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The Iraq Experiment and US National Security

Steven E. Miller

The United States emerged from the Cold War with enormous power and few if any major threats. Its supremacy was unquestioned, its allies were many and relatively powerful, its rivals were few and relatively weak, and major war seemed unlikely. The United States might be drawn into occasional regional crisis (as in the Balkans) or intervene in the occasional civil conflict or failing state (as in Somalia or Haiti), but there were few contingencies that could imaginably pose a large or serious threat to American security. Against traditional security challenges and challengers, the United States was extraordinarily secure.

Accordingly, as the Cold War ended, Washington almost immediately became preoccupied with unconventional and asymmetric challenges to its security, its global position and its regional interests. Particularly worrisome was the possibility that weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and especially nuclear weapons, might spread into the hands of hostile powers and pose grave risks for the United States at home and to its overseas interests. Among US objectives, President George H.W. Bush's 1991 National Security Strategy document urged, 'none is more urgent than stopping the global proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons as well as the missiles to deliver them'. Such weapons, the report continued, pose 'an ominous challenge to global peace and security'.¹

The Clinton administration deviated not at all from this judgement. If anything, it raised the issue still higher on the agenda, enshrining nuclear proliferation as the number-one threat to American security. Few things could upset US security in any big way, but one of them was nuclear weapons in the hands of so-called rogue states, with their outlaw ways, their hostile designs, their

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revisionist aspirations and their destabilising regional behaviours. Throughout the Clinton years, his administration focused heavily on rogue states, seeking to deny them WMD capabilities, to contain their destabilising effects, and to deter their expansionist tendencies.² Across the course of the decade, this entailed an intense confrontation with North Korea (including serious contemplation by Washington of the use of force), protracted bruising diplomacy involving Iran's nuclear acquisitiveness, and endless, frustrating cat-and-mouse games involving Saddam Hussein's nuclear ambitions.

Simultaneous with the surge of proliferation to the top of the defence policy agenda was the emergence of a transnational terrorism threat aimed at American targets and American interests. This assault may have begun during the G.H.W. Bush administration, but it was dramatically thrust into prominence early in the Clinton administration by the first, mostly unsuccessful, attack on New York's World Trade Center in 1993.³ For the remainder of the decade, the United States was subjected to a sequence of bold and shocking attacks – including the African Embassy bombings, the attack against US facilities at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, the strike against the USS *Cole* in Yemen in 2000 – that elevated the terrorism threat to very high levels. By the end of the decade, those in the Clinton administration responsible for counterterrorism believed themselves to be at war with the primary terrorist adversary, al-Qaeda. The Clinton administration took this threat seriously, gave it high priority and sought to marshal military, police and intelligence resources to combat it. Though generally overshadowed and handicapped by the president's own political and personal troubles, the campaign against al-Qaeda was an urgent item on the administration's agenda by the end of Clinton's second term and during the presidential transition in 2001 he urged the new George W. Bush administration to make this campaign 'one of their highest priorities'.⁴

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 cast these long-familiar issues in a different light. The threat seemed larger and more immediate. The need for effective remedies seemed more urgent. The dangers of inaction seemed uncomfortably high. The cost of failure seemed more extreme. After 11 September, as John Gaddis has written, the United States found itself living 'in a suddenly more dangerous world'.⁵

In the aftermath of the attacks on 11 September, the Bush administration moved quickly to develop and articulate a strategy for addressing the newly perceived threat. Though it had come to office determined to focus on great-power relations and dismissive of what it saw as the Clinton administration's preoccupation with terrorism, the Bush team was now seized with the imperative to prevent future terrorist attacks on American soil. Above all, it was driven

by a fear of easily imagined scenarios in which terrorists inflict attacks much worse than 11 September – attacks involving WMD. Here was the great new challenge to America's security and to US national security policy.

From 11 September to Baghdad

In response to this challenge, the Bush administration adopted an aggressive strategy designed to attack and eliminate a set of threats now understood to be large and urgent. The full strategy in all its dimensions includes attention to intelligence and policing, alliances and diplomacy, arms control and verification. In addition, the strategy championed three big ideas that put the United States on the road to Baghdad and a fourth that increased Washington's ambitions once it was in Baghdad.

First, at the broadest level, the post-11 September Bush strategy gave enormous priority to going on the offensive. Inaction was seen as dangerous. Defence was seen as necessary but insufficient. In President Bush's eyes, being on the defensive meant waiting for the next major terrorist attack. To protect the United States it was imperative to seek out and destroy the large potential threats. This has been a core theme and a ceaseless refrain of President Bush's ever since 11 September. In his radio address of 30 September 2006, he reiterated the point: 'The only way to protect our citizens at home is to go on the offense against the enemy across the world ... We will remain on the offense until the terrorists are defeated and this fight is won.'⁶ Indeed, Bush has said repeatedly that going on the offence is not only desirable, it is 'the only way'. In a television appearance, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld explained the logic of giving primacy to the offense:

And the reality is that terrorists can attack any time at any minute, 24 hours a day, using a variety of techniques, in any place at all. And it's not possible to defend in every place, against every technique, against every conceivable approach. Now, what does that mean? It means that you can't stop every terrorist attack. We know that throughout history. Innocent men, women and children are going to be killed if terrorists are determined to do it. What you must do, then, is to go after the terrorists where they are and get them before they have that opportunity to have the advantage of an attack.⁷

The impetus for offensive action also has a temporal dimension. To wait was to allow the hostile powers to grow more strong, to move closer to obtaining WMD capability. Indeed, delay was thought to be one of the objectives of the rogues; hostile proliferators will play for time hoping to complete their quest for

nuclear weapons or other WMD. Thus, delay raised the risk that action would come too late. Vice President Cheney explicitly articulated these concerns in his famous August 2002 Veterans of Foreign Wars speech making the case for preventive war against Iraq. '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.'⁸ In short, the broad strategic impulse embraced by the Bush administration after 11 September involved a commitment to offensive action – soon.

Going on the offensive after 11 September meant, of course, a campaign against al-Qaeda and its terrorist affiliates. But the Bush administration was always acutely concerned as well about hostile states thought to be backing international terrorism, and especially those states that were believed to be actively pursuing nuclear weapons or other WMD. The worst nightmare scenario is one involving WMD terrorism, so it was imperative to foreclose the paths to that outcome. 'The overlap between states that sponsor terror and those that pursue WMD compels us to action.'⁹

And this leads to a second big idea associated with Bush's strategic response to 11 September: regime change is the best and only reliable answer to the rogue state threat. The crux of the problem from the American point of view is hostile regimes that truck with terrorists and seek weapons of mass destruction. Even if one attacks and destroys a rogue's WMD infrastructure, the targeted state will surely attempt to reconstitute its WMD programmes if the hostile regime is left in place. If there are suspicions of a covert nuclear programme, attacking the open components of the nuclear infrastructure may do little or nothing to elimi-

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nate or delay a weapons programme. Rogue states cannot be restrained by agreements or deals because they will inevitably cheat to advance their interests. As the 2002 National Security Strategy put it, rogue states 'display no regard for international law ... and callously violate international treaties to which they are party'.¹⁰ Embedded in this notion, in fact, is a kind of proliferation fatalism: hostile rogues who wish to obtain nuclear weapons will eventually get them if given enough time, because ultimately the international non-proliferation regimes are not capable of stopping them. In aggregate, this picture of the rogue

state threat leads inexorably to a belief in regime change as 'the seemingly only appropriate response to the threats discerned by the administration'.¹¹

This in turn leads logically to the third (and perhaps the most controversial) big idea in the Bush approach: preventive war. Bush's America was prepared to

use force in a preventive fashion to achieve the regime change necessary to fully eliminate threats. Grave future danger is presumed when dealing with hostile, terrorism-supporting proliferators. The absence of an imminent threat is irrelevant if the adversary's intentions are clear and major dangers are anticipated. 'There is a compelling case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves', states the 2006 National Security Strategy, 'even if uncertainty remains about the time and place of the enemy's attack'.¹² The Bush national security team viewed itself as in the business of preventing another 11 September. It is probably not surprising that those in positions of responsibility at the time that the United States suffered the worst attack on its territory in American history would have an enormous collective resolve to see to it that this didn't happen again. President Bush has been described as passionate about his own commitment that no more 11 Septembers would happen on his watch.¹³ And the preventive war doctrine was viewed very much in this light. When preventing 11 Septembers, the Bush administration was determined to take all necessary action. Again, Cheney's speech vividly illustrates the point: 'If the United States could have preempted 9/11, we would have, no question. Should we be able to prevent another, much more devastating attack, we will, no question. This nation will not live at the mercy of terrorists or terror regimes.'¹⁴ There would be no hesitation about employing preventive war if the threat were grave.

Here then is the powerful logic that led from 11 September to Baghdad. We must act. We must act now. We must eliminate hostile regimes that might provide WMD to terrorists. We must engage in preventive war if necessary to eliminate those hostile regimes. All this is necessary to prevent future 11 Septembers. The power of this logic lies in its connection to the horror of 11 September and in the mutually reinforcing character of the big ideas. It is not surprising, hence, that the drive for war with Iraq was not slowed by disputes about its WMD capabilities or its links to al-Qaeda. Those were mere details, incidental to the big conception of doing whatever might avoid another, even worse 11 September.

To these three big ideas President Bush has added a fourth: the policy of regime change will be linked to a programme of democratisation – the Freedom Agenda – intended to liberalise the target states and to bring to power congenial regimes throughout the greater Middle East. This initiative has gained in prominence as the other rationales for war in Iraq faded, and it has become the central theme of President Bush's foreign policy. It is based on a set of debatable propositions about the relationship between democracy and terror and about the likely consequences of democratisation. But nevertheless the president is fervently committed to this agenda and clearly believes (notwithstanding the results of recent elections in the Middle East that favoured anti-American

elements) that bringing democracy to previously undemocratic lands will advantage the United States, undermine the terrorists, inoculate against rogue leaders, and help bring peace to the region. In the context of the other elements of the Bush strategy, however, the main implication of the Freedom Agenda is that every regime change becomes a grand experiment in social engineering. Almost by definition, the targets of regime change will be societies that are deeply undemocratic, that lack the institutions of civil and political life that make democracy work, that have little experience or tradition of democratic governance, and that will often have a deeply entrenched tradition of violent and corrupt politics. Bush's democratisation agenda, in short, adds an enormously challenging dimension to the regime change concept.

These are the ideas that led the United States into Iraq and determined its broad course once there. What are the lessons to be derived from Iraq now that these ideas have been tested?

The Iraq experiment and its implications: limits and legacies

Many doctrines are more rhetorical than real and remain ensconced in the realm of declaratory policy. Not so the Bush Doctrine. It was soon applied in the case of Iraq, which the Bush administration believed met all the criteria for preventive action. The Bush National Security Strategy called for forceful offensive action against hostile proliferators who had links to terrorism. As Joseph Nye has written, 'Iraq came to be viewed as the new strategy's first test'.¹⁵ The Bush administration embarked on this venture with high hopes that much would be gained at modest cost, that its doctrine would be vindicated, that its success in Iraq would send a salutary message to other hostile proliferators about their potential fate if they persisted in pursuing WMD and assisting terrorists.¹⁶ The administration and its supporters also believed that a vigorous demonstration of the efficacy of American power (and of the will and willingness to use it) would enhance America's credibility, increase its coercive capability, and intimidate rivals. Many of the most fervent supporters of the war assumed that once success in Iraq was assured and the feasibility and affordability of forceful regime change was confirmed, the Bush administration would turn American military might against other worrisome states like Syria and Iran.¹⁷

Nearly four painful years later, many of the hopes that accompanied the preventive attack on Iraq have been dashed. One essential aim was accomplished: the elimination of Saddam's regime. But most of the grander ambitions for this venture remain unfulfilled. And the implications for future US policy fall mostly in the realm of cautionary tales. Iraq has highlighted quite starkly a number of limitations in the American ability to exercise power and to prosecute a policy

of preventive war – Washington now lives with fresh reminders that even a supreme power is not omnipotent and cannot readily bend others to its will. Iraq will also leave behind a number of legacies that will influence the perceptions and constrain the options of American policymakers. These limits and legacies constitute the primary mark that Iraq will leave on American policy.

The limits of intelligence

The American experience in Iraq exposed serious limitations in the ability to obtain the high-reliability intelligence necessary to undergird a strategy of preventive war. The US attack was motivated not by mere suspicions but by claims of absolute certainty about the existence and whereabouts of Saddam's nuclear weapons programme. Cheney and Rumsfeld, for example, were not at all hesitant about insisting not only that Saddam possessed active WMD programmes but that the US government knew where they were. In the run-up to war, this was the primary rationale for attacking Iraq.

In the aftermath of the invasion, the Bush administration's claims about Iraq's nuclear efforts and capabilities were gradually revealed to be completely false. During the earliest phase of the intervention, US forces raced to designated nuclear sites but found nothing. Once Saddam's Iraq was defeated and occupied, Washington established the Iraq Survey Group, whose sole purpose was to discover, expose and eliminate Iraq's nuclear and other WMD capabilities. In a year of intensive searching – with full freedom to investigate any site in Iraq and to explore any lead – the Iraq Survey Group found nothing. While there seems to be little doubt about Saddam's desire for nuclear weapons, it turned out that there were no weapons, there were no active facilities, there was no programme with momentum, there was no imminent threat.

That the US government could have been so completely wrong about Iraq's nuclear realities has two large implications for the Bush Doctrine. First, it may be very difficult to gain international support and wide acceptance of the legality and legitimacy of a preventive strike unless the evidence of nuclear malfeasance is substantial, unambiguous and incontrovertible. After Iraq, Washington's assertions will probably not suffice – particularly if, as in the Iraq case and so far in the Iran crisis, international monitoring finds no clear or conclusive evidence of weapons activity.

Secondly, it is not possible to have confidence in the efficacy and effectiveness of a preventive strike against the nuclear assets of a hostile proliferator if reliable intelligence is lacking. A meaningful attack meant to degrade or eliminate the nuclear

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capabilities of such a state must rely on detailed information about the location and character of the array of targets to be destroyed. In the case of Iraq, Washington was unable to determine correctly whether an active programme existed and its specific claims about individual sites and facilities turned out to be almost completely wrong.¹⁸ This does not provide much reassurance that the informational prerequisites for a preventive attack against nuclear infrastructure will be met. Obviously, known and visible sites can be destroyed, but the Iraq experience suggests that covert proliferation can pose a serious and perhaps intractable challenge to the strategy of preventive war aimed at nuclear facilities. If intelligence efforts cannot be relied upon to detect and locate covert nuclear-weapons programmes, then it may be necessary to aim preventive attacks at hostile regimes rather than nuclear facilities. The experience in Iraq, however, has clearly demonstrated how difficult and expensive it can be to seek regime change via the application of military force. Invasion and occupation is not a tidy business.

Iraq revealed American intelligence to be wanting in one other important respect. Washington simply did not understand ground realities in Iraq. It did not understand the players, the factions, the divisions, the internal distribution of power, or the political dynamics that would rapidly come to dominate in post-Saddam Iraq. As a result, the Bush administration often found its expectations confounded and its efforts at political reform complicated or undermined by unanticipated (and generally unwelcome) surprises, whether the rise to great influence of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the rapid emergence of sectarianism, the wide unpopularity of the American occupation, or the outbreak of protracted violence. Above all, once the insurgency erupted, the United States found itself engaged in a knowledge-intensive fight but lacking the information necessary for success: information about who to trust and who to suspect; information about the location and strength of the adversary; information about the plans and tactics of the enemy. After extensive interaction with US forces in Iraq, for example, journalist William Langewiesche has written, 'this was said to be an intelligence-based war, but the intelligence was poor'.¹⁹

In short, both counter-proliferation and counter-insurgency are very demanding in terms of intelligence. Iraq indicates how difficult it can be to meet the informational requirements associated with these contingencies and also dramatically highlights some of the problems that can arise when intelligence is inadequate to the task.

The limits of high-tech warfare

Over the past couple of decades, the United States has invested trillions of dollars to acquire an extraordinary, globally deployable, high-tech military

establishment. The result of this expenditure is substantial American dominance in the realms of capital-intensive and technology-intensive warfare – notably in the skies, on the seas and in space. In campaigns such as Kosovo and Iraq, for example, the United States possessed virtually total air superiority. It usually possesses enormous advantages in mobility, firepower and logistics. In contexts in which technical superiority confers advantage and determines outcomes, the United States is dominant and unrivalled. Not surprisingly, those responsible for American defence policy have sought to exploit these advantages as much as possible. Rumsfeld, in particular, is known for his commitment to ‘transformational capabilities’ that exploit high technology and air power. His desire to minimise troop levels and emphasise speed and technology is well documented in accounts of the planning for US action in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Iraq war has shown quite dramatically, however, that this military technical supremacy, though obviously useful in many ways, is either not relevant or not decisive when combating a low-tech opponent engaged in asymmetric warfare. The insurgents in Iraq have no air power, no satellite intelligence, no sophisticated technical command-and-control arrangements and few advanced weapons of any sort. The staggering US advantage in these respects has not sufficed either to defeat the insurgency or to make possible the attainment of Washington’s political aims in Iraq. Similarly, in Afghanistan the Taliban, though quickly toppled, has made a comeback, violence and instability persist, and coalition forces continue to be subjected to attack. As one critic concludes, ‘intense air power and small groups of troops didn’t win in Iraq or Afghanistan’.²⁰

We live in a world in which there is no profit in challenging American military power in its areas of strength. Few potential opponents anywhere have the capability to even attempt this. But in any event, any witted opponent will understand this hugely obvious conclusion and will seek to fight on its own terms rather than on American terms. When a conflict becomes established as a long slow slog on the ground, with the opponent possessing considerable ability to determine the time, location, frequency and character of the encounters, then most of the significant action most of the time involves young men with weapons and many of the high-tech advantages of the US military are neutralised.²¹ America’s breathtaking ability to destroy targets from the air with remote platforms and precision-guided munitions utilising unrivalled technical intelligence is often valuable and can be a potent coercive instrument – as in Kosovo. It can be advantageous as well even in counter-insurgency operations when there are lucrative targets that can be hit from the air. But it has not been decisive in the streets of Baghdad and it has not brought success in Iraq. The Iraq War shows that the United States does not have a low-cost, antiseptic

high-tech option for preventive war and regime change. Any intelligent opponent will turn the conflict into a protracted low-tech struggle in which the will and skill of adversary fighters is sufficient to cause enormous problems for the United States. Washington may yet prevail in Iraq (whatever that now means) but it will not be because of its unchallenged high-tech capabilities.

The limits of US military manpower

The long slow slog on the ground that is likely to be the preferred mode of engagement of America's adversaries places a premium on manpower. In effect, in Iraq the United States is fighting a manpower-intensive war with a technology-intensive military. This has been a problem.

After the Vietnam War, the United States abandoned its conscription-based manpower recruitment system and moved to a professional military, backed by voluntary but mobilisable reserve and national guard forces. This professional force was always considerably smaller than its draftee-filled predecessor, but with the end of the Cold War it shrunk still further. Six years into the Bush administration, five years into the 'global war on terror', and nearly four years into the Iraq War, the US Army numbers approximately 500,000 troops.

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The Iraq contingency has produced the first protracted test of the adequacy of America's small professional army. The results have not been heartening. The United States has struggled to maintain a force of approximately 150,000 in the field in Iraq. Even if the United States wished to undertake a major escalation of its effort in Iraq, along the lines of the famous escalation in Vietnam in the late 1960s, the forces are simply not available (for better or worse). To be sure, it is possible to surge a few thousand or even a few tens of thousands of additional troops into Iraq, especially for brief periods of time, but there is no way that the United States can increase its deployment of ground forces in Iraq by orders of magnitude. With the current ground forces, there will never be

half a million American personnel serving in Iraq, as there were in Vietnam, however much some supporters of the war may think they are needed.

The Iraq War has made plain the fact that the forces the United States can field, given the current size of the US Army, are not enough to prosecute the regime-change mission when there is serious protracted resistance. The United States has not been able to patrol and close Iraq's borders. It has been unable to prevent movement and operations of insurgents around Iraq. It has been unable to offer sustained stability and safety in Iraq's cities. It has failed to

provide order even in Baghdad itself. It has been unable to break the insurgency – indeed, the United States has been in Iraq for nearly four years and there is no end in sight nor is there any indication that the resistance is weakening despite the concerted efforts of the US military. Pro-war critics suggest that this is the result of flawed policy by the administration, which wanted to win this war on the cheap. Some critics speak contemptuously of what they call ‘the Rumsfeld Doctrine’: ‘just enough troops to lose’.²² But while it is true that the Bush administration could have deployed more forces in Iraq at various times, it is also true that there were serious manpower constraints that limited its ability to do so.²³ It is not at all clear that there were ever enough additional deployable troops to have made a dramatic difference in the course of events in Iraq, particularly once the insurgency erupted in full force.

To many, the lesson is obvious: the United States should build a significantly larger army. Frederick Kagan and William Kristol, ardent supporters of the war, suggest that ‘the consensus for a larger army is about as complete as it could be’, and urge an immediate programme to expand the army by 50% to 750,000.²⁴ But there is no indication that a substantial expansion of US ground forces is anywhere in view. The Bush administration has never called for it or committed to it, the Congress has never insisted on it or provided funding for it, and the public has not clamoured for it. In truth, a much larger ground force probably requires the reinstatement of the draft, something that appears to inspire little enthusiasm in any walk of American public life. Among military professionals some believe that Iraq reveals the failure of the professional army. Retired Army Major General Walter Stewart writes, for example, ‘after three decades, our national experiment with an all-volunteer force has foundered during its first encounter with combat operations that last for an extended period of time’.²⁵

Nevertheless, this manpower constraint is one that will be a reality for American policymakers for the foreseeable future. If a second significant contingency should arise while the United States is still heavily engaged in Iraq, this would be very problematic. In fact, at present almost all of America’s combat ready forces are in Iraq.²⁶ Should American leaders in the future contemplate regime change via preventive war against larger, more capable and more populous foes (such as Iran), this demonstrated manpower constraint would inevitably be a major consideration. ‘The simple fact is’, writes one group of analysts, ‘that the United States currently does not have enough troops who are ready and available for missions in Iran, North Korea, or anywhere else’.²⁷ Meanwhile, Iraq continues to strain the force. Many army officials, writes one former American officer, believe that ‘current deployment rates cannot be sustained without breaking force’.²⁸

The limits of long-distance social engineering

The Bush administration entered Iraq firmly believing that the American stay would be short and sweet. The Bush team envisioned rapid decapitation to be followed by swift transformation. Saddam would be deposed. A new, pro-American leadership chosen by Washington would be put in his place. The foundation of a democratic system would be built. The Iraqi bureaucracy would continue to function, providing essential public services. The grateful Iraqi public, now liberated by American power, would applaud these results and relish its new-found freedoms – the Bush ‘Democracy and Freedom Agenda’ would be triumphant. The Bush administration anticipated that the essential tasks could and would be completed in three months, whereupon the bulk of the American invasion force would leave Iraq and return home.²⁹ The political system of Iraq was to be remade on the cheap; regime change was to be quick, decisive and easy.³⁰

This rosy scenario collapsed almost instantly after the fall of Saddam. American forces arrived in Baghdad to find not a functioning government in need only of a new head, but widespread disorder and a near-total collapse of the public sector, not a grateful public welcoming Americans and freedom in a decorous way but suspicious mobs bent on looting and settling scores. Washington’s chosen Iraqis, the favoured exiles meant to lead the newly liberated state, proved to be unwelcome, unpopular and ineffective. Instead of a smooth transformation and a quick escape, the United States found itself in an Iraq gripped by violence, lawlessness, rampant criminality and corruption, sectarian rivalry, political instability and economic distress, and the US military was entrapped by a protracted and distressingly effective insurgency. Apart from the swift demise of Saddam Hussein’s regime, nothing has gone as anticipated.

From the vantage point of nearly four grim years, it is evident that the invasion and occupation of Iraq unleashed an internal political dynamic in that troubled land that Washington did not understand, has not been able to control, and has been powerless to stop. The still mounting costs of this war – political, diplomatic, economic and human – have been vastly greater than expected or desired. A very high price has been paid to produce results that can only be described as disappointing and that remain potentially disastrous. Washington has persisted in struggling mightily (and commendably) to reform and stabilise Iraq, but even its hard-won successes have brought unwanted pyrrhic results. The painfully achieved constitution appears to have reinforced separatism and sectarian rivalry – but certainly has not ended it. The much-trumpeted Iraqi election brought to power Islamic parties sympathetic to Iran, sceptical of the

United States, hostile to Israel and distant from the secular liberal democracy that Washington had in mind. Meanwhile, Iraq's slow-motion slide toward civil war apparently continues and none of Washington's ever-shifting moves have been able to stop it.

Whatever the ultimate outcome in Iraq – however good or bad – no one is going to come away from this experience believing, as the Bush administration did at the outset of its Iraq experiment, that the political renovation of distant and alien lands is cheap and easy. On the contrary, Bush's experiment in social engineering in Iraq leads to the conclusion that externally imposed reform – gunpoint democratisation – is very difficult and costly, as well as risky, hard to control, and unpredictable in result. It is unimaginable that this lesson will not colour the perceptions of future decision-makers as they contemplate using force for the purpose of regime change.

Legacy: a broken army?

The American experience in Iraq has not only revealed shortfalls in military manpower. It has taken such a toll on US ground forces that there is fear they have been damaged in ways that are not easily repaired. The stresses imposed on US ground forces in Iraq manifest themselves in several ways. After more than three-and-a-half gruelling years, American forces are being worn down. Many units have faced repeated deployments to Iraq (and also to Afghanistan). Many units, ready to come home, find their stays in Iraq prolonged. The heat, the pressure, the violence, the human losses, the extended time away from home and loved ones cause Iraq deployments to be extremely draining. This in turn has had a negative impact on recruitment and retention. Far from increasing the size of the force, the US military has had a hard time maintaining existing force levels. Age restrictions have been eased, testing standards have been lowered, moral standards have been relaxed, and enlistment bonuses have been significantly increased, but still the military has either missed its quotas or barely made them.³¹ There can be no doubt, however, that the quality of personnel has suffered as standards have been lowered to attract more volunteers. At the same time that personnel has become a major issue, the war in Iraq continues to grind up the equipment the troops use to fight and to protect themselves. By 2006, the US Army was requesting \$9 billion in annual funding simply to replace or fix equipment damaged or destroyed in the war.³²

The cumulative effect of Iraq on US ground forces has been quite serious. Those most alarmed by the state of affairs paint a grim picture indeed. Long-time defence correspondent Joseph Galloway, for example, consulted his contacts among active duty and retired officers and came away with the conclusion that

'the US Army is utterly broken and in need of immediate repair'. Galloway is convinced that lasting damage has been done: 'After this administration is history, it will take 12 or 15 or 20 years to repair the damage it's inflicted on an institution that our country desperately needs in a century as dangerous as this one.'³³ Similarly, Fred Kaplan writes of a 'wrecked Army' in a state of crisis.³⁴ There may be some debate about the severity of this problem, but there can be no doubt that the Iraq campaign has imposed great strain on US ground forces and that this may inhibit the ability of the United States to undertake major ground combat operations in the years immediately ahead.

Legacy: validating asymmetric strategies against the lone superpower

Meant to be an impressive demonstration of the effectiveness of superior American military power, the war in Iraq has had the opposite effect of revealing how ineffectual US capability can be when up against an insurgency employing an asymmetric strategy. The Bush administration insisted for months that the insurgency was nothing more than the 'last throes' of a few thousand 'Ba'athist bitter enders'. Yet after several years of conflict, it is the United States that finds itself stymied, its forces still bogged down in Iraq, its policies in Iraq floundering, its goals largely unattained.

What Iraq has demonstrated, therefore, is that a relatively small group of lightly armed insurgents, with little in the way of major combat equipment or modern command, control and intelligence capability, can hold its own against American military power by avoiding frontal battles, exploiting superior local knowledge, and employing unconventional tactics that protract the conflict and impose a steady drain on US forces and resources. Indeed, Andrew Bacevich argues that the recent experience of the United States (and of Israel as well) suggests that the Islamic world has finally figured out an effective strategy for frustrating superior firepower. 'What many Westerners dismiss as "terrorism"', writes Bacevich,

ought to be seen as a panoply of techniques employed to undercut the apparent advantages of high-tech conventional forces. The methods employed do include terrorism ... but they also incorporate propaganda, subversion, popular agitation, economic warfare, and hit-and-run attacks on regular forces, either to induce an overreaction or to wear them down.³⁵

There have, of course, been past insurgencies that demonstrated the ability of determined asymmetric fighters to hold their own against or even defeat superior powers. The United States itself learned this lesson at great cost in Vietnam. What Iraq has done, however, is to reveal that the strategy and tactics

of insurgency work even against the lone superpower, the global hegemon, the most powerful state the world has ever seen. America's military superiority in the post-Cold War era is so overwhelming, its military spending so vast, its raw power so formidable, that it may have seemed invincible. There may have been doubts about whether it was really possible to withstand the application of American military power. Iraq has obviously settled that question and obviously not in a manner that is advantageous to the United States. The world has been watching and no doubt other potential targets of Washington's wrath have drawn comfort from the ability of Iraq's insurgents to bog down and bloody American forces and to thwart Washington's will. If Washington moves against them they will know what to do.

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Legacy: weakened credibility and diminished reputation for power

An inevitable corollary of having validated the enemy's strategy is that Washington's credibility and reputation for power has suffered. Particularly so long as so much of America's military capability is committed in Iraq, it will be more difficult for the United States to employ coercive strategies against others, it will be difficult to credibly threaten the use of force against other states, and it may be more difficult to deter wilful adversaries. America's struggles in Iraq have become so protracted and so indisputable that even strong supporters of the Bush administration and the war effort have grown concerned about the impact on global perceptions of American power. For example, former Reagan administration official John Lehman has written, 'the military occupation in Iraq is consuming practically the entire defense budget and stretching the Army to its operational limits. This is understood quite clearly by both our friends and our enemies and as a result our ability to deter enemies around the world is disintegrating.' There is no one, Lehman continues, who 'believes that we can undertake any credible additional military operations while we are bogged down in Iraq'.³⁶ Similarly, journalist Jon Lee Anderson – who has travelled extensively in the Middle East – has commented on the effect of Iraq: 'We have lost the respect of our enemies ... Our enemies lost their respect for all of our billions of dollars worth of hardware ... They no longer fear us, either. We are not stronger, because our enemies do not believe that we are strong.'³⁷ The view from abroad is similar. Owen Harries, writing in the *Australian*, provides an apt summary of the impact of Iraq on America's reputation for power:

US military power was universally considered to be awesome in its scope and irresistible in its application. Today, after its deployment in Iraq, the world is much more aware of its limitations and less impressed: aware that while it has an enormous capacity to crush and destroy, its ability to control, to impose and maintain order is far less; that while its technology is superb, the human resources at its disposal for protracted occupation or multiple engagements is seriously limited ... The US's military prestige – and therefore its ability to impose its will without recourse to force – has been seriously diminished by Iraq. This will encourage rather than deter its potential enemies.³⁸

Those who recognise the potential for undermining perceptions of American power will be cautious about undertaking further such interventions.

Legacy: an Iraq syndrome?

The Vietnam War cast a long and baleful shadow on the American body politic. It left behind an American military so wounded that it took a generation to restore it to health and a military leadership so profoundly chastened that it was reluctant in the extreme to undertake further uses of force that might inflict another disaster on the institution they served and loved. In particular, the US military came out of the Vietnam War with a deep distaste for counter-insurgency operations and an equally deep determination not to engage in such operations in the future.³⁹ More broadly, the so-called 'Vietnam syndrome' coloured the perceptions of US politicians and decision-makers for decades. After Vietnam, America's political elite had a vivid understanding of the risk that decisions to use force could have disastrous, reputation-tarnishing, even career-destroying effects. Some in the US debate welcomed the restraint imposed by the Vietnam syndrome and regarded it as wise and healthy, others regretted the aversion to force and regarded it as an unfortunate pathology to be overcome, but few doubted the existence and the impact of the syndrome.

Will there be an Iraq syndrome? While it is true that President Bush gained re-election, it seems improbable that future administrations will wish to share anything like his experience in Iraq. This one issue has overshadowed his entire presidency and will be the single largest (and undoubtedly most intensely debated) element of his legacy in history. Long-time White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card, describing life in the Bush administration, commented: 'Its Iraq, Iraq, Iraq. Then comes the economy.'⁴⁰ The Bush administration continues gamely to defend its Iraq policy and the president continues doggedly to insist that the war was a necessary and correct decision and that success will arrive if

the United States perseveres. But there can be no doubt that it has been a painful and politically costly path, the negative effects of which have been abundantly clear both internally and externally. On those matters that most politicians care deeply about – their personal popularity, their political fortunes, the standing of their political parties – Iraq has been very damaging.

Strategic options after Iraq

Whatever the eventual outcome in Iraq and whatever judgements are drawn about the American involvement there, the United States still must contend with the worrisome nexus of hostile states, terrorists and weapons of mass destruction. It seems likely that a substantial body of opinion in the United States will conclude that the main lesson of Iraq is not to do anything like it again. But there still must be some effective policy for dealing with major threats as widely understood in the post-11 September world.

And in truth, the disappointing experience in Iraq undermines the appeal of Bush's strategy but does not overturn the logic of preventive war and regime change as the Bush administration has articulated it. Iraq suggests that the costs of this strategy are significantly higher than proponents of the war had hoped, but Bush and Cheney have made it abundantly clear that to prevent a future 11 September – in particular a nuclear 11 September – they are prepared to pay whatever price is necessary. If it is costly to undertake steps essential, as they see it, to protect the United States from terrible attacks, so be it. Despite Iraq, for many in the American debate and for those at the highest levels of the Bush administration, the rationale that weaves together a preference for the offensive, regime change and preventive war is still operative. Viewed through this lens, the painful experience in Iraq, however unpleasant and undesirable it may be, does not undercut the premises that led to the adoption of the Bush strategy in the first place. Hence, it is not surprising that the Bush administration has retreated not an inch from its embrace of these policies. Indeed, the new National Security Strategy of March 2006 repeats both the logic and the policy in terms identical to that of 2002: 'When the consequences of an attack with WMD are potentially so devastating, we cannot afford to stand idly by as grave dangers materialize. This is the principle and logic of preemption. The place of preemption in our national security strategy remains the same.'⁴¹

Iraq might seem to counsel caution about undertaking additional such ventures, but the 2006 National Security Strategy instead reiterates exactly the 2002 warning about the dangers of inaction: 'The greater the 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.⁴² In 2002, President Bush had argued that the only path to safety was 'the path of action', by which he meant an offensive campaign aimed at regime change in the most dangerous hostile proliferators, employing preventive war if necessary. It seems quite evident that 1,300 days of struggle in Iraq have not changed his mind.

Thus, the fundamental strategic choices that led to war in Iraq have not been abandoned. Certainly for the remainder of Bush administration they will remain influential. But they are also likely to remain on the agenda even after 2008. This set of ideas has deep roots in the Republican Party; indeed, President Bush has been criticised by more hawkish members of his party as insufficiently aggressive. These ideas also have found resonance in the Democratic Party. It was Bill Clinton who established regime change as the goal of US policy toward Iraq and who came close to a preventive use of force against North Korea. These ideas have been evident more broadly in counter-proliferation and in counter-terrorism thinking.

The strategic choices that led to Iraq have not been abandoned

On the other hand, no one is going to want to undertake a rerun of Iraq, so there are certain to be adaptations of these ideas with the aim of limiting the downside risks. What form might these adaptations take? Several possibilities are evident.

Regime change without reform?

The Bush administration attacked Iraq with both destructive and constructive objectives in mind. On the destructive side of the equation, Bush sought to remove Saddam from power, destroy his regime, and eliminate Iraq from the roster of serious proliferation worries. On the constructive side, Bush sought to implement his policy of democracy promotion, to help create a stable, secular and democratic state. Building the new Iraq has proven to be painful, costly and difficult, and it remains to be seen whether Bush will succeed in achieving his constructive goals.

The destructive agenda, however, was successful and was accomplished quickly and relatively cheaply. When President Bush had his famous 'mission accomplished' moment on 1 May 2003, it was undoubtedly the fulfilment of his destructive aims that he and his team were celebrating. As far as the Bush administration was concerned, Saddam Hussein's Iraq was number one on the list of hostile, aggressive, proliferation-hungry, terrorism-sponsoring states. It was imperative, in their view, to remove this dangerous threat before it caused or contributed to some further horrible damage to the United States. The wilful

and impressive application of American military power had erased that threat, utterly and completely. In the Bush administration's reckoning, this was a major gain for American security and a major blow to the insidious coalition of evil states and radical Islamist terrorists. As Bush and Cheney have many times insisted, they fervently believe that this war was necessary and that the results are worth whatever price the United States has paid to achieve them. The mounting costs associated with the post-Saddam era in Iraq seem to have changed their perceptions and calculations not at all.

Illustrative and extremely revealing are comments made by Cheney in a television interview with journalist Tim Russert on 10 September 2006. Pressed on whether the Iraq War had been a misjudgement, Cheney replied:

If Saddam Hussein were still in power, the situation would be far worse than it is today. You'd have a man who had a demonstrated capacity for violence, who'd started two wars, who had, in fact, been involved with weapons of mass destruction, who had every intention of going back to it when the sanctions were lifted ... Especially with Ahmadinejad, living next door in Iran, pursuing nuclear weapons, there is no doubt in my mind that if Saddam Hussein was still in power, he would have a very robust program underway to do exactly the same thing. The world is better off because Saddam Hussein is in jail instead of in power in Baghdad. It was the right thing to do and if we had it to do over again we would do exactly the same thing.⁴³

This was a startling comment, coming at a time when the number of coalition dead in the Iraq conflict had grown to exceed the losses of 11 September, the Government Accountability Office was reporting that the military campaign in Iraq was costing the US Treasury \$2bn per week, the insurgents in Iraq were mounting several thousand attacks per month, the losses among Iraqi civilians had risen to alarming highs and continued to increase, the latest US–Iraqi plan to pacify and stabilise Baghdad was clearly failing, and the approval rating of the president and his Iraq policy was well under 50%. Taken aback, Russert asked incredulously, 'Exactly the same thing?' Offered this opportunity to back-pedal from a striking and newsworthy remark, Cheney instead replied simply, 'Yes, sir'.

Bush and Cheney clearly (and I think genuinely) believe that the removal of the threat posed by Saddam's regime and the demonstrated efficacy of American power in dispatching a dangerous enemy significantly outweigh the costs and difficulties that have ensued in Iraq.⁴⁴ In their eyes, the most essential part of the mission in Iraq was successful.

And what this implies is that the two halves of the strategy – destroying intolerable enemies on the one hand, and promoting freedom and democracy on the other – are not inherently linked (however preferable it is to link them, both from a moral and perhaps also from a domestic political point of view). These are separable objectives and however inadequate US power has been in democracy promotion it was shown to be quite effective at enemy destruction. In both Iraq and Afghanistan the offending regimes were quickly swept from the board. Faced with potential threats that are perceived by the Bush administration and many others in the American political scene as intolerable, unacceptable and evil, removing such players from the board will be viewed as a highly desirable and potentially tempting option.

President Bush himself shows no sign of wavering from the constructive side of his ambitious agenda.⁴⁵ Democracy promotion continues to figure centrally in his public utterances – and indeed was a prominent theme of his second inaugural address. But implicit in the administration's defence of its Iraq policy is an alternative strategy that is narrower and less ambitious. After Iraq, there may be a temptation to skip the social engineering and focus on destroying enemies. Indeed, those sceptical of the prospects for democracy in the Arab and Islamic world argued even before the intervention in Iraq that the United States should focus on threat reduction rather than democracy promotion. In the context of the fierce Iraq debate in the autumn of 2002, for example, Martin Kramer argued that the preconditions for democracy are absent in the Arab world, and therefore it was undesirable and potentially counterproductive to promise democracy as a consequence of US policy. 'The Iraq debate', Kramer concluded, 'should be decided by considerations of threats, threats, threats. It would be unfortunate if it were to be sidetracked by promises, promises, promises.'⁴⁶ The high price of engagement in Iraq – and even more the distinct possibility that the United States will fail in Iraq – may make the Kramer formulation the dominant one if there are future regime change debates.

In such a conception, the United States would not be indifferent to the consequences of regime change in a target state, but the core objective would be a stable, cooperative, unthreatening regime. If democratic, so much the better, but the goal would be to eliminate a threat without re-running the Iraq experience. A further variant of this approach would suggest that even coping with a period of uncertainty and instability is better than living with an intolerable threat. Iraq may be a mess, but its government is not menacing neighbours or pursuing nuclear weapons, and hence the current situation is better for American and regional security than the previous reality.

In effect, this is a strategy that envisions employing US power as a wrecking ball to destroy dangerous and unacceptable but deeply entrenched status quos. American power may not be sufficient to determine what comes afterwards, but it is more than sufficient to dislodge the status quo. This notion was evident in some corners of the Bush administration. As Thomas Ricks has written of the dominant (Cheney) faction,

Stability [in the Middle East] was not their *goal*, it was their *target* ... They wanted radical change in the Middle East. They were determined to drain the swamp – that is, to alter the political climate of the region so that it would no longer be so hospitable to the terrorists inhabiting it. A less charitable way of putting it was that they were willing ... to take a chance and then groove on the rubble.⁴⁷

When confronted by the intolerable, the unacceptable, the evil, the crucial first step is to eliminate the offending party, to disrupt the threatening status quo. Whatever comes next is almost by definition preferable to and more hopeful than the unbearable reality that provoked preventive war in the first place. Such a strategic rationale may be at least implicit in the continuing calls in some quarters for preventive action in pursuit of regime change in Syria and Iran, despite the experience in Iraq.

This is a line of thought that seeks to retain the option of using force for regime change while limiting Washington's risks and liabilities and forsaking ambitious political renovations. The logic of this strategy is sound but there is reason to question whether it will really be dramatically more effective than Bush's Iraq policy. For one thing, upending a stable status quo and creating uncontrolled instability could produce an outcome that is worse rather than better – bringing to power radical Islamists, for example. There is also a real risk that the American wrecking ball will produce not hopeful or promising situations but failed states that may exacerbate the terrorism problem and intensify rather than soothe regional difficulties. Washington will not solve the type of threat posed by pre-11 September Afghanistan by creating post-11 September failed states. Furthermore, it is by no means clear that the troubles in Iraq have been caused primarily by Bush's hopes for democratisation. Iraq has been marked by the breakdown of public order, the bitterness and resistance of deposed elites, unrestrained factional competition for power in conditions of political vacuum, ferocious sectarian rivalry, meddling and enflaming intrusions by self-interested neighbouring states, and the pernicious persistence of

This is a strategy that envisions US power as a wrecking ball

extreme violence that blights the political and social life of the country. These harsh realities appear to be by-products of the US invasion and the destruction of Saddam's regime. None appears clearly attributable to the goal of democratisation. Thus, while there is no question that the United States has the ability to destroy hostile regimes when it chooses to do so, it may in fact not be possible to avoid the adverse or destabilising consequences of such action. If Iraq is the harbinger of things to come, forcible regime change is never going to be an easy option.

Regime change by other means

The real solution to the threat posed by hostile proliferators is not preventive war but regime change. Preventive war may be judged necessary to achieve regime change, but after Iraq there can be no doubt that this is a costly choice. Accordingly, another basic question logically arises: can regime change be produced by means other than force? The Bush administration always believed so, and in both the 2002 and 2006 national strategy documents it stated explicitly that it would rather achieve its aims without resort to preventive war. 'The United States will not resort to force in all cases to preempt emerging threats', the Bush administration offered in 2006. 'Our preference is that nonmilitary actions succeed.'⁴⁸ After Iraq, this instinct is completely understandable, but what might be done to undermine hostile governments? There are several options in the policy portfolio.

One is economic sanctions. There is a substantial debate about the utility of economic sanctions. Certainly they do not work quickly and they may not always work effectively.⁴⁹ But at times they can have enormous effect. The sanctions imposed on Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War, though often criticised and unsuccessful in toppling Saddam, nevertheless had a huge impact on Iraq (ironically, one that contributed to the difficulties of reconstructing Iraq after the regime fell in 2003). Iraq expert Toby Dodge writes, for example, 'the story of Iraq from 1991 to 2003 is of a country suffering a profound macroeconomic shock. As sanctions began to take effect after 1991, there was a rapid decline in the official and visible institutions of the state.'⁵⁰ Additionally, some regimes may be more vulnerable than others to the application of economic pressure. Both the Clinton and Bush administrations have viewed North Korea as teetering on the edge of economic viability. There was a hope that squeezing North Korea economically – by clamping down on repatriated earnings from abroad, attempting to cut off North Korea's illicit exports to the maximum possible extent, interfering with Pyongyang's ability to use counterfeit currency, and so on – would cause this brittle regime to fail. Similarly, Iran is viewed as potentially vulnerable because

of the estrangement of much of the young population from the theocratic regime that governs the country. Perhaps the privations imposed by sanctions could trigger sufficient internal discontent to undermine or overthrow the regime. Even if sanctions are not generally effective, they may work in these special circumstances. Certainly in the cases of North Korea and Iran, the Bush administration has worked to exert as much economic pressure as possible, albeit with mixed results given the uneven cooperation of other states.

A second option is a strategy of subversion. Particularly in settings where there are thought to be visible fractures and fault lines in the political order (as in Iran), efforts to undermine a hostile regime might help facilitate regime change. This could involve the championing of dissident groups, encouragement of uprisings and domestic insurgencies, support for violent anti-regime groups, providing help to opposition parties and non-governmental organisations, promoting the activities of exile groups, beaming broadcasts into the target country, and perhaps also covert action and harassment raids where this is possible.⁵¹

Many of these elements are visible in US policy toward Iran. Congress has passed the Iran Freedom Support Act, which calls for support of political forces in opposition to the regime in Tehran. Congress has this year provided \$85m to 'promote democracy' – that is, to provoke regime change – in Iran.⁵² There are reports that the United States has been conducting commando raids into Iranian territory from Iraq and that it has been backing the People's Mujahedin Organisation of Iran (Mujahedin-e Khalq, MEK), an anti-Iranian group that even the United States regards as terrorist.⁵³ This approach has prominent supporters in Washington. Former Congressman Newt Gingrich, for example, calls openly for the replacement of the Iranian regime and offers a plan for how to achieve this. 'We should begin with a Reaganite strategy of helping organize every dissident group in Iran, dramatically expanding our information campaign into the country, and applying diplomatic and economic pressure.'⁵⁴ The US may refrain from launching a preventive war, but this does not mean that it is failing to seek regime change in the Iranian case.

A third possibility has found voice in the US debate. This is the idea that regime change might follow from some catalytic coercive act – a threatening build-up on the border or an assault on WMD targets or a transgression across the border. In a way, this approach uses force to achieve regime change, but seeks to do so without invasion and occupation. The logic here is that the military presence and pressure might embolden the military or some other organised social force to overthrow the government or alternatively that the mass public might be so outraged at the national humiliation that they rise up against the regime.

This is not a hypothetical category. Many supporters of the Iraq war believed or hoped beforehand that the US build-up and threat of invasion would be the catalyst for a coup or might at least foment an uprising against the regime.⁵⁵

These three approaches – sanctions, subversion and military pressure – are not mutually exclusive and indeed all three have been evident in the American approach to Iran in recent years. But while these options offer an alternative to preventive attacks to accomplish regime change, they have not been notably successful in achieving the desired end either in North Korea and Iran. Indeed both regimes seem to be on reasonably solid ground and both have been increasingly brazen in their international behaviour. Preventive war has the character that it is effective at destroying hostile regimes but can be extremely costly when employed. The alternatives avoid the costs of preventive war but their feasibility is questionable, especially if there is urgency in terms of time.

Attacking capabilities

If regime change is too costly or too difficult, the obvious alternative is preventive action to destroy the nuclear-weapons infrastructure of the threatening regime. Whatever regime rules in Tehran or other hostile proliferators, they will not be able to acquire nuclear weapons if the nuclear infrastructure is damaged or destroyed. One option for Washington, therefore, is to consider employing force in a limited way against nuclear facilities. At a minimum, this would deprive the existing leaderships of a near-term nuclear option and postpone the day when the world must confront additional nuclear-armed states. Obviously, this option depends on the ability to locate at least the key elements of the nuclear infrastructure. If a state has successfully hidden its nuclear-weapons programme, it may still be possible to attack suspected sites, but there will be no way to confidently degrade the nuclear capability.

Engagement, diplomacy, negotiation

Regime change and democratisation, regime change without reform, regime change by other means, or counter-proliferation attacks against nuclear facilities all fall at the aggressive end of the spectrum of options. US policy has been driven to this end of the spectrum by the judgement that hostile proliferation is intolerable and that only offensive action against transgressors will truly eliminate these severe threats. However, diplomacy has remained part of the mix, even in the cases of North Korea and Iran, and in instances in which the more aggressive choices are deemed too costly, too risky or infeasible, diplomacy may be the only option for trying to restrain a potential proliferator or to persuade it to reverse course. Negotiation is rarely likely to be easy – particularly when

the parties are deeply divided and deeply suspicious of one another – and it is by no means certain to be successful, as is attested by the failure of the Six-Party Talks in Asia to stop North Korea’s nuclear programme. However, in some cases it may be possible to find a combination of threatened penalties and proffered inducements – the proverbial carrots and sticks – that will suffice to successfully address a proliferation problem. In 1994, for example, the Clinton administration succeeded in negotiating the Agreed Framework with North Korea; whatever its imperfections, the Agreed Framework succeeded for nearly a decade in freezing and putting under international monitoring Pyongyang’s plutonium programme. Only when the deal broke down in the midst of confrontation between the Bush administration and North Korea did Pyongyang move rapidly to develop its plutonium-based arsenal. Similarly, Libya was persuaded to abandon completely its nascent nuclear weapons programme in the course of lengthy negotiations. Negotiation sometimes can succeed in circumscribing nuclear proliferation threats.

Washington has been oddly schizophrenic about the diplomatic option during the Bush administration. On the one hand, perhaps out of necessity, it has been involved for years in the Six-Party Talks with North Korea. It has supported the E3 negotiations with Iran. It has sought to gain support at the UN for its positions in both these crises. No doubt the Bush administration would complain vehemently if it were accused of neglecting diplomacy. On the other hand, its distaste for and distrust of diplomacy is palpable and it has refused to engage in bilateral discussions with any of the hostile protagonists of recent crises, whether Iran or North Korea or Syria. It is the most minimal requirement of diplomacy that the parties be willing to talk, but this the Bush administration has been reluctant to do in all the hard cases. In truth, it may be difficult to effectively negotiate with another state while simultaneously pursuing a policy of regime change toward it. But the Bush reluctance to engage in diplomacy – particularly bilateral diplomacy – appears to derive more from a distaste for the evil parties who would be on the other side of the table and from a deep scepticism about the value of diplomacy. Speaking of the ‘war on terrorism’ during the Congressional election campaign in autumn 2006, Bush appealed to voters to support Republicans because ‘I need members of Congress who understand that you can’t negotiate with these folks’.⁵⁶ It is not entirely clear who Bush had in mind in making this comment, but it accurately conveys the general predisposition of his administration. Further, senior members of the administration routinely voice views that are

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incompatible with successful diplomacy. Negotiations also generally require the willingness to offer inducements, often quite substantial inducements, if a rival is to be swayed from an undesirable course. This Bush has condemned as rewarding cheaters and succumbing to blackmail, and he has at times vowed not to do it. Negotiations often involve making concessions – tantamount to appeasement in the eyes of the Bush team. Negotiations generally require bargaining, but Bush has insisted that the United States will not meet bilaterally until his demands are met. Not surprisingly, this approach has failed, as others are not likely to give up their major concessions as the first move in a negotiation. In short, negotiation represents another potential option for addressing proliferation challenges, but it is not evident whether the Bush administration is genuinely seeking solutions or whether it is using diplomacy to smooth the road toward the use of force.

Acquiescence and deterrence

There have been only a small number of cases of hostile nuclear proliferation, but in these cases a pattern can be discerned. As a hostile nuclear-armed power is emerging, Washington frets and fulminates, criticises and complains, threatens and opposes. There are always fears that the leadership in the proliferating state – whether headed by Stalin, Mao or Kim Jong Il – is reckless, irrational, unpredictable, risk-taking and prone to misperception and miscalculation. There are always great worries that the emerging nuclear state will be undeterrable – not least because such leaders are regarded as unconcerned about possible harm to their populace. There is typically serious consideration of preventive war to remove the alarming threat before it is too late – against the Soviet Union in the early 1950s, against China in the mid-1960s, against North Korea in the mid-1990s – but ultimately this option is set aside, the risks too great, the potential costs too high.⁵⁷ And in the end the outcome is that the United States (unhappily) learns to live with the new nuclear-weapon state and fashions a deterrent policy to neutralise the threat it represents. For all of its absolutist rhetoric about the unacceptability of hostile proliferation, this is the approach that even the Bush administration seems to have chosen to deal with North Korea. Iraq is so far the lone exception to this pattern, the single case in which the preventive war option was pursued. If one consequence of Iraq is that the United States moves away from the strategy of preventive war and if proliferation diplomacy continues to fail in some key cases, then by default it will be necessary to develop deterrence policies against new nuclear-armed states in the years ahead. This may be a likely outcome – as with North Korea – but for Washington it will not be a preferred or satisfactory outcome. Indeed, it is

precisely to avoid this result that the Bush administration has championed the more aggressive options available to it.

Iran after Iraq: what now?

Whatever the costs and difficulties of the Iraq war, the problem of coping with hostile proliferators will remain high on the US security policy agenda and must be addressed. Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that the painful experience in Iraq has caused the use of force to be removed from the roster of options. On the contrary, the Bush administration has so far appeared to be remarkably unchastened by the results of its Iraq policy and has been outspoken in asserting its continued commitment to a policy of preventive attack.

President Bush has repeatedly proclaimed that the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran would be intolerable and unacceptable. According to a recent report by a well-informed journalist, 'Bush has vowed privately not to leave office with Iran's nuclear program intact'.⁵⁸ There is nothing to suggest either that he has changed his mind or that he does not mean what he says. The ineluctable corollary of his stance, however, is that if Iran's nuclear-weapons programme cannot be stopped by diplomacy, then it must be eliminated by force. To be sure, the limitations and risks exposed by the Iraq experiment make it unlikely that the United States will undertake a strategy of regime change via full-scale invasion. Even the Bush administration shows little appetite for that approach at this point. But even if intervention is ruled out, there remains a spectrum of more limited military options aimed at the more limited objective of damaging Iran's nuclear infrastructure and delaying its progress toward enrichment and reprocessing capabilities that would give Tehran a nuclear-weapons option. It is obvious that this does not represent a permanent solution to the challenge of Iran's nuclear appetite. But the goal would be to buy time, either to let diplomacy work or, more ideally from the Bush point of view, in the hope that regime change might somehow come about before the programme is reconstituted.

Though much of the public discourse is focused on the more ambitious military options – invasion or massive aerial attack – it may be that the more likely, more tempting, options reside at the more limited end of the spectrum. It may be that the political costs, the military stresses, and the escalatory risks can best be contained by considering *the minimum meaningful attack* – that is, the smallest use of military force that would provide significant benefit in terms of the goal of inhibiting Iran's nuclear progress. This would inevitably involve concentration on one of Iran's essential facilities necessary for the production of fissile material. A likely candidate would be the uranium-conversion facility at Esfahan, which processes raw uranium yellowcake into the uranium hexafluor-

ride feedstock used for centrifuge enrichment. Without this feedstock, there can be no enrichment and hence the destruction of this facility would be a major barrier to progress for Iran. The Esfahan facility is located miles out of the city and is housed in unhardened above-ground industrial buildings. The destruction of several buildings in a single remote location with little risk of unwanted collateral damage would represent a serious setback for the Iranian programme to develop the full nuclear-fuel cycle. The Esfahan facility took at least six years to construct; even if Iran were able to move faster the second time around, this one very small and limited attack could cause a few years of delay in the Iranian programme.

The minimum meaningful attack would, by definition, leave most of Iran's nuclear infrastructure untouched and intact. There would undoubtedly be worries about Iran's remaining ability to work with centrifuges and to gain technical knowledge and experience that would be useful if and when the uranium-conversion facility were reconstituted. A minimal attack contains costs but limits gains. The key judgement is whether enough delay is achieved to justify the choice of this option.

A variant of the minimum meaningful attack would focus on a small number of *crucial chokepoint nuclear technologies*. Arguably, there are a small number of key facilities in Iran whose destruction would substantially derail Iran's pursuit of enrichment or reprocessing and gain years of delay. These would include not only the uranium-conversion facility at Esfahan, but also the pilot centrifuge plant at Natanz, and the heavy-water production plant at Arak. This still represents a very limited target set. These are all soft targets that could be struck with little risk of unwanted collateral damage or loss of innocent lives. A successful strike against these targets would essentially remove from the board the Iranian capabilities that have been at the heart of the multi-year crisis over Iran's nuclear ambitions. This does not, of course, represent a permanent solution because Iran can be expected to attempt to rebuild

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its nuclear fuel cycle programme. But some years of delay would be gained. Indeed, it may be even harder for Iran to reconstitute its programme now that its main supplier for many key technologies, the A.Q. Khan network, has (presumably) been put out of business. There will be warranted worry about Iranian retaliation to such an attack, but even an outraged Tehran would have to be mindful of the enormous escalatory potential that resides in US air and naval power. Washington's aim, in this scenario, would be to destroy a small number of key Iranian nuclear facilities while deterring significant Iranian response by threat of much more massive air attacks if Iran strikes out at US interests.

Very limited strikes would aim to bring meaningful benefit in terms of slowing the Iranian nuclear programme while minimising the costs and risks of preventive attack. It is plausible to calculate, however, that any air campaign launched against Iran, however limited, will produce international criticism, nationalist outrage within Iran, and a variety of hostile responses from Tehran. If it is expected that a serious price is going to be borne under all circumstances involving the use of force, then Washington may find itself tempted by the more ambitious end of the spectrum. A more extensive assault on Iran's capabilities might entail the possibility of higher costs, but also promises much higher payoffs in terms of nuclear capacity destroyed, progress impeded, and Iranian options foreclosed in the near term.

One version of a more ambitious air campaign would involve a much more *comprehensive attack on Iran's nuclear infrastructure*. This would entail an attack on some two dozen major nuclear facilities that are geographically widely scattered around Iran. A truly comprehensive attempt to degrade Iran's nuclear infrastructure would strike not only the facilities directly related to uranium enrichment or plutonium reprocessing, but also the light-water reactor at Bushehr, nuclear research centres in Tehran and Esfahan and elsewhere, research and manufacturing facilities for centrifuges and other sensitive components, and perhaps even uranium mines.⁵⁹

At the most ambitious end of the spectrum of options would be the *full suppressive attack*. This would add an array of additional targets to the comprehensive attack on nuclear infrastructure. To minimise risk to US military assets, Iran's air force and air defence system could be attacked. To preclude or reduce the Iranian ability to disrupt the crucial waterways in the Persian Gulf, the Iranian navy might be attacked. To reduce the ability of Iran to implement effective reprisals, the Iranian military and perhaps logistical targets would be attacked. At this most ambitious end of the spectrum, the US air campaign would involve hundreds if not thousands of targets and would require some days of intense bombardment.⁶⁰

The wisdom of any of these attacks will depend on several key judgements. First, if Iran has a significant covert nuclear-weapons programme, as many seem to believe, then striking known and visible targets in the Iranian nuclear complex offers little benefit while incurring the significant costs of preventive action. Secondly, how much time is bought if Iran's nuclear infrastructure is destroyed? Is five years of delay, or three or ten, worth the costs of a preventive attack? Thirdly, if the anticipated delay is short, is the United States prepared to commit to re-attacking Iran's nuclear infrastructure, and will this be feasible? (Presumably a reconstituted programme will be much more hidden.) If

not, what is gained by a relatively brief interruption in Iran's nuclear progress? Fourthly, Iran's retaliatory options need to be taken into account. Iran possesses a number of distressing options, in Iraq, against Israel, through Hizbullah, via the oil market, in opposition to the major Sunni oil producers. What is the net judgement when the gains obtained by a preventive air attack are weighed against likely Iranian retaliations?

But in strategy as in medicine, diagnosis dictates remedy. So long as an Iranian nuclear-weapon capability is defined as intolerable and unacceptable, the military option will remain prominent and tempting – because even if the price is high the gain is incalculable. This leads to the final, and most fundamental judgement: can the United States and the world live with a nuclear-armed Iran? Can it be deterred? Many would say yes, but the answer of the Bush administration is no.

Notes

- 1 George H.W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States, 1991–1992* (Washington DC: Brassey's, 1991), pp. 58, 62.
- 2 For extensive discussion of the role of rogue states in US thinking and policy during the 1990s, see Michael Klare, *Rogue States and Nuclear Outlaws: America's Search for a New Foreign Policy* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995); and Robert Litwak, *Rogue States and US Foreign Policy: Containment After the Cold War* (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2000).
- 3 The origins and early phases of al-Qaeda's challenge to the United States are authoritatively recounted in Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror: Radical Islam's War Against America* (New York: Random House, 2003).
- 4 As reported in Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004), pp. 225–6.
- 5 John Lewis Gaddis, 'Grand Strategy in the Second Term', *Foreign Affairs*, vo. 85, no. 1, January–February 2005, <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20050101faessay84101/john-lewis-gaddis/grand-strategy-in-the-second-term.html>, p. 1.
- 6 President's Radio Address, 30 September 2006, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060930.html>.
- 7 Fox News Sunday, 28 March 2004, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,115436,00.html>.
- 8 Remarks by the Vice President to the Veterans of Foreign Wars 103rd National Convention, 26 August 2002, p. 5, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/08/20020826.html>.
- 9 The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002, p. 15, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2002/>.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 11 Andrew Flibert, 'The Road to Baghdad: Ideal and Intellectuals in Explanations of the Cold War', *Security Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1, April–June 2006, pp. 310–52. The conception of threat undergirding the preventive war doctrine is spelled out in greater

- detail in Steven E. Miller, 'Terrifying Thoughts: Power, Order, and Terror after 9/11', *Global Governance*, vol. 11, no. 2, April–June 2005, especially pp. 251–4.
- 12 The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States*, March 2006, p. 18, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/>.
 - 13 As Woodward reports, Bush decided immediately after 11 September that combating terrorism 'is the primary focus of this administration'. Bob Woodward, *Bush At War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), p. 73.
 - 14 Remarks by the Vice President, p. 5.
 - 15 Joseph S. Nye, Jr., 'US Power and Strategy After Iraq', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 82, no. 4, July–August 2003, p. 61.
 - 16 The expectations of the Bush administration as it contemplated war with Iraq are detailed in Steven E. Miller, 'Gambling on War: Force, Order, and the Implications of Attacking Iraq', in Steven E. Miller, William D. Nordhaus, Carl Kaysen, John D. Steinbruner and Martin B. Malin, *War With Iraq: Costs, Consequences, and Alternatives* (Cambridge, MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, November 2002), pp. 7–14.
 - 17 See, for example, William Kristol, 'The End of the Beginning', *Weekly Standard*, vol. 8, no. 34, 12 May 2003, which comments that 'the liberation of Iraq was the first great battle for the future of the Middle East'.
 - 18 See, for example, Thomas Powers, 'Secret Intelligence and the War on Terror', *New York Review of Books*, 16 December 2004, which illustrates that most of the specific claims offered by senior Bush administration officials were incorrect.
 - 19 William Langewiesche, 'Rules of Engagement', *Vanity Fair*, November 2006, p. 326.
 - 20 Carl Robichaud, 'Failings of the Rumsfeld Doctrine', *Christian Science Monitor*, 21 September 2006, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0921>.
 - 21 See the important analysis in Barry Posen's prescient article, 'Command of the Commons: The Military Foundations of US Hegemony', *International Security*, vol. 28, no. 1, Summer 2003, pp. 5–46, which contrasts realms of US military dominance with 'contested zones' in which weaker adversaries can function with effectiveness against American forces. Also directly pertinent here is Ivan Arrequin-Toft, 'How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict', *International Security*, vol. 26, no. 1, Summer 2001, pp. 93–128, which argues that while the weaker side can never muster dominant capabilities, it can fashion a dominant strategy: 'A weak actor's strategy can make a strong actor's power irrelevant' (pp. 93–4). The implication of such analyses is that Iraq is not an anomaly.
 - 22 This formulation is from Tom Friedman, 'Big Talk, Little Will', *New York Times*, 16 August 2006, but is widely echoed among Rumsfeld's frustrated pro-war critics.
 - 23 For a concise but vigorous explanation of the constraints on US troop deployments, see Lawrence Korb and Peter Ogden, 'Why We Can't Send More Troops', *Washington Post*, 14 September 2006.
 - 24 Kagan and Kristol, 'More Troops'. See also the urgent appeal from a US officer recently returned from Iraq, who complains that the US has just enough troops to 'not lose' but not enough to win. Pete Hegseth, 'More Troops, Please', *Wall Street Journal*, 3 October 2006.
 - 25 Walther L. Stewart, Jr, 'The All-Volunteer Army: Can We Still Claim

- Success?', *Military Review*, July–August 2006, p. 101.
- 26 Korb and Ogden, 'Why We Can't Send More Troops', states, for example, that 'the active Army has close to zero combat-ready brigades in reserve'.
- 27 Lawrence Korb, Max Bergmann and Peter Ogden, 'Tapped Out: Bush Has Mismanaged the Military', *The New Republic Online*, 13 September 2006.
- 28 J.D. Henderson, 'National Insecurity', <http://www.intel-dump.com>, 19 September 2006.
- 29 Numerous accounts of the Iraq War confirm that the Bush administration had a three-month time horizon in mind when it ordered the invasion of Iraq. See, for example, Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin, 2006), pp. 106–10.
- 30 For analysis of the optimistic assumptions that guided US planning for Iraq, see Nora Bensahel, 'Mission Not Accomplished: What Went Wrong with Iraqi Reconstruction', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 29, no. 3, June 2006, especially pp. 456–8.
- 31 A brief overview can be found in Joseph L. Galloway, 'Army Lowers Standards and Increases Bonuses But Still May Fall Short of Recruiting Goal', Knight Ridder, June 13, 2005.
- 32 See, for example, 'US Army Reset Bills Hit \$9B', *Defense News*, 13 February 2006, p. 1.
- 33 Joseph L. Galloway, 'Army is Broken and in Need of Repair', Knight Ridder, 12 October 2005.
- 34 Fred Kaplan, 'How Bush Wrecked the Army', *Slate*, 25 September 2006.
- 35 Andrew Bacevich, 'The Islamic Way of War', *The American Conservative*, 11 September 2006, p. 8.
- 36 John Lehman, 'We're Not Winning this War', *The Washington Post*, 31 August 2006.
- 37 Amy Davidson, Seymour M. Hersh, Jon Lee Anderson and George Packer, 'The World After 9/11', *The New Yorker* online, 11 September 2006, http://www.newyorker.com/online/content/articles/060911on_onlineonly02, pp. 6–7.
- 38 Owen Harries, 'Costs of a Needless War', *The Australian*, 18 July 2005.
- 39 Ironically, one result of this aversion was the lack of an effective US counter-insurgency strategy in Iraq, which contributed to the difficulties Washington encountered there. See Ahmed S. Hashim, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 275.
- 40 As quoted in Bob Woodward, 'Secret Report Disputes White House Optimism', *Washington Post*, 1 October 2006.
- 41 *National Security Strategy 2006*, p. 23.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- 43 'Interview of the Vice President by Tim Russert, NBC News, Meet the Press', 10 September 2006, p. 8, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060910.html>.
- 44 My own assessment of costs and benefits comes to the opposite conclusion. See Steven E. Miller, 'Mired in Mesopotamia? The Iraq War and American Interests', in Richard Rosecrance and Arthur Stein (eds), *No More States? Globalization, National Self-Determination and Terrorism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006).
- 45 In his preface to the 2006 National Strategy document, President Bush insists (contrary to the proposition being developed here) that 'fighting terror' and 'promoting freedom' are 'inseparable priorities'. *National Security Strategy 2006*, p. i.
- 46 Martin Kramer, 'When I Hear "Arab Democracy" I Reach for My Seat Belt', *Sandstorm*, 11 October 2002, <http://>

- Martinkramer.org. Elsewhere Kramer has argued that Bush's strategy of democracy promotion in the greater Middle East is conceptually flawed because 'political pluralism has not been an antidote to political Islam'. See Martin Kramer, 'Should America Promote a Liberal, Democratic Middle East?', 4 October 2002.
- 47 Ricks, *Fiasco*, p. 48, emphasis original. See also Joshua Micah Marshall, 'Practice to Deceive', *Washington Monthly*, April 2003, which placed the Iraq intervention in a similar context: 'Invasion of Iraq was not merely, or even primarily, about getting rid of Saddam Hussein. Nor was it really about weapons of mass destruction, though their elimination was an important benefit. Rather, the administration sees the invasion as only the first move in a wider effort to reorder the power structure of the entire Middle East ... So events that seem negative ... are actually part of the hawks broader agenda'. (p. 1 of online version, <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2003/0304.marshall.html>).
- 48 *National Security Strategy 2006*, p. 18.
- 49 Robert Pape, 'Why Economic Sanctions Do Not Work', *International Security*, vol. 22, no. 2, Fall 1997, pp. 90–136.
- 50 Toby Dodge, 'War and Resistance in Iraq: From Regime Change to Collapsed State', in Rick Fawn and Raymond Hinesbusch (eds), *The Iraq War: Causes and Consequences* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 2006), p. 212.
- 51 For a detailed account of the CIA's long involvement in covert operations in support of regime change and democratisation, see John Prados, *Safe for Democracy: The Secret Wars of the CIA* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2006).
- 52 See, for example, Karl Vick and David Finkel, 'US Push for Democracy in Iraq Could Backfire in Iran', *Washington Post*, 14 March 2006.
- 53 Sam Gardner, 'The End of the Summer of Diplomacy: Assessing US Military Options On Iran', A New Century Foundation Report, September 2006, pp. 9–10.
- 54 Newt Gingrich, 'Lessons from the First Five Years of the War: Where Do We Go From Here?' *On the Issues/AEI Online*, 11 October 2006, p. 9. If the subversive approach fails, Gingrich advocates the use of force against Iran.
- 55 This is suggested, for example, in Ken Pollack, 'Next Stop Baghdad?', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 18, no. 2, March–April 2002, p. 44.
- 56 Quoted in Jim Rutenberg, 'For White House, War of Words, At Least, is a Battle Where it Excels', *New York Times*, 26 September 2006. See also John Judis, 'State of Rejection: How Conservative Hatred for Diplomacy Hurts Us', *New Republic Online*, 23 August 2006, <https://ssl.tnr.com/p/docsub.mhtml?i=w060821&s=judiso82306>.
- 57 For evidence of preventive war thinking, on the Soviet case, see Marc Trachtenberg, 'A Wasting Asset: American Strategy and the Shifting Nuclear Balance, 1949–1954', *International Security*, vol. 13, no. 3, Winter 1988–1989, pp. 5–49; on the China case, see William Burr and Jeffrey Richelson, 'Whether to Strangle the Baby in the Cradle: The United States and the Chinese Nuclear Program, 1960–1964', *International Security*, vol. 25, no. 3, Winter 2000–2001, pp. 54–99; on the North Korea case during the Clinton administration, see Ashton B. Carter and William J. Perry, *Preventive Defense: A New Security Strategy for America*

(Washington DC: Brookings Institute Press, 1999).

- ⁵⁸ Lawrence F. Kaplan, 'The Iran Plan: Peace Now', *The New Republic*, 2 October 2006, <http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?i=20061002&s=kaplan100206>, p. 3.
- ⁵⁹ See 'Target Iran – Air Strikes', <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iran-strikes.htm>. Maps of the

locations of Iran's nuclear facilities can be found on the Nuclear Threat Initiative website at http://www.nti.org/e_research/profiles/Iran.

- ⁶⁰ See, for example, Fred Kaplan, 'Mind Games: Are We Going to Attack Iran?', *Slate*, 18 September 2006, which reports that the Pentagon has identified 1,500 aim points in Iran's nuclear complex alone.