

[50] John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 234.

[51] Ibid.,p. 266.

status quo and withstand pressure from revisionist states. According to Mearsheimer, offshore balancing is:

> Predicated on a belief that there are three regions of the world that are strategic important to the United States – Europe, North-east Asia and the Persian Gulf – it sees the United States' principle goal as making sure no country dominates any of these areas as it dominates the Western Hemisphere. This is to ensure that dangerous rivals in other regions are forced to concentrate their attention on great powers in their own backyards rather than be free to interfere in America's. The best way to achieve that end is to rely on local powers to counter aspiring regional hegemons and otherwise keep U.S. military forces over the horizon. But if that proves impossible, American troops come from offshore to help do the job, and then leave once the potential hegemon is checked.[52]

For some scholars, offshore balancing squares neatly with defensive realism and the balance of power logic.[53] From this perspective, offshore balancing is a cost effective strategy that is premised on alliance commitments and the "functioning equilibrium" between the great powers in Asia, Europe and the Middle East.[54] According to Christopher Layne, the advantage of this strategy is fourfold: (i) it insulates the U.S. from great power wars; (ii) avoids the United States from fighting wars on behalf of their allies, or wars of "credibility"; (iii) it reduces the risk of the U.S. homeland from being attacked by terrorism; and (iv) it maximises the U.S relative power position in the international system.[55] Scholars that have subscribed to offshore balancing include

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[52] John Mearsheimer, 2011, 'Imperial by Design', p, 18

[53] Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture, and Change in American Strategy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 114-147.

[54] Ibid., p. 118

[55] Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 160

preeminent realists such as John Mearsheimer,[56]Christopher Layne,[57]Stephen Walt,[58]Barry Posen,[59] and Christopher Preble.[60] Taken together, each endorse a less activist American grand strategy that align with defensive realist assumptions. Defensive realists argue that the international system does not reward states that seek expansionist strategies, but instead "the stronger states in the international system should pursue military, diplomatic, and foreign economic policies that communicate restraint".[61] Defensive realists argue that a less activist strategy is desirable because of the security dilemma under conditions of anarchy, whereby states misinterpret the intentions of others. [62]

Others, however, consider offshore balancing an isolationist strategy that corresponds with an American retreat from its global leadership position. Robert Lieber, for instance, has recently argued that in practice, offshore balancing "provides a rationale

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[56] John Mearsheimer, "Imperial by Design," *The National Interest* (January/February 2011), 16–34;

[57] Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: U.S. Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp.159–192; Christopher Layne, "From Preponderance to Offshore Balancing: the United States' Future Grand Strategy," *International Security* 22 (1) (Summer 1997), pp. 86–124; Christopher Layne, 'Offshore Balancing Revisited', *The Washington Quarterly* 25 (2) (Spring 2002), pp. 233–248; Benjamin Schwartz and Christopher Layne, 'A New Grand Strategy', *Atlantic Monthly*, (January 2002), pp. 36–42.

[58] Stephen Walt, 'The End of the U.S. Era,' *The National Interest* (November/December 2011), pp. 6–16; Stephen Walt, "In the National Interest: A New Grand Strategy for U.S. Foreign Policy," *Boston Review*, (February/March, 2005); Stephen Walt, *Taming U.S. Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (New York: Norton, 2006).

[59] Barry Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014); See also Barry Posen, 'Pull Back: The Case for a Less Activist Foreign Policy' *Foreign Affairs* (Jan/Feb, 2013).

[60] Christopher Preble, *The Power Problem: How American Military Dominance Makes Us Less Safe, Less Prosperous, and Less Free* (Ithaca: Cornwell University Press, 2009).

[61] Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, 'Security Seeking under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited', *International Security* 25 (3) (2000/01), pp. 128-161

[62] See, for instance, Robert Jervis, 'Cooperation under the Security Dilemma', *World Politics* 30 (2) (1978), pp. 167-214.

for inaction" that ultimately entails a "reductive" view of foreign policy.[63] Indeed, Christopher Layne, a self-professed offshore balancer, has pointed to the similarities with this isolationist strategy:

> First, neither offshore balancing nor isolationism holds that U.S interests require it to use military power to preserve economic or ideological openness in Eurasia. Second, both offshore balancing and isolationism posit that, most of the time, Eurasian great power wars can be contained, and confined, without involving the United States. Third, although offshore balancing concedes that a Eurasian hegemon might threaten the territorial security of the American homeland, there are circumstances when it might not. Finally, today, at least, there is no single rising hegemon in Eurasia that necessitates an ongoing U.S. military presence there, which means that for all practical purposes the current grand strategic prescriptions of offshore balancing and isolationism look very much alike.[64]

Of course, while offshore balancing commits America to withdraw from many international commitments, there remain vast differences with isolationism. The primary goal of offshore balancing is to prevent the emergence of a hostile hegemon in each of the three critical regions around the globe. This includes the provision of weapons, money, and international diplomacy, to local actors to relieve the United States from the responsibility of maintaining the status quo.[65] Critically, if regional actors are unable to maintain the regional balance of power, offshore balancing *does* commit United States military forces to intervene in order to rectify this imbalance.[66] Isolationism, on the other hand, does not consider regional balance of power an important consideration in American security, nor does it entertain notions of

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[63] Robert Lieber, *Retreat and Its Consequences: American Foreign Policy and the Problem of World Order* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 11

[64] Layne Reference!

[65] Hal Brands, 'Fools Rush Out? The Flawed Logic of Offshore Balancing', *The Washington Quarterly* 38 (2) (2015), pp. 7-28.

[66] For a good discussion on the time constraints associated with offshore balancing, see, for instance, James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, 'An Ocean Too Far: Offshore Balancing in the Indian Ocean', *Asian Security* 8 (1) (2012), pp. 1-26.

American intervention. Indeed, in a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt canvassed the success of offshore balancing in U.S. strategic history. For these scholars, offshore balancing has preserved American security and offered stabilisation through a "global balance of power". More importantly, and critical to our discussion here, they explicitly identify President Nixon's strategy in the Middle East in the early 1970s as constituting offshore balancing:

> In the Persian Gulf, however, the United States stayed offshore, letting the United Kingdom take the lead in preventing any state from dominating that oil-rich region. After the British announced their withdrawal from the Gulf in 1968, the United States turned to the shah of Iran and the Saudi monarchy to do the job.[67]

Yet, an understated aspect of the offshore balancing strategy is that its primary objective is the continued growth of the global economy. The strategy eschews other objectives, such as democracy promotion or human rights, with the regional balance of power important only with respect to serving America's economic interests. The offshore balancing strategy in the Persian Gulf was undergirded by a desire to keep the critical sea-lanes open to ensure the world economy functioned in a manner conducive to western economic interests. Iran and Saudi Arabia were critical with respect to creating a bulwark against Iraq and the Soviet Union, particularly because they had the willingness to interfere with the flow of Middle East oil.[68] Thus, Nixon and Kissinger were not subservient to liberal internationalist ideals such as the spread of democracy and human rights. Their strategy of offshore balancing abstained from humanitarian interventions and broader nation building programs. In this regard, offshore balancers heeded the advice of early 20th century realist, including Hans Morgenthau and Reinhold Niebuhr, who had warned of the consequences when a strategy pursued idealistic intentions.

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[67] John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, 'The Case for Offshore Balancing: A Superior U.S. Grand Strategy', *Foreign Affairs* 95 (4) (2016). P. 75.

[68] Layne, *The Peace of Illusions*, pp. 64-65.

One consequence of offshore balancing's down-playing of the liberal agenda is that it is regularly characterised as being sympathetic to European *realpolitik*. Indeed, Henry Kissinger, the architect of President Nixon's Middle East offshore balancing strategy, is commonly linked to a Bismarckian understanding of international politics.[69] However, this understanding of offshore balancing fails to recognise that it also has its roots in the Hamiltonian tradition of American statecraft, which is where we now turn.

The Unit-Level Variable: The Hamiltonian Tradition

To this point, the chapter has argued that President Nixon's twin pillars strategy is contextualised as a strategy of offshore balancing. This strategy diverged from previous United States administrations that were wary of the Shah's ambition for Iranian hegemony in the Gulf. We have discussed how offshore balancing has its intellectual origins with the "defensive realist" school of thought, which looks to balance regional powers against each other to detract attention away from the United States and ensure that a hostile state does not control regions of strategic importance. This offshore balancing strategy then, does not subscribe to liberal strategies for the promotion of democracy or human rights, but rather, affords primacy to geopolitical principles. The preference for power over idealism has led many to argue that President Nixon and Henry Kissinger subscribed to a world order that had its roots in European *realpolitik*, particularly that of Klemens von Metternich and Otto van Bismarck. These 19th Century statesman, of course, are the architects of the Concert of Europe, which saw Prussia, Russia, France, and the United Kingdom, balance against each other, bringing a dramatic close to the instability that had previously raged through Europe after the French Revolution.

The next section seeks to make a different argument. Rather than linking the twin pillars strategy to European *realpolitik*, it argues that offshore balancing demonstrates

[69] Thomas A. Schwartz, "Henry Kissinger: Realism, domestic politics, and the struggle against exceptionalism in American foreign policy." Diplomacy & Statecraft 22 (1) (2011), pp. 121-141.

an affinity with the Hamiltonian tradition of American statecraft, as conceived by Walter Russell Mead. The aim here is to move the analytical framework away from statesman such as Metternich and Bismarck, and edge it closer to Alexander Hamilton, the United States First Secretary of the Treasury. In doing so, it draws attention to the misrepresentation of both Nixon and Hamilton in modern scholarship that characterises each as proponents of European *realpolitik* and its "amoral" underpinnings. In short, the argument in this section is that both Nixon and Hamilton deployed a distinctly American realist foreign policy that afforded primacy to orthodox notions of balance of power, but with the critical caveat that both were advocates of an open economic trading order.[70]

Channelling a Hamiltonian Realpolitik

As we have discussed above, President Nixon is partially understood through his decision to reverse President Truman's Cold War containment strategy. By moving the structure of the international system from a bi-polar world order, between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, to a multipolar world order that sought to bring both the Soviet Union and China back into the international system (along with Japan and Europe), President Nixon is frequently conceived of as being sympathetic to strategic calculations rather than ideological conceptions of liberty and morality.[71] This perception of Nixon's antipathy to American principles of liberalism has often seen his presidency connected to European realpolitik, particularly with respect to the influence that European Statesman such as Prince Metternich and Otto von Bismarck

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[70] Colin Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press), p. 33

[71] See, for example, Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Doak Barnett, *China and the Major Powers in East Asia,* (Washington D.C: The Brookings Institute, 1977). Also, Andrew Nathan and Robert Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China's Search for Security*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Conpany, Inc, 1998). For a book that looks to constructivist understanding of the US-China rapprochement, see, Evelyn Goh, *Constructing the U.S. Rapprochement with China, 1961 – 1974* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

had upon the ethos of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.[72] Assessments of Kissenger's strategy have pointed to Prince Metternich's prudence in bringing peace through the Concert of Europe in the early 19th century - whereby Prussia, Russia, France and the United Kingdom each balanced against each other; which they believe to be axiomatic of Kissinger's conception of world order, most evident in his Doctoral thesis and later book *A World Restored*.[73] In this respect, President Nixon's global strategy of détente, along with his regional twin pillars strategy in the Middle East, have been viewed as an "aberration" in American grand strategy. This, they argue, reversed the "Manichaean struggle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness" that demanded the United States increase and advance their nuclear and conventional forces to contain Soviet and Chinese expansionist ambitions.[74]

According to these scholars, continental realism found its "zenith" in American foreign policy in the Nixon and Ford administrations, when "as national security advisor and secretary of state, Henry Kissinger placed American foreign policy on solidly Continental grounds".[75] For Walter Russell Mead, it was not only the systems and process of governance that Nixon and Kissinger promoted, where "congress was frozen out of foreign policy", but also that international politics for these statesman was made within a "moral-free zone".[76] Niall Ferguson has characterised the Nixon and Kissinger administration as constituting an "American Machiavellianism" due to episodes that include their strategy to end the Vietnam War through bombing Cambodia while secretly talking with Le Duc Tho.[77] Indeed, Henry Kissinger in his

[72] See, for example, Stephan A. Garrett, "Nixonian Foreign Policy: A New Balance of Power, or a Revived Concert", *Polity* 1976 8(3), p. 389-421.

[73] Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964).

[74] Phil Williams, "Détente and US Politics", *International Affairs* 1986 61 (3), p. 432.

[75] Mead, *Special Providence*, p. 72

[76] Ibid.

book *World Order* stated that President Nixon's time in the White House is best conceptualised through its balancing tendencies, which exploited the Soviet-China split, fundamentally dismantling the potential for these two communist states to join together, which added further weight to the proponents pointing to Kissinger's European tendencies.[78]

Alexander Hamilton, the first American Secretary of the Treasury, has also been characterised within a framework of *realpolitik*. This representation of Hamilton is important, because the connection between Kissinger and Hamilton is in fact closer than that of Kissinger and European statesmen, suggesting there is in fact an "American realpolitik". Yet, Alexander Hamilton, like Kissinger and Nixon, has been characterised as delivering an amoral American foreign policy with a similarity and connection to continental realism. John Harper, for instance, has drawn a parallel between Hamilton and Machiavelli with respect to "Hamilton and his followers [being] concerned with land power and the *European balance*; they believed in the inevitability of interstate conflict and the necessity of heroic leadership - the hallmarks of "continental realism".[79] Hamilton's upbringing in the West Indies, which witnessed a broken home and disease ridden family life, together with their "often identical conclusion about human nature and politics" that were developed from similar life experiences, led Harper to note that "Hamilton resembled not only Machiavelli himself, but the upstart figure who was the focus of the Florentine's famous study".[80] Harper states:

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[77] Niall Ferguson, *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (New York: Penguin Book, 2004), p. 100 & p. 118-119.

[78] Henry Kissinger, *World Order*, p. 304. See also, Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994).

[79]John Lamberton Harper, *American Machiavelli: Alexander Hamilton and the Origins of US Foreign Policy*. (Cambridge University Press, 2004)., p. 5 Emphasis added.

[80] Ibid, p. 15.

> Hamilton and Machiavelli, the father of continental realism, inhabited the same moral and intellectual world, one where emerging states had to adapt themselves to the law of the jungle and to look to successful models to survive. Hamilton's view of human nature, politics, and statecraft was strikingly similar to Machiavelli's, but the affinity runs deeper than ideas to the level of character.[81]

Hamilton's interpretation of American foreign policy was depicted in his famous *Pacificus-Helvidius Debates of 1793-1994* with James Madison.[82] While Hamilton and Madison debated the role of the executive and legislative branches in the conduct of American foreign policy, their essays nonetheless provide an insight into their respective views about the principles that should govern American foreign policy. For Madison, the indispensable support the French provided America throughout their successful revolution against the British, ultimately bound America to support the French in their latest war against the British. For Hamilton, however, these appeals for American support on the grounds of a shared history or ideology ultimately undermines America's national interest. Hamilton's policy of neutrality was followed by the *Jay Treaty in 1795* that agreed the terms of trade between Britain and the United States, further undercutting the willingness for American support in the French Revolution and subsequent war with Britain.[83] Of course, the underlying logic that drove Hamilton's strategy is perhaps best found in his 1787 *Federalist Paper Number 11* that urged that the fledgling United States avoid "entanglement in the politics and conflicts of Europe through a policy of strict neutrality".[84] This, of course, was echoed

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[81] John Lamberton Harper, American Machiavelli: Alexander Hamilton and the Origins of U.S. Foreign Policy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[82] Alexander Hamilton, Pacificus-Helvidius Debates of 1793-1994, ed. Morton Frisch (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2007). Accessed at http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/hamilton-the-pacificus-helvidius-debates-of-1793-1794

[83] See, for instance, Joseph Charles, 'The Jay Treaty: The Origins of the American Party System', *The William and Mary Quarterly* 12 (4) (1955), pp. 581-630.

[84] Alexander Hamilton, 'Federalist No. 11', in *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

in Washington's farewell address (that Hamilton wrote) in 1796 that stated, "It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliance with any portion of the foreign world".[85]

It is against this background that Hans Morgenthau also understood Hamilton's foreign policy in a "realist" fashion.[86] For Morgenthau, three types of American statesman have emerged throughout America's history:

> The realist, thinking in terms of power and represented by Alexander Hamilton; the ideological, acting in terms of power, thinking in terms of moral' principles, and represented by Thomas Jefferson and John Quincy Adams; the moralist, thinking and acting in terms of moral principles and represented by Woodrow Wilson.[87]

Hence, Hamilton's dismissal of the ideological and moral dimensions of American statecraft is the driving force behind this Continental categorisation. Hamilton's rejection of moral principles like "faithfulness to treaty obligations", "gratitude to a country that had lent its assistance to the colonies in their struggle for independence", and "the affinity of republican governments" that had ultimately divorced him from the "other" idealistic American statesman that had defended a French alliance. Morgenthau notes:

> Must a nation subordinate its security, its happiness, nay, its very existence to the respect for treaty obligations, to the sentiment of gratitude, to sympathy with a kindred political system? This was the question which Hamilton proposed to answer, and his answer was an un- equivocal "no." Hamilton unswervingly applied one standard to the issues raised by the opposition to Washington's proclamation of neutrality: the national interest of the United States.[88]

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[85] For a good discussion on the implications of this address for United States foreign policy, see, for instance, David Fromkin, 'Entangling Alliances', *Foreign Affairs* 48 (4) (1970), pp. 688-700.

[86] Hans Morgenthau, *In Defense of the National Interest* (New York, 1951).

[87] Ibid., p. 840

[88] Ibid., p. 844.

Yet, others have refuted such attempts to portray Hamilton within the narrow confines of realpolitik. According to Albert Bowman, it was in fact Jefferson who defined American national interest in these "amoral terms" terms, and that Morgenthau's portrayal of Hamilton provides a "gross misreading" of the American tradition. Bowman states that Hamilton conceived of the national interest "through a connection with England" while Jefferson was concerned first and foremost with the "balance of power in Europe". This division, Bowman argues, would ultimately have led Jefferson to undertake a war with Britain to preserve the balance of power, while Hamilton would have reneged on the neutrality policy if Britain requested him to do so. Taken together, Bowman suggests the argument that attempts to juxtapose "Jefferson moralism" with "Hamilton's national interest" provides a misrepresentation of American foreign policy traditions.[89] Others have been more explicit in their attacks against those that attempt to connect Hamilton's foreign policy with Continental realism. For these analysts, Hamilton's association with the apparent "pessimistic outlook of human nature", and "zero-sum" game associated with Continental Realists, was precisely what Hamilton was seeking to avoid.[90]

Walter Russell Mead argued that European statesman were concerned with "jealous" and "powerful rivals" that obliged them to consider their national interests in purely "military terms".[91] Hamilton, according to Mead, had a very different agenda. Hamilton's foreign policy was connected to his profound belief in America's economic interests, freedom of the seas, and the broader notion of the "Open Door". This economic rationale was developed through a rich appreciation of the British Empire and the successful manner through which they built a global trading system. Drew

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[89] Albert H. Bowman. 'Jefferson, Hamilton and American Foreign Policy', *Political Science Quarterly* 71(1) (March, 1956).

[90] Mead, *Special Providence*., p. 103.

[91] Mead, p. 101.

McCoy has similarly described the mercantile component of this strategy as Hamilton's "system in which fiscal policy and economic growth were intimately tied to the need for amicable Anglo-American commercial relations".[92] By drawing on the work of J.G.A. Pocock, McCoy draws our attention to Alexander Hamilton's "intellectual" connection with the political shift that had erupted in 18th Century Britain and the transition away from the agricultural economy toward the industrial revolution. Britain's success in building a series of seaports, trade routes, and trading partners, ultimately enabled the Empire to prosper and control the international trading system. For Hamilton then, this British model, understood through the expansion of financial and economic interests, was at the forefront of his strategic calculations, particularly in the domain of United States foreign policy. Walter Russell Mead states:

> Hamiltonian's British policy was more commercial and less militaristic than Continental policies; American policy could and would be more commercial still. Indeed, the importance of trade would determine the Hamiltonian definitions of U.S. security interests…...It was the interruption of trade, rather than the loss of territory to rivals, that would most worry American foreign policy intellectuals through the first 150 years of national independence.[93]

Indeed, the Hamiltonian tradition and associated notion for freedom of the seas and economic interests have been the deciding factor for American entry into some of its most catastrophic wars. For instance, Thomas Jefferson sent a naval force to fight the Barbary Pirates who were seizing American Ships off the coast of Algiers in 1801, and it was German submarine warfare that threatened a blockade on Allied forces that inspired America's entry into the War I. The Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbour in World War II and President Reagan sending American ships into the Persian Gulf

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[92] Drew R. McCoy, 'Republicanism and American Foreign Policy: James Madison and the Political Economy of Commercial Discrimination, 1789 to 1794', *The William and Mary Quarterly* 31(4) (1974, p. 633.

[93] Ibid., p. 102

throughout the Iran-Iraq War, along with President Clinton sending the Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Strait, were each concerned first and foremost with the continued ability for America to gain access to these critical sea lanes to spread their economic wings around the globe.

The important point here is that President Nixon's Middle East strategy aligned with Hamiltonian imperatives, and not with European realpolitik as many suggest. Nixon's strategy of offshore balancing, while immune to liberal ideas of human rights and democracy, was developed in accordance with the necessity to keep the Persian Gulf sea lanes open. President Nixon's desire to grow the global economy was the driving imperative of his twin pillars strategy. While it was divorced from moral values, it was nonetheless driven by a national interest understood in purely economic terms.

The Realist Response

Realist theory provides a cogent explanation of United States strategy in the Middle East between 1972-1979. President Nixon's strategy was designed to balance the Soviet Union and Iraq so neither could hold a predominate amount of power in the region. The Treaty of Friendship agreement between the Soviet Union and Iraq was in many respects the systemic factor that stimulated the United States to develop this balancing response. This strategy accords with structural realist theory. Waltz noted that a structural theory of international politics "leads us to expect states to behave in ways that result in balances forming".[94] The structure of the international system, he argued, encouraged interdependent behaviour to halt a single state from holding a preponderance of power. Thus, the United States and Iran, and the Soviet Union and Iraq each balanced against each other so that no single state could establish hegemony over the Middle East. This balancing strategy kept a check and balance over the region so that any regional hegemonic ambition was considered a fruitless and harming endeavour.

[94] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 125.

Yet, there are caveats to Waltz's prescription that are important to our discussion here. First, the connection between polarity and alliance formations. Waltz suggests the polarity of the international system influences the foreign policy action that a state will pursue, particularly with respect to whether a state will adopt an internal balancing or buck-passing strategy. Within a multipolar order, the uncertainty that surrounds the understanding of who threatens who, along with the difficulty in estimating the consequences of external actions, ultimately encourages states to buckpass rather than adopt and internal balancing strategy. Waltz notes that "in multipolar systems there are too many powers to permit any of them to draw clear and fixed lines between allies and adversaries and too few to keep the effects and defection low".[95] On the other hand, in a bipolar order the United States is more likely to undertake an internal balancing strategy because "allies add relatively little to the superpowers' capabilities, they concentrate their attention on their own disposition".[96] Hence, the structure (polarity) of the international system, according to Waltz, will determine whether a state will undertake a buckpassing strategy or a develop internal capabilities to balance a belligerent state. A bipolar structure incentivises a state to forego external balancing behaviour as "bipolar superpowers do not need to chain themselves to small, reckless allies, since the superpowers are not dependent on allies for their survival. Superpowers also do not pass the buck, since smaller allies cannot possibly confront the opposing superpower alone".[97] The underlying logic here, then, is that "interdependence tends to decrease as the number of great powers diminishes; and two is the lowest possible number".[98] Great powers have little concern for strategic considerations that occur on the periphery, diminishing the logic that

[95] Ibid, p. 168.

[96] Ibid, p. 171.

[97] Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, 'Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Mulitpolarity', *International Organization* 44 (2) (1990), p. 141.

[98] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 145.

motivates balancing, bandwagoning, or buck-passing behaviour; which are only viable in a multipolar order and devoid of purpose in a bipolar structure. Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder succinctly captured the essence of Waltz position noting,

> this structure compromises a constant element, anarchy, and a variable element, polarity. The fundamental, invariant structural feature, international anarchy generally selects and socialises states to form balancing alignments in order to survive in the face of threats from aggressive competitors. However, a variable structural feature, polarity, affects the efficiency of the balancing process.[99]

Yet, President Nixon adopted three strategies that contradict Waltz's theory. First, President Nixon did not embrace an internal balancing strategy as is expected within a bipolar system. President Nixon pursued a buckpassing strategy that looked to Iran and Saudi Arabia to balance the Middle East. Second, President Nixon attempted to shift the polarity of the international system from a bipolar to multipolar order. While Kissinger acknowledged that the United States preference for a multipolar order was made in part to the ongoing structural pressures, his administration nonetheless believed that this pluralist order would be beneficial to American national interests.[100] The problem here of course, is that Waltz considers a multipolar order more dangerous because "dangers are diffused, responsibilities unclear, and definition of vital interests easily obscured".[101] Third, structural realism is ambiguous about the expected balancing behavior of a state that is operating in a multipolar order (which Nixon ultimately attempted to construct). The opaque nature of the multipolar system ultimately rendered Waltz unable to explain whether a state will adopt an internal balancing or buckpass strategy.[102]

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[99] Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, 'Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Mulitpolarity', *International Organization* 44 (2) (1990), p. 140.

[100] Hal Brands, *What Good is Grand Strategy?: Power and Purpose in American Statecraft From Harry S. Truman o George W. Bush* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014). p. 65.

[101] Kenneth Waltz, 'The Stability of a Bipolar World', *Daedalus* 93 (3) (1964), p. 884.

Of course, scholars have attempted to understand the strategies states' adopt when operating in multipolar orders. Christensen and Snyder, for instance, argued that the perceptions of the security dilemma – the efficacy of defensive doctrines – impacts how states decide what strategy to pursue. A state will form a strong alliance with other states when they perceive the threatening state holds an offensive military advantage, while they will adopt a buck-passing strategy when they perceive a defensive advantage.[103] Christensen later extended this argument to include perceptions of the balance of power to influence either an internal balancing or buckpassing strategy.[104] These arguments therefore suggest the United States adopted a buckpassing strategy as a consequence of their perceiving that Iran and Saudi Arabia held the defensive advantage against Iraq. In this respect, the perception of a defensive advantage would turn a future war between Iraq/Soviet Union and Iran/Saudi Arabia into a battle of attrition, deterring either state from launching a war, and if war were to occur, the United States was able to enter at a later stage without the risk of Iran and Saudi Arabia having lost the war.

This chapter has not looked to perceptions of the balance of power or the security dilemma to understand the United States decision to buckpass, but has instead considered the Hamiltonian tradition as a variable influencing how military force was used to balance the Middle East.[105] By placing the economic drivers of President Nixon's strategy as the intervening variable, we can more fully explain the decision to shift the distribution of power from a bipolar to multipolar order and tjudegment for

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[102] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 165-169.

[103] Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, 'Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity', *International Organization* 44 (2) (1990), pp. 137-168.

[104] Thomas Christensen, 'Perceptions and Alliances in Europe, 1865-1940', *International Organization* 51 (1) (1997), pp. 65-97. See also Barry Posen, *Sources of Military Doctrine*, pp. 232-233.

[105] It is also worth noting that structural realism is unable to explain the British decision to retreat from the Middle East, shifting the balance of power in favour of Iraq and the Soviet Union.

the United States to remain offshore, rather than forward deployed in the region. In this sense, understanding the interaction between the economic drivers of the Hamiltonian tradition with the strategy of offshore balancing provides an appreciation for the domestic dimensions of United States foreign policy. A crucial aspect of the decision to outsource responsibility to Iran and Saudi Arabia was the Nixon administration's conception of the United States role in the world. That is, it provides insight not only with respect to the crucial drivers of foreing policy, but also, what was disregarded as a secondary concern in their foreign policy design. The external behaviour of the United States eschewed democracy promotion, human rights, or the export of American morals, but was concerned instead with maintaining a stable balance of power to ensure the flow of oil from the region.

Conclusion

The Nixon years was a period of profound change in American statecraft. This included a detente with the Soviet Union and the opening of China that ultimately reversed America's previous Cold War strategy of containment. President Nixon pursued a strategy that was aimed at reconfiguring the distribution of power so that multipolarity would allow a balancing formation to occur. In doing so, President Nixon pulled back America's forward leaning posture and outsourced regional security to other trusted states. This strategy was particularly pronounced in the Middle East. The British withdrawal east of the Suez pressured Nixon to develop a strategy in accordance with his global vision enunciated in his infamous Guam Doctrine. Accordingly, President Nixon devised a strategy of offshore balancing that looked to Iran and Saudi Arabia to safeguard American interests in the region.

Nixon's strategy has been characterised by many as advancing elements of realpolitik. The practical nature of Nixon foreign policy, which was devoid of moral and ideological principles, are held up as evidence for this classification. Nixon's desire to create a Metternichian system through Bismackian realpolitik, they argue, was axiomatic of his willingness to create relationships with America's communist

enemies. In this respect then, offshore balancing also squares neatly with this label. Offshore balancing limits America's national interest to the security of the homeland, and looks to balance the international order through a semi-hierarchical world order that is reliant on all powers to uphold international stability. Yet, this chapter has attempted to demonstrate that Nixon and Kissinger's recalibration of American Cold War foreign policy followed the well-trodden Hamiltonian tradition of American statecraft. Hamiltonian strategy is pragmatic in its approach and not held hostage to the duty of moral and ideological mandates. While Hamilton himself has been characterised within the European school, due to his policy of neutrality in the late 18th Century Franco-British Wars, this misreads the economic forces driving his agenda. Alexander Hamilton was concerned first and foremost with aligning his strategy with the national interest of America, and not by previous treaties or ideological principles that many of his colleagues were beholden to. While geopolitics plays a crucial role in the development of this strategy, it is nonetheless guided by the economic interests of the United States and not by the military and zero sum calculations that drove Continental realism. In this context, this chapter has argued that president Nixon's twin pillars strategy demonstrates an affinity with the Hamiltonian tradition of American statecraft.

Chapter Three:

American Coercive Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1979-2001: Andrew Jackson and Selective Engagement

Peace, above all things, is to be desired, but blood must sometimes be spilled to obtain it on equable and lasting terms.[1]

Abstract: This chapter explores the first strategic adjustment in American grand strategy in the Middle East. The offshore balancing strategy deployed by the Nixon administration was replaced with a strategy of selective engagement that consists of a forward deployed military to deter and coerce belligerent states to accord with American interests. It analyses three military episodes to illustrate the American military was used uphold the regional status quo rather than alter the regional balance of power: Lebanon, Libya, and Kuwait. It argues that the alteration in balancing behavior is explained in accordance with the Jacksonian tradition that deploys military force to demonstrate American resolve and to pursue retribution against those that impinged upon their honour.

Introduction

The 1980s was a critical decade in America's engagement with the Middle East. It was a period in which the United States under the Carter Doctrine, for the first time, assumed primary responsibility for Middle East security and successive deployments of military force were used toward that end. The Reagan administration used American military muscle in Lebanon, Libya, and the Iran-Iraq War, and President George H. W. Bush also demonstrated American military prowess in the First Gulf War. In each of these examples, military force emerged as the primary instrument of American statecraft that was used to deter and/or compel belligerents to act in accordance with American interests. The pursuit of this overtly militaristic strategy effectively closed the door on the previous United States strategy of offshore balancing

[1] President Andrew Jackson

that had relied on other powers to assume responsibility for balancing belligerent states.

This chapter focuses on America's engagement in the Middle East from 1979 – 2001. It attempts to conceptualise this as a distinct period in America's engagement with the region where a fundamental shift in United States balancing strategy took place. It does so by exploring the "limited objectives" of America's military engagement, whereby it did not attempt to explicitly alter the regional balance of power, nor did it attempt to export utopian ideas of liberty, human rights, and democracy, but rather deployed military force to demonstrate resolve and to pursue retribution against those that impinged upon American honour. In this context, this chapter focuses particularly upon the role that "coercive diplomacy" had in driving American statecraft across multiple United States administrations. Following the perceived failure of President Carter's foreign policy, the Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations used the military to dissuade others from threatening American interests and to maintain the regional balance of power.

The argument in this chapter is two-fold. First, United States engagement in the Middle East between 1979–2001 is conceptualised as a strategy of selective engagement. Selective engagement affords primacy to the role of military force to uphold the regional status quo, but stops short of pursuing wider ambitions that fundamentally alter the regional balance of power. In this regard, selective engagement uses the military toward compellence, deterrence, and coercion, rather than for more ambitious pursuits that attempt to alter regional dynamics. The second argument in this chapter is that the Reagan and Bush administrations deployed military force in accordance with the Jacksonian tradition of American statecraft. The Jacksonian tradition uses American military muscle to preserve and safeguard American "reputation" and "honour". There is, however, an important caveat to this argument. Implicit in the Jacksonian tradition is an appreciation for total war and the willingness to pursue the "unconditional surrender" of the enemy. This is perhaps

best understood through American involvement in World War I and World War II, where in both instances America pursued the complete surrender of the German and Japanese belligerents. Of course, American military involvement in the Middle East throughout the 1980s falls short of such standards, particularly with respect to a preference to "strike and retreat", with minimal modification or weakening of the threat. Notwithstanding this admonition, the Jacksonian tradition is a salient lens through which to analyse this period of American military involvement in the Middle East. The American military was used to coerce the belligerents to respect American authority and to demonstrate American resolve against antagonistic behaviour, particularly where American lives were threatened.

The argument will proceed in five parts. First, the structural inputs will be introduced. This includes the Iranian Revolution and Afghanistan War as precursors to the development of the Carter Doctrine and the subsequent development of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF). Second, the three case studies will be discussed. This includes President Reagan's military intervention in Lebanon and Libya, and President Bush's intervention in Kuwait. These will be used to illustrate that America's military was a display of coervice and compellent power to serve a conception of regional stability. Here, Bush's use of force will be conceptualised as more forceful than Reagan's due to structural considerations – the Cold War thaw and dissolution of Soviet Union – which made concerns about order more pressing. Third, the strategy of selective engagement will be analysed. Drawing on the work of Robert Art, selective engagement will be shown to straddle the middle ground between pre-emption and retreat. This will characterise selective engagement as a strategy that not only compels and deters opponents from undertaking a course action, but also integrates the use of brute force to persuade the opponent to desist from their destabilising activities. Fourth, selective engagement will be connected to the Jacksonian tradition of American statecraft that understands military force as a

demonstration of resolve to protect the American people. The chapter will conclude with the realist inability to adequately explain this period of strategic adjustment.

The Structural Inputs: The Iranian Revolution and the Afghanistan War

President Jimmy Carter entered the White House upon a platform of change. The nullifying political episodes that included the Vietnam War, Watergate, and the Church Committee, which had revealed the Central Intelligence Agency covert operations against foreign governments, brought President Carter to power promising a foreign policy that was driven by human rights, rather than intervention.[2] No longer would America view the world through a Cold War lens of geopolitics (or *realpolitik* as defined in the previous chapter), but instead notions of human rights and dignity would become defining principles for America's engagement with the world. In President Carter's inaugural address he stated:

> I would hope that the nations of the world might say that we had built a lasting peace, based not on weapons of war but on international policies which reflect our own most precious values. These are not just my own goals, and they will not be my accomplishments, but the affirmation of our nation's continuing moral strength and our belief in an undiminished, ever-expanding American dream.[3]

President Carter stated that American foreign policy should be "based on an historical vision of America's role. Our policy is derived from a larger view of global change. Our policy is rooted in our moral values, which never change. Our policy is reinforced by our material wealth and by our military power. Our policy is designed to serve

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[2] David F. Schmitz and Vanessa Walker, 'Jimmy Carter and the Foreign Policy of Human Rights: The Development of a Post-Cold War Foreign Policy', *Diplomatic History*, 28 (10) (2004), pp. 113-143. This provides a thorough outline of President Carter's human rights ambition and a generally positive appraisal of his presidency. See also, Jeral Rosati, 'Jimmy Carter, A Man Before his Time: The Emergence and Collapse of the First Cold War Presidency', *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 23 (3) (1993), pp. 459-476; Michael Krukones, 'The Campaign Promises of Jimmy Carter: Accomplishments and Failures', *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 15 (1) (1985), pp. 136-144.

[3] Jimmy Carter,' Inaugural address', 20 January 1977, *Public Papers of the Presidents: Carter*, 1977, 1-4. Accessed at http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=6575

mankind."[4] The importance of human rights to President Carter's foreign policy was evident across multiple continents and geopolitical flashpoints. For instance, President Carter's moral agenda included a desire to withdraw military support to key allies, such as South Korea, if they did not improve constitutional freedoms.[5] South Korea was a long-standing ally of the United States that had committed substantial military support to the United States war effort in Vietnam, but had since the early 1960's, under President Park Chung-hee, limited the political freedoms of its citizens and shifted the South Korean regime to a largely authoritarian state.[6] Although Congress had previously voiced its concern over South Korean human rights record, President Carter's 1976 campaign pledge to withdraw United States military forces if the regime did not address human rights violations was the first credible threat issued to the South Korean regime.[7] President Carter similarly threatened the Argentinian military junta that were also engaged in serious human rights offences.[8] The United States had previously supported the Argentine military in its overthrow of both President Arturo Frondizi and Isabel Peron in 1962 and 1976 respectively. The military junta had provided the United States with support in its fight against communist forces, which had become increasingly more difficult in Latin

[4] Office of the Historian, Department of State, United States of America. https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/short-history/carter

[5] See, for instance, Lyong Choi, 'Human Rights, Popular Protest, and Jimmy Carter's Plan to Withdraw U.S. Troops from South Korea', *Diplomatic History* 41 (5) (2017), pp. 933-958; Donald Zagoria, 'Why we Can't Leave Korea', *New York Times* 2 October 1977. Accessed at http://www.nytimes.com/1977/10/02/archives/why-we-cant-leave-korea-south-korea-is-not-south-vietnam-and.html

[6] See, for instance, Chong –Sik Lee, 'South Korea in 1980: The Emergence of a New Authoritarian Order', *Asian Survey* 21 (1) (1981), pp. 125 -143.

[7] Franz –Stefan Gady, 'How the Deep State Stopped a US President from Withdrawing US Troops from Korea', The Diplomat (June 15, 2018). Accessed at https://thediplomat.com/2018/06/how-the-deep-state-stopped-a-us-president-from-withdrawing-us-troops-from-korea/

[8] See, for instance, William Schmidli, 'Institutionalizing Human Rights in U.S. Foreign Policy: U.S.-Argentine Relations, 1976-1980', *Diplomatic History* 35 (2) (2011), pp. 351-377.

America following the Cuban Revolution in 1959. The election of President Carter reversed this strategic calculation. Within one month of coming to office, President Carter slashed military aid to Argentina by two-thirds and implemented the Humphrey-Kennedy Amendment of 1976 to the Foreign Assistance Act that prohibited all foreign military assistance and sales to Argentina. President Carter adopted a similar outlook in his Cold War relations with the Soviet Union, developing a strategy of "reciprocal détente" that premised future U.S-Soviet relations on a platform of human rights.[9] Ultimately, President Carter, along with his National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brezinski, believed that linking human rights to their ongoing relationship with the Soviet Union would provide a platform to achieve global stability.[10]

Yet two events triggered a recalibration of President Carter's priorities. The Iranian Revolution and the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan ultimately forced President Carter to discard his human rights emphasis and replace it instead with the stark realities of Cold War geopolitics. These events, which came just two years after taking office, contributed to President Carter's State of The Union address that recast the Middle East as a primary region of concern for United States strategic policy and emphasised the role of the United States military in stabilising the region. President Carter noted that, "an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States to be repelled by *any means necessary*".[11] This speech not only brought a dramatic close to President Nixon's détente and twin pillars strategy, but also rolled back the human

[9] See, for instance, Christian Philip Peterson, 'The Carter Administration and the Promotion of Human Rights in the Soviet Union, 1977-1981', *Diplomatic History* 38 (3) (2014), pp. 628-656.

[10] For a critique of President Carter's human rights agenda, see Jeane Kirkpatrick, 'Dictatorship and Double Standards', *Commentary* 68 (5) (1979), pp. 34-45.

[11] Jimmy Carter, *State of the Union Address,* 1980. The Jimmy Carter presidential Library and Museum. Accessed at https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/assets/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml

rights agenda that had until that point been a defining element of the Carter administration's foreign policy.[12]

The Iranian Revolution and the accession of Ayatollah Khomeini as the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran threatened to alter the balance of power in the Middle East. The cleric's willingness to export his revolution through the region unsettled the Sunni-led Gulf States and hardened the distrust between the two religious sects. The Shia community had been fundamentally disenfranchised in the region, epitomised through Saddam Hussain's execution of Iraq's Shia spiritual leader, Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammed bin Baqir al-Sadr.[13] The persecution provided Iran with leverage to harness and ferment Shia aspirations throughout the Arab world.[14] Iran originally focused on Bahrain, where two distinguished Iranian Shia ayatollahs rallied the Bahrain Shia population to support an Iranian bid to reclaim Bahrain, which they had only rescinded a claim to in 1971.[15] Saudi Arabia was similarly concerned that the 250,000 strong Shia community that were residing in the Qatif region of the Eastern Provinces, close to the critical oil fields that drove the Saudi and international economy, would also be receptive to the Iranian call for a Shia uprising. Indeed, Iran inspired the Shia community to revolt in order to celebrate the return of Ayatollah Khomeini as the Supreme Leader of Iran. Although this event was localised, the Saudi National Guard was nonetheless required to quell Shia passions

[12] Andrew J. Bacevich, *America's War for the Greater Middle East: A Military History*. (New York: Random House, 2016), p. 29.

[13] See, for instance, T.M. Aziz, 'The Role of Muhammad Baqir Al-Sadr in Shia Political Activism in Iraq from 1958to 1980', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25 (2) (1993), pp. 207-222.

[14] Central Intelligence Agency. National Foreign Assessment Center, 'Iran: Exporting a Revolution' (March, 1980). Accessed at https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP81B00401R000500100001-8.pdf

[15] Central Intelligence Agency. National Foreign Assessment Center, 'Iran: The Shia Revolution and Iran's Neighbours' (Octoner, 1979). Accessed at https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0001255340.pdf

that were hardened by Radio Tehran's Arabic language service broadcasting inflammatory remarks to ignite anti-Sunni/government messaging.

Taken together, there was a genuine fear that Iran had the capacity to ignite a Shia uprising that could challenge the control of the Sunni monarchs and further reshape the regional balance of power. These events were perceived by American officials as having the potential to further undermine American influence in the region. On November 4, 1979, American fears were confirmed. Two weeks after the Shah was admitted to the United States for medical treatment, several hundred Iranian militants stormed the American Embassy in Tehran taking fifty-two American diplomats and staff hostage for 444 days, concluding on January 20, 1981.[16] The diplomatic standoff that ensued through this period, which was hardened by Khomenei's rhetorical support for the militants, ultimately ruptured United States-Iran relations.

The next month following the hostage crisis, Soviet forces entered Afghanistan.[17] President Carter stated in an address to the American people that "Soviet occupied Afghanistan threatens both Iran and Pakistan and is a stepping stone to possible control over much of the world's oil supplies".[18] In his State of the Union address in January 1980, Carter went further noting the Soviet invasion was "the most serious threat to peace since the Second World War".[19] These events provided challenges for

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[16] For a good outline of the U.S. decision making throughout this hostage crisis, see, for instance, Betty Glad, 'Personality, Political and Group Process Variables in Foreign Policy Decision-Making: Jimmy Carter's Handling of the Iranian Hostage', *International Political Science Review*, 10 (1) (1989), pp. 35-61.

[17] For good outlines of Soviet strategy in Afghanistan, see, for instance, Lester W. Grau and Michael A. Gress, *The Soviet-Afghanistan War: How a Superpower Fought and Lost* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002); Roger R. Reese, *The Soviet Military Experience: A History of the Soviet Army, 1917-1991* (London: Routledge, 2000); Sir Rodric Braithwaite, 'The Russians in Afghanistan', *Asian Affairs* 42 (2) (2011), pp. 213-229; Artemy Kalinovsky, 'Decision-Making and the Soviet War in Afghanistan: From Intervention to Withdrawal', *Journal of Cold War* Studies 11 (4) (2009), pp. 46-73.

[18] Jimmy Carter, Address to the Nation, January 4, 1980, Public *Papers of the Presidents*, 1980-1981. Accessed at http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=32911

[19] Jimmy Carter, *State of the Union Address*, 1980. The Jimmy Carter presidential Library and Museum. Accessed at https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/assets/documents/speeches/su80jec.phtml

the Carter administration. The Iranian Revolution and subsequent hostage crisis, along with the Afghanistan War, affected President Carter's capacity to prioritise human rights issues, demanding instead, a revised Middle East strategy that prioritised the role of military force.

On January 15, 1981, the Carter administration released the "Presidential Directive 63: Persian Gulf Security Framework".[20] This directive outlined that the United States would begin building their own military facilities in the Middle East to deter Soviet aggression. The Directive noted that "building [their] our own capabilities to project force into the region while maintaining a credible presence there" would enable the United States to "establish a broad range of military and related response options in and outside the region against the Soviet Union, including US force projection into the region, to compensate for the current Soviet regional advantage in conventional forces".[21] President Carter prioritised the protection of the "Straits of Hormuz" in addition to "strengthening key friends in the region".

The Persian Gulf Security Framework ultimately paved the way for the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) under the command of Lieutenant General P.X. Kelley. General Kelley noted the strategic rationale behind the reorientation of American military forces in the Middle East was in response to a "new Soviet overseas military threat" that included a "string of Soviet bases and forces to the North of Turkey, Iran, and now Pakistan [that calls] for new and effective US responses, and the RDJTF is one such response".[22] General Kelley understood his role as taking primary responsibility for Middle East security when he suggested "the countries of

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[20] Zbigniew Brzezinski, Presidential Directive/NSC 63, Subject: Persian Gulf Security Framework (January 15, 1981). Accessed at https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/pddirectives/pd63.pdf See also, https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract&did=459079

[21] Ibid.

[22] P.X. Kelley, 'Rapid Deployment: A Vital Trump', *Parameters* (Spring 1981), 51

the Middle East require help from the United States – diplomatically, economically, and, if necessary, militarily – to buttress their own collective security efforts. In the aggregate, the rendering of such help is designed to protect the vital interests of the United States, its friends, and its allies in the Middle East and Persian Gulf".[23] Although the RDJTF was initially composed of existing forces that had already been assigned commitments, particularly in Western Europe (NATO) and Northeast Asia in Korea, the decision to assign a contingent of forces to the Middle East demonstrated a profound break from the previous strategy of offshore balancing that had guided United States policy in the region.[24] In short, the twin structural shocks of the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan fundamentally altered the Middle East in President Carter's strategic calculations and arguably paved the way for its emergence as an informal American protectorate to be policed by American military.

Three Military Episodes: Lebanon, Libya, and Kuwait.

Until this point, the chapter has illustrated that systemic factors forced the United States to alter their strategic calculus in the Middle East. Notwithstanding President Carter's emphasis on human rights and his desire to recalibrate American foreign policy away from geopolitical considerations, the Iranian Revolution and Soviet invasion of Afghanistan forced the administration to recast the Middle East as a region of primary importance to be defended with military force. This reversed the previous strategy of offshore balancing that had looked to others to stabilise the region. This section provides analysis of three key military episodes that transpired in accordance with the Carter Doctrine's core intentions: President Reagan's Lebanon intervention; President Reagan's use of air strikes against Colonel Qaddafi; and President George H. W. Bush's response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In each of these instances, it

[23] Ibid., p. 52

[24] For a comprehensive outline of the costs and composition of the RDJF see Congress of the United States: Congressional Budget Office. 'Rapid Deployment Forces: Policy and Budgetary Implications' (February 1983). Accessed at https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a474780.pdf

will be shown that the use of military force was limited to the maintenance of the status quo, eschewing wider ambitions such as the advancement of democratic principles or human rights concerns. More explicitly, in each of these episodes, the use of military force was deployed first and foremost as a tool to coerce and deter belligerent states to uphold the regional balance of power.

Lebanon and Reagan's first use of American military force in the Middle East, 1982-1984

Between the Nixon and Reagan presidency, the use of military force was limited to two hostage rescue operations in the Gulf of Thailand and the Republic of Iran.[25] The weariness of the Vietnam War had left the Ford and Carter administrations reticent to use military force as a key instrument of American statecraft. Yet, Ronald Reagan arrived in the White House in 1981 promising a more assertive foreign policy that recognised the utility of military force in preserving American interests. From Reagan's perspective both President Nixon's détente with the Soviet Union and President Carter's emphasis on human rights had weakened America's international standing and jeopardised the national security of the United States. These strategies, according to Reagan, had emboldened the Soviet Union and enabled them to advance their interests in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. In the White House, President Reagan promised a more assertive foreign policy that would "pursue a policy of peace through strength" and would reinstate a "defence capability that provides a margin of safety for America".[26] Reagan noted in his autobiography that when he entered the White House:

> Pentagon leaders told me appalling stories of how the Soviets were gaining on us militarily, both in nuclear and conventional forces; they were spending fifty percent more each year on weapons than we were;

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[25] Jeffrey Record, *Making War, Thinking History: Munich, Vietnam, and Presidential Uses if Force from Korea to Kosovo* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2002). p. 79.

[26] Lou Cannon, 'Reagan: Peace through Strength', *The Washington Post* (August 19, 1980). Accessed at https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1980/08/19/reagan-peace-through-strength/f343ddc5-fbda-49fc-a524-6fbc29dfb312/?utm_term=.79947fa39ec9

> meanwhile in our armed forces, the paychecks were so small that some married enlisted men and woman were eligible for welfare benefits; many military personnel were so ashamed of being in the service that as soon as they left their posts, they put on civilian clothes.[27]

President Reagan's muscular foreign policy was most overt in the Middle East. Although Reagan deployed military force in Grenada, in Operation Urgent Fury, and used proxy forces in Central America to combat communism, his operations in Libya, Lebanon, and the naval intervention in the Iran-Iraq war demonstrate that the Middle East had become a central concern for US strategic policy. In 1983, President Reagan "upgraded" RDJTF and rebranded the force structure as the United States Central Command (CENTCOM).[28] The importance of this promotion should not be overlooked. Lieutenant General Robert Kingston, Kelley's replacement, and first CENTCOM commander, noted that "the establishment of a Unified Command (one of only six worldwide) that can concentrate on security issues facing the entire region was a visible signal to friends and potential adversaries of the importance that the US places on security and stability in South-West Asia, the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa. I was given the mission to deter aggression from whatever source and to assist friendly regional states that request US support".[29] CENTCOM was provided more resources than were previously available to RDJTF and General Kingston was provided with the authorisation to stipulate where forces would come from and what they would consist of.[30] This signalled a deeper engagement with the region that was now undergirded by the forward deployment of American military forces.

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[27] Ronald Reagan, *An American Life* (London: Arrow, 1991), pp. 234-235.

[28] For an excellent discussion of this upgrade see, Alan Ned Sabrosky and William Olson, 'USCENTCOM Reconsidered: A Case for Reform', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 10 (3) (1987), pp. 310-330.

[29] Robert Kingston, 'From RDF to CENTCOM: New Challenges?' *RUSI* (March 1, 1984), p. 16.

[30] See, for instance, Bruce Kuniholm, 'The Carter Doctrine, the Reagan Corollary, and Prospects for United States Policy in Southwest Asia', *International Journal* 41 (2) (1986), pp. 341-361.

The upgrade of RDJTF to CENTCOM was formed during a significant American military intervention in Lebanon. In 1982, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) presence had grown significantly in Lebanon. The Arab-Israeli War in 1948-49, the Six Day War in 1967, and the group's subsequent expulsion from Jordon in 1971 had resulted in the PLO to establishing a stronghold in Lebanon.[31] This critical location provided it with the ability to undertake increased operations – including missile and artillery fire across the Lebanon-Israel frontier – against Israel .[32] Ariel Sharon, Israel's then Defence Minister, requested U.S. support in expelling the PLO and Syrian forces from Lebanon. Following the attempted assassination of Israel's British Ambassador, Shlomo Argov, and the United States' unwillingness to support Sharon's request, Israel took matters into its own hands bombing PLO targets in Lebanon.[33] Although the United States had previously signed a unanimous United Nations Security Council Resolution demanding Israel withdraw from Lebanon,[34] and declined Sharon's request for assistance, many have suggested that President Reagan ultimately endorsed Israel's subsequent military incursion into southern Lebanon. Zeev Schiff noted:

> Israel's incursion into Lebanon did not come as a surprise. Then Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon did not hand the Pentagon his specific war plans, but there is no doubt that Washington, through its contacts, was well apprised of the plans before they were implemented. Washington knew about the highly visible concentration of forces on the borders of Lebanon and that Israel intended to invade Lebanon with a

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[31] See, for instance, Brynen, 'PLO Policy in Lebanon: Legacies and Lessons', *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 18 (2) (1989), pp. 48-70.

[32] See, for instance, Richard Gabriel, *Operation Peace for Galilee: Israeli/Palestine Liberation Organization War in Lebanon* (Hill and Wang, 1994).

[33] William Claiborne, 'Israel Hits PLO sites in Beirut, Killing 45', *The Washington Post* (June 5, 1982), Accessed at https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1982/06/05/israel-hits-plo-sites-in-beirut-killing-45/eb771331-8f0a-46cd-96d0-c60bcd551ac1/?utm_term=.1c07e3085772

[34] United Nations Security Council Resolution 509 (June 6, 1982). Accessed at http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/509

> large army. Thus Washington's vague murmurings and apparent indifference were interpreted by the Israeli government as a green light for Operation Peace for Galilee.[35]

While the ultimate objective of Sharon's invasion invited much speculation at the time,[36] it appears that it was geared to three strategic goals. First, Israel wanted to confront the PLO in Southern Lebanon were a stronghold had taken shape due to sympathetic Arab governments supplying them with a cache of weapons.[37] Second, Israel wanted the Syrian Army to withdraw from Lebanon, where Syrian President Afez al Assad's regime maintained a foothold that continued to threaten Israel following their loss of the Golan Heights in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. This included Syrian deployed surface to air missiles in Lebanon to deter Israel from further provocations.[38] Third, Israel believed that they could also influence Lebanon's domestic politics by fostering a strategic relationship with the Phalange, a Christian Maronite group led by Bashir Gemayel.[39] Sharon was interested in Gemayel being elected in the forthcoming election as this would likely result in the PLO being removed from Beirut which would constitute a clear benefit to Israel.

Within months, Israel had overwhelmed the Syrian and PLO forces and controlled much of Beirut. Because of the high death toll that proceeded Israel's military campaign and the diplomatic pressure that the United States felt, President Reagan

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[35] Zeev Schiff, 'The Green Light', Foreign Policy 50 (1983), p. 74. Accessed at https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1148281.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A63ff30aa3cbda9ee551de470053488b9

[36] See for instance, Shai Feldman, *Deception, Consensus, and War* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1984).

[37] For a good outline of the PLO see, for instance, Eugene Rogan, *The Arabs: A History* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), pp. 432-444.

[38] Although Syria previously refrained from basing ground to air missiles in Lebanon, in accordance with a previous agreement with Israel, this fundamentally changed when Israeli shot down two Syrian helicopters over Mt. Lebanon.

[39] For a good outline of these objectives, see Brian Parkinson, 'Israel's Lebanon War: Ariel Sharon and Operation Peace for Galilee', *Journal of Third World Studies* 24 (2) (2007), pp. 63-85.

convinced Israeli Prime Minister Begin to halt further Israeli military advances. With the ceasefire in place, Lebanon requested the United States compose a Multinational Force (MNF) with the French and Italians to safeguard the evacuation and security of the Palestinian civilians for thirty days. Israel demanded that the MNF not be mandated by the UN, but be deployed instead upon an invitation from the Lebanese government.[40] While Defence Secretary Weinberger advised that United States forces should be kept out of Lebanon, Reagan ultimately disagreed, with United States Marines being deployed on August 24, 1982 for an agreed period of 30 days.

Yet, the United States deployment was done without clear operational or policy objectives. Jeffrey Record noted:

> Reagan and other administration spokesman cited at least a dozen different political objectives, some incompatible with each other and others clearly beyond the reach of the intervention forces and their rules of engagement. These declared objectives included guarding the Beirut airport, protecting Palestinian civilians in West Beirut, freeing the Lebanese army to pursue antigovernment militias and warlords, creating a democratic and unified Lebanon, advancing the Arab-Israeli peace process, preventing Lebanon's domination by Syria and the Soviet Union, stopping an Israeli-Syrian war, facilitating the mutual withdrawal of Israeli and Syrian forces, demonstrating that the United States could not be intimidated by terrorist attacks, and, above all else, providing "presence" – simply being there to show that the United States cared.[41]

Indeed, following the Pentagon press conference that had announced the deployment of U.S. marines to Lebanon, a reporter asked, "Have I got this right? Eight hundred marines wearing camouflage field uniforms and carrying M-16s are going to get on boats and helicopters and go into the port area of Beirut and set up tents. That is all

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[40] For a good overview of the Italians involvement, see, for instance, Bastian Matteo Scianna, 'A Blueprint for Successful Peacekeeping? The Italians in Beirut (Lebanon), 1982–1984', *The International History Review* DOI 10.1080/07075332.2018.1431804

[41] Jeffrey Record, *Making War, Thinking History: Munich, Vietnam, and Presidential Uses if Force from Korea to Kosovo* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2002). p. 79.

you've told us they are going to do in the course of 30 days, isn't it? Have you told us a single thing that they are going to do while they're there?". The Spokesman answered: "You are quite correct. I have not told you a single thing that they are going to do while they are there because it is, at this stage of the game, quite simply impossible to know in advance precisely what it is going to be".[42] Thus, the first deployment of United States forces into Lebanon had no clear directive to govern their actions. This ambiguous deployment signalled a willingness for the United States to undertake a more assertive role in the region and altered the previous strategy of offshore balancing (buckpassing) to one where the United States deployed expeditionary forces toward the balance of power, that is perhaps more akin to an internal balancing strategy.

When the 30-day period expired and the United States had departed Lebanon on September 10, 1982, the situation on the ground rapidly deteriorated. Lebanon's President-elect Gemayel was assassinated four days after the withdrawal of the MNF, which was followed by a brutal retribution by the Phalange Christian militia group. The Phalange, with IDF involvement,[43] undertook a savage campaign against Palestinian Shiites that included killing at least 700 Palestinian refugees in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.[44] The brutality of this attack encouraged the Reagan administration to consider redeploying U.S. marines to quell the uprising. Yet, as so often bedevilled the Reagan administration, the advisors were divided over how to respond, with Secretary of State, George Shultz, pushing for a military response, while

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[42] Cited in Gail Yoshitani, *Reagan on War: A Reappraisal of the Weinberger Doctrine, 1980-1984* (Texas University Press, 2011). p. 80.

[43] Thomas Friedman, 'The Beirut Massacre: The Four Days', *The New York Times* (September 26, 1982), Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/1982/09/26/world/the-beirut-massacre-the-four-days.html

[44] Seth Anziska, 'A Preventable Massacre', The New York Times (September 16, 2012). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/17/opinion/a-preventable-massacre.html

Secretary of Defence, Caspar Weinberger, opposed the deployment of U.S. marines.[45] Reagan again dismissed Defence Secretary Weinberger's opposition and approved the redeployment of United States marines, who were returned to Beirut airport on September 29, 1982. Reagan stated in a televised address that the objectives of the deployment remained the same as the previous deployment:

> Our basic objectives in Lebanon have not changed, for they're the objectives of the Government and the people of Lebanon themselves. First and foremost, we seek the restoration of a strong and stable central government in that country, brought into being by orderly constitutional processes. Lebanon elected a new President 2 short weeks ago, only to see him murdered even before he could assume his office. This week a distressed Lebanon will again be electing a new President. May God grant him safety as well as the wisdom and courage to lead his country into a new and happier era.[46]

In the televised address, Reagan spoke of the "responsibility" and "right" that the United States had with respect to stabilising the region.[47] This is illustrative of the gradual shift the United States underwent with respect to stabilising the region; they had previously outsourced responsibility to others, while Reagan began the process of the United States taking primary responsibility for such stabilisation efforts.

Although the first seven months of this redeployment were reminiscent of the previous 30-day deployment, with the United States marines not firing a weapon or being the target of attacks, this changed on April 18, 1983, when Hezbollah attacked the United States embassy in Beirut, killing seventeen Americans, including eight CIA

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[45] Office of the Historian, The Reagan Administration and Lebanon, 1981-1984. Accessed at https://history.state.gov/milestones/1981-1988/lebanon

[46] Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, 'Address to the Nation Announcing the Formation of a New Multinational Force in Lebanon (September 20, 1982). Accessed at https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/research/speeches/92082f

[47] Ibid.

operatives.[48] Three months later the U.S. marines exchanged fire against the Druze militia (and ally of Syria) and two marines were killed. This escalation in violence culminated with the Hezbollah attack on the United States marine's barracks at Beirut airport on October 23, 1983, killing 221 U.S. marines and 21 naval officers.[49] Ultimately, in the end, each of these attacks against the United States were motivated by the perceived affiliation between United States marines and the minority Christian government. Colin Powell noted, "When the shells starting falling on the Shiites, they assumed the American referee had taken sides against them. And since they could not reach the battleship, they found a more vulnerable target: the exposed Marines at the airport".[50]

As the American people began to question the United States involvement in Lebanon, President Reagan explained in a radio address to the nation that without United States military commitment to the region the Soviet Union would take over the Middle East and the western world would no longer have access to oil:

> Can the United States or the free world stand by and see the Middle East incorporated into the Soviet bloc? What of Western Europe and Japan's dependence on Middle East oil for the energy to fuel their industry? Do we remember the oil embargo and the lines at our own gas stations? And didn't we assume a moral obligation to the continued existence of Israel as a nation back in 1948? I've never heard anyone in this country ever suggest that we should abandon that obligation.[51]

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[48] President Reagan's response to these attacks can be found here, Ronald Regan, Presidential Library and Museum. Statement on the Bombing of the United States Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon ((April 18, 1983). Accessed at https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/research/speeches/41883b; See also, Central Intelligence Agency, 'Flashback: April 18, 1983: U.S. Embassy Attacked in Beirut' (April 17, 2014). Accessed at https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2014-featured-story-archive/flashback-april-18-1983-u-s-embassy-bombed-in-beirut.html;

[49] See the initial NY Times article here, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1983/10/24/issue.html?action=click&contentCollection=Archives&module=LedeAsset&region=ArchiveBody&pgtype=article

[50] Colin Powell and Joseph Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003), p. 281.

President Reagan therefore connected the United States military involvement in Lebanon to balancing of power logic and the continued access to oil in the region. While these objectives were similar to those which animated the strategy of the Nixon administration, the way in which the Reagan administration sought to achieve them was fundamentally different.

For instance, Michael Bohn provided a detailed outline of the events as they transpired in the Situation Room that shed light on the importance that Reagan placed on military force in response to the attack on the marine barracks. Here, Reagan's immediate response was to seek retribution to avenge the attack that had impinged upon American strength and honour. Bohn recalls Reagan calling for a "swift and effective retribution" noting that the President stated, "Well, let's go for it. Let's plan the mission, get ready and quick, if possible, do it with the French. But do it".[52] Mud McFarlane, Reagan's national security advisor, was similarly unsure of the objective that was to be served by such a response, when he asked "As I understand it, Mr President, you want the Pentagon to commence planning a retaliatory mission", which Reagan confirmed.[53] Planning for President Reagan's military retaliation began in earnest. A Pentagon Report had determined the bombing of the Marine barracks was "tantamount to an act of war using the medium of terrorism".[54] Hezbollah had been identified by French intelligence as the targets on October 23, 1982, and President Reagan approved the military strike two days later.

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[51] Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum. Radio Address to the Nation on the Situation in Lebanon 9October 8, 1983). Accessed at https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/research/speeches/100883a

[52] Cited in Michael Bohn, *Presidents in Crisis: Tough Decisions Inside the White House from Truman to Obama*. (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2015). p. 157.

[53] Ibid, p. 157-158.

[54] Department of Defence. Report of the DOD Commission on Beirut International Airport Terrorist Act, October 23, 1983 (December 20, 1983). Accessed at http://cgsc.cdmhost.com/cdm/fullbrowser/collection/p4013coll11/id/1393/rv/singleitem

Yet, as we now know, these air strikes were aborted without President Reagan's consent. Defence Secretary Weinberger called off the air strikes on November 16 due to his belief that U.S. marines would be at increased risk if the United States escalated the war. The decision by Weinberger ultimately illustrates the propensity for President Reagan to use military force without clear objectives, other than in retaliation against those that had impinged upon American honour and prestige. Micah Zenko noted:

> On November 14, 1983, President Reagan approved a joint U.S.-French air raid against the barracks to be carried out two days later. What happened next is hotly disputed by Reagan administration officials, although almost all accounts concur that Secretary of Defense Weinberger refused to give the authorization order to the U.S. commander of the Sixth Fleet permitting the U.S. aircraft to leave their flight decks. The French—who did not know that the United States had abandoned them until their planes were airborne—proceeded with the airstrike. Briefed on what had happened, Reagan responded: "That's terrible. We should have blown the daylights out of them. I just don't understand".[55]

While President Reagan was perplexed by this decision occurring without his consent, the United States marines nonetheless undertook a heavy military bombardment in early December, which climaxed with two aircraft being lost and a U.S fighter pilot killed. In response to this incident Reagan stated,

> Early yesterday, two such reconnaissance missions were fired upon by literally hundreds of antiaircraft and a combination of surface-to-air missiles, which were coordinated from several sites by the Syrians. Early today, we responded to this unprovoked attack by striking back at those sites from whence had come the attack. We don't seek hostilities there. Our mission remains what it was: to help stabilize the situation in Beirut until all the foreign forces can be withdrawn and until the Government of Lebanon can take over the authority of its own territory. But we are

[55] Micah Zenko, 'When America Attacked Syria', *Council on Foreign Relations* (February 13, 2012). Accessed at https://www.cfr.org/blog/when-america-attacked-syria

> going to defend our forces there. And this was the reason -- or the purpose of the mission earlier today.[56]

The remainder of December saw the continued use of USS New Jersey to bombard Syrian targets and another eight U.S. marines were killed in action. Congress were increasingly concerned that the role of the marines was not clear and that this was endangering their lives. This pressure ultimately pushed President Reagan to order the withdrawal of U.S. troops on February 7, 1984.[57]

In short, President Reagan's instinct was to deploy military force in a "show of force" against those that had "wronged America". For Reagan, this was very much a retaliatory response against threats to American interests (or American lives). Hence, President Reagan's military response was driven by an instinct to demonstrate to the American people that he had the resolve to seek retribution against those that had impinged upon American honour and prestige.

President Reagan: Signalling U.S. Resolve to Qaddafi in 1986.

President Reagan's approach towards Libya also reflected dynamics consistent with that of the Lebanon example. Here, Reagan deployed military force to attempt to first, deter and coerce Libyan leader Colonel Qaddafi from his support of terrorist activity in the region, and second, to punish him for attacks on US personnel. Colonel Qaddafi came to power in Libya in a military coup against the pro-U.S. King Idris in 1969. Upon coming to power Qaddafi, from the American perspective, immediately set about destabilising the regional order through nationalization of the country's emergent oil industry and provision of support for a variety of "anti-imperialist" and

[56] Ronald Reagan, Presidential Library and Museum. Remarks and a Question and Answer Question With Reporters on the United States Air Strikes in Syria (December 4, 1983). Accessed at https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/research/speeches/120483a

[57] Ronald Reagan, Presidential Library and Museum. Statement on the Situation in Lebanon (February 7, 1984). Accessed at https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/research/speeches/20784d

"revolutionary" movements throughout the Arab world and beyond.[58] The most immediate foreign policy goal of President Qaddafi was however the attainment of nuclear weapons capability not withstanding him ratifying the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1975 as a non-nuclear weapons state. This was initially driven in the 1970s by Qaddafi's "self-image as leader in Arab and African affairs" and sustained into the 1990s by Libya's adversarial relations with the United States.[59] In the mid-1970s, Qaddafi apparently explored a potentially promising relationship with Zulfikar Bhutto's Pakistan, then embarking on its own nuclear program and began importing uranium ore from Niger in preparation for the development of an uranium enrichment capability via the transfer of Pakistani technology. This did not eventuate due to a number of factors including Bhutto's subsequent downfall and US-led sanctions against Libya in the 1980s.[60] Qaddafi also pursued chemical weapons and supported a variety of terrorist organizations including the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the PLO. Through these endeavours the Libyan leader was connected to a string of actions that sought to undermine United States' influence and regional stability. Indeed, Bruce Jentleson and Christopher Whytock noted, "The United States linked Qaddafi's regime to such major perpetrations as the 1972 Munich Olympics killing of Israeli athletes, the 1973 assassination of the U.S. Ambassador to Sudan, and the 1975 raid of a meeting of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in Vienna, led by the international terrorist known as Carlos the Jackal".[61] In

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[58] See for instance, Paul Kenyon, *Dictatorland: The Men Who Stole Africa*, London: Head-Zeus Books, 2018, pp. 166-170.

[59] Gordon Corera, *Shopping for Bombs: Nuclear Proliferation, Global Insecurity and the Rise and Fall of the A. Q. Khan Network*, London: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 108.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Bruce Jentleson and Christopher Whytock, 'Who "Won" Libya? The Force-Diplomacy Debate and Its Implications for Theroux and Policy', International Security 30 (3) (2005/2006), p. 56. This piece also provides an excellent discussion of the reasons that Qaddafi eventually gave up his nuclear ambitions and shifted away from his international "rogue" ambitions.

addition to these terrorist activities, the United States was increasingly concerned with Qaddafi connections with the Soviet Union and the buttressing of their expansion throughout the Third World.[62]

President Reagan's most immediate response to Qaddafi was on August 18, 1981, when undertaking a "freedom of navigation" in the Gulf of Sidra (the strategic waterways between Tripoli and Benghazi) that directly challenged Libya's claim to these territorial waters. Qaddafi had claimed the Gulf of Sidra following the United States' resupply of Israel in the 1973 Yom Kippur War.[63] Qaddafi lodged the following statement to the United Nations in support of his territorial claim:

> The Libyan Arab Republic declares that the Gulf of Surt, defined within the borders stated above, is under its complete national sovereignty and jurisdiction in regard to legislative, judicial, administrative and other aspects related to ships and persons that may be present within its limits. Private and public foreign ships are not allowed to enter the Gulf without prior permission from the authorities of the Libyan Arab Republic and in accordance with the regulations established by it in this regard. The Libyan Arab Republic reserves the sovereign rights over the Gulf for its nationals. In general, the Libyan Arab Republic exercises complete rights of sovereignty over the Gulf of Surt as it does over any part of the territory of the State.[64]

In response to President Reagan's Freedom of Navigation exercise, the Libyan leader deployed two Su-22 fighters that fired missiles at United States F-14 aircraft located approximately 60 miles from the Libyan coast. While Libya had previously targeted United States military aircraft, this occasion marked the first time the United States

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[62] See, for instance, Claudia Wright, 'Libya and the West: Headlong into Confrontation?' International Affairs 58 (1) (1981-1982), pp. 13-41.

[63] For a good outline of the naval component of this war see, for instance, Lyle J. Goldstein and Yuri M. Zhukov, 'A Tale of Two Fleets: A Russian Perspective on the 1973 Naval Standoff in the Mediterranean', *Naval War College Review* VVII (2) (2004), pp. 27-63.

[64] The United Nations Legislative Series. National Legislation and Treaties Relating to the Law of the Sea (October 19, 1973), p. 26. Accessed at http://legal.un.org/legislativeseries/documents/untlegs0018.pdf

retaliated militarily with a return of fire.[65] The events were followed by simultaneous representations to the United Nations appealing against each other's actions, with little in the way of an immediate escalation.

Events gradually escalated between the United States and Libya over the next five years. In 1984, for instance, Libya dropped anti-ship mines in the Red Sea and Gulf of Suez to disrupt shipping in the region, and in 1985 provided training for the pro-Arafat PLO affiliates that hijacked the Italian cruise ship, *Achille Lauro*, travelling off the Egyptian coast that killed a sixty-nine-year disabled Israeli man by throwing him overboard.[66] Qaddafi's support for the terrorist group Abu Nidal Organisation (ANO) and their connection with the targeting of commercial airliners throughout the 1980s also encouraged Reagan to consider escalating his military response.[67] In 1985, the ANO had targeted an Egyptian airliner, along with airports in Rome and Vienna, killing a combined total of seventy-eight people, including five Americans.[68] The United States Navy's Sixth Fleet, including three carrier battle groups, also undertook

[65] For a good outline of the aerial engagements see, for instance, Steven Ratner, 'The Gulf of Sitra Incident of 1981: A Study of the Lawfulness of Peacetime Aerial Engagements', *Yale Journal of International Law* 10 (1) (1984), pp. 59-77. See also the New York Times article at the time, Bernard Gwertzman, 'U.S. Reports Shooting Down 2 Libyan Jets that Attacked F-14's Over Mediterrane', The New York Times (August, 20, 1981), Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/1981/08/20/world/us-reports-shooting-down-2-libya-jets-that-attacked-f-14-s-over-mediterrane.html

[66] See, for instance, New York Times, '85 Achille Lauro Killing 'a Mistake' (April 23, 1996). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/1996/04/23/world/85-achille-lauro-killing-a-mistake.html

[67] For a good outline of the ANO see and the terrorist activities see, for instance, Abu Nidal Organization (ANO), aka Fata Revolutionary Council, the Arab Revolutionary Brigades, or the Revolutionary Organization of Socialist Muslims', Council of Foreign Relations (May 27, 2009). Accessed at https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/abu-nidal-organization-ano-aka-fatah-revolutionary-council-arab-revolutionary-brigades

[68] See, for instance, John Tagliabue, 'Airport Terrorists Kill 13 and Wound 113 at Israeli Counters in Rome and Vienna', The New York Times (December 28, 1985). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/1985/12/28/world/airport-terrorists-kill-13-and-wound-113-at-israeli-counters-in-rome-and-vienna.html).

another round of freedom of navigation exercises.[69] These exercises led to a series of retaliatory strikes by the United States against Libyan forces, which included Reagan taking out two SAMs that had fired against United States aircraft. Qaddafi's hand was also suspected in the bombing of a TWA flight between Rome and Athens, that killed four Americans, including a nine-month old baby.[70] Libya's involvement in such terrorist incidents prompted Reagan to seek a partnership with the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to invade Libya, which the Egyptian President ultimately declined.[71]

The Reagan administration responded via a strategy that blended the limited use of force with a series of economic sanctions against the Qaddafi regime.[72] However, Qaddafi's involvement in the April 5, 1986 bombing of a West Berlin disco ultimately encouraged a more forceful military response. This attack directly targeted the United States military personnel stationed in West Berlin as part of a Cold War deployment. Colonel Qaddafi was the mastermind behind these attacks, which killed three United States military personnel and injured hundreds more.[73] Reminiscent of the Lebanon fiasco, Secretary of State Shultz was the first to push Reagan to use military force, with Secretary of Defence Weinberger resisting calls to escalate the military response. In

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[69] See, for instance, Micahel Gordon, 'U.S. Says Navy Has Completed Libyan Exercises', *The New York Times* (March 28, 1986). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/1986/03/28/world/us-says-navy-has-completed-libyan-exercise.html

[70] Roberto Suro, '4 Killed as Bomb Rips T.W.A. Plane On Way to Athens', *The New York Times* (April 3, 1986). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/1986/04/03/world/4-killed-as-bomb-rips-twa-plane-on-way-to-athens.html

[71] Stephen Engelberg, 'Egypt-US Plan to Raid Libya Reported', *The New York Times* (February 21, 1987). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/1987/02/21/world/egypt-us-plan-to-raid-libya-reported.html

[72] Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum. Message to the Congress Reporting on the National Emergency with Respect to Libya. (July 10, 1987). Accessed at https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/research/speeches/071087g; See also Bernard Weinraub, 'President Breaks all Economic Ties with the Libyans', The New York Times (January 8, 1986). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/1986/01/08/world/president-breaks-all-economic-ties-with-the-libyans.html

[73] The attack was reportedly organized and coordinated through the Libyan embassy in West Berlin. Kenyon, *Dictatorland*, p. 187.

1986, the President apparently straddled a middle ground between the two conflicting options, and began a process of exploring what form a military strike could take. President Reagan declared that the objective of any future military option should be to "inflict damage on target complexes that support terrorist operations".[74]

President Reagan was now convinced that Shultz's advice was correct and a more targeted and powerful military response was required. Reagan approved Operation El Dorado Canyon, consisting of five targets "which included the Aziziyah Barracks, Qadhafi's headquarters where he often slept, and utilised the Pentagon's preferred weapons systems – the mix of Air Force and carrier-based aircraft".[75] When France, Spain and Italy failed to take part in Reagan's punitive strikes, which included not granting the United States access to their air space, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher stepped forward and granted Reagan the ability to use United States F-111'a stationed in the United Kingdom to strike Libya. The F-111's struck Libya on April 15, 1986, achieving little in the way of tangible outcomes.[76] Of course, Qaddafi could not be directly targeted because of U.S. laws that prohibited the assassination of foreign leaders.[77] Yet, the strikes killed forty-one civilians, and one F-111 was lost on route due to engine failure, and another was shot down by Libyan defences. In addition, the French embassy was struck, over a mile from the intended target because the pilot entered the wrong coordinates.[78] Immediately following these air strikes, President Reagan made a televised address to the nation stating the rationale for the strikes:

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[74] W. Hays Parks, 'Lessons from the 1986 Libya Airstrike', *New England Law Review* 36 (4) (2002), p. 760.

[75] Michael Bohn, *Presidents in Crisis: Tough Decisions inside the White House from Truman to Obama*. (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2015). p. 172.

[76] See, for instance, Bernard Weinraub, 'U.S. Jets Hit 'Terrorist Centers' in Libya; Reagan Warns of New Attacks if Needed', *The New York Times* (April 15, 1986), Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/1986/04/15/politics/us-jets-hit-terrorist-centers-in-libya-reagan-warns-of-new-attacks.html

[77] Bruce Jentleson and Christopher Whytock, 'Who "Won" Libya? The Force-Diplomacy Debate and Its Implications for Theroux and Policy', *International Security* 30 (3) (2005/2006), p. 58.

> We believe that this preemptive action against his terrorist installations will not only diminish Colonel Qadhafi's capacity to export terror, it will provide him with incentives and reasons to alter his criminal behavior. I have no illusion that tonight's action will ring down the curtain on Qadhafi's reign of terror.[79]

Ultimately then, the underlying logic that drove Reagan's military strikes against Libya was to punish Qaddafi for his support of terrorism and compel him to not undertake such activities in the future. These air strikes signalled to both Qaddafi and the American people that President Reagan was willing to use military force to defend American interests and citizens in the face of terrorist activity. David Tucker noted:

> Its primary purpose was to deter future acts of Libyan-sponsored terrorism against the United States. It was also intended to indicate to the world the intensity of U.S. resolve to deal with this kind of violence……The raid met more success in achieving its secondary purpose: proving U.S. resolve.[80]

Thus, although these military strikes achieved no tangible strategic effect, either in terms of the overall balance of power or the advancement of American moral or democratic principles, they ultimately achieved Reagan's objective of demonstrating a willingness to protect the American people. President Reagan continued to emphasise the success of his military strikes even after Colonel Qaddafi continued his support for terrorist groups that included the infamous Lockerbie bombing episode in 1988, which killed all 259 people.

President Reagan's military response in Libya was thus reminiscent of his military response in Lebanon. This involved the use of the United States military to demonstrate resolve against those that had impinged upon American honour and

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[78] W. Hays Parks, 'Lessons from the 1986 Libya Airstrike', *New England Law Review* 36 (4) (2002), p. 764.

[79] Reagan's Library, Address to the Nation on the United States Air Strikes Against Libya, April 14, 1986. Accessed at https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/archives/speeches/1986/41486g.htm

[80] David Tucker, 'Responding to terrorism', *The Washington Quarterly* 21 (1) (1998), p. 111.

prestige. The use of the military did not align with a coherent strategic objective, but instead was used to demonstrate American dissatisfaction against belligerent states and only tangentially to undergird regional stability.

George H.W. Bush, Coercive Diplomacy and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1991

The deployment of US military force in the service of regional stability was however to define the approach of Reagan's successor, President George H. W. Bush. On August 2, 1990 Saddam Hussein successfully annexed Kuwait. Within hours of the Iraqi Armed Forces crossing the border, the Kuwaiti military had capitulated and the Emir had fled the country. 'Operation Desert Storm', led by the United States, was launched four months later, with the intention of driving the Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. This was ultimately achieved in forty-two days, with ground troops only involved in combat in the last 100 hours of operations.[81]

President Bush's response to Saddam's annexation can be divided across three phases, each made in response to Saddam's evolving decision-making and broader strategic calculations. The first preceded Saddam's decision to invade Kuwait. In this first phase, President Bush provided Saddam with an "indecisive" response to his growing frustration with Kuwait. The Kuwaiti government had pushed down the oil price and were seeking full payment from Saddam on the loan they had provided to Iraq throughout the Iran-Iraq War. This dual strategy made Iraq's repayments on the war debt untenable. Saddam's ultimately believed that the war debt should be written off by because Iraq had defended the Gulf States strategic interests in the brutal war against Iran. The war with Iran had cost both sides of the conflict over $150 billion dollars along with more than a million lives lost.[82]

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[81] John Andreas Olsen, Operation Desert Storm, 1991 in Olsen (ed*), A History of Air Warfare* (Washington: Potomac Books, 2010), p. 177.

[82] Thomas McNaugher, 'Ballistic Missiles and Chemical Weapons: The Legacy of the Iran-Iraq War', *International Security* 15 (2) (1990), pp. 5-34.

Saddam first looked to diplomacy as the primary tool to find a solution to Iraq's economic vulnerability.[83] In May 1990, Saddam raised an objection to Kuwait about their policy of saturating the oil market so that prices dropped to a level that Iraq was unable to profit from. Saddam's objection was initially acknowledged. The Gulf oil producers agreed to limit production to bolster the oil price, with a review period to occur later in the year.[84] Throughout this period, as Iraq's economic position further declined, Saddam requested economic remuneration from Kuwait for the economic hardship accumulated in their war with Iran. The recently released archive of Saddam Hussein's interview with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) demonstrates the frustration Saddam felt:

> Iraq did not owe much money after the war with Iran. Iraq had received aid form Arab countries, which Hussein believed to be aid, not loans. After the war, however, these countries "changed their minds" and demanded repayment.[85]

In a separate interview with the FBI, on February 24, 2004, the transcription continues on a similar theme, noting that "at the end of the war [with Iran] as Iraq began the rebuilding process the price of oil was approximately $7 per barrel. In Hussein's opinion, Iraq could not possibly rebuild its infrastructure and economy with oil process at this level. Kuwait was especially at fault regarding these low oil prices".[86] Hussein describes the diplomatic process that Iraq pursued to avoid the outbreak of

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[83] John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, 'An Unnecessary War', *Foreign Policy* November 3, 2009. Accessed at http://foreignpolicy.com/2009/11/03/an-unnecessary-war-2/

[84] Janice Gross Stein, 'Deterrence and Compellence in the Gulf, 1990-1991: A Failed or Impossible Task?' *International Security* 17 (2) (1992), p. 149-150.

[85] U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. Bagdad Operation Centre February 8, 2004. Interview Session Number 2. Accessed at https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB279/03.pdf

[86] U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. Bagdad Operation Centre February 8, 2004. Interview Session Number 9. Accessed at https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB279/10.pdf

war, noting that "I was against attacking if a solution could be found".[87] Yet, when Kuwait reversed their previous commitment to push oil prices up from $16-$17 a barrel, Saddam ultimately lost faith in dialogue and began considering military options.

The United States was in many respects caught off guard when Saddam invaded Kuwait, with the subsequent mobilisation of the United States military taking a little under four months.[88] Two days prior to the United States military campaign in Kuwait, President Bush explained the rationale for the invasion to the US National Security Council noting that:

> Access to Persian Gulf oil and the security of key friendly states in the area are vital to U.S. national security…..and as a matter of long-standing policy, the United States remained committed to defending its vital interests in the region, if necessary through the use of military force against any power with interests inimical to our own.[89]

Thus, according to the White House, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait amounted to an intrusion upon United States interests in the Persian Gulf, particularly access to oil and the security and stability of key friendly states in the region, which can be traced back to President Nixon's twin pillars strategy to achieve a stable balance of power in the region.[90] In a previous directive, the White House had sought to use diplomatic and economic means to halt Saddam's invasion, which were each mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 661.[91] As this strategy failed to alter Saddam's actions, or

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[87] Ibid, p. 4

[88] Ibid, p. 5

[89] The White House. National Security Directive 54 (January 15, 1991). Accessed at https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB39/document4.pdf

[90] Ibid,

[91] The Resolution can be found here http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/661

capacity to do so in the future, President Bush authorised the deployment and operation of U.S. military with a view to achieving the following six objectives:

a. Defend Saudi Arabia and other GCC states against attack;
b. Preclude Iraqi launch of ballistic missiles against neighbouring states and friendly forces;
c. Destroy Iraq's chemical, biological, and nuclear capabilities;
d. Destroy Iraq's command, control, and communications capabilities;
e. Eliminate the Republican Guards as an effective fighting force; and
f. Conduct operations designed to drive Iraq's forces from Kuwait, break the will of Iraqi forces, discourage Iraqi use of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons, encourage defection of Iraqi forces, and weaken Iraqi popular support for the current government.[92]

President Bush noted that he would consider the "explicit objective" of replacing "the current leadership of Iraq…..should Iraq resort to using chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons [or be] found supporting terrorist acts against the U.S. or coalition partners anywhere in the world [or if Iraq] destroyed Kuwait's oil fields".[93] Ultimately however President Bush was primarily concerned with reinstating the status quo, rather than upending the regional balance of power through regime change or the spread of liberal values through the region.

Following the deployment of the United States led coalition, which included support from 39 countries, along with critical compliance from China and the Soviet Union in the United Nations, the operation achieved immediate success. Between January 17, 1991 and February 28, 1991, George H.W. Bush had decisively halted Iraq's campaign with a brutal display of American military power.[94] The initial phase of the campaign

[92] The White House, National Security Directive 54, January 15, 1991. Accessed at https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB39/document4.pdf

[93] Ibid.

involved the implementation of "The Defence of the Arabian Peninsula", otherwise known as OPLAN 1002-90. OPLAN 1002-90 was executed as Operation Desert Shield and was in fact one of many plans developed by General Schwarzkopf in his period as Commander of CENTCOM.[95] Within just two months, the United States had deployed 107,000 personnel and 520,000 tons of cargo to Saudi Arabia – with many troops and capability still to arrive.[96] This initial deployment ultimately secured Saudi Arabia, which was the first objective identified in National Security Council Directive 54. The United States continued to build their forces, along with coalition partners, to reach a troop size the same as the height of the Vietnam War.[97] Between 17 January and 24 February the United States undertook an air campaign that immediately brought the Iraqi air defences to their knees. Saddam's radar installations, air fields, and storage facilities were all obliterated with little resistance from the Iraqi Air Force.[98] In a six-week period, the coalition dropped more than two times the number of laser-guided bombs released over North Vietnam in nine months.[99] With the Iraqi command and control essential paralysed, and after thirty-eight days of continuous air attacks, the ground troops entered the field on February 24, 1991. Within hours of the ground troops entering the war, Saddam had ordered his troops to withdraw.[100]

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[94] For a document that outlines the events that led to the execution of combat operations and assessments made throughout the campaign see, 'United States Central Command: Operation Desert Shield /Desert Storm', *United States Central Command*, 11 July 1991. Access at https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB39/document6.pdf

[95] Douglas Craft, 'An Operational Analysis of the Persian Gulf War', *Strategic Studies Institute* (August 31, 1992). Accessed at https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a256145.pdf

[96] *War in the Persian Gulf: Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, August 1990-March 1991* (Washington: Center of Military History, United States Army).

[97] Andrew Bacevich, *America's War for the Greater Middle East: A Military History* (New York: Random House, 2016), p. 117.

[98] John Andreas Olsen, *A History of Air Warfare* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2003), pp. 177-178.

[99] Thomas Mahken,'The Gulf War in Retrospect', *Foreign Policy* (January 20, 2011). Accessed at https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/01/20/the-gulf-war-in-retrospect/

The ground offensive would last for only 100 hours – four days of fighting – amounting to Iraqi forces losing 3,847 of their 4,280 tanks, over half of their 2,880 armoured personnel carriers, and nearly all of their 3,100 artillery pieces, and only five to seven of their forty-three combat divisions remained capable of offensive operations.[101] In the theatre of operations, some called this "the fastest and most complete victory in American military history".[102]

On Wednesday February 27, President Bush announced on television that "Kuwait is liberated. Iraq's army is defeated. Our military objectives are met. Kuwait is once more in the hands of Kuwaitis, in control of their own destiny." Bush went on to note that:

> We've already done a good deal of thinking and planning for the postwar period, and Secretary Baker has already begun to consult with our coalition partners on the region's challenges. There can be, and will be, no solely American answer to all these challenges. But we can assist and support the countries of the region and be a catalyst for peace. In this spirit, Secretary Baker will go to the region next week to begin a new round of consultations."[103]

Although many viewed the campaign as a resounding victory for the United States, Saddam Hussein long-held the belief that he in fact achieved victory in this war, not the other way around. Kevin Woods and Mark Stout reviewed thousands of Iraqi government documents that were captured in the 2003 Iraq War detailing Saddam's perception of success. Perhaps the most enlightening point to glean from their analysis is that Saddam viewed the United States failure to remove him from power a victory

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[100] Andrew Bacevich, *America's War for the Greater Middle East*, p. 123.

[101] Richard Stewart, *War in the Persian Gulf: Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm August 1990-March 1991* (Washington: Centre of Military History, United States Army), p. 63. Accessed at https://history.army.mil/html/books/070/70-117-1/CMH_70-117-1.pdf

[102] Ibid, p. 64.

[103] President George H.W. Bush, 'Address to the Nation on the Suspension of Allied Offensive Combat Operations in the Persian Gulf', February 27, 1991. Accessed at http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=19343

for Iraq.[104] The documents note a 1992 conversation that Saddam had with his military commanders, where he states, "After [America's]experience with us, which did not achieve its ends regardless of [our] withdrawal from Kuwait, they might wonder how much force they need to deploy this time to achieve what they failed to do last time".[105] Saddam's perception of success was echoed two year after the war when he told the Iraqi people that "[Iraqi] troops fought 33 countries in a month and a half and [were] still in good spirits".[106]

Saddam's perceptions of military victory align with many analysts who consider Operation Desert Storm a *display* of military power, rather than a strategic victory. Andrew Bacevich has recently noted in this respect that:

> Viewed as 'a war of oil', which indeed it was, Desert Storm produced a satisfactory yet imperfect outcome. The Emir of Kuwait had much for which to be thankful: He had regained his country. For their part, Saudi Royals no longer faced the prospect of imminent invasion. The American's had removed any doubts about their willingness to provide protection. Even so, as long as Saddam Hussein clung to power, he remained a menace and regional stability remained precarious.[107]

The decision to leave Saddam in power, and America's seemingly inadequate response to the Kurd's precarious position following Saddam's retreat, ultimately led them to label the Gulf War campaign as "inadequate". Bacevich further notes that "viewed in the context of America's expanding military involvement in the Greater Middle East – the primary interests here – Operation Desert Storm accomplished next to nothing".[108]

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[104] Kevin Woods and Mark Stout, 'Saddam's Perceptions and Misperceptions: The Case of Desert Storm', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 33 (1) (2010), p. 12.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid,p. 13.

[107] Bacevich, *America's War*, p. 133.

[108] Ibid, p. 134.

Understood in this way, President Bush's military campaign is perhaps more forceful in its ambitions to that of Reagan. While a level of continuity between the two was evident with respect to a desire to defend and maintain an American conception of the status quo, President Bush was nonetheless focused on using American coercive/compellent power to serve a broader and more forward looking conception of regional stability, compared with Reagan's more limited strategy of reprisal. The structural pressures the two presidents were operating in may in part account for this difference. That is, the structural considerations that Bush encountered included the rapid thawing and ultimate cessation of the Cold War and ultimate dissolution of the Soviet Union that was underway when Saddam invaded Kuwait. In many respects this made concerns about "order" – both regionally and globally – a much more vital concern for the Bush administration than it was for Reagan's. Notwithstanding these structural differences, both Reagan and Bush deployed military force to uphold their perceived conceptions of the status quo and maintain regional stability. These ambitions demonstrate an affinity with a strategy of selective engagement, which is where we will now turn.

A Strategy of Selective Engagement

The above three military episodes demonstrate a level of consistency with respect to the manner that force was deployed in the Middle East. The ultimate objective for each military engagement was to reinstate the status quo, rather than alter the regional balance of power. These military strategies exhibit a connection with the strategy of selective engagement as conceived by Robert Art.[109] This strategy affords primacy to the use of military force to achieve America's national interests. For Art, national interests are divided into two categories. The first are America's "vital interests", which include preventing an attack on the American homeland, preventing great

[109] See, Robert Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Robert Art, 'Geopolitics Update: The Strategy of Selective Engagement', *International Security* 23 (3) (1998/1999), pp. 79-113.

power wars and destructive security competitions among the Eurasian great powers, and maintaining secure oil supplies at stable prices by keeping Persian Gulf reserves divided among the oil-rich Gulf states. The second category of American national interests are America's so-called "desirable goals", which include preserving an open international economy, fostering the spread of democracy and the observance of human rights, and averting sever climate change and ozone depletion. The distinction between the two categories, of course, is found in the impact upon American national security if these are not protected. As Art states, "vital interests are the ones most central to America's physical security and economic well-being", while on the other hand, "desirable interests do not carry the same magnitude of potential costs and benefits to the nation as the vital ones".[110]

To secure these national interests, Art suggests that America draw from five core tools of statecraft: (i) the utility of force: military force can shape the international environment as to make it more congenial to America's political and economic interests; (ii) early action: this argues that forestalling bad things is more effective and ultimately cheaper than having to pick up the pieces after they have happened; (iii) forward defence: this prescribes retention of America's core alliances – The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the U.S.-Japan alliance, the U.S.-South Korea alliance, and those with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait – and the basing of American troops in western Eurasia and the Persian Gulf to keep these alliances strong; (iv) primacy of states: states continue to be the primary actors in world politics, and it is the different national interest between states that contribute to global instability; and finally (v) necessity of American leadership: for selective engagement to be a successful strategy,

[110] Robert Art, 'Geopolitics Update: The Strategy of Selective Engagement', *International Security* 23 (3) (1998/1999), p. 83.

it is critical that America as the world's most powerful nation lead an effective coalition of the willing.[111]

The first tool of statecraft identified by Art is critical to our discussion here; the role that military force plays in achieving the desired political objectives in the Middle East. The strategy of selective engagement stipulates that the role of American military power in the Middle East is to "divide but not conquer", whereby the maintenance of the "balance of power" remains the ultimate objective to be achieved. In this respect, America's forward military presence is used to create "regional deterrence" to provide for "in-theatre" balancing so that states do not unsettle the regional status quo.[112] Art notes that the most appropriate strategy to ensure America's continued access to Middle East oil is to "prevent a regional hegemon from controlling the Persian Gulf oil reserves, either directly by military conquest or indirectly through the threat of conquest".[113]

The ultimate objective of selective engagement then, aligns with offshore balancing that we discussed in the previous chapter. The maintenance of a stable balance of power is understood as the most appropriate strategy to stabilise the Middle East in order to gain access to the critical oil fields in the region. Of course, the difference between offshore balancing and selective engagement is that offshore balancing relies on others to maintain the balance of power, while balance of power under selective engagement hinges on the role of the United States military. In other words, while offshore balancing adopts an "external balancing" strategy (discussed in the previous chapter), selective engagement ultimately relies on an "internal balancing" whereby

[111] Ibid, pp. 80-82

[112] Robert Art, *A Grand Strategy for America* p. 139.

[113] Robert Art, 'Geopolitics Updated: The Strategy of Selective Engagement', *International Security* 23 (3) (1998/1999), p. 92.

the United States military is the primary mechanism through which to achieve a stable balance of power in the region. Art states:

> Since the late 1970s, the United States has followed a balance-of-power strategy in the Gulf, first leaning toward Iran when Iraq looked stronger, then tilting toward Iraq when Iran looked stronger, all the while acting to protect the Kuwaiti and Saudi oil fields from dominion by either one. This has been and remains a sensible policy, and under current circumstances requires an American military presence in the Gulf. "Divide but not conquer" must be America's dictum toward the Gulf.[114]

In such a reading, the primary objective animating the use of military force in the case studies explored in this chapter, therefore, is to both "compel" and "deter" states from undertaking activities that were detrimental to American interests in the region. Whether it was the unrest within Lebanon, Qaddafi's support for global terrorist organisations, or Saddam's military adventurism into Kuwait, the ultimate purpose of United States military action was to restore the status quo ante in each situation rather than an attempt to undertake regime change, influence domestic politics, or reconstitute the regional balance of power.

In many respects, then, selective engagement has similarities with Thomas Schelling's distinction between "deterrence" and "compellence".[115] For Schelling:

> Deterrence and compellence differ in a number of respects, most of them corresponding to something like the difference between statics and dynamics. Deterrence involves setting the stage – by announcement, by rigging the trip-wire, by incurring the obligation- and *waiting*. The overt act is up to the opponent. The stage-setting can often be non-intrusive, nonhostile, non-productive. The act that is intrusive, hostile, or provocative is usually the one to be deterred; the deterrent threat only changes the consequences *if* the act in question – the one to be deterred - is then taken. Compellence, in contrast, usually involves *initiating* an action (or an irrevocable commitment to action) that can cease, or become harmless, only of the opponent responds. The overt act, the first step, is up to the side that makes the compellent threat. To deter, one

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[114] Ibid, pp. 94-95.

[115] Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 72-73.

> digs in, or lays a minefield, and waits – in the interest of inaction. To compel, one gets up enough momentum (figuratively, but sometimes literally) to make the other *act* to avoid collision.[116]

Yet, whether the United States adopted a strategy of deterrence or compellence between 1979-2001 is in dispute. For deterrence to be implemented successfully the opponent must fully understand what is required of them, and the deterring state must clearly signal how the opponent can avoid the threatened military response. As Alexander George has described, "the strength of an opponent's motivation not to comply is highly dependent on what is demanded of him".[117] Perhaps the most critical lesson of the First Gulf War, as Anthony Cordesman has noted concerned the value of deterrence

> The most important lesson that the Gulf War teaches about conflict prevention is the value of deterrence, and that successful deterrence requires explicit action to define what is being deterred, backed by the threat of decisive force. It may be that no action to deter Saddam Hussein would have succeeded, but no one will ever know….few of the actions necessary to give deterrence tangible form and credibility were taken. The West and Iraq's neighbours temporized and accommodated when they should have set limits and made them convincing.[118]

John Alterman has similarly provided a comprehensive overview of United States failure to appropriately communicate United States determination to respond militarily if Saddam invaded Kuwait. Drawing from recently released Iraqi transcripts, Alterman outlines the final discussion between the United States Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, and Saddam Hussein, one week prior to Saddam's invasion of Kuwait. Alterman notes that "Glaspie expressed her concern over the situation on Iraq's southern border but never threatened any sort of military,

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[116] Ibid, pp. 71-72.

[117] Alexander George, David Hall, and William Simons, *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy: Laos, Cuba, Vietnam* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), p. 22.

[118] Anthony Cordesman, *The Lessons of the Iraq War: Main Report* (Washington D.C: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2003), pp. 1026-1027.

economic or political response if Iraq were to cross into Kuwait".[119] In this respect, United States communication did not correctly identify the demands of the adversary but also did not adequatey communicate the threat of punishment if the adversary proceeded with their belligerent behaviour. Critical to the Glaspie-Hussein exchange was a failure to communicate that the threat of punishment be greater than the expected rewards should the opponent not comply with the demands. Thus, while the United States did not adequately deter Saddam from invading Kuwait, a similar dynamic can be seen at work during the Reagan administration, particularly with respect to Weinberger cancelling missile strikes in Lebanon, along with debates between Secretary of State Shultz and Defence Secretary Weinberger regarding the efficacy of military action. In each of these instances, the United States threat and the associated credibility that military force would be used if their terrorist activity continued was diminished.

Of course, a strategy of selective engagement also relies on the role of brute force with respect to compelling states to accord with your interests. The difference between "coercion" and "brute force" is that one relies on communication, while the other relies solely on the use of force to compel states to reverse their belligerent behaviour. Art has suggested that "compellence can come in three forms: (i) diplomatic use – the issuance of threats to use force against an adversary if it does not change its behaviour; (ii) demonstrative use - the exemplary and limited uses of force; and (iii) full-scale use, or war – the use of whatever amount of force it takes to get the adversary to change its behaviour".[120] Although coercive diplomacy is most successful when threats do not need to be carried out, the use of force with respect to enhancing the credibility of threat and to demonstrate resolve is a critical factor in our understanding of United

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[119] Jon Alterman, 'Coercive Diplomacy against Iraq, 1990-98' in Robert Art and Patrick Cronin (ed) *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003), p. 278.

[120] Robert Art, 'Introduction', in Robert Art and Patrick Cronin (ed) *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003), p. 278.

States strategy in this period.[121] Yet, while selective engagement is a salient categorisation of military force that is used to coerce and deter belligerent states, an under appreciated aspect of this posture is the role that United States interests and traditions have in guiding this type of military response. In this respect, the Jacksonian tradition best encapsulates the use of military force to advance an image of the United States that is powerful and strong, which is where we will now turn.

The Unit-Level Variable: The Jacksonian Tradition

We have discussed above the strategic adjustment that the United States undertook between 1979-2000. In these years, the United States moved away from the offshore balancing strategy and replaced it instead with a strategy of selective engagement. Although both these strategies endeavoured to achieve a stable balance of power in the Middle East, offshore balancing outsourced this responsibility to Iran and Saudi Arabia, while the strategy of selective engagement saw the United States adopt an internal balancing strategy through coercion and deterrence to achieve this end. What we have not explored is what accounts for this shift? Why did Nixon pursue an offshore balancing strategy, while Reagan and Bush preferred to use "in-theatre" troops to deter and coerce belligerent states? The argument in this section is that the changing conceptions of America's role in the world, particularly with respect to the role of American traditions in processing and interpreting the implications of systemic shocks, contributed to this strategic adjustment. The impact of events such as the Iranian Revolution, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and terrorist attacks on American military personnel and civilians throughout the 1980s contributed to a perception of relative American decline that was overcome, in part, through the belligerence of the Jacksonian tradition.

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[121] For a discussion on the difference between threat and brute force, see, for instance, Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, p. 3; Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman, *The Dynamics of Coercion* (Cambridge, Boston: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Thomas Schelling, 'The Diplomacy of Violence', in J Garnett (eds) *Theories of Peace and Security* (London: Palgrave Macmillan).

At its core, the Jacksonian school of thought takes a pessimistic view of the political elite, and promotes a federalist system, which seeks to prevent the concentration of power within a centralized government. Indeed, Andrew Jackson, in a personal letter to John Quincy Adams, remarked that a powerful central government "is calculated to raise around the administration a moneyed aristocracy dangerous to the liberties of the country."[122] While Jeffersonian and Jacksonian traditions share this mutual affection for liberty, illustrated through their shared affording of primacy to the Bill of Rights and the Constitution, there is a stark divide in how both traditions believe this goal of liberty is best achieved:

> The Jeffersonians are most profoundly devoted to the First Amendment, protecting the freedom of speech and prohibiting a federal establishment of religion, Jacksonians see the Second Amendment and the right to bear arms as the citadel of liberty. To oversimplify, Jeffersonians join the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU); Jacksonians join the National Rifle Association (NRA). In doing so, both are convinced that they are standing at the barricades of freedom.[123]

The Jacksonian tradition is based on, what Mead terms, a "community of political feeling" defined by principles of populism, individualism, honor and courage.[124] Drawing on the work of David Hackett Fischer, Mead identifies the basis of the populism central to the Jacksonian tradition with the protestant "Scotch-Irish" element of British colonization of North America.[125] The "Scotch-Irish," Mead argues, shaped by centuries of conflict in Ireland, "established a culture and outlook formed by centuries of bitter warfare before they came to the United States." Rogers M. Smith also identified the development of what he termed an "American creed" amongst this

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[122] Jackson to L. H. Coleman, April 26, 1824, Jackson to Quincy Adams, Nov. 22, 1821. Cited in Robert Remini, *The Legacy of Andrew Jackson* (London: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), p. 7.

[123] Mead, p 225.

[124] Walter Russell Mead, "The Jacksonian Tradition and American Foreign Policy," *The National Interest*, (Winter 1999/2000), p. 8.

[125] David Hackett Fisher, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

important segment of the American population that bears striking resemblance to Mead's characterization of Jacksonians. For Smith, by the mid-nineteenth century many Americans in fact "identified membership in their political community not with freedom for personal liberal callings or republican self-governance" as Jeffersonians would have it, but rather "with a whole array of particular cultural origins and customs" strongly linked to North European ancestry, Protestantism, belief in the superiority of the "white race," and patriarchal familial leadership.[126]

In order to understand the importance of the Jacksonian tradition's influence on American foreign policy one must recognize perhaps its central engine. Jacksonians, Mead argues:

> believe that government should do everything in its power to promote the well-being—political, economic, and moral—of the folk community. *Any* means are permissible in the services of this end, as long as they do not violate the moral feelings or infringe on the freedoms that Jacksonians believe are essential.[127]

The Jacksonian foreign policy call to arms is thus not driven by the moral underpinnings of the Wilsonian tradition or the quest for an "open door" world of the Hamiltonian tradition. Rather it is animated by the instinct, in the first instance, to protect members of the "folk community" from threat.

From this attitude flow several important implications for American foreign policy. The first concerns the Jacksonian threshold for action, especially for the use of military force. Jacksonians were against the U.S. intervention in Bosnia, due to the limited threat this posed to direct American security interests, but were accepting of the push for U.S. intervention against Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, as the Iraqi dictator's move was perceived as a threat to world oil supplies, and hence, a potential

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[126] Rogers M. Smith, "The 'American Creed' and American Identity: The Limits of Liberal Citizenship in the United States," The Western Political Quarterly, 1988, 41 (2), p. 234.

[127] Mead, "The Jacksonian Tradition," p. 15.

threat to the economic well-being of Jacksonian America. A similar rationale was evident in the shifting positions of Jacksonian sentiment in the lead up to American intervention in both World Wars. Here, it was not the atrocities committed by the Central Powers, the Nazis, or the Japanese army but the sinking of American shipping (for example, the Lusitania) and the attack on Pearl Harbor that rallied Jacksonian sentiment to the side of Presidents Wilson and Roosevelt. In the latter case, as FDR biographer Jean Edward Smith has documented, the President, during the tense U.S.-Japanese diplomacy prior to Pearl Harbor, was careful to be "like Lincoln prior Fort Sumter" in wanting "Japan to be perceived as the aggressor" in the event of open conflict.[128]

This desire to be seen as the righteously aggrieved party to a conflict also speaks to the second important implication of Jacksonian sentiment for foreign policy: the significance attached to the protection of national honor and reputation. Honor for Jacksonians:

> …is not simply what one feels oneself to be on the inside; it is also a question of the respect and dignity one commands in the world at large. Jacksonian opinion is sympathetic to the idea that our reputation—whether for fair dealing or cheating, toughness or weakness—will shape the way others treat us.[129]

From Robert Kennedy's claim in his memoir, *Thirteen Days*, that he advised his brother, President John F. Kennedy, against a Pearl Harbor-esque "sneak attack" against Soviet missile sites in Cuba,[130] to the opprobrium directed at President Obama after his now infamous "red line" statement on Syria, the protection of American honor has been a vital element of the Jacksonian worldview.[131]

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[128] Jean Edward Smith, *FDR* (New York: Random House, 2008), p. 527.

[129] Mead, "The Jacksonian Tradition," p. 16.

[130] Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: W. W. Norton, 1999).

Once Jacksonian opinion is mobilized in support of American intervention or military action abroad a third implication comes into play. Jacksonians agree with General Douglas MacArthur's understanding that victory in war must be total and come with the "unconditional surrender" of the enemy. The failure to achieve this stringent war-fighting aim has seen Jacksonian sentiment turn against a number of twentieth century American Presidents:

> Truman's efforts to wage limited war in Korea cost him his re-election in 1952. Similarly, Lyndon Johnson's inability to fight unlimited war for unconditional surrender in Vietnam cost him his presidency in 1968; Jimmy Carter's inability to resolve the Iranian hostage crisis with a clear-cut victory destroyed any hope he had of winning the 1980 election; and George Bush's refusal to insist on an unconditional surrender in Iraq may have contributed to his defeat in the 1992 Presidential election.[132]

A fourth implication stemming from the harnessing of Jacksonian sentiment in support of intervention or war is that Jacksonian opinion is predisposed to be bloody-minded once the United States is engaged in a conflict and resistant to rationales for their resolution short of "total victory." President Nixon's struggle to extricate the United States from the Vietnam War is illustrative here. Nixon and his National Security Adviser and then Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, spent much of their time in office attempting to assuage Jacksonian opinion as they attempted to withdraw the United States from Vietnam without losing "credibility" with adversaries, allies and the US public alike.[133] It was arguably no coincidence that Nixon and Kissinger framed their strategy of withdrawal from Vietnam as "peace with honor." Additionally, once adversaries are defined as an "enemy nation" (for instance China from 1949-1972 or Iran since 1979), it becomes extremely difficult for Jacksonian

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[131] For example, see Richard Miniter, "How Obama's 'Red Lines' Made the World Much More Dangerous," *Forbes*, Feb. 16, 2015, http://www.forbes.com/sites/richardminiter/2015/02/16/how-obamas-red-lines-made-the-world-much-more-dangerous/#1988bd9e65e7.

[132] Mead, "The Jacksonian Tradition," p. 24.

[133] See, for example, Sandra Scanlon, "The Conservative Lobby and Nixon's 'Peace with Honor' in Vietnam," *Journal of American Studies*, 2009, 43 (2), pp. 255-276.

opinion to be swayed to support efforts at normalization. This attitude continues to manifest itself in contemporary foreign controversies such as some of the rhetoric deployed by those opposed to the Obama Administration's negotiation of a nuclear agreement with Tehran or normalization of relations with Cuba.

Of course, the third and fourth aspects of the Jacksonian tradition does not reach the level of military force we discussed in three case studies in this chapter. The United States sought limited objectives, where the unconditional surrender of their opponents was never considered as a desirable goal. Nonetheless, the way that military force was used aligns with many of the core elements of the Jacksonian tradition, particularly a desire to play the honor and prestige of American identity.

Finally, Jacksonian opinion, in the absence of direct threats to American security is likely to advocate a minimalist or, in the words of George W. Bush during the 2000 election campaign, a "humble" foreign policy that eschews both the "crusading" liberal interventionism of the Wilsonians and the commitment to open international political and economic institutions characteristic of the Hamiltonians.[134] For instance, in the 1990s Jacksonian opinion was against the Clinton Administration's interventions in Haiti, Somalia and Bosnia, due to the limited threat this posed to the traditional national security interests of the United States. Michael Mandelbaum, encapsulating Jacksonian sentiment in this context, castigated President Clinton for attempting to "turn American foreign policy into a branch of social work."[135] He argued that the Administration's interventions in these countries were symptomatic of a shift in attention from those states "potentially dangerous" to international order (and American security) to the "political, economic and social conditions" of weak states on the periphery of international affairs.[136] Even more egregious from this

[134] http://www.debates.org/?page=october-11-2000-debate-transcript.

[135] Michael Mandelbaum, "Foreign Policy as Social Work," *Foreign Affairs*, 1996, 75 (1), p. 18.

[136] Mandelbaum, "Foreign Policy as Social Work," p. 17.

perspective was that the Administration's interventions in each of these cases were half-hearted and harmed American prestige:

> Putting an end to the suffering in Bosnia, Haiti and Somalia would have involved addressing its causes, which would have meant deep, protracted and costly engagement in the tangled political life of each country. When the time came to carry out the commitment at the risk of American lives, the president balked. He refused to bomb in Bosnia, withdrew US troops from Somalia and recalled the ship from Haiti, thereby earning a reputation for inconstancy that haunts his presidency.[137]

In contrast, the George H. W. Bush Administration had avoided such criticism with respect to its response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, in part, by framing Saddam Hussein's move as a threat to world oil supplies, and hence, a potential threat to the economic well-being of Jacksonian America. Thus, for a particular case or crisis in which American intervention (especially militarily) is proposed to win the support of Jacksonian opinion, the case or crisis must be framed as a *direct* threat to the core interests of the United States.

The Realist Response

Realist theory offers a salient explanation for the United States strategy between 1979-2000. For instance, the Iranian revolutionary regime was focused on spreading their Shia religion throughout the Middle East to unsettle the Sunni monarchs, which ultimately forced the United States to adopt a balancing strategy as Waltz theory suggests. The Shia uprising had the potential to diminish United States influence in the region and further jeopardise their access to oil. In this respect, the United States strategy accords with Stephen Walt's balance of "threat" theory that suggests a state will balance against aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive capability, and perceived aggressiveness.[138] The United States did not balance against Iranian power,

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[137] Mandelbaum, "Foreign Policy as Social Work," p. 18.

[138] Stephen Walt, *The origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University press, 1987), pp. 21-26.

as they were not the most dominant force in the region, but were instead balancing against the threat that the regional status quo could be upended through political and religious interference. Of course, this does not to suggest that Iran did not pose a military threat, but it is sensitive to the point that Iraq arguably maiatained greater conventional military power than Iran in the early 1980s.

Thus, the United States also balanced against Iraqi power. Kenneth Waltz maintained that great powers balance against shifts in overall material capability and against the most powerful state in the region.[139] Iraq maintained a strong relationship with the Soviet Union, which was underpinned by the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation Agreement signed in 1972 that provided Iraq with immense material power.[140] In this respect, the United States was balancing against the power of the Soviet Union at a regional level in the Middle East.[141] Kenneth Pollack, who was a CIA analyst in this period, noted that "the devastation of Iranian military power [following the Iran-Iraq War] mean that, for the first time, Iraq was effectively unrestrained in how it could pursue its regional ambitions".[142]

The United States decision to develop military capability in the region during the Carter administration points to an internal balancing strategy. Internal balancing consists of the mobilisation of additional resources through either an increase in defence spending or a policy of conscription. John Mearsheimer notes "internal

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[139] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1979), pp. 116-128.

[140] 'Soviet and Iraq in 15-Year Pact', *The New York Times* (April 10, 1972). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/1972/04/10/archives/soviet-and-iraq-in-15year-pact-more-military-assistance-expected.html

[141] Steve Yetiv, *The Absence of Grand Strategy: The United States in the Persian Gulf, 1972-2005* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2008), p. 35.

[142] Kenneth Pollack, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* (New York: Random House, 2002), p. 29..

balancing is self-help in the purest sense of the term".[143] Kenneth Waltz's also contends that internal balancing is the appropriate strategy in a bipolar order, which the United States was operating in throughout this period. Waltz noted, "balancing is differently done in multi and bipolar systems….where two powers contend, imbalances can be righted only by their internal efforts…this is a crucial difference between multi and bipolar systems".[144] President Carter's decision to launch the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) is indicative of the United States internal balancing strategy. This decision gave credibility to Carter's previous State of Union address that warned the United States would use military force to protect its interests and allies in the region, thus positioning itself as the primary state responsibility for maintaining the regions balance of power.

Yet, there are three inconsistencies here that realist theory cannot account for. First, why did the United States adopt this internal balancing strategy rather than allow Iraq and Iran to balance against each other in the region? The appeal of the United States' remaining offshore and allowing Iran and Iraq to check each other's influence is that "when buck-passing leads to war, the buck-passer, like the baiter improves its relative power position by remaining on the sidelines while its main rivals wear themselves down".[145] While the United States seemed to be conscious of this, particularly with respect to their schizophrenic strategy throughout the Iran-Iraq War that aided both belligerents, the broader strategy ultimately eschewed an offshore strategy and instead attempted to contain both Iran and Iraq simultaneously. Gregory Gause noted pointedly in the this regard that :

> …in its strategic logic the policy represents a significant departure in Washington's approach to the Gulf. Dual containment explicitly

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[143] John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 157.

[144] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 163.

[145] John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 162.

> disavows the need for any kind of political relationship with Iran or Iraq and rejects the idea that a rough military equivalence between them is an important element of gulf stability. It assumes for the United States a much larger, unilateral role in managing gulf affairs than any previous administration has envisaged at a time that American influence over the two most important strategic actors in the Gulf is practically nil.[146]

Indeed, Martin Indyk, the Special Assistant to the President for Near East and South Asian affairs under President Clinton, outlined the United States logic of renouncing the previous offshore strategy when he noted "the United States would no longer play the game of balancing Iran against Iraq. The strength of the United States and its friends in the region –Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the GCC- would allow Washington to counter both Iraqi and Iranian regimes. We will not need to depend on one to counter the other".[147] In many respects, this contradicts realist logic. While realist theory suggests that this is likely to occur in a bipolar order, we have seen in the last chapter that this is not necessarily correct when the United States outsourced responsibility to Iran and Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the structure of the international system alone does not provide an adequate explanation for this shift and suggests a need to explore domestic-level variables.

Second, and as mentioned above, internal balancing requires that a state increase defence spending or implement a policy of conscription. However, the United States did not immediately provide more resources for the RDJTF. Instead, the RDJTF was initially composed of existing forces that already had commitments, particularly in Western Europe (NATO) and Northeast Asia in Korea. The 1983 Congressional Budget Office Report noted:

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[146] Gregory Gause III, 'The Illogic of Dual Containment', *Foreign Affairs* 73 (2) (March/April 1994), p. 60.

[147] Cited in Gregory Gause III, 'The Illogic of Dual Containment', *Foreign Affairs* 73 (2) (March/April 1994), p. 57.

> When plans for the Rapid Deployment Forces (RDF) were announced in 1979, no new combat forces were created for them. (For simplicity, the RDF is referred to here as a single unit.) Rather, the RDF was envisioned to consist of existing forces—portions of all four U.S. armed services—most of which already had the traditional mission of assisting in the defense of NATO Europe. The size of the RDF can therefore have important implications for the U.S. policy with respect to NATO.[148]

Thus, while the intention of the Carter Doctrine and subsequent Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force was to shift balancing responsibility directly to the United States, it is unclear whether this strategy is consistent with an internal balancing theory, or whether structural realism needs to be broadened to account for the "threat of the use of military force".

Third, a similar problem exists with respect to whether the United States strategy in Lebanon, Libya, and Iraq reflected an internal or external balancing strategy. The problem here, of course, is that the United States adopted both a unilateral and collective security approach. Steve Yetiv noted that "in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Washington organized a major coalition that ultimately ejected Iraq from Kuwait in Operation Desert Storm. Not surprisingly, the U.S.-led response reflected some mixture of unilateral and collective security approach". [149] While Yetiv's motive in making this point was to distinguish between balance of power and balance of threat, there are wider implications for how we categorise balancing behaviour. Realist theory is underpinned by assumptions about what type of balancing behaviour a state will adopt (internal, buckpassing, bandwagining, and underbalancing) but faces problems when attempting to categorise the specific strategies a state pursues to

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[148] Congress of the United States: Congressional Budget Office. Rapid Deployment Forces: Policy and Budgetary Implications (February 1983), p. xiii. Accessed at https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a474780.pdf

[149] Steve Yetiv, 'The Travails of Balance of Power Theory: The United States in the Middle East', *Security Studies* 15 (1) (2006), p. 91.

operationalize this behaviour. A similar problem exists with respect to President Reagan's decision to bomb Libya. While the White House originally wanted to work in concert with France, Spain, and Italy, when this was rejected, the United States had to work unilaterally. Thus, the reason that drove the United States to adopt an internal balancing strategy, rather than an external balancing strategy, are found outside the theoretical literature that has hitherto argued this decicion is fundamentally dependent on whether a bipolar or multipolar order exists, or whether a state holds an offensive or defensive advantage.[150]

The argument here, therefore, is that defining balancing behaviour through broad prisms such as internal and external balancing fails to capture the specific mode of military deployment. In the current balancing framework, the role of military force is not defined and the specific style of deployment remains elusive. By coding balancing in accordance with the type of military strategy deployed (i.e., selective engagement) we can overcome not only the definitional and operational ambiguity that currently manifests in balancing categories, but also consider balancing behaviour (the use of military force) as an action guided by a specific worldview. In short, the United States attempted to balance the region through a strategy of selective engagement. That strategy was developed not only in response to changes in the international system, but also through an affinity it has with the Jacksonian tradition of restoring American honor and prestige that had been diminished through various states and groups targeting the American interests, status and citizens.

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[150] John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 267-268; John Mearsheimer, 'The False Promise of International Institution', *International Security* 19 (3) (1994/1995): esp. 26-34; Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, 'Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity', *International Organization* 44 (2) (Spring, 1990), pp. 137-168; Thomas J. Christensen, 'Perceptions and Alliances in Europe, 1865-1940', *International Organization* 51 (1) (1997), pp. 65-97.

Conclusion

The Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan altered the Middle East's security dynamics. The United States lost a key strategic partner and the Soviet Union edged closer to the critical oil fields in the Persian Gulf. Notwithstanding President Carter's initial desire to refocus American foreign policy and human rights issues, these systemic variables demanded that the United States continue to respond to the Cold War realities of the time. Yet, the response that both President Reagan and Bush pursued cannot be accounted for through systemic variables alone. The military response that was adopted had an affinity with Robert Art's strategy of selective engagement and its connections to the Jacksonian tradition. President Reagan especially sought to use military force as an instrument of compellence/deterrence in the service of maintaining "stability" in the region. United States military force – especially air power - was conceived of as a means of maintaining the regional status quo without the risks of long-term commitments of "boots on the ground". This strategy, therefore, dismissed any ambition that might include upending the regional balance of power or exporting democratic principles including human rights. This strategy was concerned primarily was restoring American honor that was damaged by the numerous terrorist attacks that had impacted the American people, in addition to the threat of American oil reserves that was ushered in with Saddam's invasion of Kuwait. The military response to these events was chosen in accordance with the instinct of protecting the American "folk community". This demanded that military force would not be used to wage full-scale war, it would be used to demonstrate resolve and a willingness to reinstate American prestige through brute force, compellence, and deterrence.

Chapter Four

Unipolarity and State Behaviour: Woodrow Wilson, George Bush and the 2003 Iraq War

Abstract: This chapter explores the United States use of force throughout President Bush administration. The Bush Jnr administration undertook a strategic adjustment whereby military force was used to alter the regional balance of power, rather than maintain the status quo. It does this by focusing on the 2003 Iraq War, where a crucial mix of militarised Wilsonianism and unfettered American primacy inspirited a strategy that attempted to reconfigure the balance of power. It argues that the Bush Jnr administration's conviction in Wilsonian values ultimately led them to conclude that Middle East states would bandwagon with them following the invasion of Iraq.

Introduction

The 2003 Iraq War has been labelled "one of the great disasters in the history of American foreign policy".[1] The consequences of this decision have been well explained: thousands of innocent deaths, the eruption of a civil war, the demise of public services, the crippling of the economy, the rise of ISIS, and the ongoing influence of proxy-forces. Yet, although the debilitating effects of this war have been fully understood, the ultimate causes of the war are less clear. Some argue, for instance, that major figures in the administration of President George W. Bush, such as Paul Wolfowitz, Dick Cheney, and Donald Rumsfeld were seeking to "finish the job" they started back in 1991 when they let Saddam retreat to Baghdad.[2] Others have pointed to the role of intellectual traditions, particularly interdependent realism,

[1] Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, 'Realism, Liberalism and the Iraq War', *Survival* 59 (4) (2017), p. 7.

[2] Mark Updegrove, 'I want this for George', *Politco Magazine* (November 19, 2017). Accessed at https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/11/19/relationship-president-george-hw-bush-george-w-bush-41-43-iraq-war-215828; See, also, Max Fisher, America's Unlearned Lessons: The Forgotten Truth about why we Invaded Iraq, *Vox* (February 16, 2016). Accessed at https://www.vox.com/2016/2/16/11022104/iraq-war-neoconservatives

which "advances the view that high levels of security interdependence (present when mutual vulnerability is very high) make international anarchy unacceptably perilous, and it suggests that effective government will and should consolidate at successively larger scales".[3] Through this reading, the Iraq war is understood through the incentives and constraints that are inherent in systemic anarchy so that Saddam's apparent stockpile of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) meant "the elimination of the Iraqi regime was necessary for the protection of the American regional hegemonic order".[4] Other scholars have identified liberal internationalism, and its core assumption that the "regime type of foreign states is the primary determinant of their behaviour", as a determining factor in the Bush administration's calculus. Here, a democratised Iraq was conceived of as not only be better for the Iraqi people but also for American security.[5] And finally, others have used a Grotian perspective that understands the Iraq War as an attempt to "save and enhance the international order that has been under threat since the events of September 11, 2001".[6]

These debates are further complicated because the United States decision to invade Iraq contradicts balance of power logic. The Iraq war, in both realist or liberal understandings, amounted to a quest for regional dominance rather than the use of military force to maintain a stable balance of power. The former strategies of offshore balancing and selective engagement, which were both premised on the overriding objective to stop a single regional state holding a preponderance of power, were replaced instead with a strategy that attempted to shift the regional balance of power

[3] Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, 'Realism, Liberalism and the Iraq War', *Survival* 59 (4) (2017), p. 10.

[4] Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, 'Realism, Liberalism and the Iraq War', *Survival* 59 (4) (2017), p. 21.

[5] Patrick Porter, 'Iraq: a liberal war after all: a critique of Dan Deudney and John Ikenberry', *International Politics* 55 (2018), p. 342.

[6] Galia Press-Barnathan, 'The War against Iraq and International Order: From Bull to Bush', *International Studies Review* 6 (1) (2004), p. 196.

definitively in the United States' favour. Part of the problem here is that realist scholarship has, in the most part, assumed that, in accordance with balance of power logic, no single state can become a hegemon. Therefore, realist theory has not fully considered state behaviour that does not accord with the status quo. Realist theorists have focused on the role of multipolar and bipolar world orders, and the implications of this for the balance of power, rather than analysing the principles that undergird hegemonic order.[7] Until recently, for instance, international relations scholarship had assumed that multipolar systems are more war prone than bipolar systems, and that states will balance against a rising power, or threatening state.[8] Indeed, realist theory has provided a contradictory assessment for the propensity for war in a unipolar order. Kenneth Waltz argued that unipolarity provokes competition due to the hegemon's incentive to increase its security through expansion.[9] While Robert Gilpin, on the other hand, argues the international system is more stable with a skewed distribution of power due to the hegemon's capacity to set and enforce the rules of international politics.[10]

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[7] For hegemonic order theorists, see, for instance, John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Instiutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). For scholars arguing that the balance of power is now a redundant theory, see, for instance, Margarita Petrova, The End of the Cold War: A Battle for Bridging Ground between Rationalist and Ideational Approaches in International Relations?', *European Journal of International Relations* 9 (1) (2003), pp. 115-163. For discussions of bandwagoning, see, for instance, Randall Schweller, 'Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In', *International Security* 19 (1) (1994), pp. 71-107 and Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

[8] See, for instance, Jack Levy, 'The Causes of War: A Review of Theories and Evidence', In *Behavior, Society, and Nuclear War*, ed. P.E. Tetlock et al., pp. 209-333 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Colin Elman, 'Horses for Courses: Why Nor Neorealist Theories of Foreign Policy', *Security Studies* 6 (1) (1996), pp. 7-53.

[9] Kenneth N. Waltz, 'Evaluating Theories', *American Political Science Review* 91 (4) (December 1997), pp. 915-916.

[10] Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

The argument in this chapter is that the Iraq War can be understood, in part, by balance of power theory. It argues that the liberal Wilsonian belief in cooperation is connected to the bandwagoning logic.[11] It argues that this unit-level variable (i.e. Wilsonianism) is premised on other states aligning with a powerful liberal hegemon to stabilise the regional order. The Wilsonian's concluded that liberating Iraq from Saddam's dictatorship would inspire or compel other Middle East nations to bandwagon with the United States. The decision to use the United States military as a tool to wage a war of regime change then, rather than to coerce or deter, would generate a democratic wave throughout the Middle East. In this respect, such an approach aligns with scholarly arguments that suggest a unipolar order fosters stability, rather than instability, as the a state holding a preponderant amount of power "generates incentives for cooperation".[12]

The argument will unfold across five sections. First, I consider the structural factors that President George W. Bush confronted in his first years in the White House. This considers not only the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States but also how these events impacted on President Bush's world view. Second, we examine the United States war in Iraq. This outlines the various way that the Bush administration attempted to solicit support for the Iraq War. It argues that while democracy promotion was at the centre of the decision to invade Iraq, the threat of weapons of mass destruction were used as an inducement to garner support. Third, I consider a strategy of primacy. The central argument in this section is that while offensive realism and primacy have much in common, they diverge over the influence of unit-level variables in guiding state behavior; offensive realism believes systemic factors encourage states to maximize power, while primacy considers this as a

[11] The author is aware that bandwagoning is considered the opposite of balancing. Stephen Van Evera was the first to consider bandwagoning the opposite of balancing. See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 126.

[12] Wohlhorth, 'The Stability of a Unipolar Order', p 38.

decision states purposefully make. Fourth, I explore liberalism and neo-conservatism. The focus here is demonstrating how neo-conservatism was born out of liberalism's perceived failures, encouraging neo-conservatives to reconfigure Wilsonian principles upon illiberal lines i.e., unilateralism took precedent over multilateralism, force was understood as being more effective than diplomacy, and institutions were no longer conceived as influential mechanisms on state behavior. The core argument here is that ultimately Wilsonianism is only liberal in form and not in substance or practice. And finally, I consider realist responses to the Iraq War. I contend the realist theory is unable to account for the United States invasion of Iraq because of its status quo bias that assumes states pursue security over power. In this respect, realism is unable to account for decisions that run counter to structural incentives. Realism's status quo bias, therefore, leaves it unable to consider that other states will bandwagon with the most powerful state in the region.

Structural Input

President Clinton's 2001 National Security Strategy (NSS) did not consider terrorism a primary threat to the United States. When terrorism was mentioned, it was largely done in the context of other transnational threats, including drug trafficking and international crime. For Clinton, the overarching concern was the continued pursuance of the "engagement and enlargement strategy" that was first iterated in his 1994 NSS.[13] President Clinton's primary goal was to shape the international environment in ways that "promote[d] peace, stability and prosperity" so that processes of "democratization, open markets, free trade, and sustainable development" were able to be strengthened.[14] These objective were to be achieved by "countering regional aggressors" like North Korea, and "adapting alliances; and

[13] 'A National Security Strategy of Engagment and Enlargement', The White House (July 1994). Accessed at http://nssarchive.us/national-security-strategy-1994/

[14] 'A National Security Strategy for a Global Age', *The White House* (December 2000), pp. 5-6. Accessed at http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/2001.pdf

encouraging the reorientation of other states, including former adversaries".[15] The main tools of statecraft to advance this strategy, according to President Clinton, was diplomacy, international assistance and international law enforcement.

When George W. Bush was running for president in 2000 he did not immediately seek to challenge the premise of Clinton's foreign policy agenda. When debating Democratic nominee, Al Gore, Bush preferred to debate domestic concerns such as Medicare and tax cuts in addition to the character and credibility of the two leaders.[16] Indeed, Bush admitted that foreign policy issues were not his strong suite, evident in the infamous *Glamour Magazine* interview he gave on the campaign trail. The New York Times notes:

> When a writer for Glamour Magazine recently uttered the word "Taliban" – the regime in Afghanistan that follows an extreme and repressive version of Islamic law -- during a verbal Rorschach test, Mr. Bush could only shake his head in silence. It was only after the writer gave him a hint ("repression of women in Afghanistan") that Mr. Bush replied, "Oh. I thought you said some band. The Taliban in Afghanistan! Absolutely. Repressive.[17]

Bush first outlined his foreign policy vision during the Republican Party presidential primaries in 1999, stating that as president he would pursue stronger relations with China and Russia, noting that they "are powers in transition ... If they become America's friends, that friendship will steady the world. But if not, the peace we seek

[15] Ibid., p. 8.

[16] See, for instance, Alison Mitchel, 'THE 2000 CAMPAIGN: THE STRATEGY; SHIFTING TACTICS, BUSH USES ISSUES TO CONFRONT GORE', The New York Times (September 16, 2000). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/2000/09/16/us/2000-campaign-strategy-shifting-tactics-bush-uses-issues-confront-gore.html

[17] Elaine Sciolino, 'The 2000 Campaign: The Advisor; Bush's Foreign Policy Tutor: An Academic in the Public Eye', The New York Times (June 16, 2000). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/16/world/2000-campaign-advisor-bush-s-foreign-policy-tutor-academic-public-eye.html

may not be found".[18] In many respects, this signalled a level of consistency in United States foreign policy through which cooperation with allies and enemies would remain the cornerstone of America's engagement with the world. Yet, Bush also attempted to delicately refashion his foreign policy image by offering a distinct alternative to Clinton administration's foreign policy program. Bush criticised President Clinton for overextending the America military while undertaking a series of budgetary cuts, arguing instead, that under his leadership the military would adopt a more limited global presence and that funding would be increased to allow the military to perform their duties to a superior standard. This outlook led many to believe that the combination of an increase in the defence budget with the retrenchment of the military would ultimately amount to an isolationist foreign policy.[19] Indeed, this perception was reinforced when Condoleezza Rice, his then foreign policy advisor, published an article in *Foreign Affairs* that chastised the Clinton administration for viewing multilateral institutionalism as an end itself, which she argued, undermined the America's national interest.[20]

The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World trade Centre in New York rescinded any predilection toward a retrenchment strategy. President Bush's immediate response to the terrorist attack was to garner international support. He turned to the United Nations, European partners, and allies such as Australia. The United Nations quickly condemned the attacks and passed Resolution 1373 that aimed

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[18] Governor George W. Bush, 'A Distinctly American Internationalism', (Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, California, November 19, 1999". Accessed at https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/bush/wspeech.htm

[19] Ivan Eland, 'Overextended Military: Is This the Bush Administration or Clinton Administration II?', The CATO Institute ((February 2, 2002). Accessed at https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/overextended-military-is-bush-administration-or-clinton-administration-ii

[20] Condoleezza Rice, 'Campaign 2000: Promoting the National Interest', Foreign Affairs (January/February 2000). Accessed at https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2000-01-01/campaign-2000-promoting-national-interest

to combat international terrorism through financial mechanism, targeting states that funded terrorist activities.[21] NATO took the unprecedented step of invoking Article V of the Treaty that notes "an attack against one ally is considered as an attack against all Allies".[22] And Australia similarly invoked, for the first time, Article VI of the ANZUS Treaty, which the Australian Parliament endorsed on the 17 September, 2001.

President Bush relied exclusively on a group of experienced advisors to guide America's response to this terrorist attack. Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay provide the background of the eight advisors at Bush's helm:

> The group was led by Condoleezza Rice, the provost at Stanford University and previously his father's White House adviser on the Soviet Union, and Paul Wolfowitz, the dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and Undersecretary for Defense Policy in the first Bush administration. The other Vulcans were Richard Armitage, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs in the Reagan administration; Robert Blackwill, White House adviser on European and Soviet affairs in the first Bush administration; Stephen J. Hadley, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy in the first Bush administration; Richard Perle, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy during the Reagan administration; Dov Zakheim, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Planning and Resources in the Reagan administration; and Robert Zoellick, Undersecretary of State for Economic Affairs and White House Deputy Chief of Staff during the first Bush administration.[23]

This team was tasked with developing a coherent strategy in response to a threat that had until now never been fully considered: a non-state actor that had demonstrated the means and capacity to target American soil. While military strength,

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[21] 'SECURITY COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTS WIDE-RANGING ANTI-TERRORISM RESOLUTION; CALLS FOR SUPPRESSING FINANCING, IMPROVING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION', The United Nations (28 September 2001). Accessed at https://www.un.org/press/en/2001/sc7158.doc.htm

[22] 'Collective Defence - Article 5', North Atlatntic Treaty Organization. Accessed at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm

[23] Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay, 'The Bush Revolution: The Reamking of America's Foreing Policy', The Brookings Institition (April 2003), p. 2.

multilateralism, democracy promotion, free-trade and individual liberties, had to a large extent undergirded America's engagement with the world, this strategic shock demanded a review of American tools of statecraft.

President Bush's 2002 National Security Strategy is the best representation of this revised strategy. This was released when the war in Afghanistan had been in operation for eleven months, culminating in the Taliban government being overthrown for their failure to hand over Osama bin Laden and close Al-Qaeda training camps. The NSS provided a characterisation of the Bush administration's worldview, outlining their perceptions and interpretations of the preeminent threats that America now faced. The strategy noted that "The gravest danger our Nation faces lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. Our enemies have openly declared that they are seeking weapons of mass destruction, and evidence indicates that they are doing so with determination".[24] Thus, the connection between terrorist activity and weapons of mass destruction was ushered in as the gravest threat to American security. The NSS states:

> But new deadly challenges have emerged from rogue states and terrorists. None of these contemporary threats rival the sheer destructive power that was arrayed against us by the Soviet Union. However, the nature and motivations of these new adversaries, their determination to obtain destructive powers hitherto available only to the world's strongest states, and the greater likelihood that they will use weapons of mass destruction against us, make today's security environment more complex and dangerous.[25]

President Bush traversed similar ground in his famous West Point speech in June 2002 noting, "The gravest danger to freedom lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology—when that occurs, even weak states and small

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[24] The White House, The National Security of the United States of America (September 2002), p. 4 Accessed at http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/2002.pdf

[25] Ibid, p. 13.

groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations. Our enemies have declared this very intention, and have been caught seeking these terrible weapons. They want the capability to blackmail us, or to harm us, or to harm our friends—and we will oppose them with all our power".[26]

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the NSS was the willingness to act pre-emptively against terrorist cells with the potential to use weapons of mass destruction against the United States. The document noted that the United States would "act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defence by acting pre-emptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country".[27] Attentive to the legal implications of this declaration, President Bush noted that legal scholars had "conditioned the legitimacy of pre-emption on the existence of an imminent threat" whereby the United States would now be required to "adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today's adversaries".[28]

Of course, this was not the first time the United States had reserved the right to act pre-emptively. Melvyn Leffler reminds us that President Clinton's "Presidential Decision Directive 39" of 1995 had also approved a pre-emptive strike against terrorist targets.[29] This Directive noted that "the U.S. shall pursue vigorously efforts to deter and pre-empt, apprehend and prosecute, or assist other governments to prosecute, individuals who perpetrate or plan to perpetrate such attacks".[30] Yet, the question that

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[26] Text of Bush's Speech at West Point (June 1, 2002). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/01/international/text-of-bushs-speech-at-west-point.html

[27] The White House, The National Security of the United States of America (September 2002), p. 6 Accessed at http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/2002.pdf

[28] Ibid., p15.

[29] Melvyn Leffler, 'Bush's Foreign Policy', *Foreign Policy* 144 (September/October 2004), p. 24.

[30] The White House, *Presidential Decision Directive 39* (June 21, 1995). Accessed at https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd39.htm

concerns us here is not the declaration to act pre-emptively, but the objective that was to be pursued when undertaking such an act. While, as we saw in the previous chapter, President Reagan sought to deter and coerce belligerent states to maintain the status quo, President George W. Bush intervened in Iraq to remake the regional balance of power .

The 2003 Iraq War

President George W. Bush's decision to invade Iraq in 2003 should not be considered an act solely undertaken in response to the September 11 attacks. As is well understood, Saddam Hussein had previously dismissed some sixteen UN Security Council resolutions passed between 1991 and 2002.[31] Yet, it was perhaps President Bush's desire to secure a seventeenth resolution (Resolution 1441) that was labelled "a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations", which ultimately encouraged the United States to move toward war. This resolution, which drew particular attention to Resolution 687 adopted in 1991 at the conclusion of the first Iraq War, mandated "full disclosure of all of Iraq's ballistic missile stocks (with a range of more than 150km) and production facilities, all nuclear materials, and all chemical and biological weapons and facilities as well as cooperation in their destruction".[32] The Resolution requested that Iraq "unconditionally undertake not to use, develop, construct or acquire" weapons of mass destruction.[33] Although Saddam adhered to these mandates, allowing inspectors to enter the country and turning over Iraqi intelligence documentation, the US was ultimately not satisfied that Saddam had provided full and complete access.[34]

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[31] Security Council Holds Iraq in 'Material Breach' of Disarmament Obligations, Offers Final Chance to Comply, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1441 (November 8, 2002). Accessed at https://www.un.org/press/en/2002/SC7564.doc.htm

[32] Steve Yetiv, *The Absence of Grand Strategy* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2008), p. 93.

[33] Ibid.

Thus, on March 19, 2003 the US and the "coalition of the willing" that included 49 countries (with only the United States, United Kingdom, Poland and Denmark providing troops) invaded Iraq. The war was not sanctioned by the UN and many believed that Resolution 1441 did not provide the legal grounds for the invasion. Tomasz Iwanek, for instance, noted:

> That a breach of that Resolution is insufficient legal grounds for invasion. The Resolution is not explicit enough to warrant such construction and cannot claim to lift or abolish an existing state of cease-fire. It was for the UN not for individual states to decide whether Iraq had failed to fulfil its obligations to such an extent as to warrant punitive military action.[35]

Of course, Colin Powell justified the incursion in his infamous UN speech in February 2003 where he provided "additional information" regarding Iraq's weapons program. Powell noted that "the facts on Iraq's behavior demonstrate that Saddam Hussein and his regime have made no effort - no effort - to disarm as required by the international community. Indeed, the facts and Iraq's behavior show that Saddam Hussein and his regime are concealing their efforts to produce more weapons of mass destruction". According to Powell then, "the core assessments made by Dr Blix and Dr El-Baradei" demonstrate that "Iraq appears not to have come to a genuine acceptance, not even today, of the disarmament which was demanded of it".[36] This speech had a profound impact in connecting the United States decision to invade Iraq with the notion of pre-emptive self-defence discussed above. From this perspective, it is plausible to conclude the invasion of Iraq turned on Saddam Hussein's willingness to develop, acquire, and use weapons of mass destruction against the United States. Indeed, Robert Jervis has demonstrated that the intelligence assessment conceivably led many

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[34] Michael Byers, 'Agreeing to Disagree: Security Council Resolution 1441 and Intentional Ambiguity', *Global Governance* 10 (1) (2004), pp. 165-186.

[35] Tomasz Iwanek, The 2003 Invasion of Iraq', Journal of Conflict and Security Law 15 (1) (2010), pp. 89-116.

[36] Full text of Colin Powell's speech 'US secretary of state's address to the United Nations security council'. Accessed at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/feb/05/iraq.usa

to believe Iraq did hold weapons of mass destruction, and therefore, should not be immediately dismissed as a tool that was "politicized" by those in power.[37] Jervis notes that the investigations into why intelligence failed make clear that "many of the ICs' [Intelligence community] judgments were stated with excessive certainty: while the preponderance of evidence indicated that Iraq had WMD, it was not sufficient to prove it beyond reasonable doubt".[38]

The United States apprehension was further heightened through the possibility that Saddam might share biological and chemical weapons with terrorist organisations such as al Qaeda. Vice President Cheney reiterated these concerns in his 2002 Veterans of Foreign Wars speech noting that, "Time is not on our side. Deliverable weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a terror network, or a murderous dictator, or the two working together, constitutes as grave a threat as can be imagined. The risks of inaction are far greater than the risk of action".[39] The association between terrorist cells and weapons of mass destruction in many ways became the defining feature that justified the United states invasion of Iraq.

Yet, the veracity of these arguments has been challenged through recently declassified documents that suggest the administration sought to "justify" the invasion of Iraq in ways that resonated with American citizens. For instance, a meeting between General Tommy Franks and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld outlined the need to "focus on WMD", while acknowledging the ultimate aim of the war was the "decapitation of government". [40] Andrew Bacevich also noted that "the official" reason for invading

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[37] Robert Jervis, 'Reports, Politics, and Intelligence Failures: The Case of Iraq', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 29 (1) (2006), p. 7.

[38] Ibid., p. 14.

[39] Remarks by the Vice President to the Veterans of Foreign Wars 103rd National Convention, 26 August 2002. Accessed at https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/08/20020826.html

[40] 'Talking points for the Rumsfeld-Franks meeting' *National Security Archive* November 27, 2001. Accessed at https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB326/doc08.pdf

Iraq "offered by the Bush administration itself and seconded by many of the war's most ardent supporters, cited the putative threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. Yet in reality, this was a cover story. As Paul Wolfowitz acknowledged, WMD offered "the one issue that everyone could agree on".[41] Thus, the desire for WMD to be used as a decoy to conceal other motives for the United States occupation has opened the space for almost any justification to be accepted as the "reason" for the 2003 Iraq war.

Consequently, many have posited more cynical explanations for the war. Raymond Hinnebusch, for instance, argues that the United States invasion of Iraq was primarily a bid to secure oil reserves for future American prosperity. Hinnebusch asserts that:

> …the argument that oil was not decisive so flies in the face of common sense that the burden of proof lies on those who deny it. It also begs the question as to why the country sitting atop the world's second largest oil reserves and which posed no threat to the US should have been targeted while North Korea, whose nuclear capabilities were real not hypothetical but did not possess oil , was spared.[42]

Many have furthered these conspiratorial theories and suggested the "military industrial complex" was the motivating force behind the invasion due to the potential for increased sales of missiles, ammunition, and weapons.[43] Meanwhile, other scholars have pointed to Israel as the defining factor that led the United States to launch a war in the Middle East. From this perspective, Israel's quest for regional hegemony could be achieved, they argue, by encouraging religious and sectarian fragmentation in Iraq.[44] This argument is similar to those analysts that suggest the roots of the war can be traced to a desire to "transform strategically located Iraq into a permanent base for

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[41] Andrew Bacevich, *America's War for the Greater Middle East*, p. 239

[42] Raymond Hinnebusch, 'The US Invasion of Iraq: Explanations and Implications', *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 16 (3) (2007), p. 212.

[43] Steve Yetiv, *The Absence of Grand Strategy*, p. 131.

[44] Stephen J. Sniegoski, Paul Findley, and Paul Gottfried, *The Transparent Cabal: The Neoconservative Agenda, War in the Middle East, and the National Interest of Israel* (Virgina: HIS Press, 2008). pp. 45-57.

the projection of American military power and political influence throughout the Middle East and Central Asia".[45] And finally, Andrew Bacevich has recently argued:

> In reality, the Bush administration invaded Iraq in order to validate three precedent-setting and mutually reinforcing positions. First, the United States was intent on establishing the efficacy of preventative war. Second, it was going to assert the prerogative, permitted to no other country, of removing regimes that Washington deemed odious. And finally, it was seeking to reverse the practice of exempting the Islamic world from neoliberal standards, demonstrating that what Condoleezza Rice called "the paradigms of success" – democracy, limited government, market economies, and respect for human (especially women's) rights.[46]

Yet, the above justifications cannot adequately explain why the United States administration fought the particular type of war that it did, and do not demonstrate why the overthrow of the Iraqi army and government, along with killing the country's leader, were deemed a necessary prerequisite toward their stated goals. The alleged pre-invasion connections between Iraq and terrorist organizations such as al Qaeda were in fact made a reality through the Bush administration's failure to adequately plan for the post-overthrow security situation. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the military strategy deployed in Iraq within the context of the broader strategy of primacy, of which it was arguably an expression of.

A Strategy of Primacy

The strategy of primacy contradicts the core tenets of realist strategy. While realism assumes the natural tendency of states is to balance against power or threat, primacy heads in a different direction and suggests that the United States can and should hold a predominant amount of power in the international system. This strategy emerged with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the United States arising as the world's sole superpower. A central question for policy-makers in Washington as the American

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[45] Ronald Steel, 'An Iraq Syndrome', *Survival* 49 (1) (2007), p. 154.

[46] Andrew Bacevich, *America's War for the Greater Middle East* (New York: Random House, 2016)

"unipolar moment" dawned was deceptively simple: what should the country's grand strategy now be? It spawned vociferous debate in the United States, and elsewhere, producing calls for a variety of strategies from "neo-isolationism" to "offshore balancing" to explicit American "hegemony".[47] What united such disparate approaches was a central concern that the United States be able to correctly identify and sustain a coherent way to ensure its national security at a time of profound geopolitical change. For those such as Nordlinger or Layne who advocated for *less* rather than more US engagement throughout the globe, the disappearance of the Soviet threat provided Washington with a unique window of opportunity to achieve Walter Lippman's great ideal of a "solvent" foreign policy. For Lippmann, the "constant preoccupation of the true statesman" should be to construct a foreign policy that brings into balance, "with a comfortable surplus of power in reserve, the nation's commitments and the nation's power".[48]

Such calls were countered by alternative arguments that conceived of the "unipolar moment" as historically unique one whereby Washington could ensure benign United States hegemony for decades to come.[49] The grand strategy by which such a goal could be achieved was primacy. Primacy, Robert Jervis notes, not only "means being much more powerful than any other state according to the usual and crude measures of power (e.g., gross national product; size of the armed forces; lack of economic, political, and geographic vulnerabilities)" but also having the ability to "establish, or at least strongly influence, 'the rules of the game' by which international politics is played, the intellectual framework employed[…]and the standards by which behavior

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[47] Charles Krauthammer, 'The Unipolar Moment', *Foreign Affairs* 70 (1) (1990/1991), pp. 23-33; Eric Nordlinger, *Isolationism Reconfigured: American Foreign Policy for a New Century* (Princeton. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Layne, Christopher Layne, 'The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise', *International Security* 17 (4) (1993): 5–51.

[48] Walter Lippman 1943. *US Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1943), p. 9

[49] Charles Krauthammer, 'The Unipolar Moment', *Foreign Affairs* 70 (1) (1990/1991), pp. 23-33; Eric Nordlinger, *Isolationism Reconfigured: American Foreign Policy for a New Century* (Princeton. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995);

is judged to be legitimate".[50] Primacists share a realist appreciation of "power, force, conflict and national self-interest in international relations" but are more ambitious as they sought not a balance of power but preponderance of power on behalf of the United States and its close allies' in order to pre-empt any potential peer competitors and foster the development of a liberal world order.[51] "States pursue primacy", Samuel Huntington famously argued, not only "in order to be able to insure their security, promote their interests, and shape the international environment in ways that will reflect their interests and values" but "to achieve the state's goals without recourse to war".[52] The United States having achieved primacy with the end of the Cold War, he concluded, had "every reason to attempt to maintain that primacy through peaceful means so as to preclude the need of having to fight a war to maintain it".[53]

With the election of George W. Bush to the presidency, the United States' pursuit of primacy with a "human face" of the Clinton years shifted ultimately toward a much more muscular iteration. Although as a presidential candidate George W. Bush presented, for some, a restrained vision of American primacy - for instance castigating the Clinton administration during the presidential debate with Vice President Al Gore in 2000 for using the American military to "nation build" in places such as Somalia, Haiti and Bosnia – he nonetheless shared a number of the core assumptions that had guided American post-Cold War grand strategy. In a November 1999 address at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, Bush called for an "American internationalism" that resonated with the grand strategies of both his father's and Clinton's administrations:

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[50] Robert Jervis, 'International Primacy: Is the Game Worth the Candle'? *International Security* 17 (4) (1993), p. 52–53.

[51] Colin Dueck, 'Ideas and Alternatives in American Grand Strategy, 2000–2004', *Review of International Studies* 30 (4) (2004), pp. 515-516.

[52] Samuel Huntington, 'Why International Primacy Matters', *International Security* 17 (4) (1993), p. 53.

[53] Ibid, pp. 53-54.

> Some have tried to pose a choice between American ideals and American interests—between who we are and how we act. But the choice is false. America, by decision and destiny, promotes political freedom – and gains the most when democracy advances. America believes in free markets and free trade – and benefits most when markets are opened. America is a peaceful power – and gains the greatest dividend from democratic stability. Precisely because we have no territorial objectives, our gains are not measured in the losses of others. They are counted in the conflicts we avert, the prosperity we share and the peace we extend.[54]

Bush presaged his administration's approach when he argued that unlike the Clinton administration, under his leadership the United States would not rely on international arms control agreements that were "not verifiable" and "not enforceable" to "diminish the evil attraction of these weapons for rogue states" but rather on developing ballistic missile defence capabilities and the United States' nuclear arsenal.[55]

Condolezza Rice, then candidate Bush's foreign policy adviser, reiterated these themes in her *Foreign Affairs* article mentioned above, stressing that a George W. Bush presidency would "renew and strengthen alliances", ensure that the United States would have the military capabilities to "deter war, project power and protect" American interests, and deal "decisively" with "rogue states", WMD proliferation and terrorism.[56] In contrast to the Clinton administration, Rice claimed, a Bush administration would marry a belief in the universality of American values like democracy, free markets and human rights with a clear appreciation that power mattered in international politics. Hence a Bush administration would notionally be best positioned to utilise the United States' pre-eminent military, economic and

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[54] George W. Bush, 'A Distinctly American Internationalism." *Address at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library* (Simi Valley, California, November 19, 1999". Accessed at https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/bush/wspeech.htm.

[55]Ibid. .

[56] Condolezza Rice, 'Promoting the National Interest', *Foreign Affairs* 79 (1) (2000), pp, 46-47.

political power to favor "those who believe" in these universal values.[57] Prior to coming into office, then, George W. Bush's world-view was thus best described as a form of "hegemonic realism" that emphasized that the best means of attaining American interests and national security was through the pursuit of enduring primacy and extension of the "unipolar moment".[58]

The events of 9/11 served to intensify the administration's belief that only by crafting a grand strategy based on the universality of American values and the primacy of American power could it ensure both national and international security. This link was most notably elucidated in President Bush's January 2002 State of the Union address. While the president famously identified North Korea, Iran and Iraq as constituting an "axis of evil" due to their sponsorship of terrorism and WMD proliferation, he also argued that "this will be a decisive decade in the history of liberty" and that the United States had been "called to a unique role in human events".[59] This "unique role" was not only about "eliminating threats and containing resentment" but seeking "a just and peaceful world beyond the war on terror".[60]

This was subsequently reinforced by the President's June speech at West Point .[61] Bush reaffirmed his commitment to the maintenance of American primacy, declaring that, "America has, and intends to keep, military strengths beyond challenges – thereby making the destabilizing arms races of other eras pointless, and limiting rivalries to

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[57] Ibid, p. 47.

[58] Daadler, Ivo Daadler and James Lindsay, *The Bush Revolution: The Remaking of America's Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2003), p. 9; Steven Hurst, 'Myths of Neoconservatism: George W. Bush's 'Neo-conservative' Foreign Policy Revisited', *International Politics* 42 (1) (2005). p, 77.

[59] George W. Bush. Full Transcript: *State of the Union Address* (29 January 2002). Accessed at http://edition.cnn.com/2002/ALLPOLITICS/01/29/bush.speech.txt/index.html?_s=PM:ALLPOLITICS

[60] Ibid.

[61] Neta Crawford, 'The Road to Global Empire: The Logic of US Foreign Policy after 9/11', *Orbis* 48 (4) (2004), p. 693.

trade and other pursuits of peace".[62] Such pre-eminent power, however, would be used not simply to ensure the nation's defence but to secure a "just peace" that "favors human liberty" throughout the world. This cause, moreover, was both "America's opportunity and America's duty", and was confronted by a "threat with no precedent" through the "perilous crossroads of radicalism and technology" whereby "weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations".[63] In this context the United States could no longer rely on Cold War-era strategies of deterrence and containment but rather must pre-empt such threats:

> Deterrence, the promise of massive retaliation against nations, means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies. We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants who solemnly sign nonproliferation treaties and then systematically break them. *If we wait for threats to fully materialize we will have waited too long*.[64]

This alignment between values and primacy was clearly detailed in the September 2002 National Security Strategy. The NSS highlighted the administration's belief that American power was inherently "benign and redeeming force in international politics".[65] Echoing the president's West Point address, the foreword to the NSS noted that while "the United States enjoys a position of unparalleled military strength and great economic and political influence" it would use this position not to "press for

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[62] George W. Bush, Remarks of President George W. Bush to the US Military Academy (June 1, 2002). Accessed at http://www.cfr.org/world/remarks-us-military-academy/p5664

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid, emphasis added.

[65] Jonathan Monten, 'The Roots of the Bush Doctrine: Power, Nationalism, and Democracy Promotion in U.S. Strategy', *International Security* 29 (4) (2005), p. 131.

unilateral advantage" but instead "seek instead to create a balance of power that favors human freedom".[66] "The US national security strategy", the document continued, would be, "based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the fusion of our values and our national interests" and would aim "to help make the world not just safer but better".[67] The way that this could be achieved was through the spread of the "single model for national success…freedom, democracy and free enterprise".[68]

Second, the central threat of the post-9/11 world – the potential nexus of "rogue states", WMD proliferation and terrorism - meant that "the United States can no longer rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past". Rather, the "inability to deter a potential attacker", the "immediacy" of threat and the "magnitude of potential harm that could be caused by our adversaries' choice of weapons" required that the United States "will, if necessary, act pre-emptively" in order to "forestall or prevent such hostile acts".[69] For some observers this amounted to a strategy not of pre-emption but rather prevention whereby, "Imminent threat is no longer the trigger for pre-emption; the threat is imminent: adversaries are always out to get us and capable of doing so. It is not what they have or intend to do right now, it is what they might get or think about doing in the future".[70]

Third, and flowing from this need to combat the imminent threat posed by the nexus of rogue states, WMD and terrorism, the NSS asserted the United States' right to act unilaterally to prevent "the enemies of civilization" acquiring "the world's most

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[66] George W. Bush, National Security Strategy of the United States of America (Washington DC: September, 2002), p. iv. Accessed at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf

[67] Ibid, p. 1

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid, pp. 14-15.

[70] Neta Crawford, 'The Road to Global Empire: The Logic of US Foreign Policy after 9/11', Orbis 48 (4) (2004), p. 695; Jeffrey Record, 'The Bush Doctrine and War with Iraq', Parameters, 33(1) (2003), p. : 4-21.

destructive technologies".[71] Finally, the NSS reaffirmed the administration's commitment to maintain American military pre-eminence, asserting that, "Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equalling, the power of the United States".[72]

Taken as a whole, the logic underpinning the administration's approach was explicitly primacist in nature. It was based on two inter-related assumptions: that the maintenance of overwhelming American material power, combined with its commitment to liberal values, would in fact dissuade rather than provoke peer competition. The administration appeared to subscribe to the view elucidated by William Wohlforth that a unipolar order based on American primacy actually "prone to peace".[73] American primacy would achieve this by dissuading hegemonic rivalry, minimizing security competition amongst the great powers, limiting expensive major power competition through the maintenance of "key security institutions", and providing incentives for others to bandwagon with the United States by ensuring that the costs of balancing were prohibitive.[74]

This view endured both before and after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. During an address to the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) in February 2003, Bush declared that the pre-eminent threat to international security – the nexus of rogue states, terrorism and WMD proliferation - came from those, such as Iraq, "who flout" the "just demands of the civilized world".[75] If the United States had to act against Iraq, he continued, "we

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[71] George W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington DC: September, 2002), pp. 14-15. Accessed at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf

[72] Ibid, p. 30.

[73] William C. Wohlforth, 'The Stability of a Unipolar World', *International Security*, 24 (1) (1999), p. 7

[74] Ibid, pp. 7-8.

[75] The Guardian 'Full text: George Bush's speech to the American Enterprise Institute', February 27, 2003). Accessed at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/feb/27/usa.iraq2

will signal to outlaw regimes that in this new century, the boundaries of civilized behavior will be respected".[76] By taking action to disarm such "rogues", the president concluded, the United States would "make this an age of progress and liberty" in which "free people will set the course of history, and free people will keep the peace of the world".[77] Meanwhile, in his second inaugural address, President Bush asserted, in language reminiscent of Strobe Talbott's 1999 statement on Kosovo, that:

> The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world. *America's vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one*…So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.[78]

The administration, as Adam Quinn has argued, thus "showed no appreciation of the realist sensibility's desire to base world order on a balance of power" but rather interpreted the concentration of enormous material power in the hands of one state as "a positive feature of world order so long as the hands in question are those of a 'civilised' power disposed to use them for extension of civilisation's writ".[79] Thus, the Bush administration believed American primacy would be met agreeably by the international community and that it provided a tool to make the world safer. Before turning our attention to the bandwagoning assumption of this strategy it is first necessary to consider the neo-conservative influence in United States statecraft.

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[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] George W. Bush 'Full Transcript: Second Inaugural Address' (January 20, 2005). Accessed at http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4460172

[79] Adam Quinn, '*US Foreign Policy in Context: National Ideology from the Founders to the Bush Doctrine* (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 157.

The Unit-level Variable: The Wilsonian Tradition

A unipolar power has a variety of strategies at its disposal. The skewed distribution of power does not determine what strategy the hegemon will ultimately adopt. The structural constraints that are evident within a bipolar or multipolar order no longer apply when a single state holds a preponderance of power. Thus, and as Nuno Monteiro has recently noted, "to say the world is unipolar is to describe the systemic distribution of power, not the strategy of the sole great power".[80] Therefore, when looking to understand the United States decision to invade Iraq unit-level variables play a critical intervening role. Stephan Krasner had previously connected power and ideology in driving hegemonic states expansionist tendencies when he noted, "Only states whose resources are very large, both absolutely and relatively, can engage in imperial policies, can attempt to impose their vision on other countries and the global system. And it is only here that ideology becomes a critical determinant of the objectives of foreign policy."[81] The argument in this section is that the Wilsonian tradition of United States foreign policy had a critical role in President Bush's decision to spread democracy to the Middle East. In this sense, President Bush adopted a hard-nosed neoconservative approach that militarised Wilsonian morals, values, and interests.

President Wilson, the 28th President of the United States who served from 1913-1921, had a profound impact on advancing the moral dimensions of American statecraft and expediently increased the United States engagement with the world. Wilson considered the combination of these two elements (moralism andengagement) as working in harmony with each other so that the spread of American values would enhance not only American security but also advance global security.

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[80] Nuno Monteiro, 'Rest Assured: Why Why Unipolarity is not Peaceful', *International Security* 36 (3) (2011/2012), p. 14.

[81] Stephen D. Krasner, *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials Investments and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 340.

In devising the United States foreign policy agenda, Wilson first and foremost considered the morally "right" policy to adopt, rather than what would necessarily bring the United States the greatest strategic advantage.[82] President Wilson noted that "There is 'only one way for parties and individuals to win the confidence of this Nation and that is by doing the things that *ought* to be done".[83] Thus, for President Wilson, the "right" foreign policy was defined as an act that served the liberty and humanity of mankind. By placing these principles at the forefront of his decision-making process Wilson understood America's engagement with the world in an increasingly benign way. In an address in 1916 titled 'Need of an Army and Navy', Wilson outlined the desire to build the national reserve to "half a million trained citizens", noting "This America that we thought was full of a multitude of contrary counsels now speaks with the great volume of the heart's accord, and that great heart of America has behind it the supreme moral force of righteousness and hope and the liberty of mankind".[84] Wilson's foreign policy, therefore, was driven by moral imperatives that saw the armed services used a tool to advance these interests.

Indeed, in an address to the Gridiron Club in Washington, Wilson outlined the "basis of his foreign policy" that was "founded upon the profound principle of human liberty and of humanity, and whenever it bases its policy upon any other foundation than those that it builds upon the sand and not upon the solid rock".[85] For Wilson, these principles of liberty and humanity were used to frame his understanding of World War I that was then raging in Europe and which America had not yet entered:

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[82] Arthur Link, *The Higher Realism of Woodrow Wilson and Other Essays* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1971), p.129.

[83] Woodrow Wilson, *Selected Literary and Political Papers and Addresses of Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1918), p. 104. Emphasis added.

[84] Woodrow Wilson, *Selected Literary and Political Papers and Addresses of Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1918), p. 105.

[85] Woodrow Wilson, *Selected Literary and Political Papers and Addresses of Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1918), p. 107.

> America ought to keep out of this war. She ought to keep out of this war at the sacrifice of everything except this single thing upon which her character and history are founded, her sense of humanity and justice. If she sacrifices that, she has ceased to be America; she has ceased to entertain and to love the traditions which have made us proud to be Americans; and when we go about seeking safety at the expense of humanity, then I, for one, will believe that I have always been mistaken in what I have conceived to be the spirit of American history.[86]

Critically, President Wilson placed these moral dimensions above the material incentives found within the Hamiltonian tradition. Notwithstanding the importance of economic wealth to advance American interests, President Wilson noted "America is not going to be immortal because she has immense wealth….but rather because of the ideas she has conceived…..the purposes she has set herself to achieve….because she has seen visions that other nations have not seen….and because it sought the liberty of mankind".[87] Thus, while the Hamiltonian and Wilsonian traditions both share an affinity with the extroverted traits of American foreign policy, as opposed to the introverted tendencies of the Jacksonian and Jeffersonian traditions, they ultimately pursue different objectives i.e., for Wilsonian's, economic strength is a means to an end and not an end in itself. Adam Quinn notes that "Wilson would later cite America's entry into the Great War as vindication of his belief that material prosperity could be subordinated to the service of ideals, arguing that America's sacrifice would 'show that we were not accumulating that wealth selfishly, but were accumulating if for the service of mankind".[88]

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[86] Woodrow Wilson, *Selected Literary and Political Papers and Addresses of Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1918), p. 108.

[87] Cited in Adam Quinn, *US Foreign Policy in Context: National Ideology from the Founders to the Bush Doctrine* (New York: Routledge 2010), p. 89.

[88] Adam Quinn, US Foreign Policy in Context: National Ideology from the Founders to the Bush Doctrine (New York: Routledge 2010), p. 89.

It is within this context that we understand President Wilson's interventionist foreign policy. President Wilson concluded that United States' promotion of democracy was an honourable ambition due to the advancement this would have for both mankind and American security. The promotion of liberty, democracy and human rights, was an American responsibility to provide to states that did not currently have a self-government. President Wilson's first intervention was in Mexico when he undertook a series of incursions that ultimately reconfigured the meaning and principles of the Monroe Doctrine. Wilson initially noted that:

> It is none of my business, and none of your business, how long they (the Mexicans) take in determining who shall be their governors or what their government shall be. It is none of your business, and none of my business, how they go about the business. It is theirs. The country is theirs. The government is theirs. And so far as my influence goes, while I am President, nobody shall interfere with them.[89]

Of course, President Wilson did intervene in Mexico to oust General Victoriano Huerta who had overthrown Francisco Madero in a coup in February 1913. While Wilson undertook a series of advances and retreats he ultimately invaded Mexico most forcefully after Huerta had been overthrown in the Civil War. Wilson had responded to a provocative step by Pancho Villa, a Mexican Revolutionary General, who had crossed the border into the United States resulting in the infamous Battle of Columbus. Wilson noted in a statement to the press at the time:

> As has already been announced, the expedition into Mexico was ordered under an agreement with the de facto 'Government of Mexico for the single purpose of taking the bandit Villa, whose forces had actually invaded the territory of the United States, and is in no sense intended as an invasion of that republic or as an infringement of its sovereignty.[90]

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[89] 'President Wilson's Lack of Policy in Mexico', *The Journal of Race Development* 7 (2) (1916), pp. 175–186

[90] Woodrow Wilson, *Selected Literary and Political Papers and Addresses of Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1918), p. 110.

Yet, President Wilson's ultimate objective throughout the various Mexican interventions was to install a stable democratic government and uphold constitutional rule. Following the overthrow of Madero, Wilson challenged European powers to cede their relationships with the Mexican dictator to undermine the legitimacy of the Mexican regime. Three weeks after General Huerta's successful coup, President Wilson sent a note to the European powers that asserted:

> Usurpations like that of General Huerta menace the peace and development of America as nothing else could. They not only render the development of ordered self-government impossible; they also tend to set law entirely aside to put the lives and fortunes of citizens and foreigners alike in constant jeopardy y It is the purpose of the United States, therefore, to discredit and defeat such usurpations whenever they occur y Its fixed resolve is that no such interruptions of civil order shall be tolerated so far as it is concerned. Each conspicuous instance in which usurpations of this kind are prevented will render their recurrence less likely, and in the end a state of affairs will be secured in Mexico and elsewhere upon this continent which will assure the peace of America and the untrammeled development of its economic and social relations with the rest of the world.[91]

Thus, President Wilson believed intervention was a first-step toward Mexican self-government. This shift would not only benefit the United States by creating the antecedent conditions for a stable regional order, but would also create the foundations for a prosperous and peaceful Mexican state. In this reading then, President Wilson's intervention was not understood as an aggressive act, but was a necessary advancement toward self-determination.

President Wilson undertook several further incursions in the American "sphere of influence" to spread self-government and liberty. Adam Quinn notes that:

> During his first term, Wilson set in train highly interventionist policies in Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua. These involved

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[91] Tony Smith, 'From Woodrow Wilson in 1902 to the Bush Doctrine in 2002: Democracy Promotion as Imperialism', *International Politics* 48 (2/3) (2011), p. 239.

> the deployment of US troops and American administrative 'assistance', and the creation of new constitutional systems. Sometimes, when those systems failed to sustain themselves, the process reached its logical conclusion with the institution of US military government to rescue basic order. As well as helping draft constitutions, these interventions established US control of substantial parts of the government revenue apparatus, effectively annexing chunks of national sovereignty.[92]

Perhaps the most well understood intervention undertaken by President Wilson was not in the Western Hemisphere, but in the European conflict the United States had long attempted to avoid. Following nearly two years of the United States avoiding entanglement in Europe's conflagration, President Wilson requested that Congress approve a Declaration of War against Germany on April 2, 1917. Wilson noted "Our motive will not be revenge or the victorious assertion of the physical might of the nation, but only the vindication of right, of human right, of which we are only a single champion".[93] Wilson reinforced the overriding objective for the United States joining the war effort was to:

> …vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish and autocratic power and to set up amongst the really free and self-governed peoples of the world such a concert of purpose and of action as will henceforth ensure the observance of those principles.[94]

President Wilson's understanding of the United States role in the world and the responsibility he believed he had for exporting democratic principles are informative in our understanding of the United States invasion of Iraq. President Bush believed that the spread of American values and principles would not only be good for

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[92] Adam Quinn, US Foreign Policy in Context: National Ideology from the Founders to the Bush Doctrine (New York: Routledge 2010), p. 92.

[93] Woodrow Wilson, *Selected Literary and Political Papers and Addresses of Woodrow Wilson* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1918), p. 190.

[94] Ibid, p. 192.

American security, but the promotion of these values would benefit the Middle East. President Bush noted in his second inaugural address:

> We are led by events and common sense to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world….So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.

Of course, these words were reminiscent of the logic of the 2002 National Security Strategy that noted the primacy of human rights and freedom in the development of human potential:

> The great struggles of the twentieth century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom—and a single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise. In the twenty-first century, only nations that share a commitment to protecting basic human rights and guaranteeing political and economic freedom will be able to unleash the potential of their people and assure their future prosperity.[95]

The spread of liberal principles abroad was understood as necessary for American security at home. Prosperity and security could only be realized, according to President Bush, through the spread of liberty and freedom and the adoption of democratic governance by those antagonistic to the United States led order. President Bush, like President Wilson, believed that the use military force in pursuit of these goals, particularly using a pre-emptive military strikes, were legitimate as they not only provided for American security, but would also create the foundations for a prosperous and stable Middle East. The 2002 National Security Strategy lays out this intention:

> The United States has long maintained the option of preemptive actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national security. The greater the

[95] National Security Strategy, p. 3. Accessed at file:///Users/anthonyricketts/Desktop/2002%20nss.pdf

> threat, the greater is the risk of inaction— and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy's attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively. The United States will not use force in all cases to preempt emerging threats, nor should nations use preemption as a pretext for aggression. Yet in an age where the enemies of civilization openly and actively seek the world's most destructive technologies, the United States cannot remain idle while dangers gather.[96]

Yet, the use of a preemptive strike in the service of harnessing a new era of democracy in the Middle East suggests this strategy is counterintuitive to balance of power logic. That is, both President Bush and Wilson did not seek an equilibrium of power but viewed the international system as most stable when America held a preponderance of power. This global hegemonic position would enable the United States to shape the international system in ways that were congenial to the spread of liberal principles. The pursuance of a stable balance of power, on the other hand, would ultimately render an uncertain international environment. President Wilson noted in this regard that:

> The question upon which the whole future peace and policy of the world depends is this: Is the present war a struggle for a just and secure peace, or only for a new balance of power? If it be only a struggle for a new balance of power, who will guarantee, who can guarantee, the stable equilibrium of the new arrangement? Only a tranquil Europe can be a stable Europe. There must be, not a balance of power, but a community of power; not organized rivalries, but an organized common peace.[97]

Yet, both President Bush and President Wilson also implicitly premised their liberal interventionism on a bandwagoning logic. Bandwagoning, as Randall Schweller notes, is a strategy used to "side with the stronger state, especially for opportunistic

[96] Ibid, p.15

[97] Woodrow Wilson. Address to Congress (January 22, 1917).

gain".[98] Of course, this runs contrary to Kenneth Waltz and Stephen Walt's argument that states seek to maximise security and will balance with the weaker side against a powerful state. Kenneth Waltz famously noted that "In international politics, success leads to failure. The excessive accumulation of power by one state or coalition of states elicits the opposition of others".[99] Thus, the next section considers realist theory not only in accordance with security gains, but also with respect to non-security gains, whereby a state joins forces with the most powerful, rather than balances against it.

The Realist Response

Structural realism suggests the balance of power emerges if two requirements are met: first, the international order be anarchic; and second, the international order be populated by units wishing to survive.[100] Yet, these two requirements produce two antithetical variables. How can the international system be anarchic if states only strive for security?[101] The theory of balancing is thus developed in accordance with "the assumed motivations of states and the actions that correspond to them".[102] That is, it suggests that states are concerned primarily with their survival as this "stimulates states to behave in ways that tend toward the creation of a balance of power".[103] But because neorealists believe that states are not driven by power, it is not clear why the

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[98] Randall Schweller, 'New Realist Research on Alliances: Refining, not Refuting, Waltz's Balancing Proposition', The *American Political Science Review* 91 (2) (1997), pp. 927-930.

[99] Kenneth Waltz, 'The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory', in Robert Rotberg and Theodore Rabb, eds. *The Origin and Preservation of Major Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1988), p. 49. Cited in Randall Schweller, 'Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Reviosinst State Back In', *International Security* 19 (1) (1994), p. 72.

[100] Waltz, Theory of International Politics, p. 121.

[101] Randall Schweller, 'Neorealism's Status Quo Bias: What Security Dilemma?' *Security Studies* 5 (3) (1996), p. 91.

[102] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 118.

[103] Ibid.

system is considered anarchic, nor why balancing is indeed necessary at all. Moreover, and as Randall Schweller has noted, realism "overlooks the importance of revisionist goals (non-security expansion) as the driving force – indeed, the sine qua non – behind most of its theoretical concepts".[104]

This section attempts to make three claims with respect to realism's inadequacy to analyse the 2003 Iraq War. First, neorealism in unable to account for expansionist powers. Structural realism's "status quo bias" that assumes states desire security over power leaves it inadequate as an explanatory theory to account for the 2003 Iraq war. Second, neorealism is unable to account for a unipolar order. While realists regularly challenge claims as to the durability of a unipolar order, particularly on the basis of the claim that other powers will balance against a state that holds a preponderance of power, realism has tended to provide poor explanations of hegemonic state behaviour. This section will consider offensive realist scholarship that suggests states will expand in accordance with power maximisation strategies, but will ultimately conclude that power maximisation is explained through unit-level variables, rather than through the international system alone. The third section concludes by suggesting that bandwagoning can explain the United States decision to invade Iraq. That is, the Bush administration ultimately believed that Middle East states would not balance against power, as Waltz suggests, but rather would instead bandwagon with it in anticipation of security gains.[105]

I begin first with structural realism's status quo bias. This discussion is important with respect to realist understanding of the United States decision to invade Iraq. It turns on the perennial debate as to whether states look to guarantee their survival by maximising relative power or by preserving the status quo. Defensive realists purport

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[104] Randall Schweller, 'Neorealism's Status-Quo Bias: What Security Dilemma', *Security Studies* 15 (3) (1996), p. 92.

[105] Randall Schweller, 'Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back in', *International Security* 19 (1) (1994),pp. 72-107.

two primary reasons why states attempt to preserve the status quo. First, expansion ultimately increases a state's insecurity. Jack Snyder argues in *Myths of Empire* that over expansion is fatal to a states future security.[106] Gaining security through expansion will provoke "self-encirclement" that will lead to "an overwhelming coalition of opposing state". As this has been discussed above there is no need to outline Snyder's logic here, suffice to say that these echo Kenneth Waltz and Stephen Walt's familiar discussion regarding the balance of power logic. Snyder also notes that expansion undermines security because of the increased costs that come with "imperial overextension".[107] That is, the costs that accompany the responsibility of holding additional territory ultimately begin to outstrip the benefits.[108] This argument, of course, was first enunciated in Paul Kennedy's *The Rise* and *Fall of Great Powers* where he outlined the disjuncture between the hegemon's unavoidable tendency to ever-increasing political and military commitments and its economic capability to meet them.[109]

Literature concerning the advantages of a defensive military doctrine are connected to arguments that discredit expansionist strategies.[110] Indeed, Clausewitz, the so-called godfather of modern military theory, argued in Books VI and VII that defence was stronger than attack.[111] Eric Labs has similarly noted that defence is easier than

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[106] Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

[107] Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, p. 6.

[108] Snyder, *Myths of Empire*, p. 8.

[109] Paul Kennedy. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500–2000* (New York: Random House, 1987)

[110] See, for instance, Barry Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 34-81.

[111] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976). For an excellent analysis surrounding the ambiguity of Clausewitz's

offense. Labs states that:

> …defensive realists rely heavily on the idea that there is an offense-defence balance of military technology and capabilities in the international system and that states can read and measure this balance. When they do so, they discover that defense – the ability to protect and hold one's territory – is almost always stronger than offense – the ability to attack and conquer territory.[112]

Of course, offensive realist argue that the anarchic international system provides states with clear incentives to pursue power maximising strategies.[113] These scholars agree with defensive realists that security in never guaranteed in an anarchical international system, but whereas defensive realists believe that expansionist strategies generate insecurity, offensive realists argue that this is the most appropriate way to guarantee their future survival. The more power a state holds, according to this view, the more secure a state will ultimately be. Because the international system is built on insecurity and conflict "rational states often are compelled to adopt strategies in their search for security".[114] Mearsheimer, the architect of offensive realism, notes "that in a world where states have the capability to offend against each other, and might have the motive to do so, any state bent on survival must be at least

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offensive/defensive discussion, see, Azar Gat, 'Clausewitz and Offense and Attack', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 11 (1) (1988), pp. 20 -26.

[112] Eric Labs, 'Beyond Victory: Offensive Realism and the Expansion of War Aims', *Security Studies* 6 (4) (1997), p. 10.

[113] John Mearsheimer, 'False Promise of International Institutions', *International Security* 19 (3) (1993/1994), p. 11-12. Jeffrey Taliaferro argues that "all states strive to maximize their power relative to other states because only the most powerful states can guarantee their survival", see Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, 'Security Seeking under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited', *International Security* 25 (3) (2000/2001), p. 128. Eric Labs has similarly stated that "the best way to maximize security is to maximize relative power", see Eric J. Labs, 'Beyond victory: Offensive realism and the expansion of war aims', *Security Studies* 6 (4) (1997), p. 5.

[114] Sean Lynn-Jones, 'Realism and America's Rise: A Review Essay', *International Security* 23 (2) (1998), p. 157.

suspicious of other states and reluctant to trust them".[115] He further adds:

> Offensive realism parts company with defensive realism over the question of how much power states want. For defensive realism, the international structure provides states with little incentive to seek additional elements of power; instead it pushes them to maintain the existing balance of power. Preserving power, rather than increasing it, is the main goal of states. Offensive realists, on the other hand, believe that status quo powers are rarely found in world politics, because the international system creates powerful incentives for states to look for opportunities to gain power at the expense of rivals, and to take advantage of those situations when the benefits outweigh the costs. A state's ultimate goal is to be the hegemon in the system.[116]

Therefore, the key question is to determine under what conditions states seek to either maximize their security or their power. Kenneth Waltz provided confusion when answering this question. Waltz noted that "a balance of power theory, properly stated, begins with an assumption about states: They are unitary actors who, at a minimum, seek their own preservation and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination".[117] Notwithstanding this acknowledgement for power seeking states, Waltz has long been understood as a defensive realist. The following passage captures Waltz's sentiment that states treasure security over power:

> In anarchy, security is the highest end. Only is survival is assured can states safely seek such other goals as tranquillity, profit, and power. Because power is a means and not an end, states prefer to join the weaker of two coalitions….the goal the system encourages them to seek is security.[118]

The second area that realism finds difficult with respect to the United States decision

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[115] Mearsheimer, 'False promise', p. 11.

[116] John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014), p. 21.

[117] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 118.

[118] Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 126.

to invade Iraq in 2003 is their seeming lack of consideration of unipolar state behaviour. For instance, Mearsheimer's seminal work *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* never explores to any great depth the repercussions of one single state holding a preponderant amount of power. In fact, Mearsheimer ultimately believes no single state could attain global dominance noting, "Except for the unlikely event wherein one state achieves clear-cut nuclear superiority, it is virtually impossible for any state to achieve global hegemony. The principle impediment to world domination is the difficulty of projecting power across the world's oceans onto territory of a rival great power".[119]

Christopher Layne has picked up on Mearsheimer's failure to engage seriously with the ordering effects of unipolarity. Layne reminds us that:

> Omitting unipolarity, Mearsheimer says there are three different distributions of power in the international system: bipolarity, unbalanced multipolarity, and balanced multipolarity. There is no index listing for unipolarity. Unipolarity, however, is mentioned cursorily three times in the text. At p. 40, Mearsheimer says that even at the height of the mid-nineteenth century Pax Britannica the distribution of power in the international system was multipolar not unipolar. At p. 345 he says "there are no meaningful security threats to the dominant power in a unipolar system." Finally, at p. 381, Mearsheimer states the present distribution of power in the international system is not unipolar, because the United States is not a global hegemon.[120]

Notwithstanding this realist exclusion of unipolarity, the end of the Cold War gave rise to a revised theoretical framework that not only acknowledged the capacity for a global hegemon, but critically, also opened the space to consider unit-level variables within strategic design. William Wohlfotth, Stephen Brooks and John Ikenberry, the most prominent of these theorists, advanced an argument that United States global hegemony is something that occurs outside structural constraints, which would not

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[119] Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 40 and p. 41.

[120] Christopher Layne, 'The Poster Child for Offensive Realism', *Security Studies* 12 (2) (2002), p. 123.

trigger balancing tendencies. These scholars eschew Waltzian conceptions of balance of power, including the belief in the stability of bipolarity over multipolarity, to develop a new analytical framework that recognises the strength of the post-Cold War world unipolar order.

This echoed Robert Gilpin's *War and Change in World Politics*.[121] In this seminal work, Gilpin did not pay homage to the balance of power logic, but instead put forward the argument that the stability of the international system was achieved through a single state holding a preponderance of power. Gilpin artfully sidestepped the positivist scientific strait jacket that, at the time, was viewed as a necessity to advance the international relations discipline, and instead attempted to "provide a framework for thinking about the problem of war and change in world politics".[122] Gilpin moved the discussion beyond systemic factors alone, and instead provided space for the consideration of other intervening variables. According to one scholar, "*War and Change* contained multiple avenues for interaction between the domestic and systemic levels. *Theory* (of International Politics) appeared to construe structure as material, while *War and Change* appeared to allow in important roles for ideas".[123] William Wohlforth has recently stated that Gilpin did not aspire to be the champion of realist thought, but instead looked for understanding outside the tradition:

> Gilpin had no interest in redefining realism and becoming its standard bearer. He wanted to provide a better theoretical framework for understanding war and change. As he made perfectly clear in his 'blue book' Political Economy of International Relations, he did not believe that realism or its competitors were, could or should be unified theories or internally coherent, scientific research programmes. They were, he held, part complex intellectual tradition and part political ideology. Given those beliefs, Gilpin would not have forwarded himself as the champion of a new realist 'theory of international politics' even if he had

[121] Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[122] Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[123] William Wohlforth, 'Gilpian Realism and International Relations', *International Politics* 25 (4) (2011), p. 503.

> been inclined to do so. And, as those who know him will be quick to affirm, he was not inclined to do so. He was neither a self-promoter nor a nurturer and promoter of like-minded graduate students. Those he did train are living proof of his commitment to intellectual eclecticism and independent thinking.[124]

Critically, although Gilpin was identified within the discipline as an 'offensive realist' his work ultimately did not meet this criterion. The primary reason that Gilpin diverged from offensive realist scholarship was his belief that states pursue expansionist policies not only due to the security maximising imperatives derived from systemic anarchy but also derived from economic or prestige imperatives. Wohlforth notes:

> States may well choose a wide variety of strategies depending on their assessment of the probability and severity of security threats. They may choose to pursue economic gain instead of security if the probability of conflict is low, or they may choose to pursue power and prestige in the near term in order to be more secure in the long term. Thus, for Gilpin, states do not 'maximize security' at all times and under all conditions, as Waltz held.[125]

The third area that realism is unable to account for the United States invasion of Iraq is their inclination to consider bandwagoning a strategy designed in response to threat, rather than an opportunity for "self-extension".[126] For instance, Stephen Walt defined bandwagoning as "When confronted by a significant external threat, states may either balance or bandwagon. Balancing is defined as allying with others against the prevailing threat; bandwagoning refers to the alignment with the source of the danger".[127] Waltz similarly defined bandwagoning "in sharp contrast" to balancing. He noted that "if states wished to maximise power, they would join the stronger side,

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[124] William Wohlforth, 'Gilpian Realism and International Relations', *International Politics* 25 (4) (2011), p. 502.

[125] Ibid., p. 503-504.

[126] Randall Schweller, Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In', *International Security* 19 (1) (1994), pp. 72-107.

[127] Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances,* p. 17.

and we would see no balances forming but a world hegemon forged. This does not happen because balancing, not bandwagoning, is the behaviour induced by the system".[128] In this respect, and as we have discussed above, realist definitions of bandwagoning are connected to their assumption that states pursue security rather than power. This status quo bias, therefore, dismisses the possibility that a state would bandwagon with a powerful state to advance their economic position, or prestige in the international system.

Randall Schweller has most pressingly challenged the assumption that states are inherently status quo oriented and suggested that disgruntled rising powers benefit from joining sides with the strongest power as opposed to balancing against it. In this reading, secondary powers are motivated to form an alliance with a powerful state that offers them positive inducements. Schweller noted:

> And because members of military alliances always sacrifice some foreign-policy autonomy, the most important determinant of alignment decisions is the compatibility of political goals, not imbalances of power or threat. Satisfied powers will join the status quo coalition, even when it is the stronger side; dissatisfied powers, motivated by profit more than security, will bandwagon with an ascending revisionist state.[129]

The consequences of understanding bandwagoning as a strategy taken in response to threat is that it fails to capture the Bush administration's decision to invade Iraq. For structural realists, a United States led invasion of Iraq would be expected to generate a backlash from Middle East states. This demonstration of power, they argue, would ultimately lead other states to balance against the United States, creating more tension in the region and diminish the United States overall ability to control their primary interests.

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[128] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 126.

[129] Randall Schweller, Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In', *International Security* 19 (1) (1994), p. 88.

The Bush administration however ultimately appeared to conclude that American primacy in the Middle East would in fact encourage other states to bandwagon with American power, even to the extent of adopting liberal values, creating a democratic wave throughout the region. Indeed, three weeks prior to the Iraq invasion, President Bush stated, "A new regime in Iraq would serve as a dramatic and inspiring example of freedom for other nations in the region".[130] And in November 2003 President Bush outlined his agenda for the 'Greater Middle East', noting, "As long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place of stagnation, resentment, and violence ready for export. And with the spread of weapons that can bring catastrophic harm to our country and to our friend, it would be reckless to accept the status quo".[131]

The Wilsonain influence that drove the 2003 Iraq War was inspired by their belief that American security would be enhanced by the spread of democracy in the Middle East. In some ways this represents an American interpretation of democratic peace theory. Wilsonianism, which Christopher Layne characterises as the "political Open Door", ultimately recasts security in ideological terms:

> …the Open Door posits that closure abroad – either economic or ideological – would endanger the safety or America's core values at home by forcing the United States to become a garrison state. In essence, the Open Door substituted an open-ended, ideological and de-territorialized definition of American security for a more traditional conception of security based on the international systems distribution of power. That is, it divorced the

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[130] The White House, 'President Discusses the Future of Iraq' (February 26, 2003). Accessed at https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030226-11.html

[131] The White House, 'President Bush Discusses Freedom in Iraq and Middle East (November 6, 2003). Accessed at https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html; See also, for instance, Tamara Coffman Wittes, 'The New U.S. Proposal for a Greater Middle East Initiative: An Evaluation', Brookings Institute (May 10, 2004). Accessed at https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-new-u-s-proposal-for-a-greater-middle-east-initiative-an-evaluation/; Dona Stewart, 'The Greater Middle East and Reform in the Bush Administration's Ideological Imagination', *Geographical Review* 95 (3) (2005), pp. 400-424.

> concept of security from defense of the American homeland and, instead, ultimately defined security ideationally.[132]

In President George W. Bush's narrative, the moral and civilised attributes that underpin democracy would not only make Iraq a more principled state but would also make the region more susceptible to American interests and therefore enhance the security of the United States. Paul Wolfowitz, who served as the Deputy Secretary of Defence from 2001-2005 echoed this logic when he noted that "in reality, the internal makeup of states has a huge effect on their external behaviour – so it must be a significant consideration for U.S. foreign policy".[133]

Realists refute this logic. They argue instead that democratic states are no more receptive to American needs than any other governance structure. The international system is the defining feature that determines the strategy that a state will pursue. Therefore, realists believe that the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and the pursuance of a democratic state mirroring America's moral and civilizational outlook, was a flawed strategy that would not make America or the region more secure.

The assumption that other regional states would embrace democratic principles can also be seen in some neoconservative commentary that frames the 2011 Arab Spring as inspired by the Iraq War. For instance, Kanan Makiya, one of the foremost academic advocates of the Iraq War, wrote in the *New York Times* "The removal of Saddam Hussein and the toppling of a whole succession of other Arab dictators in 2011 were closely connected — a fact that has been overlooked largely because of the hostility that the Iraq war engendered".[134] Former Vice-President Dick Cheney has argued that

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[132] Layne, *The Peace of Illusions*, p. 194

[133] Paul Wolfowitz, 'Realism', *Foreign Policy* (Sep/Oct 2009), p. 67.

[134] Kanan Makiya, 'The Arab Spring Started in Iraq', *The New York Times* (April 6, 2013). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/07/opinion/sunday/the-arab-spring-started-in-iraq.html; this argument has also been expounded by Abe Greenwald, "What We Got Right about the War on Terror", *Commentary*, September 2011, https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/what-we-got-right-in-the-war-on-terror/

"the fact that we brought democracy, if you will, and freedom to Iraq, has had a ripple effect on some of those other countries",[135] while Bush's National Security Adviser Condoleeza Rice claims that the invasion of Iraq played a major role in making "the conversation about democratization" now a "routine" occurrence in the Middle East.[136] Thus, for Makiya, and the broader Wilsonian cohort, the overthrow of Saddam Hussein inspired the Arab Spring which has overthrown other autocratic leaders in the Middle East.

Of course, in the end, realist scholars might ultimately be correct that smaller Middle East powers would not bandwagon with the United States, but would in fact balance against it. Paul Pillar has argued that Middle East states resisted United States influence due to the brutal manner in which they pursued their war aims. Pillar notes, "If the violence, disorder, and breakdown of public services in Iraq were the birth pangs of a new Middle Eastern order, most people in the region wanted nothing of it".[137]

In short, realist scholar's failure to consider bandwagoning as a strategy used for state advancement ultimately left them unable to consider the wider objectives of the Bush administration's decision to invade Iraq. There ongoing assumption that states will not maximise power but will adopt status quo strategies rendered them unable to consider the broader objectives that led to the decision to liberalise the Middle East.

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[135] Alex Seitz-Wald, "Cheney Credits Iraq War For Helping To Start Arab Spring", ThinkProgress, 31 August 2011, https://thinkprogress.org/cheney-credits-iraq-war-for-helping-to-start-arab-spring-a6a106d18d5b/.

[136] Judy Keen, "Rice reflects on Bush tenure, Gadhafi in new memoir", USA Today, 30 October 2011, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/washington/story/2011-10-31/condoleezza-rice-memoir-bush/51006960/1

[137] Paul Pillar, 'The Neocons' Undemocratic Domino', *The National Interest* (August 15, 2011). Accessed at https://nationalinterest.org/blog/paul-pillar/the-neocons-undemocratic-domino-5766

Conclusion

The 2001 World Trade Centre terrorist attacks was considered a systemic shock. This not only demonstrated that America was susceptible to attack from non-state actors, but also that relationships between state and non-state entities posed a serious threat to future global stability. In particular, the ability for terrorist groups to gain access to weapons of mass destruction was now considered a pre-eminent threat to American national security.

President George W. Bush's decision to invade Iraq in 2003 should not be considered an act solely undertaken in response to the September 11 attacks. This chapter has outlined the previous sixteen UN Security Council Resolutions that Saddam Hussein had dismissed between 1991 and 2002 and the importance of these with respect to the ultimate decision to launch the Iraq War. In particular, Resolution 1441 was considered a "final opportunity" for Saddam to comply disarmament obligations that were previously outlined in Resolution 687, which mandated full disclosure to of Iraq's ballistic missile stock with a range higher than 150km, along with nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and facilities.

This chapter has argued that the Iraq War can be understood by the influence of the Wilsonian tradition. In particular, it argued that the liberal Wilsonian belief in cooperation is connected to the bandwagoning logic that is premised on states aligning with a powerful liberal hegemon to stabilise the regional order. That is, the Wilsonian's concluded that liberating Iraq from Saddam's dictatorship would inspire other Middle East nations to bandwagon with the United States. The decision to use the United States military as a tool to wage a war of regime change then, rather than to coerce or deter, would generate a democratic wave throughout the region.

The chapter has argued that realist theory has difficulty explaining the Iraq War. Realist's belief that states balance against power or threat, and do not bandwagon with the most powerful state, leave it unable to fully consider the Bush administration's assumption that the moral and civilised attributes that underpin democracy would

not only make Iraq a more principled state but would also make the region more susceptible to American interests and therefore enhance the security of the United States.

Chapter Five

Shielding the Republic: Barack Obama, Retrenchment, and the Jeffersonian Tradition of American Foreign Policy

ABSTRACT: The strategy pursued by President Barack Obama confounded critics from both the Left and the Right in American politics. This chapter argues that this is due to the fact that Obama's foreign policy exhibited affinities with the least prominent tradition of the four traditions of American foreign policy identified by Walter Russell Mead: the Jeffersonian tradition. In contrast to the more prominent Wilsonian and Hamiltonian traditions, that we have discussed in previous chapters, the Jeffersonian tradition exhibits more introverted tendencies that seek to perfect and protect rather than export the virtues of the Republic. The Jeffersonian understanding of foreign policy is, in Walter Lippman's phrase, first and foremost as the "shield of the republic". The chapter will track the influence and implications of this perspective through an analysis of the Obama administration's approaches to its Middle East strategy, particularly the intervention in Libya and the Syrian crisis.

Introduction

When Barack Obama was campaigning for the presidency of the United States in 2008 he famously promised to deliver "change that we can believe in". Many presumed, and undoubtedly many Americans also hoped, that he would in fact become a "transformational" president once in the White House. One core sphere in which it was presumed there would clearly be more change than continuity was in the conduct of United States foreign policy. This perception was based on candidate Obama's campaign rhetoric where he strove to distinguish himself and his prospective foreign policy from not only that of President George W. Bush but also his Republican opponent, Senator John McCain. Throughout 2008, Obama did indeed signal that an administration under his leadership would pursue the "renewal of American leadership" by rectifying the unilateral interventionism of the Bush administration,

most notably those connected to the war in Iraq and the "War on Terror", which we discussed in the previous chapter.[1]

When in the White House however, Obama's foreign policy at times puzzled both critics and supporters alike. The administration's foreign policy, for example, was described as abandoning the "democracy promotion tradition" of U.S. foreign policy, as "ideological pragmatism", as "incoherent" and even cold-bloodedly "realist".[2] This chapter is an attempt to explain this confusion by placing the foreign policy action and rhetoric of President Obama within a neoclassical realist framework to consider, more fully, the unit-level variable that ultimately drove the strategic direction of his administration. This chapter argues that President Obama's strategy in the Middle East cannot be accounted for by the distribution of material power alone, nor simply by limiting its analysis to the realist lens, but instead, can be explained by considering the affinity that President Obama's foreign policy had with the least prominent tradition of the four traditions of American foreign policy identified by Walter Russell Mead: the Jeffersonian tradition. In contrast to the more prominent Wilsonian and Hamiltonian traditions, which we have explored in previous chapters, the Jeffersonian tradition exhibits more introverted tendencies that seek to perfect and protect rather than export the virtues of the Republic. In the Jeffersonian understanding, foreign policy is, in Walter Lippman's phrase, first and foremost the "shield of the republic". The chapter will track the influence and implications of this perspective through an

[1] See for example, Barack Obama, 'Renewing American Leadership', *Foreign Affairs* 86/4 (2008), 2-16; and 'Obama's Remarks on Iraq and Afghanistan', *New York Times* (July 15, 2008). Accessed at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/15/us/politics/15text-obama.html?_r=0&pagewanted=all

[2] For example, Joshua Muravchik, 'The Abandonment of Democracy', *Commentary* 127 (7) (July 2009), pp. 21-26; Henry R. Nau, 'Obama's Foreign Policy', *Policy Review* (April-May 2010), pp. 27-47; Daniel Drezner, 'Does Obama Have a Grand Strategy? Why We Need Doctrines in Uncertain Times', *Foreign Affairs* 90 (4) (July/August 2011), pp. 57-68; and Stephen Walt, 'Is Barack Obama More of a Realist Than I Am?', *Foreign Policy* (19 August 2014). Accessed at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2014/08/19/is_barack_obama_more_of_a_realist_than_i_am_stephen_m_walt_iraq_russia_gaza

analysis of the Obama administration's approach to two prominent foreign policy challenges: the intervention in Libya and the Syrian crisis. The chapter ultimately concludes that President Obama pursued a strategy of retrenchment that can be traced to the Jeffersonian tradition of United States foreign policy.

The chapter will proceed in five major parts. First, we will examine the structural pressures that President Obama faced when coming to office. This will consider not only Iraq and Afghanistan War, but also Obama's presidential campaign against Al Gore. Second, the chapter will outline President Obama's strategy in Libya and Syria. This section will argue that the main objective in these wars was to limit American involvement and avoid foreign entanglement. Third, we then consider this approach within a strategy of retrenchment. The central point in this section is the comparison of this strategy with the more extraverted strategies that we have discussed previously in this thesis. Fourth, we consider how this strategy was informed by Jeffersonian themes, which ultimately guided Obama's approach to the use of military force in the Middle East. Finally, we will consider the realist response to these structural pressures, noting the similarity between President Obama's campaign pledge to that of realist scholarship.

Structural Input

Toward the end of the administration of President George W. Bush, the durability of American primacy and its "vindicationist" face were tarnished by the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, along with the 2008 global financial crisis (GFC). These episodes had, in turn, fed into a more encompassing challenge to American primacy - the so-called "rise of the rest", such as China and India, which to some observers signaled the "end of the American era" of predominance in international affairs.[3]

[3] See for example, Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World: And the Rise of the Rest,* (London: Penguin Books, 2008); Christopher Layne, 'The Unipolar Illusion Revisited: The Coming End of the United States' Unipolar Moment', *International Security* 31 (2) (2006), pp. 7-41; and Stephen M. Walt, 'The End of the American Era', *The National Interest* (Nov/Dec 2011), pp. 6-16.

It was in this context that Barack Obama's campaign for the White House took place and it formed a crucial backdrop for the articulation of his views on foreign policy. Obama explicitly framed his candidacy as an alternative to what he asserted to be the erroneous foreign policy choices of the Bush administration that had over-extended the United States in the Middle East and tarnished its international standing through its unilateralism. The first strategic priority Obama sought to pursue was to "move beyond Iraq". Senator Obama had previewed many of his campaign positions vis-à-vis Iraq when he introduced to Congress the *Iraq War De-Escalation Act* in January 2007.[4] Although ultimately failing to be approved as law, the act nonetheless signaled key components of Obama's agenda with respect to Iraq once in office. The act proposed a reduction in US troop levels, a phased withdrawal of US military forces from the country and a shift of the American role to training of Iraqi forces, and a focus on leading "regional diplomatic initiatives" to stabilize the country.[5]

In his July 2007 article in *Foreign Affairs*, Obama further revealed his rationale for seeking to end the American commitment in Iraq. For Obama the war in Iraq was significant not only for the fact that it diverted American attention away from the threat of Al Qaeda but that it was based on the flawed belief that contemporary post-9/11 security threats were "state based" and "principally amenable to military solutions".[6] Contemporary challenges in the Middle East, he continued, could only be addressed with "the whole range of instruments of American power-political, economic, and military".[7] During his first presidential debate with Republican

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[4] S.433 - Iraq War De-Escalation Act of 2007. Congress.gov (January 30, 2007). Accessed at https://www.congress.gov/bill/110th-congress/senate-bill/433

[5] Ibid, Sections 3-7.

[6] Barack Obama, 'Renewing American Leadership', Foreign Affairs 86 (4) (2007), p. 4.

[7] Ibid, 6.

nominee Senator John McCain in September 2008, Obama revisited this theme arguing that not only had he opposed the 2003 invasion of Iraq due to the fact the Bush administration did not know "how much it was going to cost, what our exit strategy might be, how it would affect our relationships around the world, whether our intelligence was sound" but "also because we hadn't finished the job in Afghanistan" and "put al Qaeda to rest".[8] The lesson that Obama drew from this misadventure was also instructive for his future conduct of foreign policy once in the White House. "I think the lesson to be drawn", he suggested, "is that we should never hesitate to use military force…to keep the American people safe. But we have to use our military wisely. And we did not use our military wisely in Iraq".[9]

Flowing on from this assessment was Obama's second clear priority: to refocus American attention on Afghanistan and Pakistan as the "central front in our war against al Qaeda".[10] Under Obama's leadership, the United States would insist not only "that Pakistan crack down on the Taliban, pursue Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants, and end its relationship with all terrorist groups" but that the United States would take the fight against Al Qaeda beyond this "central front" if necessary as "There must be no safe haven for those who plot to kill Americans".[11] This commitment to directly target suspected al Qaeda operatives was even more explicitly underscored during the second Obama-McCain presidential debate with the Democratic nominee asserting:

> …if we have Osama bin Laden in our sights and the Pakistani government is unable or unwilling to take them out, then I think that we

[8] 'The First Presidential Debate', *New York Times*, (September 26, 2008). Accessed at http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/president/debates/transcripts/first-presidential-debate.html

[9] Ibid.

[10] Obama, 'Renewing American Leadership', p. 9.

[11] Ibid, 10.

> have to act and we will take them out. We will kill bin Laden; we will crush Al Qaida. That has to be our biggest national security priority.[12]

The third strategic priority Obama identified during the campaign was to reemphasize the important role that alliances and partnerships with other major powers could play in not only supporting American power but also in resolving international security challenges. For Obama it would be important for the United States to encourage others, such as a rising China, to hold "a stake in upholding the international order" as this would encourage them "to play a responsible role as a growing power—to help lead in addressing the common problems of the twenty-first century". Moreover, institutions and partnerships - rather than the use of military force – were to be repositioned to the centre of the international efforts in order to create global stability. A fundamental flaw of American strategy under the Bush administration, according to this view, was that it had "sent the opposite signal to our international partners," including the dismissal of "European reservations about the wisdom and necessity of the Iraq war" and belittled "South Korean efforts to improve relations with the North". Such misgivings would see an Obama Administration "rebuild our ties to our allies in Europe and Asia and strengthen our partnerships throughout the Americas and Africa."[13] Here, Obama identified the goal of halting further nuclear proliferation as one where the United States could not rely on its own power and diplomacy but must "lead a global effort" including "the active cooperation of Russia" and other crucial players to act "in areas of common interest—above all, in making sure that nuclear weapons and material are secure".[14] Moreover, in confronting the proliferation efforts of Iran or North Korea, an Obama administration, while not taking the military option "off the table", would make the

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[12] 'The Second Presidential Debate', *New York Times* (October 7, 2008). Accessed at http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/president/debates/transcripts/second-presidential-debate.html

[13] Obama, 'Renewing American Leadership', pp. 11-12.

[14] Ibid, 8.

development of "strong international coalition…our first measure".[15] Thus in contrast to the Bush administration's belief in the effectiveness and righteousness of the "vindicationist" face of American power, Obama arguably channelled an "exemplarist" alternative asserting that: "America cannot meet the threats of this century alone, and the world cannot meet them without America. We can neither retreat from the world nor try to bully it into submission. We must lead the world, by deed and by example".[16]

Taken together, Obama entered the White House with severe structural pressures that were personified in the ongoing wars in the Middle East, the global financial crisis, and the rise of China and India. These events were perceived by Obama as demanding a revised foreign policy that recognised the limits of American military power and a recognition that other states had a role to play in global stability. This adjustment was perhaps most explicit in the Middle East, particularly with respect to the Syrian and Libyan Wars, which is where we now turn.

Military Response: The Syrian and Libyan Wars

President Obama's response to the Syrian and Libyan wars prioritised American domestic ideals over that of international leadership. This reticent response to these civil wars is conceptualised through the notion that "the objectives of foreign policy….is but a means to the end of protecting and promoting the goals of domestic society, that is, the individual's freedom and society's well-being".[17] Michael Hardt has picked up on this point that the "shield of the republic" within the Jeffersonian tradition is to construct the United States as a democratic society based on "social equality, economic equality, freedom, and republicanism".[18] And it is these

[15] Ibid, 9.

[16] Ibid, 2.

[17] Tucker and Hendrickson, 'Thomas Jefferson and American Foreign Policy', p. 139.

[18] Hardt, 'Jefferson and Democracy', pp. 41-78.

aspirations that Obama has considered first and foremost when weighing up his response to the civil wars in Syria and Libya.

The 2011 Libya intervention has been singled out as a sea change in America's involvement in the Middle East. The NATO and United States use of force in Libya in 2011 has been argued to be "first new war for President Obama"[19], a new American paradigm of "leading from behind"[20], and a demonstration of President Obama seeking to "off-load" responsibility to American allies.[21] While studies have attempted to make sense of this apparent anomaly through variables such as the "bureaucratic roles on positions"[22], theoretical frameworks such as "neoclassical realism"[23], the interplay between "law and presidential powers"[24], and the role of NATO in Operation Odyssey Dawn[25], what has been missing from this, is a discussion that situates President Obama's strategic response to these two Civil Wars within a well formed tradition of American foreign policy.

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[19] Ryan Hendrickson, 'Libya and American War Powers: War Making Decision in the United States', *Global Change, Peace and Security* 25 (2) (2013), p. 175.

[20] Steven Erlanger and Eric Schmitt, 'NATO Set to Take Full Command of Libyan Campaign', *New York Times* (March 25, 2011). Accessed June 24, 2016 http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/26/world/africa/26libya.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

[21] Jeffrey Goldstein, 'The Obama Doctrine: The President explains the hardest decisions about America's role in the world', *The Atlantic Monthly* 317 (3) (2016), p. 78.

[22] Mikael Blomdahl, 'Bureaucratic Roles and Positions: Explaining the United States Libya Decision', *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 27 (1) (2016), pp. 142-161.

[23] Kevin Marsh, 'Leading from Behind": Neoclassical Realism and Operation Odyssey Dawn', *Defense and Security Analysis* 30 (2) (2014), pp. 120 – 132.

[24] Chris Edelson and Donna G. Starr-Deelen, 'The Law: Libya, Syria, ISIS, and the Case Against the Energetic Executive', *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 45 (3) (2015), Simon Chesterman, 'Leading from Behind': The Responsibility to Protect, the Obama Doctrine, and Humanitarian Intervention after Libya', *Ethics International Affairs Journal* 25 (3) (2011), pp. 1 – 7.

[25] Jeffrey Michaels, 'NATO After Libya', *The RUSI Journal* 156 (6) (2011), pp. 56-61.

President Obama, and other key members of his administration, viewed the Libyan war as an issue removed from the national interest of America. As Obama's Defence Secretary Robert Gates said at the time, "I don't think it's a vital interest of the United States, but we clearly have an interest there".[26] This understanding of the Middle East, where it is understood as a secondary concern in America's strategic outlook, had important ramifications for the manner in which the war was mobilized. As Andreas Krieg has convincingly argued:

> In reality, the U.S. war against ISIS followed an already well-established U.S. doctrinal approach to security in the Middle East, according to which, if vital U.S. national interests are not directly concerned, the mobilization of partners and allies allows for the sharing of the strategic and operational burden of the war. In the aftermath of lengthy and costly operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Obama administration's approach to the Middle East has not been one of disengagement so much as one shifting engagement.[27]

In other words, the United States national interest and the perception of the strategic importance of the Middle East were important drivers in determining the strategy that Obama would employ in Libya. As Jeffrey Michael's argued, President Obama viewed the Libyan crisis "as primarily a European problem, with European NATO members presumed capable enough to take the military lead".[28]

This "European problem" manifested itself in both the military capability and broader commitment that the United States provided to the campaign. While the Iraq and Afghanistan campaign under George W. Bush was a "demonstration of American

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[26] Jon Hilsenrath, 'Gates Says Libya Not Vital National Interest', *The Wall Street Journal* (March 27, 2011). Accessed June 24, 2016 http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704308904576226704261420430

[27] Andreas Krieg, 'Externalizing the Burden of War: The Obama Doctrine and US Foreign Policy in the Middle East', *International Affairs* 92 (1) (2016), p. 97.

[28] Jeffrey Michaels, 'NATO After Libya', 57.

military power", Obama's military contribution in Libya was rather driven by a desire to "support" the mission. For instance, and as Ben Barry has demonstrated:

> President Obama will feel his decision to '"lead from behind" by withdrawing combat forces and confining US military to supporting roles was vindicated by events. Throughout the operation, supporting US military capability was decisive. This included 80% of the air-to-air refuelling, significant numbers of targeting staff and the resupply of precision munitions when some countries were running short. The United States also provided invaluable intelligence and surveillance, not least from its unique satellite capabilities.[29]

While these "supporting" capabilities were important in a tactical sense, the strategic ramifications are as equally pertinent to this discussion. The "off loading" of the tactical and operational components and adopting a "leading from behind" approach are representative of what Andreas Krieg has dubbed "Obama's surrogate warfare".[30] For Krieg,

> The core principle of the Obama Doctrine is burden-sharing, both strategically and operationally. On the strategic level, it emphasizes the need for collective action through coalition warfare and for capacity-building of local partners and allies. On the operational level, it prioritizes covert warfare, relying increasingly on technological platforms, special forces operations and CIA operatives to achieve strategic and operational objectives out of the public eye. Essentially, Obama's foreign policy is one that lays that doctrinal foundation for surrogate warfare: externalising the burdens of warfare to human and technological surrogates. The post-Iraq US policy towards the Middle East appears to be testimony to the doctrinal shift to waging war by surrogate *in the absence of vital national interest*.[31]

[29] Ben Barry, 'Libya's Lessons', *Survival*, 53 (5) (2011), p. 11.

[30] Andreas Krieg, 'Externalizing the Burden of War: The Obama Doctrine and US Foreign Policy in the Middle East', *International Affairs* 92 (1) (2016), pp. 97-113.

[31] Ibid, 104. Emphasis added.

Indeed, prior to his election in 2008, Obama signalled that he would adopt a "surrogate warfare" strategy if he determined that vital American national interests were not threatened. In his Presidential debate with John McCain in 2008, Obama was asked by moderator Tom Browkaw, "What is the Obama doctrine for use of force that the United States would send when we don't have national security issues at stake"? Obama's response bears a striking consistency with his maligned "leading from behind" approach he pursued vis-à-vis Libya in 2011. He argued in response to Browkaw's question that while he did believe that the United States would "have to consider it as part of our interests, our national interests, in intervening where possible" in the case of humanitarian crises, the American public had to understand that "there's a lot of cruelty around the world. We're not going to be able to be everywhere all the time. That's why it's so important for us to be able to work in concert with our allies". Furthermore, Obama hypothesized about the contemporaneous crisis in Darfur to illustrate his point, suggesting that the United States could be assisting the African Union peacekeeping force by "providing logistical support, setting up a no-fly zone at relatively little cost to us, but we can only do it if we can help mobilize the international community and lead. And that's what I intend to do when I'm president". [32] Adding further weight to the argument that this was an accurate estimation of the logic Obama applied to Libya, Anne Marie Slaughter, Director of Policy Planning at the State Department from 2009 to 2011, wrote in the *New York Review of Books* in March 2011 that:

> Obama acknowledged, rightly, that the US has more direct vital interests—the preservation of US territory, the safety of our people, the security of our allies, and "our core interests." Protecting civilians in Libya does not fall within that category, but rather within the category

[32] Second Presidential Debate: Barack Obama v John McCain, Belmont University, Nashville. (October 9, 2008). Accessed at http://www.debates.org/index.php?page=october-7-2008-debate-transcript, Emphasis added.

> of "challenges to our common security and common humanity." The US should not "be afraid to act," but neither should it act alone.[33]

Perhaps more tellingly, it is in Syria that Barack Obama forthrightly pursued a strategy that distanced America from a war that he perceived as removed from American national interests. However, in making this decision, the President had to weigh up many competing variables, as the 2014 *Congressional Research Services Report* outlines:

> Debates over U.S. policy towards Syria since 2011 have repeatedly returned to the questions of assistance for the opposition and potential U.S. military intervention, whether to protect civilians, target terrorist groups, or punish Syrian forces suspected of involvement in chemical weapons attacks or other attacks on opposition-held areas.[34]

In response to these convoluted policy options, President Obama withstood mounting pressure and nullified the voices calling on him to use the military to intervene in Syria. For instance, in rationalising his decision to intervene in Libya, President Obama stated, "If we waited one more day, Benghazi, a city nearly the size of Charlotte, could suffer a massacre that would have reverberated across the region and stained the conscience of the world… It was not in our national interest to let that happen. I refused to let that happen".[35] At the same time, however, Obama stated that his decision not to intervene in Syria in response to Bashar al-Assad's apparent use of chemical weapons against Syrian civilians was "a proud moment….and the fact that I was able to pull back from the immediate pressures and think through in my own

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[33] Anne Marie Slaughter, 'Interests vs. Values? Misunderstanding Obama's Libya Strategy', *New York Review of Books* (March 30, 2011). Accessed at http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2011/03/30/interests-values-obamas-libya-strategy/

[34] Christopher M. Blanchard, Crala E. Humud and Mary Beth D. Nikitin, 'Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response', *Congressional Research Service* (September 17, 2014), p. 23.

[35] Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Libya National Defense University Washington, D.C. (March 28, 2011). Accessed at https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/28/remarks-president-address-nation-libya

mind what was in *America's interests*…..was as tough a decision as I've made – and I believe ultimately it was the right decision to make".[36]

Such thinking that links "American interests" to his decision not to intervene militarily is central to understanding his approach to the Syrian conflict. Obama was consistently clear that if American interests are not threatened then he will not adopt the critical error of his predecessor, and send the American military force into a conflict zone. In this respect, Obama's response to the Syrian war runs congruent with a strategy of retrenchment that views the United States as being in a position of strength when it is removed from "entangling alliances". As we will see below, this exemplifies the convergence between Obama and Jefferson, where they adopt a similar strategic outlook through their inherent belief that war threatens "the cherished ideals of liberty" and that the "object of foreign policy should be to defend those values at home rather than to extend them abroad".[37]

In order to nullify the voices pressuring President Obama to "do more" in Syria, he furthered his "leading from behind" approach that has included "the provision of nonlethal and lethal assistance to select Syrian opposition groups, a sustained international diplomatic effort to establish a negotiated transition, and the provision of humanitarian assistance in Syria and neighbouring countries".[38] Taken together, President Obama has removed his "lead from behind" strategy, and replaced it instead with a strategy of "train and equip".

At times, President Obama attempted to frame the Syrian crisis as a direct threat to America, and speak directly to the 'Jacksonian Folk Community" we discussed in Chapter three. In President Obama's 2014 national prime time address on Islamic

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[36] Jeffrey Goldberg, 'The Obama Doctrine', p. 76. Emphasis added.

[37] Mead, *Special Providence*, p. 175.

[38] Blanchard et al, 'Armed Conflict in Syria: Overview and U.S. Response',p. 24.

State, he stated, "I will not hesitate to take action against [ISIS] in Syria, as well as Iraq. This is a core principle of my presidency: If you threaten America, you will find no safe haven….I have made it clear that we will hunt down terrorists who threaten our country wherever they are".[39] However, these statements were not been matched to a military response on the ground. Indeed, Obama stated that an American military response will do little to alter the trajectory of the Syrian war when he stated:

> When you have a professional army that is well armed and sponsored by two large states [Iran and Russia], who have huge stakes in this, and they are fighting against a farmer, a carpenter, an engineer who started out as protestors and suddenly now see themselves in the midst of a civil conflict….The notion that we could have – in a clean way that didn't commit U.S. military forces-changed the equation on the ground there was never true.[40]

This aversion to inter-state war, based on a desire to prioritise domestic affairs over that of entangling alliances, allows us to best conceptualise Obama's Middle East strategy within a strategy of retrenchment, which is where we now turn.

A Strategy of Retrenchment

President Obama's response to these events resonate with a strategy of retrenchment. Retrenchment is best understood as a strategy designed to reduce America's global commitments through the decoupling of various global obligations, particularly military entanglements. This includes the reduction of defence spending and a desire for allies to defend themselves from external aggression. Discussions surrounding this strategy gained strength in the mid-1990's to counter the growing wave of voices that were encouraging a more activist United States foreign policy as the Cold War ended. At this time, the United States perceived success against the Soviet threat, along with the military dominance displayed in the first Gulf War, were encouraging many to advocate for American global leadership. Of course, the momentum building around

[39] President Obama, 'Remarks of President Barack Obama Address to the Nation', The White House (September 10, 2014).

[40] Ibid, p. 73.

American primacy was greeted by a group of realist scholars pressing for a more restrained American global presence. These realists voices called for long-standing American partners, including, Germany, Japan, and Saudi Arabia, to increase their own defence position and take greater responsibility for not only their own security, but also regional stability. While this was not an endorsement for a strategy of isolationism, they nonetheless encouraged the United States to roll back its global leadership position.

Perhaps one of the most obvious areas the Obama administration demonstrated a commitment to a strategy of retrenchment is his decision to scale back defence expenditure. For instance, in 2010, the United States annual military expenditure consisted of approximately 5% of GDP, however, when Obama left the White House that figure had been depleted to 3%. Drawing from these figures, Colin Dueck has noted:

> The Budget Control Act of 2011 in particular, together with subsequent sequestration, resulted in roughly $1 trillion in defense cuts over a ten-year period currently underway. This was on top of previous cuts from Obama's first two years under then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. The cuts showed up in reduced numbers of weapons, personnel, soldiers, Marines, ships and aircraft since 2010. In real terms, defense spending has gone down significantly as a proportion of the US federal budget since that year, while domestic spending has gone up.[41]

This reduction in defence spending can be traced to the Budget Control Act of 2011, when President Obama pronounced that half of the $1.2 trillion in sequestration cuts would come from the Defence budget. Mark Moyar has suggested that after the handwringing that accompanied these sequestration discussions, the Obama administration then subsequently moved to refine its Middle East commitments.

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[41] Colin Dueck, 'The Strategy of Retrenchment and its Consequences', *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (April 13, 2015). Accessed at https://www.fpri.org/article/2015/04/the-strategy-of-retrenchment-and-its-consequences/

> The Defense Strategic Guidance of 2012 proclaimed that the U.S. could afford to draw down the military because the Iraq and Afghanistan wars were ending and al Qaeda was on the run. In 2013 then-Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel organized a new strategic review that determined the military could perform its key missions even if the Army shrank to between 420,000 and 450,000 soldiers. The White House wove this finding into a narrative in which the Defense Department approved of a sequestration-size military. White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest wheeled out this talking point on July 8 when asked about the Army's 40,000 layoffs, saying the force reductions were "consistent with the view of our civilian and uniform military leadership about the threats that the country faces.[42]

Indeed, the 2012 Defence Strategic Guidance states that "This country is at a strategic turning point after a decade of war and, therefore, we are shaping a Joint Force for the future that will be smaller and leaner, but will be agile and flexible, ready and technologically advanced".[43] This represented both an acknowledgement for the limits of American power, but also a recalibration of American interests. The combination of cutting back troop numbers alongside a severe cut in the overall defence spending aligned with the core principles of a retrenchment strategy.

Of course, those that argue for more, rather than less, American engagement in the world understand President Obama's retrenchment strategy as profoundly dangerous to international security. Robert Gilpin has noted that "retrenchment by its very nature is an indication of relative weakness and declining power, and thus retrenchment can have a deteriorating effect on relations with allies and rivals…..Rivals are stimulated to close in, and frequently the precipitate a conflict in

[42] Mark Moyar, 'How Obama Shrank the Military', *The Wall Street Journal* (August 2, 2015). Accessed at https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-obama-shrank-the-military-1438551147

[43] The White House, 'Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense' (January 2012). Accessed at http://archive.defense.gov/news/defense_strategic_guidance.pdf

the process".[44] Indeed, Robert Lieber has suggested that Obama's decision to draw down troops in the Middle East ultimately led to the creation of ISIS.

> The other fateful event concerned the drawdown of US forces. Military and diplomatic officials had recommended leaving a reduced force of up to 30,000 troops to underwrote stability and provide assistance to the Iraqi military including training, air support and intelligence. After debates among advisers and disagreements between the White House and the military, the president in June 2011 decided on a figure of 10,000 (later reduced to 5,000). This required renewal of a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) to provide legal immunity for US troops, but negotiations to achieve it failed.[45]

While many have conceptualised President Obama in strict isolationist terms, others have pointed to the difficulty in categorising his administration. Colin Dueck, for instance, noted President Obama's pragmatic approach when in the White House makes any categorisation of his administration fundamentally problematic.

> The flexible quality of the current president's foreign policy has encouraged an unusual range of theories as to its nature. Since Barack Obama first ran for the White House, and in the intervening years, various commentators have identified the following as central elements of the Obama Doctrine: Engagement (Robert Singh); Leading from behind (Ryan Lizza); Drone Strikes (David Rohde); A kinder, gentler empire (Robert Weiss); a lack of genuine strategic thinking (Leslie Gelb).[46]

Because of these various categorisations, and as noted in the introduction, President Obama's strategy has been praised and excoriated in almost equal measure for a variety of often contradictory qualities such as pragmatism, realism, naivety, and fecklessness. The fact that the President Obama's foreign policy has been so difficult to characterise has led some to question whether he in fact had any guiding principles or concepts in this domain. Such contradictory assessments are the result of a failure

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[44] Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press), p. 194.

[45] Robet Lieber, *Retreat and its Consequences* (New York: Cambridge University Press), p. 98

[46] Colin Dueck, *The Obama Doctrine: American Grand Strategy Today* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 1.

to account for the introverted influence of the Jeffersonian tradition (which we will discuss shortly). In this respect, a key issue here is that much of the Washington foreign policy establishment, and associated think-tanks and commentariat, took it for granted that the extroverted traditions of Hamilton and Wilson are in fact the United States' default foreign policy settings (which we discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Four). While both of these traditions have arguably dominated American foreign policy thinking and debates since 1945, the various crises that confronted the United States since 9/11 provided increasing political space for the resurgence of a more restrained foreign policy.

Thus, attempts to understand Obama's pursuance of strategic retrenchment have largely been framed by International Relations dichotomies of realist/idealist or internationalist/isolationist. When analysed through this prism, many "judged" Obama's foreign policy performance against a backdrop of misgivings with his inability to control the geopolitical reshuffling that has swept through the Middle East. For instance, Bret Stephens has argued, "Nevertheless, every president should be judged on a few fundamentals - his ability to deliver what he promised, weaken the country's foes and strengthen its friends, elaborate a concept of the American interest that is persuasive and true, and pass on a world heading in the right direction. Obama rates well on none of these".[47] Such lambasting has led others, such as Daniel Drezner, to argue that Obama "lacks a grand strategy" to guide his foreign policy agenda.[48] Other authoritative voices urged America to continue its "deep engagement" and not be influenced by the "isolationist" voices that emerged as a result of the overextension of American power during the Bush years.[49]

[47] Bret Stephens, 'What Obama Gets Wrong: No Retreat, No Surrender, *Foreign Affairs* 94 (5) (2015), p. 14.

[48] Daniel W. Drezner, 'Does Obama Have a Grand Strategy? Why We Need Doctrines in Uncertain Times', *Foreign Affairs* 90 (4) (2011), pp. 57-68.

While these arguments are understood through the realism-idealism logarithm, others have managed to "cut through" this binary and offer a more nuanced account of Obama's strategic direction. For instance, Dueck's hesitancy to recognise a consistent approach led him to coin President Obama's as a "hybrid strategy" that "appears to be pursuing a grand strategy that combines elements of bargaining, integration, and containment".[50] Similarly, Robert Kaufman, convincingly argued that President Obama had "articulated a clear, logically consistent national security strategy that has crystallised into doctrine during his second term".[51] This "doctrine" affords primacy to "pragmatism" and "flexibility", underpinned by political characteristics such as "conviction" and "consensus".

Although alluding to the practical elements shaping the foreign policy setting of the Obama presidency, these works have not synthesised and accounted for the broader approach of Obama's *Foreign Affairs* essay or, more critically, his time in the White House. Obama pursued a creed that charts the middle ground between pre-emption and isolation, adopting one over the other according to the way he understands foreign or national security challenges to threaten the national interest. More explicitly, the striking feature of Obama's foreign policy engagement was his reticent response to entangling that is consistent with the Jeffersonian tradition and the related purpose of United States foreign policy: "shielding the Republic".

Even at the very beginning of Obama's emergence as a national figure, the tendency to frame foreign policy choices by the calculus of their potential consequences for the Republic's own national security was evident. The George W. Bush administration's "War on Terror" and military misadventures in Afghanistan and Iraq played a central role in Obama's thinking on foreign policy as he sought the Democratic Party's

[49] Stephen G. Brooks, G. John Ikenberry, William C. Wohlforth, 'Don't Come Home, America: The Case against Retrenchment', *International Security* 37 (3) (2012), pp. 7 – 51.

[50] Ibid, p. 44.

[51] Robert G. Kaufman, 'Prudence and the Obama Doctrine', *Orbis* 58 (3) (2014), p. 441.

nomination in 2008. As we have discussed, Obama's campaign was driven by the notion that America was "overextended" in the Middle East, and that he would rectify the excesses of the George W. Bush era. The crusading fervour of President Bush's post-9/11 foreign policy had, in Obama's view, imperilled rather than protected the country's national security and strategic interests by alienating allies, creating opportunities for adversaries (e.g. al Qaeda's post-2003 presence in Iraq), and stimulating consecutive years of fiscal overextension. Writing in *Foreign Affairs* in the midst of his presidential campaign, Obama stated:

> The Bush administration responded to the unconventional attacks of 9/11 with conventional thinking of the past, largely viewing problems as state based and principally amenable to military solutions. It was this tragically misguided view that led us into a war in Iraq that never should have been authorized and never should have been waged….. America cannot meet the threats of this century alone, and the world cannot meet them without America. We can neither retreat from the world nor try to bully it into submission. We must lead the world, by deed and by example.[52]

In his September 2008, presidential debate with Senator John McCain, candidate Obama was quick to contrast his early opposition to the Iraq War with that of the Republican standard bearer. Obama argued that not only had he opposed the war due to the fact that "not only did we not know how much it was going to cost, what our exit strategy might be, how it would affect our relationships around the world, and whether our intelligence was sound" but "also because we hadn't finished the job in Afghanistan" and "put al Qaeda to rest".[53] Obama hammered the theme that the Bush administration's crusading fervour had not only resulted in a missed opportunity to destroy al Qaeda in Afghanistan but also undermined the economic and social fabric of the country: "We've spent over $600 billion so far, soon to be $1 trillion. We have

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[52] Barack Obama, 'Renewing American Leadership', *Foreign Affairs* 86 (2) (2008), p. 4.

[53]'The First Presidential Debate', *New York Times*, (September 26, 2008). Accessed at http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/president/debates/transcripts/first-presidential-debate.html

lost over 4,000 lives. We have seen 30,000 wounded, and most importantly, from a strategic national security perspective, al Qaeda is resurgent, stronger now than at any time since 2001".[54] Finally, and perhaps most importantly for discussions of Obama's foreign policy, were the lessons that he drew from the Iraq debacle:

> We took our eye off the ball. And not to mention that we are still spending $10 billion a month…at a time when we are in great distress here at home, and we just talked about the fact that our budget is way overstretched and we are borrowing money from overseas to try to finance just some of the basic functions of our government. So I think the lesson to be drawn is that we should never hesitate to use military force, and I will not, as president, in order to keep the American people safe. But we have to use our military wisely. And we did not use our military wisely in Iraq.[55]

Here then, Obama sketched a strategy of retrenchment that is consistent with the Jeffersonian critique of the Bush administration's crusading foreign policy. The United States invasion of Iraq in 2003 had not only been unwise from a strategic perspective, taking the country's eye off the true threat to American national security (al Qaeda), but had undermined American standing amongst allies and precipitated economic hardship and crisis at home. To fully conceptualise the affinity that President Obama had with the Jeffersonian tradition, it is important we now turn our attention more fully to this tradition of United States foreign policy.

The Unit-Level Variable: The Jeffersonian Tradition

One of the distinguishing features of the Hamiltonian and Wilsonian traditions that we have discussed in previous chapters is their extroversion. Their primary concern is to actively shape the United States' external environment in ways consistent with their core interests and values. The Jeffersonian tradition, in contrast, is in important

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

respects introverted, primarily concerned with the protection and perfection of the republic itself:

> Jeffersonians [and Jacksonians] believe that the specific cultural, social and political heritage of the United States is a precious treasure to be conserved, defended and passed on to future generations; they celebrate what they see as unique, and uniquely valuable, elements of American life and believe that the object of foreign policy should be to defend those values at home rather than to extend them abroad.[56]

The Jeffersonian tradition is rooted in the belief that "the objectives of foreign policy were but a means to the end of protecting and promoting the goals of domestic society, that is, the individual's freedom and society's well-being".[57] This view has its grounding in Thomas Jefferson's assertion that the American revolution, and subsequent creation of the federal republic, had in fact rejected traditional reason of state and founded *novus ordo seclorum* (a new order for the ages) based on republican government and individual liberty. Indeed, Michael Hardt has provided a persuasive case that at its core, Jefferson sought to construct the United States as a democratic society based on "social equality, economic equality, freedom, and republicanism".[58] Domestically, this led Jefferson to accentuate the need for limits to be placed on the authority and power of the federal government through the constitution and enshrinement of the rights of the states lest tyranny take root. As Tucker and Hendrickson note, however, Jefferson's desire to see the spread of republican government and liberty entailed in the realm of foreign policy an enduring tension between "the desire to reform the international system" and "the desire to remain separate from it" in order to protect the security of the Republic.[59] The significance of

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[56] Mead, *Special Providence*, 175.

[57] Robert Tucker and David Hendrickson, 'Thomas Jefferson and American Foreign Policy, *Foreign Affairs*, 69 (2) (Spring 1990), p. 139.

[58] Michael Hardt, 'Jefferson and Democracy', *American Quarterly*, 59 (1) (2007), pp. 41-78.

[59] Ibid, p. 149.

this tension can be seen, for instance, by contrasting Jefferson's push for greater solidarity with revolutionary France during his time as Washington's secretary of state with his desire to balance the "tyrant of the ocean" (Great Britain) against the "tyrant on land" (Bonaparte's France) during his own presidency (1801-1809) in order to preserve a balance of power.[60]

'Commerce with all nations, alliance with none'

The Jeffersonian tradition offers a distinct approach to American foreign policy. While the Hamiltonian and Wilsonian tradition are grounded in the exportation of American exceptionalism, be it either economic or democratic, the Jeffersonian tradition rests on the preservation, and realisation, of these qualities at home. At his core, Thomas Jefferson, an American founding father, third President of the United States, and author of the Declaration of Independence, was driven by a desire to limit the capacity of government, and wanted the states to hold the ultimate authority.[61] This trait was born out of a Republican competition with the Federalist North, which espoused a strong national government, and vigorous diplomatic ties with Great Britain.[62] Jefferson understood the Constitution as a form of state control, allowing America to mass armies, and send the military abroad, which would dissolve the capacity for America to be self-reliant and diffuse the virtues of the Republic.

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[60] For Jefferson's support for revolutionary France see, Philipp Ziesche, 'Exporting American Revolutions: Gouverneur Morris, Thomas Jefferson, and the National Struggle for Universal Rights in Revolutionary France', *Journal of the Early Republic* 26 (30 (2006), pp. 419-447. For Jefferson's views on Napoleon see for instance, Joseph I. Shulim, 'Thomas Jefferson Views Napoleon', *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 60 (2) (1952), pp. 288-304.

[61] Richard Bernstein, *Thomas Jefferson*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2003), p. xiii.

[62] For a detailed discussion on the dichotomy between the Federalists and Republicans, which entails not only government power, diplomatic relations, and the conflict between the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, see Charles Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (New York: Free Press 1966). Cited in Richard Matthews. *The Radical Politics of Thomas Jefferson: A Revisionist View* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas 1984), p. 1.

Thomas Jefferson, like President Obama, lived and ruled, in a period of immense global change. As Richard Bernstein stated, "From 1765-1775, America had to withstand the feud with Great Britain over the American colonists' rights and responsibilities under the unwritten English constitution. From 1775-1783, America declared, and then won, American Independence in an unprecedented, gruelling war, against the world's most formidable military and naval power".[63] This ascendency set in motion a chain of complex and divisive struggles to implement new instruments of government in order to protect the fruits of the Republic.

This protection and perfection of the Republic is the central thrust of the Jeffersonian tradition. This was built upon, in part, Jefferson's time as the American Minister to France, where he experienced the difference between the "Old and New Worlds".[64] Jefferson's time in France reaffirmed his view of the rewards America had gained from the revolution, through their victory from the constraints of Great Britain. Jefferson saw in France, "Corruption – rooted in monarchy, aristocracy, urbanization, and established churches – rotting European life. Unlike Europe, he insisted, America was growing happier, richer, and more virtues daily".[65]

This conviction, which understood America as the bastion of individual liberty, over that of Europe, continued to drive his belief that America must remain detached from the political and military endeavours beyond American shores. In Jefferson's inaugural address, he spoke of the need to avoid "entangling alliances" with all nations.[66] This was predicated on a belief that America must rid itself of foreign

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[63] Bernstein, *Thomas Jefferson,* p. xvii.

[64] Lawrence Kaplan, *Jefferson and France: As Essay on Politics and Political Ideas*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967). Also, see Bernstein, *Thomas Jefferson*, p. 66.

[65] Bernstein, *Thomas Jefferson*, p. 66.

[66] Forrest McDonald, *The Presidency of Thomas Jefferson*, (Lawrence, Kansas: The University of Kansas 1976), p. 53.

liaisons, due to the capacity for it to enlarge the Federalist's powers, and diminish the richness of the Republic. The Jay Treaty, for the Republicans, along with other international obligations that anchored America to European interests, were understood as unnecessary, impinging on America's democratic sanctuary. Jefferson therefore, it has been argued, would "prefer the isolation of China, rather than the European entanglement, underpinned by trade and military relationships".[67] As Jefferson stated:

> You ask what I think on the expediency of encouraging our states to be commercial? Were I to indulge my own theory I should wish them to practice neither commerce nor navigation but to stand with respect to Europe precisely on the footing of China. We should thus avoid wars and all our citizens would be husbandmen.

In this respect, Jefferson has long been regarded as a man of peace. As Jefferson lamented, "if there be one principle more deeply rooted than any other in the mind of every American, it is, that we should have nothing to do with conquest".[68] In a letter to Tench Coxe, Jefferson wrote:

> As to myself, I love peace, and I am anxious that we should give the world still another useful lesson, by showing to them other modes of punishing injuries than by war, which is as much a punishment to the punisher as to the sufferer. I love, therefore, ... [the] proposition of cutting off all communication with the nation which has conducted itself so atrociously. This, you will say, may bring on war. If it does, we will meet it like men; but it may not bring on war, and then the experiment will have been a happy one. [69]

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[67] McDougall, *Promised Land,* p. 32.

[68] Letter from Thomas Jefferson to William Short (July 28, 1791), reprinted in Julian P. Boyd and Ruth W. Lester, eds, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* 686, 688 (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1982). Cited in, Robert Turner. 'State Responsibility and the War on Terror: The legacy of Thomas Jefferson and the Barbary Pirates', *Chicago Journal of International Law* 4 (1) (2003), p. 126.

[69] Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Tench Coxe (May 1, 1794), reprinted in Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert Ellery Bergh, eds, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* 284, 285 (Thomas Jefferson Memorial

Jefferson's aversion to inter-state war was based on his fears as to its consequences for the *domestic* political order of the United States. For Jefferson, war threatened the cherished ideals of liberty and republican government as wars were not only costly to wage ("The most successful war seldom pays for its losses") but also fostered the development of standing armies that presented "instruments so dangerous to the rights of the nation and which place them so totally at the mercy of their governors that those governors, whether legislative or executive, should be restrained from keeping such instruments on foot but in well-defined cases".[70]

While such sentiment has often been construed as a manifestation of "isolationist" tendencies, it is arguable that these were significantly modified in practice when Jefferson deemed foreign interference to have seriously impinged on the United States' fundamental interests such as its right to unmolested commerce. In fact, it is Jefferson's commitment to "neutral rights" that illuminate most clearly the central tenets of his thinking on foreign policy. This was borne out in perhaps the two most prominent cases of Jefferson's career – the "neutrality debates" surrounding the Anglo-French Wars after the French Revolution and the first of so-called "Barbary Wars" (1801-1805). These cases, and Jefferson's response to them, were crucially shaped by his desire to secure three principle goals: "securing the nation's trade routes, protecting its rights as a neutral power top undertake commerce between European belligerents, and building a naval force sufficient to defend and advance these commercial interests".[71]

Association 1903). Cited in Turner. 'State Responsibility and the War on Terror: The legacy of Thomas Jefferson and the Barbary Pirates', pp. 126-127.

[70] Letter from Thomas Jefferson to David Humphreys (March 18, 1789), reprinted in Joyce Appleby and Terence Ball, *Thomas Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999), p. 113.

[71] James M. Sofka, 'The Jeffersonian Idea of National Security: Commerce, the Atlantic Balance of Power and the Barbary War, 1786-1805', *Diplomatic History* 21 (4) (1997), p. 521.

Jefferson, as it is often noted, was in fact the first American President to commit U.S. forces to war against what today would be termed state sponsored terrorism, primarily in order to defend American commerce and to demonstrate to the European powers (primarily Britain and France) the Republic's resolve to protect its neutral trading rights. As Robert Turner has stated:

> In October 1784, the American merchant brig Betsy was seized on the high seas and taken with its crew of eleven to Morocco. Lacking both a naval force to protect American commerce and the ability to compel the American states to furnish the necessary funds to provide for a navy, the Continental Congress ultimately decided to follow the European lead and authorized $80,000 to "negotiate peace" with Morocco to obtain the release of the prisoners.[72]

This decision triggered a wave of Barbary states to seek out American vessels, which Jefferson would later come to deal with militarily as U.S. President in 1801. In making his decision to wage war, Jefferson said:

> The question is whether their peace or war will be cheapest? But it is a question which should be addressed to our Honor as well as our Avarice? Nor does it respect us as to these pyrates only, but as to the nations of Europe. If we wish our commerce to be free and uninsulted, we must let these nations see that we have an energy which at present they disbelieve. The low opinion they entertain of our powers cannot fail to involve us soon in a naval war.[73]

Such thinking also had an effect on Jefferson's position vis-à-vis British and French impingement on American commerce. While Washington's Secretary of State, Jefferson had famously been a proponent of aiding revolutionary France in its

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[72] Turner, 'State Responsibility and the War on Terror: The Legacy of Thomas Jefferson and the Barbary Pirates', p. 122

[73] Letter from Thomas Jefferson to John Page (Aug 20, 1785), reprinted in Julian P. Boyd, Mina R. Bryan, and Elizabeth L. Hutter, eds, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* 417, 419 (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1953). Cited in Robert Turner. 'State Responsibility and the War on Terror: The legacy of Thomas Jefferson and the Barbary Pirates', p. 125.

struggles against the European monarchies. Such was Jefferson's identification with revolutionary France that his great Federalist opponent, Alexander Hamilton, declaimed that not only did the Virginian have a "womanish attachment to France and a womanish resentment against Great Britain" but that if President Washington heeded his advice "there would be in less than six months an open War between the United States and Great Britain".[74] As Joseph Shulim has remarked however "Jefferson's zeal for the French Revolution" was due not only to his "philosophical beliefs" but also by considerations of "practical politics" as:

> He was convinced that a liberal victory on the other side of the Atlantic would bolster popular government in the United States against the attempts of stock-jobbing Hamiltonians to establish that "Half-way house", the English form of government.[75]

More significantly, as those such as James Sofka and Lawrence Kaplan have argued, Jefferson's "womanish attachment to France" and "womanish resentment against Britain" was also driven by a calculated judgement regarding the Transatlantic balance of power.[76] Jefferson, as Sofka argues, "held that a small but prosperous neutral power dependent on external trade for a large percentage of its national revenue" such as the United States "could not compete in the global system as long as its trade was vulnerable to attack, seizure or prohibitive duties".[77] As Secretary of State, Jefferson made his view that commerce was the lifeblood of the Republic's national power abundantly clear in his 16 December 1793 "Report on the Privileges and Restrictions of the Commerce of the United States" presented to Congress:

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[74] Cited in, McDougall, *Promised Land*, p. 29.

[75] Joseph M. Shulim, 'Thomas Jefferson Views Napoleon', *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 60 (2) (April 1952), p. 287.

[76] See Sofka, The Jeffersonian Idea of National Security; and Lawrence Kaplan, 'Jefferson, Napoleonic Wars and the Balance of Power, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 14 (2) (1957). pp. 196-217.

[77] Sofka, 'The Jeffersonian Idea of National Security',p. 521.

> As a branch of industry it is valuable, but as a resource of defense, essential. Its value, as a branch of industry, is enhanced by the dependence of so many other branches on it. In times of general peace it multiplies competitors for employment in transportation, and so keeps that at its proper level; and in times of war, that is to say, when those nations who may be our principal carriers, shall be at war with each other, if we have not within ourselves the means of transportation, our produce must be exported in belligerent vessels, at the increased expense of war-freight and insurance, and the articles which will not bear that, must perish on our hands. But it is as a resource of defense that our navigation will admit neither negligence nor forbearance. The position and circumstances of the United States leave them nothing to fear on their land-board, and leave them nothing to desire beyond their present rights. *But on their seaboard, they are open to injury, and they have there, too, a commerce which must be protected.*[78]

Even as Jefferson's attachment to France soured with Napoleon Bonaparte's usurpation of the French Revolution, Jefferson during his Presidency (1801-1809) nonetheless maintained a position that "deliberately favoured France over Britain".[79] The basis of this position was that even though 'England was fighting a defensive war against an aggressor bent on world domination' (i.e. Napoleon) Jefferson's perspective held that the wars in Europe were:

> …never really between two titans of equal strength or of equal merit. France after ceding Louisiana and after losing her fleet, looked less dangerous than Britain, who had the means, through American bases and control of the sea, to insult, plunder or attack the United States, and who had the motive of revenge to feed her hostility.[80]

Thus it was Great Britain, that "mistress of the seas", in Jefferson's judgement that constituted the greatest potential threat to the United States' ability to engage in the unmolested commerce that was central to its existence as an independent state. Such

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[78] Thomas Jefferson, 'Report on the Privileges and Restrictions of the Commerce of the United States,' 16 December 1793, in Paul Leicester Ford, ed., *The Works of Thomas Jefferson* vol. 8, (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons 1903-1905), pp. 112-113. Emphasis added.

[79] Kaplan, 'Jefferson, Napoleonic Wars and the Balance of Power', p. 198.

[80] Ibid.

a judgement led Jefferson as President to institute the Embargo and Non-Importation Acts in 1807 banning American exports to the belligerent powers that interfered with its commerce. Jefferson's logic was straightforward. As the United States did not have the military capability to compel Great Britain and France to respect American neutrality rights, it was only via "a strategy of commercial retaliation" that it could hope to "gain concessions without threat of a physical war it could not win".[81]

For the Jeffersonian's, the best foreign policy for the United States is not the caricatured "isolationist", ostrich "head-in-the-sand" approach often thrown about in American debates about foreign policy since the end of World War II. Rather, Jefferson's approach to foreign policy sketched above was largely consistent with the sentiments expressed in George Washington's Farwell Address of 1796. These were not, as they are often construed, abstract principles sacred for all time, but rather reflected the Republic's recent and "painful experience" in negotiating the exigencies of the Transatlantic balance of power.[82] Jefferson, as I have noted, concurred with Washington's maxim that "The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible".[83] Jefferson too shared Washington's view that the United States' "detached and distant situation" from Europe was one of the Republic's great assets and no doubt would have concurred with this oft-quoted passage:

> Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground? Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor or caprice? It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world; so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it; for let me

[81] Sofka, 'The Jeffersonian Idea of National Security', p. 526.

[82] Samuel Flagg Bemis, 'Washington's Farewell Address: A Foreign Policy of Independence', *The American Historical Review* 39 (2) (1934), p. 250.

[83] George Washington, Farewell Address 1796, *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy*, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp

> not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat it, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But, in my opinion, it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them.[84]

More significantly, the importance Jefferson attached to the protection of American commerce that I have described above was entirely consistent with that expressed by Washington when he stated that:

> …our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand; neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences; consulting the natural course of things; diffusing and diversifying by gentle means the streams of commerce, but forcing nothing; establishing (with powers so disposed, in order to give trade a stable course, to define the rights of our merchants, and to enable the government to support them) conventional rules of intercourse, the best that present circumstances and mutual opinion will permit, but temporary, and liable to be from time to time abandoned or varied, as experience and circumstances shall dictate; constantly keeping in view that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another; that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character; that, by such acceptance, it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favors, and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more. There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favors from nation to nation. It is an illusion, which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.[85]

Jefferson's actions in the protection of this great goal of early American foreign policy – military action against the Barbary pirates and economic sanctions against Britain and France – suggest the veracity of Mead's claim that, 'Jeffersonian's see the risks and costs of intervention as so high that *only* real threats to the nation's existence justify such adventures'.[86]

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[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Mead, *A Special Providence*, p. 193.

The Realist Response

As we have discussed, when President Obama entered the White House the United States was embroiled in two Middle East wars and severely constrained by the global financial crisis. These structural pressures led many realists to view the Obama presidency as an opportunity for the United States to pull back its global commitments. Indeed, Obama's campaign promises suggested an affinity with core realist principles. In broad terms, Obama had sketched a realist strategy that exhibited an appreciation for the limits of American power manifested in his desire to end the ongoing wars in the Middle East and the willingness to pull back America's military footprint. President Obama also suggested a willingness to outsource responsibility for global leadership to other states, such as China, endorsing an inherent belief in the balance of power logic.

Yet conceptualising President Obama's strategy in realist terms is problematic due to the ongoing definitional and operational ambiguity. That is, while it is plausible to suggest that President Obama pursued a buckpassing strategy due to the "leading from behind" and "surrogate warfare" strategy that looked to "others" to stabilise the region, there are many shortcomings that follow from such an assessment. For instance, realists suggest that a state will adopt a buckpassing strategy when their allies have a defensive advantage,[87] when a state perceives the military balance of power is to their advantage, [88] or in a multipolar order, where uncertainty understanding who threatens who, along with the difficulty estimating the consequences of external actions, will lead a state to buckpass rather than take responsibility through internal balancing behaviour.[89] Of course, the United States did

[87] Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, 'Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity', *International Organization* 44 (2) (1990), pp. 137-168.

[88] Thomas Christensen, 'Perceptions and Alliances in Europe, 1865-1940', *International Organization* 51 (1) (1997), pp. 65-97.

[89] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 168.

not have a defensive advantage and were not operating in a multipolar order, suggesting that these structural assumptions are not plausible in this scenario.

It is perhaps more valid to suggest that President Obama adopted an underbalancing strategy. Randall Schweller has attempted to understand "why threatened states often fail to adjust in a prudent and coherent way to dangerous changes in their strategic environment".[90] Adopting a neoclassical realist lens, Schweller suggests that it is the lack of "elite consensus" which is "the most proximate cause" that leads states to underbalance.[91] Meanwhile, Mark Haas has recently argued that "ideological polarity shapes how elites balance threats by affecting leaders' ability to forge and sustain international outcomes".[92] Haas laments that states will eschew alliances that are formed in accordance with balance of power logic, and instead will configure them in accordance with their ideological position.[93]And finally, Paul Schroeder, has noted that states "hide from threats" and "withdraw into isolationism" rather than adopt self-help strategies in the face of a resurgent threat.[94]

Classifying President Obama according to these underbalancing assumptions is more instructive. As we have discussed, the Obama administration afforded primacy to domestic affairs over that of providing a stable balance of power in the Middle East. However, the three accounts of underbalancing noted above cannot explain why the United States have attempted to maintain a balance of power across time, nor why

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[90] Randall Schweller, 'Unanswered Threats: A Neoclassical Realist Theory of Underbalanacing', *International Security* 29 (2) (2004), p. 199.

[91] Ibid, p. 170.

[92] Mark Haas, 'Ideological Polarity and Balancing in Great Power Politics', *Security Studies* 23 (4) (2014), p. 724. Gregory Gause has recently drawn on Hass's work to analyse the patterns of alliances currently evolving in the Middle East. See, Gregory Gause, 'Ideologies, Alignments, and Underbalancing in the new Middle East Cold War', *Political Science and Politics* 50 (3) (2017), pp. 672-675.

[93] Ibid, p. 729.

[94] Paul Schroeder, 'Historical Reality vs. Neo-Realist Theory', *International Security* 19 (1) (1994), p. 117.

President Obama ultimately reversed previous administration's assumptions. What is needed then, is an appreciation for the inter-play between the influence of the Jeffersonain tradition and the role and purpose of military force. This will not only provide the space to consider the role and purpose of American military force, but will also overcome realist definitional and operational dilemmas that cannot account for the pragmatic nature of the Obama presidency.

With that said, it is important to briefly note that President Obama's foreign policy did accord with some of the primary assumptions of realist theory. For instance, realist logic suggests the domestic make-up of a state does not impact its foreign policy behaviour. Thus, unlike the Wilsonians within the Bush administration, President Obama appeared to accept that changing the internal characteristics of a state would have limited utility when attempting to alter the foreign policy of a belligerent state. Second, Obama recognised the limits of American military power. Realists ultimately conclude that military force cannot solve the world's problems, pointing to failed military interventions such as the Vietnam War to demonstrate the inability for brute force to stimulate change in domestic affairs. Paul Starobin has noted that realists believe "that Iraq is deeply divided society that could ensnare U.S. forces, even if Saddam Hussein was easily toppled. That worry was commonplace among war critics - the anxiety that Iraq could be another Vietnam-like quagmire".[95] Brian Schmidt and Michael Williams have similarly noted that realist theorists are not regularly recognised for the appreciation they have for the strength of nationalism to overcome American military force:

> In contrast to neoconservatism's claim that democracy is the most powerful ideology in the world, realists have stressed the power of nationalism. Despite the fact that nationalism was strongly visible during the Vietnam War and is clearly evident today in the lethal insurgency underway in Iraq, the neoconservatives who planned the attack on Iraq simply discounted its potential impact, choosing instead

[95] Paul Starobin, 'The Realists', *National Journal* 38 (37) (2006), p. 26.

> to fancifully believe that the Unites States' armed forces would be greeted as liberators.[96]

Taken together then, President Obama's approach to the Middle East demonstrated an affinity with some core assumptions of realist theory. This is perhaps best represented in the closeness that Obama's stated opposition to the Iraq War had with the 2002 *New York Times* letter penned by leading realist scholars, titled "War with Iraq is Not in America's National Interest". Here, realists stated "the United States should maintain vigilant containment of Iraq – using its own assets and the resources of the United Nations – and be prepared to invade Iraq if it threatens to attack America or its allies. That is not the case today. We should concentrate instead on defeating al Qaeda".[97] Of course, while this worldview remained consistent throughout President Obama time in the White House, it cannot account for the way that he used force and the unit-level variables that led to this strategy.

Conclusion

President Obama came to office in 2008 offering "change we can believe in". Such optimism was driven by Obama's conviction that he would deliver "unconventional" thinking in the way he approached the demands of international affairs. This introspection was exhibited in his 2008 *Foreign Affairs* piece, his renowned Cairo speech, and his debates with Senator John McCain. In each of these examples, Obama promised "a new beginning" with the Muslim world, and vowed to use military muscle only where American interests were threatened.

These "commitments" were largely realised through Obama's two terms in office. Through this time, Obama resisted the pressures from within his national security

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[96] Brian Schmidt and Michael Williams, 'The Bush Doctrine and the Iraq War: Neoconservatives Versus Realists', *Security Studies* 17 (2) (2008), p. 204.

[97] 'War with Iraq is Not in America's Interest', *New York Times* (September 26, 2002). Accessed at http://www.bear-left.com/archive/2002/0926oped.html

team that sought to induce him into launching ground offensives amongst the havoc that is surging through the Middle East. Withstanding such calls, President Obama instead lavishly extricated American military forces from Afghanistan and Iraq, and avoided such cataclysmic adventurism in Syria and Libya. In doing so, Obama has pursued a strategy that many have dubbed the 'Obama Doctrine'.

However, this doctrine, understood by notions of "leading from behind", "off-loading", "surrogate warfare", and "kill over capture", has confused political commentators and analysts alike. Notwithstanding Obama's full disclosure prior to being elected, many questioned Obama's commitment to democracy and labelled his time in office as "incoherent", with "no driving strategy" to inform his foreign policy decision-making.

This chapter has attempted to explain these misgivings by placing President Obama's foreign policy behaviour within the prism of the Jeffersonian tradition of American foreign policy identified by Walter Russell Mead. Specifically, it has argued that Obama's foreign policy has demonstrated an ongoing affinity with the least prominent traditions of the four traditions identified by Walter Russell Mead, which ultimately amounted to a pursuance of a retrenchment strategy. It has made this argument by foreshadowing the introverted tendencies of this tradition, in contrast to the extroverted, and more commonly understood Hamiltonian and Wilsonian traditions.

Specifically, this chapter has argued that the Jeffersonian tradition views '"the risks and costs of intervention as so high that only real threats to the nations' existence justify such adventurism". I have illustrated the similarities between Jefferson's embargo measures against Britain and France in 1807, along with his use of military force in the Barbary Wars in the early 19th Century, with Obama's response to the civil wars in Libya and Syria. Here, Obama's strategy of "retrenchment" is understood through a spectrum of fears for its consequences to the domestic political order in America. In this respect, it was Obama's inclination to remain removed from "foreign

entanglements" in order to "perfect the republic", which has been a factor in subduing the calls to impose more of America's military muscle in order to alter the strategic landscape of the Middle East.

In short, this chapter has alluded to the tension between the introverted American foreign policy traditions (Jeffersonian and Jacksonian) and the extroverted traditions (Hamiltonian and Wilsonian). It was Obama's return to these introverted strategies, after an extended period of dominance of the extroverted traditions, which has caught most observers and Washington foreign policy elite off balance.

Chapter Six

Donald Trump and American Foreign Policy: The Return of the Jacksonian Tradition

Abstract: The aim of this chapter is to provide a partial examination of the strategic adjustment that is currently underway within the Trump administration. It attempts to make two core arguments. First, President Trump is purposively rescinding America's global leadership. The Trump administration holds a distinct lack of commitment to the broad contours of the liberal international order that previous administrations have upheld. President Trump instead, is arguably channeling key elements of the Jacksonian tradition as a consequence of his belief that the liberal order, underwritten by American leadership, has manifestly "ripped off" the American "folk community". The second argument this chapter makes is that as a consequence of this Jacksonian outlook, President Trump is overseeing a unilateral grand strategy that uses American military force as a demonstration of strength in the Middle East, but not as a tool to alter the regional balance of power. This strategy then, draws a similarity with the selective engagement strategy discussed in Chapter Three.

Introduction

The tumultuous first two years of Donald Trump's presidency has been driven by the core commitment to recalibrate America's relationship with the liberal international order. To date, the administration has been remarkable for the extent to which its foreign policy positions have run counter to the largely liberal internationalist approach of successive administrations since 1945. Hal Brands, for instance, has suggested that President Trump's foreign policy is "a hardline, nearly zero-sum approach that would actively roll back the post-war international order and feature heavy doses of unilateralism and latter-day isolationism".[1] Thomas Wright has stated that "Trump is the first post war president to oppose the liberal order as he seeks an

[1] Hal Brands, "U.S. Grand Strategy in an Age of Nationalism: Fortress America and its Alternatives", *The Washington Quarterly*, 40 (1) (Spring 2017), p. 74.

"America First" foreign policy".[2] And similarly, conservative writer David Frum lamented that "Donald Trump is doing damage to the deepest and most broadly agreed foreign-policy interests of the United States".[3]

Such critical accounts generally fail however to provide an appreciation for how previous administrations pursued distinct strategic objectives (discussed in previous chapters), nor do they outline a persuasive explanation as to the conduct of President Trump's distinct foreign policy. Moreover, recent scholarship has not considered the broader implications of the manner in which Trump has deployed military force, particularly in the Middle East. This chapter argues that what has been missing is an appreciation of the core well-spring of the Trump administration's emerging foreign policy: the Jacksonian tradition of American foreign policy.

This argument proceeds across two core sections. First, I outline the structural factors that President Trump encountered when entering the White House. This pays particular attention to Trump's campaign for the presidency and the manner in which he spoke directly to Jacksonian principles of populism, individualism, honour and courage. Second, I outline how the Jacksonian tradition has been expressed in President Trump's foreign policy with respect to the Afghanistan War, the Syrian crisis, and the Iran nuclear deal, and to a lesser extent, the Paris Climate Agreement and America's relationships with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).[4] This section will conclude by briefly connecting these specific episodes to a strategy of selective engagement that is concerned with maintaining the status quo, rather than altering the overall balance of power.

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[2] Thomas Wright, "Trump Takes Allies Back to 19th Century Global Order", *Brookings*, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/03/21/trump-takes-allies-back-to-19th-century-global-order/

[3] David Frum, "Trump's Trip was a Catastrophe for U.S.-Europe Relations", *The Atlantic,* https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/05/trump-nato-germany/528429/

[4] In this chapter I make no claim as to prudence or otherwise of the Trump administration's foreign policy direction but rather seek to demonstrate how it is informed by the Jacksonian tradition.

Structural Input?: Candidate Trump and the Jacksonian "Folk" community

The 2016 presidential election between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton was in many respects a contest between liberal internationalism and nationalistic isolationism. On the one hand, Hillary Clinton's foreign policy platform was largely an archetypal liberal internationalist one that afforded primacy to the role of democracy, free market capitalism, traditional security alliances, and the export of American ideas and norms. On the other side, however, Donald Trump ran a campaign that lambasted the "foreign-policy elites" for their pursuance of an agenda that had "ripped off" the American people. Robert J. Merry picked up on this aspect when he argued that the Trump-Clinton presidential contest was (amongst other things) between whether "nationalism" or "globalism" would guide American foreign policy.[5] Trump's "America First" sloganeering placed him in opposition not only to the group of neoconservatives that have had a stranglehold on GOP foreign policy debates in recent times but also to the broader post-Cold War consensus amongst Washington's foreign policy establishment that U.S. national security is best served by the country remaining the "indispensable nation" that brings *both* order and justice to the international system. This consensus has been based on the twin assumptions, as Eliot Cohen, Eric Edelman and Brian Hook argued, that a "strong United States is…essential to the maintenance of the open global order under which this country and the rest of the world has prospered since 1945; that the alternative to America's 'indispensability' is not a harmonious, self-regulating balance of independent states but an international landscape marked by eruptions of chaos and destruction".[6]

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[5] Robert J. Merry, "Trump vs. Hillary is Nationalism vs. Globalism, 2016", *The National Interest* (May 4, 2016). Accessed at http://nationalinterest.org/feature/trump-vs-hillary-nationalism-vs-globalism-2016-16041

[6] Eliot Cohen, Eric Edelman and Brian Hook, "Presidential Priority: Restore American Leadership", *World Affairs Journal*, (Spring 2016). Accessed at http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/presidential-priority-restore-american-leadership

The strain of nationalism that Trump tapped however was driven by a number of core sentiments that directly challenged such a consensus. Trumpian nationalists, Robert Merry suggested: (i) "don't care about dominating world events" but "want their country to be powerful, with plenty of military reach…to protect American national interests;" (ii) they ask "whether the national interest justifies the expenditure of American blood and treasure" when interventions abroad are proposed; and (iii) the "fate of America" is their primary consideration.[7] Thus, President Trump demonstrated a willingness to reconceptualise the role and purpose of American military force. This attempted to portray previous administrations use of American military force as Wilsonian project that advantaged "other" states rather than America. A Trump presidency, he argued, would use the military to advance American goals and interests, which would not be used in concert with other powers or for their protection.

The nascent nationalist/globalist divide depicted by Merry pointed to the recrudescence of the influence of the Jacksonian tradition, which critically, Donald Trump increasingly connected with throughout his presidential campaign. Indeed, Ian Bremmer, characterized much of candidate Trump's statements on foreign policy issues as almost entirely driven by an "instinctive" approach that positioned him in direct opposition to the liberal internationalism of his opponent. Trump, he argued:

> …won't be guided by ideology. He doesn't appear to have one. He's a gut-feel guy, a zero-sum strategist, and a bottom-line businessman. He won't approach problems as if the world's sole superpower can afford to be generous, to do more so that others can do less. He sees no special responsibility to be magnanimous, or even patient. Being No. 1 doesn't mean playing the role of provider. It's about winning. It means being the toughest, smartest son of a bitch at the table. In short, Trump will

[7] Robert J. Merry, "Trump vs. Hillary is Nationalism vs. Globalism, 2016", *The National Interest* (May 4, 2016). Accessed at http://nationalinterest.org/feature/trump-vs-hillary-nationalism-vs-globalism-2016-16041

> probably try to remake U.S. foreign policy in his own (self-) image.[8]

This apparent lack of belief in the necessity for American global leadership was perhaps best illustrated in the way that Trump sought to redefine America's relationship with NATO. During the election campaign Trump, described NATO as "obsolete" and a "relic" and opined that he "would be fine if NATO broke up." Moreover, Trump argued that NATO members were in fact taking advantage of the United States:

> That means we are protecting them [NATO], giving them military protection and other things, and they're ripping off the United States. And you know what we do? Nothing…..either they have to pay up for past deficiencies or they have to get out.[9]

This sentiment was furthered by Trump in his lengthy interview in early 2016 with the *New York Times* where he reflected that America's relationship with NATO was "unfair, economically, to us".[10] For Trump, this "entangling alliance" does not serve the "national interest" of the United States, but instead, diminished the "America first" program that underpinned his campaign for president. The instrumental framing of NATO as an institution that had "exploited" American foreign policy ultimately established a clear separation between the "liberal elites" that were championing Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign and Jacksonian America that perceived continued American underwriting of such security architecture as no longer serving the national security of the country.

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[8] Ian Bremmer. "Trump in the World: What Could Actually Go Wrong. The definitive guide to the global risks of a Donald Trump presidency". *Politico* (June 3, 2016). Accessed at http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/06/2016-donald-trump-international-foreign-policy-global-risk-security-guide-213936

[9] Ashley Parker. "Donald Trump Says NATO is 'Obsolete,' UN is 'Political Game", *New York Times* (April 2, 2016). Accessed at http://www.nytimes.com/politics/first-draft/2016/04/02/donald-trump-tells-crowd-hed-be-fine-if-nato-broke-up/?_r=0

[10] David E. Sanger and Maggie Habberman. "In Donald Trump's Worldview, America Comes First, and Everybody Else Pays". *New York Times* (March 26, 2016). Accessed at http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/27/us/politics/donald-trump-foreign-policy.html

Throughout the election campaign Trump focused this rhetorical swagger not only on regional security institutions, but also America's relationship with key allies as well. Trump indicated his willingness to allow relations with long-standing alliance partners - such as Japan - to drift, and argued that such states should be prepared to "go it alone" if they are "not willing to pay in cash or troop commitments, for the presence of American forces around the world".[11] Moreover, while Clinton located alliances as a core pillar of America's grand strategy,[12] Trump disputed the salience of this outlook, and argued that Japan should incur the cost of America's troops stationed on their soil, or otherwise learn to "defend themselves" in a volatile and unpredictable environment.[13] For instance, in the much publicized Republican primary debates, Trump mapped his vision for the Asia-Pacific region succinctly when he stated, "Now, wouldn't you rather, in a certain sense, have Japan have nuclear weapons when North Korea has nuclear weapons?"[14] Trump further stated, with his rhetoric perhaps more obviously targeted to appeal to Jacksonian sentiment, that "if they don't take care of us properly, if they don't respect us enough to take care of us properly, then you know what's going to have to happen … It's very simple. They're going to have to defend themselves".[15]

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Hillary Clinton, "Hillary Clinton delivers Major National Security Address", The Briefing (June 2, 2016). Accessed at https://www.hillaryclinton.com/briefing/statements/2016/06/02/transcript-hillary-clinton-delivers-major-national-security-address/

[13] Yuki Tatsumi. "Donald Trump: A Reality Check for the US-Japan Alliance", The Diplomat (May 7, 2016). Accessed at http://thediplomat.com/2016/05/donald-trump-a-reality-check-for-the-us-japan-alliance/

[14] Stephanie Condon. "Donald Trump: Japan, South Korea might need nuclear weapons". CBSNews (March 29, 2016). Accessed at http://www.cbsnews.com/news/donald-trump-japan-south-korea-might-need-nuclear-weapons/

[15] The Japan Times (May 5, 2016). Accessed at http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/05/05/national/politics-diplomacy/trump-urges-japan-pay-maintain-u-s-military-bases/#.V3elDnjfJVv

Indeed, throughout the election campaign Trump intensified this attitude to other staunch American allies, such as South Korea and Saudi Arabia. In a 2013 YouTube clip that has come to capture much of Trump's Asia-Pacific foreign policy, he stated:

> South Korea is a very, very rich country. They're rich because of us. They sell us televisions; they sell us cars. They sell us everything. They are making a fortune. We have a huge deficit with South Korea. They're friends of mine. I do deals with them. I've been partners with them, no problem. But they think we're stupid. They can't believe it. We are defending them against North Korea; we're doing it for nothing. We're not in that position. When will they start to pay us for this defense? Isn't it really ridiculous when you think of it? They make a fortune on the United States and then they got some problems, and what happens? They call the United States to defend them, and we get nothing?[16]

Trump offered comparable antipathy to Saudi Arabia, who the United States has looked to as a key ally in the Middle East for the past forty years.[17] Trump declared, "We're not being reimbursed for the kind of tremendous service that we're performing by protecting various countries. Now Saudi Arabia's one of them…..If Saudi Arabia was without the cloak of American protection, I don't think it would be around".[18]

At this time, many argued that Trump's revision of American foreign policy would "undermine" America's interests and would further destabilize an already fractured global order. Reminiscent of the observation of those that chastised the Obama

[16] Catherine Putz, "Despite Trump's Rhetoric, GOP Senators Try to Reassure South Korea", *The Diplomat* (June 3, 2016). Accessed at http://thediplomat.com/2016/06/despite-trumps-rhetoric-gop-senators-try-to-reassure-south-korea/

[17] See for example, Josh Pollack, "Saudi Arabia and the United States, 1931-2002", *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 6 (3) (2002), pp. 77-102; and David E. Long, "US-Saudi Arabia Diplomatic Relations: An Evolutionary Process", in Robert E. Looney (ed.), *Handbook of US-Middle East Relations*, (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 403-417.

[18] David E. Sanger and Maggie Habberman. "In Donald Trump's Worldview, America Comes First, and Everybody Else Pays". *New York Times* (March 26, 2016). Accessed at http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/27/us/politics/donald-trump-foreign-policy.html

administration that we canvassed in the previous chapter , Tobias Harris and Jeffrey W. Hornung, writing in the *National Interest* stated:

> Trump is right that these [US] troops defend Japan, but thanks to Japan's willingness to host so many U.S. troops, the U.S is capable of projecting power in the region, enabling it to respond to regional contingencies, deter adversaries and reassure allies of American resolve. Unfortunately, Trump does not seem to appreciate the extent to which the U.S. military presence in Asia depends on Japan's willingness to support it.[19]

Democratic Presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, also used Trump's "Japan policy" as a tool to discredit his foreign policy experience. In her much-heralded foreign policy speech, Clinton lambasted Trump when she stated, "It's no small thing when he suggests that America should withdraw our military support for Japan, encourage them to get nuclear weapons".[20] Clinton's consternation was not only driven by the "suggestion" that Japan should get nuclear weapons, but by Trump's apparent disregard for how acquiescence to such a development would weaken regional security in North East Asia by undermining the credibility of American extended nuclear deterrent guarantees to allies and provide further proliferation incentives to the likes of North Korea.

However, such criticism failed to acknowledge the motivating factors that undergirded Trump's foreign policy direction. Trump's *National Interest* speech outlined "five main weaknesses in [American] foreign policy (overextended resources; allies are not paying their fair share; friends no longer depend on America; our rivals no longer respect us; and America no longer has a clear understanding of their foreign policy goals)," which he claimed he would redress if elected president.[21]

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[19] Tobias Harris and Jeffrey W. Hornung, "Trump Shouldn't Bash Japan", *The National Interest* (February 25, 2016). Accessed at http://nationalinterest.org/feature/trump-shouldnt-bash-japan-15328

[20] Louis Jacobson, "Hillary Clinton says Donald Trump argued U.S. should 'encourage' Japan to get nuclear weapons", *Politifact* (June 6, 2016). Accessed at http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2016/jun/06/hillary-clinton/hillary-clinton-says-donald-trump-argued-us-should/

Trump identified his foreign policy as diverging from that of previous administrations in that:

> My foreign policy will always put the interests of the American people, and American security, above all else. That will be the foundation of every decision that I will make. America First will be the major and overriding theme of my administration.[22]

Thus, Trump's "America First" approach was predicated upon, and spoke directly to, the "introverted tendencies" of the Jacksonian tradition that we mapped above. He depicted America's post-Cold War foreign policy as defined by "foolishness and arrogance," with a clear disposition towards "extroverted" impulses:

> It all began with the dangerous idea that we could make Western democracies out of countries that had no experience or interest in becoming a Western democracy. We tore up what institutions they had and then were surprised at what we unleashed. Civil war, religious fanaticism; thousands of American lives, and many trillions of dollars, were lost as a result. The vacuum was created that ISIS would fill. Iran, too, would rush in and fill the void, much to their unjust enrichment.[23]

Critically though, Trump did not run for President as an explicit isolationist. As Daniel Larison stated, "If we can pin down his foreign policy at all, it is aggressive and unilateralist when Trump thinks the United States has something to gain, and it is otherwise content to leave regional problems to regional actors".[24] In other words, while Trump signaled his intention to leave regional problems to Japan, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia, throughout the election-cycle, he also clearly stated his intention to

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[21] Donald Trump, "Trump on Foreign Policy", *The National Interest* (April 27, 2016). Accessed at http://nationalinterest.org/feature/trump-foreign-policy-15960

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Daniel Larison, "No, Trump Isn't an Isolationist", *The American Conservative* (November 5, 2015). Accessed at http://www.theamericanconservative.com/larison/no-trump-isnt-an-isolationist/

use force against ISIS. As Trump stated in his foreign policy address, "And then there's ISIS. I have a simple message for them. Their days are numbered. I won't tell them where and I won't tell them how. We must as, a nation, be more unpredictable. But they're going to be gone. And soon".[25] In a separate campaign speech Trump enunciated his plan to "Bomb the shit outta them…. I'd just bomb those suckers…. I'd blow up the pipes, I'd blow up the refineries, I'd blow up every single inch, there would be nothing left".[26] Such rhetoric speaks to the Jacksonian desire to protect its community from direct threat (construed in this instance as both physical and economic) and Jacksonian conceptions of "honor" as the Islamic State constitute an inherently dishonorable adversary justifying the deployment of all and any means to destroy them.

Taken together, Trump ran for president of the United States by appealing to the core tenants of the Jacksonian tradition. Trump articulated a rebuttal of America's Hamiltonian and Wilsonian impulses and provided an alternative vision that appealed to segments of American society that were disconnected from the "political elite" and their financial and economic interdependence. Andrew Rojecki noted "Trump's supporters sought an 'America-First' policy that depended on a return to robust economic growth and the exclusion of foreigners".[27] Randall Schweller similarly argued that the "America First" program emerged at a critical juncture between the shifting dynamics of the international system with a president that acknowledged the interests of those disconnected from the benefits of the liberal order:

> For decades, American citizens, in stark contrast with their leaders, have been more realist than liberal in their foreign-policy orientation. There is now sufficient compulsion in the United States' external environment

[25] Trump on Foreign Policy, 2016.

[26] The Daily Beast (December 11, 2015). Accessed at http://www.thedailybeast.com/cheats/2015/11/12/trump-i-d-bomb-the-s-t-out-of-isis.html

[27] Andrew Rojecki, "Trumpism and the American Politics of Insecurity", *The Washington Quarterly* 39(4) (2016), p. 65

> for them to demand a more narrowly self-interested foreign policy. They insist on a President who unabashedly puts American interests first; who, as a billionaire businessman with highly touted deal-making skills, will fight as an economic nationalist to keep manufacturing jobs in the United States rather than letting the vagaries of markets and globalization decide the fates of working class Americans.[28]

The Jacksonian President: Trump's Unilateral Grand Strategy

Since President Trump's inauguration, there has been conflicting assessments as to whether Trump has (and is) following the pledges made on the campaign trail. Philip Bump, for instance, has stated that "the recurring theme of his presidency so far has been that the rebel he presented on the campaign trail quickly transformed into a doctrinaire Republican after inauguration. This is almost certainly a function of Trump's indifference to the details of policy".[29] David Graham has similarly stated that "By our tally, Trump has fully completed one full promise. A handful of them have seen little or no action at all. Larger portions are either in progress or too early to judge. Two are frozen in court. The largest single chunk is those whose completion looks highly dubious but cannot be finally judged yet".[30] For some it is Trump's "foreign policy" in particular that has veered "furthest from his campaign positions, taking a warmer approach to Japan and other US allies than de did as candidate, and being notably less aggressive towards China".[31] And others have seen Trump leave

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[28] Randall Schweller, "A Third-Image Explanation for Why Trump Now: A Response to Robert Jervis's 'President Trump and IR Theory", *H-Diplo* (February 8, 2017). Accessed at https://issforum.org/roundtables/policy/1-5m-third-image#_ftn1

[29] Philip Bump, "Another core Trump Campaign promise falls by the wayside', *The Washington Post* (May 22 2017). Accessed at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2017/05/22/another-core-trump-campaign-promise-falls-by-the-wayside/?utm_term=.0aa84cf2810a

[30] David Graham, "Has Trump kept his Campaign Promises?", The Atlantic (April 28, 2017). Accessed at https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/04/trump-promises-cheat-sheet/507347/

[31] Barney Jopson, "Trump's Promises: How much has he achieved so far?", *The Financial Times* (February 28, 2017). Accessed at https://www.ft.com/content/af02362c-fd0b-11e6-96f8-3700c5664d30?mhq5j=e3

behind the campaign hyperbole and replace it instead with a more coherent and positive policy agenda. Matthew Kroenig stated that "the Trump administration has left behind the rhetoric of the campaign trail and has begun to adopt foreign policies that are, for the most part, well suited to the challenges ahead".[32]

In contrast, this chapter argues that Trump's presidency demonstrates a continuation of the Jacksonian tradition that animated his 2016 election campaign. It points to a level of coherence within Trump's foreign policy agenda, which is focused first and foremost on disconnecting America from the Wilsonian and Hamiltonian elements of America's foreign policy that Trump believes has "ripped off" the American people. More specifically, it argues that President Trump has adopted a strategy of unilateralism to vindicate the Jacksonian segments of American society, and anchor notions of "national honor" and "reputation" to his "America First" sloganeering. In making this argument, the chapter points to three core foreign policy decisions of the Trump administration. First, Trump's military actions in Afghanistan and Syria. Second, Trump's decision to reverse the Iranian nuclear deal affirmed under the Obama administration. Third, Trump's ambiguity surrounding his endorsement Article V of the NATO Treaty that binds member nations to defend one another if one comes under attack. And finally, although not directly connected to Trumps Middle East strategy, we will consider his withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, which was labelled by the administration as encroaching upon America's ability to "conduct[ing] its own domestic affairs".[33]

The first foreign policy domain that President Trump has demonstrated consistency with Jacksonian sentiments is through his decision-making on American military

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[32] Matthew Kroenig, "The Case for Trump's Foreign Policy: The Right People, the Right Positions", *Foreign Affairs* 96 (3) (2017), p. 30.

[33] Michael Shear, "Trump with Withdraw U.S. from Paris Climate Agreement", *New York Times* (June 1, 2017). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/01/climate/trump-paris-climate-agreement.html

operations in Afghanistan and Syria. In Afghanistan, the president has sent up to another 5000 US troops to beat back a resurgent Taliban.[34] The strategy that Trump is pursuing in America's longest war "includes a greater focus on defending populations centres while ceding much of the remote country sides to insurgents. It has also involved an interdiction campaign against the Taliban, with air strikes on their narcotic labs and other revenue sources. The goal has been to pressure the Taliban to the negotiating table".[35] Trump unveiled his Afghanistan strategy in August 2017 to a prime-time television audience, where he invoked a Jacksonian tone with regard to the "special role" that the American military plays:

> Since the founding of our republic, our country has produced a special class of heroes whose selflessness, courage, and resolve is unmatched in human history. American patriots from every generation have given their last breath on the battlefield for our nation and for our freedom. Through their lives, and though their lives were cut short, in their deeds they achieved total immortality.[36]

In this highly-anticipated speech, President Trump announced three core interests for the United States in Afghanistan. First, Trump declared that "our nation must seek an honorable and enduring outcome worthy of the tremendous sacrifices that have been made, especially the sacrifices of lives". Second, "A hasty withdrawal would create a vacuum that terrorists, including ISIS and Al-Qaeda, would instantly

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[34] Missy Ryan and Greg Jaffe, "U.S. poised to expand military effort against Taliban in Afghanistan", *The Washington Post* (May 8, 2017). Accessed at https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-poised-to-expand-military-effort-against-taliban-in-afghanistan/2017/05/08/356c4930-33fa-11e7-b412-62beef8121f7_story.html?tid=ss_tw&utm_term=.f579680797e5

[35] Lara Seligman, 'One Year On Little to Show For Trump's Afghanistan Strategy', *Foreign Policy* (August 23, 2018). Accessed at https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/08/23/one-year-on-little-to-show-for-trumps-afghanistan-strategy/

[36] Full Transcript: Donal Trump Announces his Afghanistan Strategy (August 21, 2017). Accessed at https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/full-transcript-donald-trump-announces-his-afghanistan-policy/537552/

fill just as happened before September 11th". And third, Trump concluded, "the security threats we face in Afghanistan, and the broader region, are immense". Taken together, President Trump confessed that "we will win" through all instruments of American power "including diplomatic, economic, and military" to "defend America from its enemies abroad".[37]

Although some have viewed this as the "right" strategy that might ultimately be a formula for success,[38] others have viewed this as a continuance of the Bush and Obama strategy from previous years. Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Helene Cooper writing in the *New York Times* have suggested that the shift away from regional centres to focus on regional centres such as Kabul ultimately represents a retreat that echoes previous administrations:

> The retreat to the cities is a searing acknowledgment that the American-installed government in Afghanistan remains unable to lead and protect the country's sprawling rural population. Over the years, as waves of American and NATO troops have come and left in repeated cycles, the government has slowly retrenched and ceded chunks of territory to the Taliban, cleaving Afghanistan into disparate parts and ensuring a conflict with no end in sight.[39]

More critically, these deliberations have led some to question how this policy aligns with Trump's previously professed skepticism of overseas military interventions. Phillip Carter, for instance, has stated, "None of this squares with President Donald Trump's campaign pledge of an "America First" foreign policy, nor with his

[37] Ibid.

[38] Vanda Felbab-Brown, 'President Trump's Afghanistan Strategy: Hopes and Pitfalls', Brooking Institute (September, 2017). Accessed at https://www.brookings.edu/research/president-trumps-afghanistan-policy-hopes-and-pitfalls/

[39] Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Helene Cooper, 'Newest U.S. Strategy in Afghanistan Mirrors Past Plans for Retreat', *The New York Times* (July 28, 2018). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/28/world/asia/trump-afghanistan-strategy-retreat.html

healthy skepticism of how America's long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were managed under Presidents Bush and Obama".[40] Others have stated that "sending thousands more troops into harm's way would be an even graver step into the kinds of foreign entanglement he [Trump] criticised as a private citizen".[41] However, Trump's decision to continue the "forever war" is more likely found in his eagerness to be characterised as a powerful president that was able to overcome "evil". Stephen Walt has perhaps come closest to this assessment, noting "My fear, of course, is that the real purpose of this new move is simply to delay the admission of defeat, so that the top brass doesn't have to admit it failed and a president who portrays himself as a "winner" won't have to watch Afghanistan collapse on his watch".[42] Indeed, this Jacksonian characteristic to defend America's "national honor" and "reputation" is also connected to President Trump's decision to drop "the world's largest non-nuclear bomb" – or Massive Ordnance Air Blast (MOAM) – on an Islamic State tunnel complex in eastern Afghanistan. This strategy captured the attention of many analysts not only due to the size of the weaponry but also to the limited number of militias it targeted. Robin Wright has argued that "The U.S. decision to drop the bomb was striking for several reasons. America's biggest non-nuclear bomb–which costs sixteen million dollars, and three hundred million dollars to develop—was used on one of the smallest militias it faces anywhere in the world".[43] Of course, deploying the most

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[40] Phillip Carter, "Welcome to the Forever War Mr. President", *Slate* (May 11, 2017). Accessed at http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2017/05/trump_s_afghanistan_strategy_could_get_us_sucked_back_into_the_forever_war.html

[41] Bryan Bender and Eliana Johnson, "Trump's campaign pledges face Coalition in Afghanistan", *Politico* (May 9, 2017). Accessed at http://www.politico.com/story/2017/05/09/trump-afghanistan-troops-taliban-238179

[42] Stephen Walt, "What's the Point of Donald Trump's Afghan Surge?", *Foreign Policy* (May 17, 2017). Accessed at http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/05/17/whats-the-point-of-donald-trumps-afghan-surge-taliban-afghanistan/

[43] Robin Wright, "Trump drops the mother of all Bombs on Afghanistan", *The New Yorker* (April 14, 2017). Accessed at http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/trump-drops-the-mother-of-all-bombs-on-afghanistan

powerful conventional weapon in American armory is consistent with the Jacksonian tradition of signalling American prestige and resolve.

The Jacksonian tradition also provides an explanation of President Trump's strategy in Syria. For instance, in April 2017, President Trump launched 59 Tomahawk missiles into Syria in response to Syrian Dictator Bashar al-Assad's use of chemical weapons against innocent civilians. The missiles specifically targeted the Shayrat air base that was used two days earlier by the Syrian regime to launch the chemical attacks. Pentagon spokesperson, Captain Jeff Davis, stated that the strike had "targeted aircraft, hardened aircraft shelters, petroleum and logistical storage, ammunition supply bunkers, air defence systems and radars".[44] The Trump administration called the strike a "one-off" that was aimed at punishing the Syrian dictator."[45] In justifying his decision to use military force, Trump stated that it was in the "vital national security interest of the United States to prevent and deter the spread and use of deadly chemical weapons" and that Syria had "violated its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and ignored the urging of the U.N Security Council".[46]

The ultimate impact of these air strikes was minimal. The airbase was operational within 24 hours and the Syrian air force immediately begun using the runway for operations, which led to many questioning the ultimate success of the campaign. Paul Iddon noted that "Trump's attack, the launching of an enormous array of missiles at a single target certainly wasn't extensive. If it's true that Syrian warplanes are

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[44] U.S. Department of Defense, Statement by Pentagon spokesman Capt. Jeff Davis on U.S. Strike in Syria (April 6, 2017). Accessed at https://dod.defense.gov/News/News-Releases/News-Release-View/Article/1144598/statement-from-pentagon-spokesman-capt-jeff-davis-on-us-strike-in-syria/

[45] Ibid.

[46] 'Transcript and Video: Trump Speaks about Strikes in Syria', *The New York Times* (April 6, 2017). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/06/world/middleeast/transcript-video-trump-airstrikes-syria.html

continuing to operate from Shayrat then the raid failed to completely pulverize, or even severely disable, is sole target".[47] Moustafa Bayoumi, meanwhile, questioned the Trump's motives, lamenting:

> So why attack in the first place? Once again, we're being told by military officials that their actions are intended "to send a message" What nonsense this is. Will Basher al-Assad now cease his murderous actions because he's just been delivered "a message"? How are we suppose to believe there is a strategy to Trump's actions anyway?[48]

President Trump undertook another round of punitive air strike one year later in response to Basher al-Assad's using chemical weapons again. Drawing similarities to the strikes twelve months earlier, President Trump declared that "the purpose of our actions tonight is to establish a strong deterrent against the production, spread and use of chemical weapons. Establishing this deterrent is a vital national security interest of the United States".[49] In these latest strikes, President Trump was more forthright in his acknowledgement that America "cannot purge the world of evil or act everywhere here is tyranny".[50] Reminiscent of President Obama's words discussed in the previous chapter, Trump continued "No amount of American blood or treasure can produce lasting peace and security in the Middle East. It's a troubled place. We will try to make it better, but it is a troubled place".[51]

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[47] Paul Iddon, 'The Syria Strike Proves America's Military is Addicted to Tomahawk Missiles', *The National Interest* (April 10, 2017). Accessed at https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/the-syria-strike-proves-americas-military-addicted-tomahawk-20104

[48] Moustafa Bayoumi, ''Trump's Senseless Syria Strikes Accomplish Nothing', The Guardian (April 7, 2017). Accessed at https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/apr/06/donald-trumps-senseless-syria-strikes-accomplish-nothing

[49] President Trump on Syrian Strikes: Full Transcript and Video', *The New York Times* (April 13, 2018). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/13/world/middleeast/trump-syria-airstrikes-full-transcript.html

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

Of course, at an Ohio rally a month prior to these strikes, President Trump had stated the United States would be withdrawing from Syria "very soon". Without consulting with his advisors, or providing any rationale behind this strategy, Trump noted:

> We're coming out of Syria, like, very soon. Let the other people take care of it now. Very soon — very soon we're coming out. We are going to have 100 percent of the caliphate, as they call it, sometimes referred to as land, taking it all back, quickly, quickly. But we are going to be coming out of there real soon.

To add further confusion to the United States strategy in Syria, Trump would again reverse his instincts and commit the United States to a permanent stationing of troops in Syria. In September 2018, President Trump pronounced a more "long-term" strategy in Syria that would leave "about 2000 troops there" for the indefinite future.[52] Citing senior State Department officials the Washington Post stated that the strategy has changed course due to ongoing doubts as to whether "Russia is willing and able to expel Iranian forces from the war-torn nation".[53] The article quotes James Jeffrey, the recently appointed special envoy for Syrian engagement, as the source confirming President Trump had reversed his previous inclination to withdraw from Syria and to commit to a permanent presence until both ISIS is defeated and Iran forces had vacated the country.

While many have found President Trump's strategy confusing, the Jacksonian tradition provides a compelling explanation for the principles that have guided his foreign policy since entering the White House. Walter Russell Mead, for instance, has

[52] Karen De Young, 'Trump Agrees to an Indefinite Military Effort and new Diplomatic Push in Syria U.S. Officials Say', *The Washington Post* (September 6, 2018). Accessed at https://www.washingtonpost.com/

[53] Rebecca Kheel, 'Trump Extends Indefinite Syria Strategy: Report', *The Hill* (September 7, 2018). Accessed at https://thehill.com/policy/defense/405532-trump-extends-indefinite-syria-strategy-report

described the Syrian missile strikes as "playing the right cards" to the Jacksonian community:

> At home, it won approval from Jacksonians and others who want a strong president. The strikes vindicated America's prestige and dealt a clear setback to those who seek to humiliate or marginalize the U.S. But no ground troops were involved and Mr. Trump made no move toward long-term counterinsurgency or nation-building, the type of campaign that many Americans, his base in particular, have learned to view skeptically.[54]

President Trump's Jacksonian instincts have had important implications for the coercive nature through which he has used military force. The use of military strikes has played into notions of "honour" and "prestige" that accompanies the Jacksonian tradition. Although President Obama considered such strikes in response to Basher al-Assad use of chemical weapons, his Jeffersonian instincts ultimately persuaded him to pull back from this action. President Obama impulses, as we have discussed, were aligned with the Jeffersonian tradition that attempted, first and foremost, to disentangle America from military endeavours and focus instead on domestic politics. President Trump's intuition, on the other hand, led him to undertake a more assertive military response that aligned with Jacksonian instincts of demonstrating American "resolve" and "strength". President Trump connected chemical weapons as a threat to American national security; a threat that he could abdicate the American people from through his authority and willingess to use America's military strength.

Although President Obama and President Trump both considered ISIS the primary threat in Syria, embodied in their commitment to focus their campaign east of the Euphrates River, rather than west of the river where President Basher al-Assad had pronounced was his sphere of influence, President Trump nonetheless determined the use of chemical weapons and the ongoing Iranian presence in Syria constitutes an

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[54] Walter Russell Mead, "In Striking Syria, Trump Made all the Right Calls", *The Wall Street Journal*, (April 7, 2017). Accessed at https://www.wsj.com/articles/in-striking-syria-trump-made-all-the-right-calls-1491604687

unacceptable threat to America.[55] At the same time, however, President Trump also acknowledged that the United States would be unable to stabilise the region, so that "winning" was understood though a willingness to use military force, rather than an ability to bring peace.

This logic can be simultaneously applied to President Trump's response to the Iraq war. On the campaign trail in April 2016, President Trump promised that he would "beat ISIS very, very quickly, folks. It's gonna be fast. I have a great plan. It's going to be great".[56] Although not disclosing his "secret" strategy, candidate Trump promised a brutal end to the terrorist organisation that be believed was born from the 2003 Iraq War. Indeed, within one year of Trump entering the White House, the Islamic State were severely hampered. The Islamic State had lost control of Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, along with losing other strongholds such as their self-declared capital in Raqqa, Syria. Taking back these towns was considered by many to signal the "official" end of the Islamic State. Army Colonel Ryan Dillon, the spokesman for the United States coalition supporting the campaign against ISIS, stated:

> Over all, ISIS is losing in every way. We've devastated their networks, targeted and eliminated their leaders at all levels. We've degraded their ability to finance their operations, cutting oil revenues by ninety per cent. Their flow of foreign recruits has gone from about fifteen hundred fighters a month down to near zero today. ISIS in Iraq and Syria are all but isolated in their quickly shrinking territory.[57]

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[55] Frederic Hof, 'Strategic Change and its Challenges', Atlantic Council (October 29, 2018). Accessed at http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/syriasource/strategic-change-and-its-challenges

[56] Ariel Cohen, 'Trump says he has a Secret Plan to Beat the ISmalic State', *The Washington Examiner* (April 23, 2016). Accessed at https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/trump-says-he-has-a-secret-plan-to-beat-the-islamic-state

[57] Robin Wright, 'The Ignominious End of the ISIS Caliphate', The New Yorker (October 17, 2017). Accessed at https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-ignominious-end-of-the-isis-caliphate

President Trump took immediate responsibility for ISIS's apparent demise. Heather Nauert, the State Department spokesperson, stated that "The previous [Obama] admiration tried….But President Trump, and under his administration, we have doubled down on the efforts to take back all of the territory that has been taken by ISIS".[58] Trump was perhaps more explicit, suggesting "I issued orders to give our commanders and troops on the ground he full authorities to achieve this mission…..We have made alongside our coalition partners, more progress against these evil terrorists in the past several months than in the past several years".[59]

Indeed, days after his presidential inauguration President Trump signed an executive order requesting that a "preliminary draft of the Plan to defeat ISIS shall be submitted to the President by the Secretary of Defence".[60] The memorandum stated that this should include a "comprehensive strategy and plan to defeat ISIS" along with recommendations for the "United States rules of engagement and other United States policy restrictions that exceed the requirements of international law regarding the use of force against ISIS".[61] On May 19, 2017, Secretary of Defence, Jim Mattis, provided an outline of this revised strategy declaring two significant changes that resulted from President Trump's review of our findings. The first was a change in "delegated authority to the right level to aggressively and in a timely manner move against enemy vulnerabilities", while the second concerned "a tactical shift from shoving ISIS out of safe locations in an attrition fight to surrounding the enemy in their strongholds so we

[58] Joel Gehrke, 'State Department: Obama 'Tried' to Defeat ISIS, Trump Succeeded', The Washinton Examiner (October 24, 2017). Accessed at https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/state-department-obama-tried-to-defeat-isis-trump-succeeded

[59] The White House, 'Statement by President Donald J. Trumpon the Defeat of ISIS in Raqqah' (October 21, 2017). Accessed at https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-donald-j-trump-defeat-isis-raqqah/

[60] The White House, 'Presidential Memorandum Plan to Defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria' January 28, 2017). Accessed at https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/presidential-memorandum-plan-defeat-islamic-state-iraq-syria/

[61] Ibid.

can annihilate ISIS. The intent is to prevent the return home of escaped foreign fighters".[62] Taken together, this ultimately meant that fewer layers of approval were necessary when ground forces requested air strikes, improving the speed at which decision-making was executed.

Although Trump prioritised the efficiency of the rules of engagement to increase the amount of air strikes taken against ISIS targets, which subsequently produced a higher rate of civilian deaths, the underlying logic of Trump's strategy remained consistent with that of President Obama's. This included a clear preference for the use of airs strikes, the training of Iraqi force, ongoing intelligence support, and the provision of United States weapons. More critically, President Trump endorsed and reinstated the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine General Joseph Dunford and Air Force General Paul Selva, who had previously served in this role under President Obama, and reinstated the ongoing Commanders of operations on Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria.[63] In this regard, President Trump offered a minimal tactical shift rather than overturning Obama previous strategy.

Yet ,there are crucial differences between the Trump and Obama administrations that can be traced to the traditions of United States foreign policy. While Obama's instincts led him to reluctantly deploy America's military force to the Middle East, President Trump, while lambasting a determination to extract America from the region, has nonetheless exhibited an enthusiasm for the potential to annihilate ISIS. At a recent Pentagon Press Conference, Secretary of Defence, Jim Mattis, for instance, reinforced

[62] United States Department of State, 'Department of Defense Press Briefing by Secretary Mattis, General Dunford and Special Envoy McGurk on the Campaign to Defeat ISIS in the Pentagon Press Briefing Room' (May 19, 2017). Accessed at https://dod.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/1188225/department-of-defense-press-briefing-by-secretary-mattis-general-dunford-and-sp/

[63] Brian McKeon, 'Trump's Secret Plan to Defeat ISIS Looks a Lot Like Obama's', *Foreign Policy* (May 31, 2017). Accessed at https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/05/31/trumps-secret-plan-to-defeat-isis-looks-a-lot-like-obamas/

this point noting "we have to destroy ISIS. The President has been very clear that – that ISIS is to be taken out, so that's going to happen".[64]

In keeping with the Jacksonian tradition, President Trump has also outsourced the responsibility to defeat ISIS to his generals, which Jacksonian's consider the most respected people in the American community. President Trump is channelling Jacksonian ideals by recognising the military's crucial role in protecting American interests, honour, and prestige. An American retreat from the Middle East would portray American weakness – and a strong ISIS – a scenario that the Jacksonian folk would not accept. Moreover, President Trump has not considered the Hamiltonian aspects of economic integration, or a Wilsonian nation-building objective, but is driven, first and foremost, with the defeat of ISIS to demonstrate is strength and power as a leader. The essence of Trump's Jacksonian strategy is captured by Peter Beinhart who suggested "He [Trump] doesn't just advocate Jacksonian policies. He also appears to channel the Jacksonian ethic in his personal conduct. Trump describes his political struggle in the same Hobbesian terms as he describes America's struggle in the world".[65] Thus, President Trump eschews Jeffersonian minimalism and instead channels a Jacksonian strategy that appeals to identity politics and American patriotism.

President Trump's Jacksonian instinct is also visible in his relationship with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Throughout the campaign trail and into the first six months of his presidency, Trump refused to commit to Article V of the NATO Treaty. Constanze Stelzenmuller has noted that "it is one of the most damaging things

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[64] U.S Department of Defence, *Department of Defense Press Briefing by Secretary Mattis and General Dunford in the Pentagon Briefing Room* (August 28, 2010). Accessed at https://dod.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/1615116/department-of-defense-press-briefing-by-secretary-mattis-and-general-dunford-in/

[65] Peter Beinhart, 'Trump's Self-Pitying Aggression', *The Atlantic* (May 19, 2016). Accessed at https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/05/the-jacksonian-candidate/483563/

an American president has ever done to NATO. It amounts to an abandonment of the alliance".[66] Julie Smith, writing at *Foreign Policy*, stated that Trump's refusal to invoke Article V "fueled uncertainty and insecurity, which will serve as an obstacle to transatlantic cooperation in the years ahead".[67] And Thomas Wright has perhaps gone further noting that "Trump's failure to personally endorse Article 5 may come to be one of the *greatest* diplomatic blunders made by an American president since World War II".[68] Yet, such arguments fail to consider the source of Trump's NATO skepticism: the Jacksonian Tradition. As Walter Russell Mead has recently stated, Trump's "destiny" is to look after the "physical security and economic well-being of the American people in their national home" rather than to defend European interests that seemingly have no connection to the "folk" constituency's way of life.[69] At the May 25 2017 NATO meeting in Brussels, Trump stated that "I have been very, very direct with Secretary Stoltenberg and members of the Alliance in saying that NATO members must finally contribute their fair share and meet their financial obligations, for 23 of the 28 member nations are still not paying what they should be paying and what they're supposed to be paying for their defense".[70] For Jacksonian America, then, Trump's scrutiny of NATO's economic deficiency, and his failure to "coherently" endorse Article V, is further proof of the president's willingness to

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[66] Constanze Stelzenmuller, "Trump's abandonment of NATO in Brussels", *Brookings* (May 29, 2017). Accessed at https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/05/29/trumps-abandonment-of-nato-in-brussels/

[67] Julie Smith, "Trump's Article V Omission Was an Attack Against All of NATO", *Foreign Policy*, May 26, 2017. Accessed at http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/05/26/trumps-article-5-omission-was-an-attack-against-all-of-nato/

[68] Thomas Wright, "Trump Remains a NATO Skeptic", *The Atlantic*, May 27, 2017. Accessed at https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/05/trump-nato-article-five-israel-saudi-arabia/528393/. Emphasis added.

[69] Walter Russell Mead, "The Jacksonian Revolt", *Foreign Affairs* 96 (2) (2017), p. 4.

[70] Remarks by President Trump at NATO Unveiling of the Article 5 and Berlin Wall Memorials – Brussels Belgium, *The White House* (May 25, 2017). Accessed at https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/05/25/remarks-president-trump-nato-unveiling-article-5-and-berlin-wall

place America and its citizens before projects that are connected to Hamiltonian and Wilsonian ideals. More explicitly, this judgement is symbolic of Trump fusing Jacksonian perceptions of American "national honor" and "reputation" to his "America First" agenda.

Although not directly related to President Trump's military strategy, his administration's decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris Climate Agreement is worth briefly noting here due to its connection with Jacksonian characteristics. This decision has been labelled as "a disaster for America",[71] "one of the worst foreign policy blunders in history",[72] and as "counterproductive to willingly become an international pariah on global climate change."[73] While such analysis is based on the impact that this will have on the climate, it is also driven by the residual effects that observers perceive this decision will have on the continued credibility of American global leadership more broadly. According to David Sanger and Jane Perlez, President Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord is the "greatest strategic gift to the Chinese, who are eager to fill the void that Washington is leaving around the world on everything from setting the rules of trade and environmental standards to financing the infrastructure projects that give Beijing vast influence".[74] Yet these judgments are primarily focused on the likely *effects* of President Trump's

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[71] Daniel Baer et al, "Why Abandoning Paris is a Disaster for America", *Foreign Policy* (June 1, 2017). Accessed at http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/06/01/why-abandoning-paris-climate-agreement-is-bad-for-america-trump/

[72] Alexandra Wilts, "Trump's decision to pull out of Paris Agreement branded 'one of the worst foreign policy blunders in history", *Independent*, June 1, 2017. Accessed at http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/paris-agreement-trump-response-climate-change-deal-withdrawal-latest-news-decision-a7768221.html

[73] Robert Stavins, "Why Trump Pulled the U.S. out of the Paris Accord", *Foreign Affairs* (June 5, 2017). Accessed at https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2017-06-05/why-trump-pulled-us-out-paris-accord

[74] David Sanger and Jane Perlez, "Trump Hands the Chinese a Gift: The Chance for Global Leadership", *The New York Times* (June 1, 2017). Accessed at https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/01/us/politics/climate-accord-trump-china-global-leadership.html

foreign policy program rather than an explanation of likely causes of such decisions. A more salient assessment of Trump's decision to withdraw for the accords has perhaps been made by Cary Coglianese, a professor of law and political science at Pennsylvania University, when he noted that, "It's one of the few things that he's able to do….for Trump supporters it looks like he's delivering on a campaign promise — it looks like he's standing up for Americans against the rest of the world".[75] Indeed, in explaining his rationale to leave the accords Trump stated:

> As President, I can put no other consideration before the wellbeing of American citizens. The Paris Climate Accord is simply the latest example of Washington entering into an agreement that disadvantages the United States to the exclusive benefit of other countries, leaving American workers -- who I love -- and taxpayers to absorb the cost in terms of lost jobs, lower wages, shuttered factories, and vastly diminished economic production.[76]

Trump further noted that the Paris Accords "could cost America as much as 2.7 million lost jobs by 2025 according to the National Economic Research Associates. This includes 440,000 fewer manufacturing jobs -- not what we need -- believe me, this is not what we need -- including automobile jobs, and the further decimation of vital American industries on which countless communities rely".[77] In this respect, President Trump is attempting to connect directly with the "American people" by characterizing the Paris Accords as another example of the liberal economic agenda impinging upon the physical and economic security of American citizens.[78]

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[75] John Upton, "Trump's Base the Big Winner form Paris Withdrawal", *Climate Central* (June 1, 2017). Accessed at http://www.climatecentral.org/news/trump-base-the-winner-from-paris-withdrawal-21502

[76] Statement by President Trump on the Paris Climate Accord, The White House (June 1, 2017). Accessed at https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/06/01/statement-president-trump-paris-climate-accord

[77] Ibid.

Conclusion

Criticisms of President Trump are inclined to overlook that his often-contradictory assertions on key foreign and defense policy issues are driven by an inherently Jacksonian sentiment: unilateralism. The embryonic "Trump doctrine", as Alex Ward has argued, could be best described as "America Alone":

> He wants to alter the liberal international order that has benefitted the United States and its allies since the end of World War II. He wants to defeat terrorists wherever they are. He wants to forcibly wrest natural resources from other states and bring them to America. And, he wants America to do all this by itself, mostly with military force. Perhaps instead of "America First," his doctrine should really be "America Alone.[79]

This predominant theme of unilateralism, and its centrality to restoring the rest of the world's respect for the United States, was underlined again by the candidate himself as he officially accepted the GOP nomination in Cleveland, Ohio, on 21 July 2016:

> The most important difference between our plan and that of our opponents, is that our plan will put America First. Americanism, not globalism, will be our credo. As long as we are led by politicians who will not put America First, then we can be assured that other nations will not treat America with respect. This will all change when I take office.[80]

Trump is thus demonstrating a similarity with the Jacksonian tradition. The locus of this affinity is found in Jacksonian notions of American populism, national honor and reputation, where Trump will seek retribution when America's prestige or reputation is infringed upon. Through the 2016 presidential contest, Hillary Clinton, rightly

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[78] Jeff Colgan and Robert Keohane, "The Liberal Order Is Rigged", *Foreign Affairs* 96 (3) (2017), p. 37.

[79] Alex Ward, "'America Alone': Trump's Unilateralist Foreign Policy", *War on the Rocks* (May 31, 2016). Accessed at http://warontherocks.com/2016/05/america-alone-trumps-unilateralist-foreign-policy/

[80] Donald Trump's acceptance speech at RNC 2016, full transcript, (21 July 2016). Accessed at http://www.syracuse.com/politics/index.ssf/2016/07/donald_trumps_acceptance_speech_at_rnc_2016_full_transcript.html

lambasted Trump's disparate statements on foreign policy as "dangerously incoherent.[81] Yet simply labelling such Trump assertions that the United States should abandon long-standing alliances such as NATO if allies don't "pay their own way" or that it would not be a bad thing for South Korea and Japan or Saudi Arabia to acquire nuclear weapons as "dangerous" does not directly address the Jacksonian sentiments that underpin their appeal to Republican voters. The Trump presidency has been consistent in its ability to resonate with Jacksonian society, which suggests that a strategy of unilateralism will continue to drive the foreign policy agenda of the administration.

President Trump's strategy in the Middle East can be explained through this connection to the Jacksonian tradition of American foreign policy. His decision to use the GBU43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast on an ISIS cave complex in Afghanistan, along with his use of Air Strikes response to Basher al-Assad's use of chemical weapons in Syria, share an affinity with the Jacksonian characteristics of restoring American prestige and power. A similar strategic outlook also explains Trump's Iraq strategy, where a continuance of Obama's strategy was implemented, but with an increased emphasis on "winning" and "beating ISIS". This language is contrasted with President Obama's more limited Jeffersonian goals of "degrading, and ultimately defeating" ISIS, whereby Trump resonated with the Jacksonian determination to annihilate those that jeopardise America's standing in the world.

As allies and adversaries both at home and abroad attempt to come to grips with the Trump administration's evolving foreign policy, they may do well to recall Max Weber's observation that while, "Interests (material and ideal), not ideas, dominate directly the actions of men" the "images of the world created by these ideas have very often served as switches determining the tracks on which the dynamism of interests

[81] http://time.com/4355797/hillary-clinton-donald-trump-foreign-policy-speech-transcript/.

kept actions moving".[82] Given the rise of anti-establishment populism on both sides of American politics during the 2016 election cycle, including robust critiques of the liberal internationalist foreign policy agenda by both Donald Trump and Senator Bernie Sanders, it appears that the Jacksonian tradition of foreign policy should now be seriously reckoned with as an animating force for American foreign policy into the future.

[82] Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, (Tuebingnen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1926), pp. 347-348.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to understand United States strategic adjustment in the Middle East. It has done so by focusing on the various military strategies that United States has deployed in the region between 1972-2018. I have identified five distinct strategies through this time whereby military force was used in contrasting and definitive ways. Accounting for these strategic changes has been the central focus of this thesis.

The thesis subscribed to realist assumptions as its starting point. That is, it assumed that systemic factors push and pull states in directions according to shifts in the regional distribution of power. The oscillating growth rates of a country's material capability, particularly their economic and military capacity, but also their political stability and regional interests, compelled the United States to adopt internal or external balancing strategies. The United States balanced against states that were antagonistic to their interests; which included ongoing terrorist activity, threats to the outflow and access of Persian Gulf oil, and the potential for terrorist cells to attain weapons of mass destruction. Each of these systemic factors triggered a balancing response from the United States.

Yet, this thesis has argued that realist theory was unable to account for the "type" of balancing behaviour that the United States embraced, particularly with respect to the role of military force. While realist theory allowed the thesis to identify broad balancing behaviours such as internal and external balancing, these terms were ultimately limited when used to conceptualise distinct military patterns the United States deployed in the region. In this respect, realist theory provided a framework to understand how states are socialised to respond to changes in the distribution of power or perceptions of threat, but did purport to explain the role and purpose of military force.

To account for this shortfall, the thesis has utilised a neoclassical realist theoretical framework. Neoclassical realists argue that in grand strategic design, structural factors supply the raw data, but domestic factors (such as institutions and ideology) act to process this information to produce the foreign policy behaviour of a given state. While affording primacy to the international system, the thesis has nonetheless acknowledged that foreign policy decisions are also shaped by a state's perceptions and judgments. Therefore, two variables are critical when seeking to understand balancing behaviour: first, the role and purpose of military force; and two, the state's interests and ideology that ultimately command its use. This is not to suggest that the international system does not provide important input with respect to influencing state decision-making, but it does propose that balancing is ultimately a function of military force that is guided by state's interests and ideology.

In the context of United States strategy in the Middle East, the thesis has argued that it is the historically-informed traditions of American foreign policy identified by Walter Russel Mead that have been a key intervening variable shaping US strategic adjustment. Rather than adopting the tendency to characterise American foreign policy through realist/idealist or internationalist/isolationist dichotomies, Mead's work helped understand strategic adjustment through a recognition and appreciation of enduring traditions of American foreign policy behaviour. That is, the United States used various military doctrines according to not only changes in the international distribution of power, but also in accordance with distinct ideological dispositions that were identified through Mead's typologies.

The benefit of using a neoclassical realist framework was not only the ability to consider unit-level variables but also the space that it provided to merge international relations with the strategic studies literature. While these two strands of scholarship have regularly spoken across each other rather than amongst each other, this thesis has attempted to blend this scholarship together so that realist scholarship is sensitive

to the animating features of strategy studies; primarily, the use of force for political purposes.

Chapter one focused primarily on Kenneth Waltz seminal work *Theory of International Politics*. It began by analysing Waltz's understanding of a theory of international politics and whether a theory of foreign policy could be deduced from his work. This discussion was important to this thesis because Waltz's theory has provided the foundation for various balancing theories that are used to understand strategic adjustment, such as buckpassing, bandwagoning, and underbalancing.

This chapter ultimately concluded that these theories leave unspecified the specific "mode" of military force and lack operational clarity when understanding what type of balancing behaviour a state will adopt. The chapter concluded by offering unit-level variable to explain different military postures. Drawing on Walter Russell Mead's typologies, offshore balancing was situated within the Hamiltonian tradition of American statecraft, selective engagement was connected to the Jacksonian tradition of American statecraft, the strategy of primacy was placed within the Wilsonian tradition of American statecraft, and retrenchment was situated within the Jeffersonian tradition of American statecraft.

Chapter two focused on America's engagement with the Middle East between 1972-1979. This commenced by charting the structural inputs that the Nixon administration faced when coming to office that included the retrenchment of the British from the Middle East and the ongoing crisis in the Vietnam war. The chapter pointed to President Nixon's offshore balancing strategy that looked to Iran and Saudi Arabia to protect American interests in the region. This 'Twin Pillars' strategy was designed to counter the Soviet Union's rising influence in the region and safe-guarded American access to Persian Gulf oil.

The chapter ultimately concludes that although realism shares an affinity with offshore balancing it is ultimately unable to account for the United States Twin Pillars strategy. Realist theory assume that the bipolar distribution of power, which the

Nixon administration was operating within, would lead the United States to adopt an internal rather than an external balancing strategy. Moreover, realist theory cannot account for President Nixon's decision to shift the distribution of power from a bipolar to a multipolar order, which they ultimately conclude is the most unstable of orders. Instead, the chapter argued that the Hamiltonian tradition of United States foreign policy that is driven by the economic interests of the United States provides partial explanation for this strategic choice. The United States focus on accessing Persian Gulf oil so that advanced economies could continue to grow, which Hamiltonian's agree with, was a motivating factor that led to the offshore balancing strategy, disregarding other interests such as the promotion so human rights, democracy or American values.

Chapter three focused on America's engagement in the Middle East from 1979 – 1991. This began our first strategic adjustment in the Middle East that saw Nixon's offshore balancing strategy replaced with the strategy of selective engagement. This strategy was underpinned by a willingness to forward deploy the United States military force to deter and coerce belligerent states to comply with American interests. It focused on the United States use of force in Lebanon, Libya, and Kuwait to argue that the American military was used to uphold the regional status quo rather than to alter the regional balance of power.

Critically, this chapter acknowledged that President George H. W. Bush's military campaign was more forceful in its ambitions than that of Reagan. While a level of continuity between the two was evident, particularly with respect to upholding the regional status quo, President Bush was nonetheless focused on using American coercive/compellent power to serve a broader and forward looking conception of regional stability, compared with Reagan's more limited strategy of reprisal. The chapter accounted for this difference through the divergent structural pressures the two presidents were operating in. That is, the structural considerations that Bush encountered included the Cold War thaw and ultimate dissolution of the Soviet Union that was underway when Saddam invaded Kuwait. In many respects this made

concerns about "order" – both regionally and globally – a much more vital concern for the Bush administration than it was for Reagan's.

This chapter concluded that realist theory was unable to adequately account for United States strategy though this period. It argued that realist theory is ultimately ambiguous as to whether the United States use of force constituted an internal or external balancing strategy. The United States pursued both a unilateral and collective security approach that does not square neatly with any specific balancing theory. Nonetheless, given the offensive nature of the military, and the United States leadership in its delivery, this period was categorised as an internal balancing strategy. But this categorization does not explain the United States decision to come "onshore" rather than allow Iraq and Iran to balance against each other in the region, as realism would suspect. Moreover, an internal balancing strategy is premised on the United States increasing defence spending or invoking a policy of conscription, none of which the United States did to offset the threats in the region.

Therefore, this chapter argued that the Jacksonian tradition partially explains the United States use of force through this period. The Jacksonian tradition uses American military muscle to preserve and safeguard American "reputation" and "honour" against those that threaten American prestige. There is, however, an important caveat to this argument. Implicit in the Jacksonian tradition is an appreciation for total war and the willingness to pursue the "unconditional surrender" of the enemy. Notwithstanding this admonition that both Reagan and Bush did not pursue such egregious aims, the Jacksonian tradition was nonetheless identified as a salient lens through which to analyse this period of American military involvement in the Middle East. The American military was used to coerce the belligerents to respect American authority and to demonstrate American resolve against antagonistic behaviour, particularly where American lives were threatened.

Chapter four focused on the strategic adjustment undertaken by President George W. Bush with respect to the 2003 Iraq War. The Bush administration deployed the military

to position the United States as the regional hegemon, rejecting previous status quo strategies of selective engagement and offshore balancing. The chapter argued that this pursuit of hegemony was connected to the strategy of 'primacy'. Primacy is premised on the belief that American global leadership is not only good for the world but is also good for America. That is, the United States should pursue power in both military and economic terms so they are able to promote American interests and shape the contours of international politics. The chapter argued that this strategy is connected to President Bush's decision to invade Iraq in 2003, where he emphasised the importance of American power to bring about a "just peace" that advances "human liberty" throughout the Middle East.

The chapter argued that realist theory is unable to account for the 2003 Iraq War. Structural realism's "status quo" bias assumes that states value security over power. That is, states will ultimately balance against power to maintain the status quo, rather than pursue strategies that will ultimately lead other states to balance against them. Similarly, realist theory is unable to consider the behaviour of a unipolar power. Instead, realists have considered the ordering principles of a bipolar and multipolar order but dismissed both the durability of a single state holding a preponderance of power. While the chapter considered offensive realism as an explanatory factor that led to the Iraq War, it ultimately suggested that scholars who advance American global leadership do so with respect to acknowledging this as a strategic choice, rather than an act driven by systemic factors. Perhaps most importantly, the chapter argued that realism is also unable to account for the invasion of Iraq due to their propensity to consider bandwagoning a strategy designed in response to threat, rather than an opportunity for self-extension". In other words, neorealism status quo bias does not enable it to consider the potential for Middle East states to bandwagon with American power, and adopt liberal principles on the aftermath of the invasion, as the Bush administration ultimately concluded.

Therefore, this chapter has argued that the Wilsonian tradition partially explains the United States decision to invade Iraq. Wilson was driven by the moral dimensions of Unite States foreign policy whereby the United States would pursue the liberalisation of the word order as this would not only enable human potential but would provide security for America.

Chapter five focused on America's engagement with the Middle East between 2008-2016. This focused on President Obama's decision to pull back America's engagement with the Middle East. It focuses specifically on President Obama's response to the Syrian and Libyan Wars. Here, the United States adopted a profoundly isolated strategic response that considered these ongoing conflicts as removed from American interests. In Libya, President Obama adopted a strategy of "leading from behind" and "surrogate warfare" that determined the ongoing crisis as primarily a "European problem". President Obama's response to the Syrian was perhaps even more stark whereby he adopted a strategy of "train and equip" in accordance with the determination that the ongoing crisis as not in America's national interests. This chapter argued that President Obama's response is appropriately categorised as a retrenchment strategy, which is best described as a strategy to reduce America's global commitments through the a reduction in global military commitments and defence spending.

This chapter pointed to several problems in realist theory accounting for President Obama's Middle Eats strategy. Notwithstanding areas of alignment, in nonetheless suggested that categorising Obama's strategy within a buckpassing framework is problematic due to the necessary requirement that this entail their allies have a defensive advantage, when they believe that the balance of power is to their advantage, or in a multipolar order whereby states intentions are uncertain.

Instead, the chapter has argued that the Jeffersonian tradition partially explains President Obama's underbalancing strategy. That is, the Jeffersonian belief that the objective of foreign policy is to serve and protect the advancement of domestic society

remains a critical explanatory variable when understanding President Obama's decision to retrench form the Middle East. The Jeffersonian tradition exhibits more introverted tendencies that seek to perfect and protect rather than export the virtues of the Republic and is, in Walter Lippman's phrase, the "shield of the republic".

Chapter six attempted to provide a partial examination of the strategic adjustment that is currently underway within the Trump administration. It put forward two core arguments. First, President Trump is purposively rescinding America's global leadership. The Trump administration holds a distinct lack of commitment to the broad contours of the liberal international order that previous administrations have upheld. President Trump instead, is arguably channeling key elements of the Jacksonian tradition as a consequence of his belief that the liberal order, underwritten by American leadership, has manifestly "ripped off" the American "folk community". The second argument this chapter makes is that as a consequence of this Jacksonian outlook, President Trump is overseeing a unilateral grand strategy that uses American military force as a demonstration of strength in the Middle East, but not as a tool to alter the regional balance of power. The chapter pointed specifically to President Trump's punitive air strikes in Syria and use of the world's largest non-nuclear bomb - or Massive Ordnance Air Blast – to demonstrate strength as a leader and willingness to fight against those that had threatened American lives; drawing a similarity with the selective engagement strategy discussed in Chapter Three.

More broadly my research has pointed to the importance of considering unit-level variables when analysing strategic adjustment. It has rejected the distinction between the international and domestic spheres, and demonstrated how state interests, ideology and world outlook, interact with systemic changes to generate a specific strategic response. It has argued that the strategies the United States have adopted in the Middle East in response to a change in the regional balance of power can be explained through an appreciation for the various interests and ideologies across administrations.

Taken together, the thesis has reconstituted balancing behaviour. It has suggested that a primary mechanism of balancing involves the use of military force, and therefore, remains a critical variable when attempting to understand the specific balancing response undertaken by a state. This thesis has narrowed familiar definitions of balance of power to overcome many of the under-specification issues identified above. That is, rather than defining it within the nebulous categories of internal and external balancing, which leave unspecified the metrics through which balancing behaviour will be assessed, the thesis has coded balancing behaviour according to specific military behaviour. Drawing on strategic studies literature, the thesis identified various patterns of military usage (offshore balancing, selective engagement, primacy, and retrenchment) to guide our analysis for how the United States has responded to systemic changes in the Middle East.

Notwithstanding the aspirations of this thesis, there are three areas that would benefit from further research. First, the interaction between regional and global strategic considerations. While the thesis, at times, pointed to the implications of global strategic considerations upon United States Middle East strategy, stand-alone research that captures this interaction would be beneficial to our understanding of strategic adjustment. This would elucidate the fragile balancing of global strategic considerations, but also draw into question some of the ongoing assumptions about how global grand strategy is designed, and how these impact regional priorities. Second, the interaction between the systemic and unit-level variable. While this thesis has afforded primacy to the structural inputs to trigger a strategic adjustment, a research program that used unit-level variables as its starting point would open the space to reconsider assessment of strategic change. While this type of research would perhaps be most familiar to constructivist and foreign policy analysis scholars, it would provide an interesting discussion regarding the domestic-level influence of United States strategy in the Middle East. Finally, although neoclassical realism is an important advance to realist scholarship, there is much work to be done to provide it

with predictive capacity. While such heights might be beyond the reach of the social sciences, I hope that this thesis has perhaps, in some minuscule way, opened the door to wider research aimed at understanding the ramifications for the confluence of polarity, state interests, and military force.

Nonetheless, in the end, this thesis has begun the process of understanding American strategic adjustment in the Middle East in accordance with systemic change, the role of military force, and the distinct world views that administrations have held across time. This has both validated and advanced realist theory. It has demonstrated that American strategic adjustment occurred in response to changes in the regional distribution of power, as realist theory assumes, but has narrowed balancing behaviour to the sphere of military force, and explained its usage through the administration's interests and broader worldview.

Appendix

Table 1

Ordered	No. designation	Weapon description	Year(s) Weapon of order	Year delivery	of delivered	No. Comments
(15)	Il-14	Transport aircraft	(1957)	1958-1960	(15.00)	Second-hand
(14)	An-2	Light transport ac	(1958)	1959-1960	(14.00)	
(11)	Il-28	Bomber aircraft	(1958)	1958	(11.00)	Possibly Second-hand
(25)	IS-3	Tank	(1958)	1959-1961	(25.00)	Second-hand
(250)	M-30 122mm	Towed gun	(1958)	1958-1962	(250.00)	Second-hand
19	MiG-15	Fighter aircraft	(1958)	1958	19.00	Probably Second-hand
(10)	MiG-15UTI	Trainer aircraft	(1958)	1959	(10.00)	Probably Second-hand
(17)	MiG-17	Fighter aircraft	(1958)	1958-1959	(17.00)	Second-hand; aid
12	Project-183/P-6	FAC	(1958)	1959-1961	12.00	
(250)	SU-100	Self-propelled gun	(1958)	1959-1963	(250.00)	Second-hand
45	T-34-85	Tank	1958	1959	45.00	Second-hand
(250)	T-54	Tank	(1958)	1959-1965	(250.00)	
(15)	Yak-11	Trainer aircraft	1958	1958-1960	(15.00)	Second-hand
200	BTR-152	APC	(1959)	1960-1964	(200.00)	
(100)	K-5/AA-1	SRAAM	(1959)	1960-1962	(100.00)	For MiG-19S combat aircraft; status uncertain
(17)	MiG-19	Fighter aircraft	(1959)	1960-1962	(17.00)	Probably Second-hand
(80)	T-34-85	Tank	(1959)	1960-1965	(80.00)	Second-hand
8	An-12	Transport aircraft	(1961)	1962-1965	8.00	

(250)	D-1 152mm	Towed gun	(1961)	1962-1966	(250.00)	Second-hand
4	Mi-1	Light helicopter	(1961)	1962	(4.00)	
3	SO-1	Patrol craft	(1961)	1962	3.00	
(10)	Tu-16	Bomber aircraft	(1961)	1962	(10.00)	Probably Second-hand
(800)	K-13A/AA-2	SRAAM	(1962)	1964-1970	(800.00)	For MiG-21F/FL and Su-7B combat aircraft
(12)	MiG-21F-13	Fighter aircraft	(1962)	1964	(12.00)	
(20)	S-75 Dvina/SA-2	SAM system	(1962)	1963-1970	(20.00)	
(480)	V-750/SA-2	SAM	(1962)	1963-1970	(480.00)	
9	Mi-4A	Helicopter	(1963)	1964	9.00	
(184)	SON-9/Fire Can	Fire control radar	(1965)	1965-1984	(184.00)	For use with S-60 57mm, KS-12 85mm, KS-19 100mm and KS-30 130mm AA guns
(50)	T-34-85	Tank	(1965)	1967-1968	(50.00)	Second-hand
(250)	BRDM-2	Reconnaissance AV	(1966)	1967-1973	(250.00)	
(100)	M-43 120mm	Mortar	(1966)	1967-1970	(100.00)	
(40)	MiG-21PF	Fighter aircraft	1966	1966-1967	(40.00)	MiG-21FL version
10	An-24	Transport aircraft	(1967)	1968-1969	(10.00)	
(100)	BM-21 Grad 122mm	Self-propelled MRL	(1967)	1968-1969	(100.00)	
5	Il-14	Transport aircraft	(1967)	1967	(5.00)	Second-hand
(100)	M-46 130mm	Towed gun	(1967)	1968-1970	(100.00)	Possibly Second-hand
(45)	PT-76	Light tank	(1967)	1968-1970	(45.00)	Probably second-hand
(50)	T-54	Tank	(1967)	1968	(50.00)	
(250)	BTR-50	APC	(1968)	1969-1973	(250.00)	

(15)	MiG-21PF	Fighter aircraft	1968	1968-1969	(15.00)	MiG-21FL version
2	Project-254/T-43	Minesweeper	(1968)	1969	2.00	Second-hand Navy
(20)	Su-7B	FGA aircraft	1968	1968-1969	(20.00)	
(25)	Mi-4A	Helicopter	(1969)	1970-1971	(25.00)	
(250)	BTR-60PB	APC	(1970)	1971-1975	(250.00)	
12	Mi-8T	Transport helicopter	(1970)	1971	12.00	
(100)	T-12 100mm/2A19	Towed gun	(1970)	1971-1975	(100.00)	
(100)	ZSU-57-2	SPAAG	(1970)	1971-1973	(100.00)	Second-hand
3	An-12	Transport aircraft	1971	1972	(3.00)	
(6)	P-12/Spoon Rest	Air search radar	1971	1971-1973	(6.00)	For use with SA-3 SAM systems
(50)	P-15U/SS-N-2B	Anti-ship missile	(1971)	1972-1974	(50.00)	For Osa-1 FAC
(6)	Project-205/Osa	FAC	1971	1972-1974	(6.00)	Second-hand; Osa-1 version
(30)	S-125M/SA-3B	SAM system	1971	1972-1973	(30.00)	
(1100)	V-601/SA-3B	SAM	(1971)	1972-1973	(1100.00)	
(15)	Mi-6T	Transport helicopter	(1972)	1973	(15.00)	Number delivered could be 10
(90)	Mi-8T	Transport helicopter	(1972)	1973-1980	(90.00)	
(60)	Su-7B	FGA aircraft	(1972)	1972-1973	(60.00)	
12	Tu-22	Bomber aircraft	(1972)	1973	12.00	Second-hand
(250)	3M11/AT-2a	Anti-tank missile	(1973)	1973-1976	(250.00)	Incl for Mi-24A helicopters
(20000)	9M14M/AT-3	Anti-tank missile	(1973)	1973-1989	(20000.00)	Incl for BMP-1 IFVs, BRDM-2 tank destroyers and Mi-24D and Mi-8TV helicopters

(200)	BMP-1	IFV	(1973)	1974-1975	(200.00)	
(100)	BRDM-2	Tank destroyer	(1973)	1973-1982	(100.00)	9P133 version (with AT-3 missiles)
(1260)	K-13M/AA-2C	SRAAM	(1973)	1974-1981	(1260.00)	For MiG-23MF/BN, MiG-21MF and Su-20 combat aircraft
(60)	MiG-21MF	Fighter aircraft	(1973)	1973-1974	(60.00)	
(60)	P-15U/SS-N-2B	Anti-ship missile	(1973)	1974-1977	(60.00)	For Osa-2 FAC
8	Project-205/Osa	FAC	1973	1974-1977	8.00	Second-hand; Osa-2 version
(80)	Su-20	FGA aircraft	(1973)	1974-1981	(80.00)	
(300)	T-55	Tank	1973	1974-1975	(300.00)	
(100)	T-62	Tank	1973	1974-1975	(100.00)	
(200)	ZSU-23-4 Shilka	SPAAG	1973	1973-1976	(200.00)	
(12)	9P117/Scud-B TEL	Mobile SSM launcher	1974	1975	(12.00)	
(20)	MiG-23MS	Fighter aircraft	(1974)	1976	(20.00)	
(48)	R-17 Elbrus/Scud-B	SSM	1974	1975	(48.00)	
(20)	2K12 Kvadrat/SA-6A	SAM system	(1975)	1977-1985	(19.00)	No. could be up to 25
(1200)	3M9/SA-6	SAM	(1975)	1977-1986	(1200.00)	
(50)	D-20 152mm	Towed gun	(1975)	1976	(50.00)	
(100)	R-23/AA-7	BVRAAM	(1975)	1976	(100.00)	For MiG-23MF combat aircraft; status uncertain
(6500)	Strela-2/SA-7	Portable SAM	(1975)	1975-1986	(6500.00)	
2	An-26	Transport aircraft	1976	1977	2.00	
70	MiG-23BN	FGA aircraft	1976	1977-1978	(70.00)	

(600)	T-62	Tank	(1976)	1977-1979	(600.00)	Probably from Czechoslovakian production line
(24)	Luna-M/FROG-7	Mobile SSM launcher	(1977)	1978-1979	(24.00)	
(100)	BM-21 Grad 122mm	Self-propelled MRL	(1978)	1979-1980	(100.00)	
(33)	Il-76M	Transport aircraft	(1978)	1978-1984	(33.00)	Incl some modified to tanker aircraft in Iraq; incl for Iraqi airline but mainly for military use; no. could be up to 36
(40)	Mi-24D/Mi-25	Combat helicopter	1978	1979-1980	(40.00)	
(61)	MiG-21bis	Fighter aircraft	(1978)	1979-1984	(61.00)	
(5)	P-14/Tall King	Air search radar	(1978)	1978-1982	(5.00)	
(400)	R-60/AA-8	SRAAM	(1978)	1979-1984	(400.00)	For MiG-21bis combat aircraft
(50)	2S1 122mm	Self-propelled gun	1979	1980	(50.00)	
(50)	2S3 152mm	Self-propelled gun	(1979)	1980	(50.00)	
(25)	MiG-25P	Fighter aircraft	1979	1980-1981	(25.00)	
(8)	MiG-25RB	Reconnaissance ac	1979	1982	(8.00)	
10	P-40/Long Track	Air search radar	1979	1980-1984	(10.00)	
5	PRV-9/Thin Skin	Height-finding radar	1979	1980-1984	(5.00)	

(450)	R-40/AA-6	BVRAAM	(1979)	1980-1985	(450.00)	For MiG-25P combat aircraft
50	T-72	Tank	(1979)	1979	50.00	T-72B version
(160)	9K31/SA-9	Mobile SAM system	(1980)	1982-1985	(160.00)	
(25)	BMD-1	IFV	(1980)	1981	(25.00)	
(25)	M-240 240mm	Mortar	(1980)	1981	(25.00)	Possibly Second-hand
(2500)	Strela-1/SA-9	SAM	(1980)	1982-1985	(2500.00)	
(750)	BMP-1	IFV	(1981)	1981-1987	(750.00)	From Czechoslovakian production line
(576)	M-46 130mm	Towed gun	(1981)	1982-1987	(576.00)	Second-hand
(400)	T-55	Tank	(1981)	1982-1985	(400.00)	From Czechoslovakian production line
(10)	2S4 240mm	Self-propelled mortar	(1982)	1983	(10.00)	
(50)	9K33 Osa/SA-8	Mobile SAM system	(1982)	1982-1985	(50.00)	No. delivered could be up to 80
(1500)	9M33/SA-8	SAM	(1982)	1982-1986	(1500.00)	
(10)	9P117/Scud-B TEL	Mobile SSM launcher	1982	1983-1984	(10.00)	
(200)	BM-21 Grad 122mm	Self-propelled MRL	(1982)	1983-1984	(200.00)	
(576)	D-30 122mm	Towed gun	(1982)	1982-1988	(576.00)	
(250)	Kh-28/AS-9	ARM	(1982)	1983-1988	(250.00)	Iraqi designation Neissan-28
(750)	MT-LB	APC	(1982)	1983-1990	(750.00)	From Polish production line; incl some modified in Iraq to mortar

						carrier; more ordered but embargoed after 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait
(40)	R-17 Elbrus/Scud-B	SSM	(1982)	1982-1984	(40.00)	
(2150)	T-62	Tank	(1982)	1982-1989	(2150.00)	Probably Second-hand
(500)	T-72	Tank	(1982)	1982-1990	(500.00)	T-72M and/or T-72M1 version; from Czechoslovakian and Polish production lines; incl some assembled from kits in Iraq
(1080)	K-13M/AA-2C	SRAAM	(1983)	1984-1987	(1080.00)	For MiG-23BN, Su-22 and Su-25 combat aircraft
(36)	KSR-5/AS-6	Anti-ship missile	(1983)	1984	(36.00)	For B-6 bomber aircraft; status uncertain
(12)	Mi-24D/Mi-25	Combat helicopter	(1983)	1984	(12.00)	
(30)	Mi-8MT/Mi-17	Transport helicopter	(1983)	1984	(30.00)	Mi-8 version
(50)	MiG-23BN	FGA aircraft	1983	1984-1985	(50.00)	
(30)	MiG-25P	Fighter aircraft	1983	1984-1985	(30.00)	Status uncertain
(200)	PT-76	Light tank	(1983)	1984	(200.00)	Second-hand
15	Mi-2	Light helicopter	1984	1984-1985	15.00	From Polish production line
(60)	Strela-10/SA-13	Mobile SAM system	(1984)	1985	(30.00)	

(1500)	Strela-10/SA-13	SAM	(1984)	1985-1986	(1500.00)	
(37)	Mi-8MT/Mi-17	Transport helicopter	(1985)	1986-1987	(37.00)	Mi-17 version
41	MiG-29	Fighter aircraft	1985	1986-1989	(41.00)	Incl 6 MiG-29UB; 7 more ordered but embargoed
(800)	R-17 Elbrus/Scud-B	SSM	(1985)	1985-1988	(800.00)	
(175)	R-27/AA-10	BVRAAM	(1985)	1986-1989	(175.00)	For MiG-29 combat aircraft
(600)	R-60/AA-8	SRAAM	(1985)	1986-1989	(600.00)	For MiG-29 combat aircraft
(500)	Strela-3/SA-14	Portable SAM	(1985)	1987-1988	(500.00)	
(46)	Su-22	FGA aircraft	(1985)	1986-1987	(46.00)	Incl Su-22U version
84	Su-25	Ground attack ac	(1985)	1986-1987	(84.00)	Su-25K version; incl 12 Su-25UBK version
(180)	2A36 Giatsint-B 152mm	Towed gun	(1986)	1986-1988	(180.00)	
(100)	2S1 122mm	Self-propelled gun	(1986)	1987-1989	(100.00)	
(100)	2S3 152mm	Self-propelled gun	(1986)	1987-1989	(100.00)	
(3000)	9M111 Fagot/AT-4	Anti-tank missile	(1986)	1986-1989	(3000.00)	Incl for BMP-2 IFV
(360)	BM-21 Grad 122mm	Self-propelled MRL	(1986)	1986-1988	(360.00)	
(200)	BMP-2	IFV	(1986)	1987-1989	(200.00)	Possibly incl from Czechoslovakian production line

(40)	Kh-29/AS-14 Kedge	ASM	(1988)	1988-1989	(40.00)
(25)	Su-24/Fencer	Bomber aircraft	(1988)	1989-1990	(25.00)
(1000)	Igla-1/SA-16	Portable SAM	(1989)	1989-1990	(1000.00)

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