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Strategic Defense Run Amuck: Contextualizing the Iraq War

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Abstract

This paper argues that drumbeat for the 2003 Iraq War took place within an environment of reenacting an agenda of defensive deterrence. An effective ballistic missile defense was needed to deal with the emerging twin threats of WMD proliferation from rogue states and terrorist networks. The doctrine of preemption and democratic peace became two sides of the war on terror coin. In categorizing terrorism as a war, the strategy of defensive deterrence was transformed into one of offense within defense. Within that context, a preemptive strike against the "axis of evil" became the next act in the drama.

Introduction

Paul Wolfowitz, former US Deputy Secretary of Defense, declared the 2003 war against Iraq (henceforth, Iraq War) the “second front” (Gilmore, 2003: 1) of the war on terror (WOT). While events did not turn out favorably for the Bush administration, Operation Iraqi Freedom had bipartisan Congressional support. The 2002 Joint Resolution to Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq (H. J. Res. 114) was passed by 77-23 votes in the Senate (U.S. Senate Roll Call Votes, 2002) and a 296-3-133 majority in the House of Representatives (U.S. House of Representatives Roll Call Votes, 2002). By the same token, US public support for military action against Iraq was in the 59-74 percent range. Survey questionnaire wordings only changed the margin of that favorable majority (Holsti, 2011: 30, 36). In fact, 68 percent of US population supported the Iraq War at the “war’s outset” in March 2003 (Flibbert, 2012: 91).

Why did the US government invade Iraq without a conclusive end in the first front, Afghanistan? There were five possible reasons for the US war against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq: unfinished business, oil resources, security of Israel, liberation of the Iraqi people, and weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In view of statements by Bush administration officials, it appeared that unfinished business, oil resources, security of Israel, and liberation of the Iraqi people were *necessary* conditions (Thomas, 2003: 58, 65; Hirsh, 2003: 37-38; Cottam, 1993: 20). The threat of WMD (Bush, 2002b: 259)—specifically, nuclear weapons proliferation—was the *sufficient* condition for invading Iraq. While the WMD explanation had proven to be illusory, this study posited the WMD issue within the context of emerging national security threat perception by the Bush administration in assessing the Iraq War. In particular, offensive action of the Iraq War needed to be contextualized within the harsh reality of September 11, 2001 (henceforth, 9/11) terrorist attacks by an infinitesimally weaker non-state actor. Associated with preserving US “primacy,” a rejuvenation of the theory of hegemonic stability (Hinnebusch, 2006: 287) in the post-cold war unipolar milieu, Iraq War has been labeled “Offensive Realism” and “Neo-Conservative Realism” (Art, 2003: 90-92; Jervis, 2005: 5; Nuruzzaman, 2006: 249, 251). While these explanations illuminated the offensive component, the broader defensive aspect has been opaque.

Fathoming the Iraq War also entailed attention to preemption, unilateralism, and democratic peace that were staples for debate in the US in search of a grand strategy in the post-cold war era (Biddle, 2007: 461-462). For the Bush administration, the doctrine of preemption and the theory of democratic peace were two sides of the WOT coin (Jervis, 2005: 38; *The 9/11 Commission Report*, n.d.: 362). Although George W. Bush (2010: 256) has decried it, unilateralism distinguished the 2003 Operation Iraqi Freedom from the 2001 Operation Enduring Freedom against Afghanistan. Normative and institutional constrains of democracy did not restrain the US and its “coalition of the willing” from launching Iraq War. Perhaps, willingness to join the coalition was related to normative lens of the leadership in evaluating the threat (Farnham, 2003: 411). While domestic public opposition seemed more efficacious in a proportional representation system with coalition government than in a majority/plurality system (Chan, 2006: 154), the democratic peace theory acquiesced to military intervention only under the twin conditions of a quick victory and clear local support (Russett, 1993: 88, 136). A legacy of the Correlates of War project by Melvin Small and David Singer, a historian-political scientist team, Michael Doyle proposed the democratic peace theory. Accordingly, as Bruce Russett articulated the empirical statement, democracies “rarely” went to war against one another. The implication was that spread of democracies would usher a peaceful world (Phillips, 1998: 239-246). The neoconservative democratization agenda was embraced by the Bush administration as human rights and moral foundation for harmonizing US oil interest and Israeli security interest in the Middle East (Bush, 2010: 356, 397-398; Woodward, 2004: 88-89, 92-93; Hinnebusch, 2006: 296; Flibbert, 2012: 87-88; Lind, 2012: 122).

For Craig White (2010: 31, 257), the 2003 decision to invade Iraq only satisfied sovereign authority test among the six criteria of the just war theory. Distancing himself from the post-invasion fallout, Russett (2005: 399)—the doyen of democratic peace theory—remarked that the 2003 intervention did not unequivocally pass the just war doctrine. Interestingly, Francis Fukuyama (2006: 19, 28-31) withdrew his neoconservative support for Iraq War because of the Bush administration's failure to fathom the "limits of social engineering." Given that democratic peace has been associated with post-intervention political stabilization (Huntington, 1993: 34-35), it will not be examined here. However, in the post-cold war environment terrorism has posed a challenge to the US government. Thus, it is imperative to address this new, unconventional threat of terrorism.

Unconventional Threat of Terrorism

There are five features of terrorism that need to be understood. First, in holding the moral of the civilian population hostage, terrorism has reintroduced a countervalue strategy. Instead of a nuclear "balance of terror" of a bygone era, 9/11 has ushered in the ominous prospect of a new "age of terror" in the post-cold war period (Bush, 2001b: 762). While terrorists have killed and destroyed, what was important has been their target: the civilian population. In fact, in a 1998 interview in Afghanistan with ABC-TV Usama bin Ladin refused to distinguish between military and civilian population (*The 9/11 Commission Report*, n.d.: 47, 363). The violence against noncombatants has been designed to unnerve the civilian population into putting pressure on the government (Stern, 1999: 11). The physical violence has been the visible means to an end, but the more important aspect has been the psychological impact on the larger population through instilling fear (Gareau, 2004: 14; Jervis, 2005: 55-58; Hoffman, 2003: 40). While insurgency primarily has targeted the military, terrorists have played havoc on the civilian population. Of course, the conceptual distinction between insurgency and terrorism sometimes has been blurred in practice, but the distinction has been important (Kilcullen, 2005: 604-606).

Second, notwithstanding the claim to Israeli success in countering terrorism (Frisch, 2006: 844; Byman, 2006: 102-104), deterrence has been a futile concept in dealing with terrorism. Even in the Israeli case, Daniel Byman (2006: 105) noted that it has been a multi-prong strategy. Furthermore, Ranan Kuperman (2006: 3, 17) argued that downward spiraling violence in a "Tat-for-Tit" strategy warranted a distinction between tolerable and intolerable retaliations. Terrorists have been willing not only to kill noncombatants, but also to die in the process. For military personnel, part of the training has been to avoid becoming a casualty of war. Instead of cheating death, terrorists have welcomed that outcome for themselves (Stern, 2004: 52-53). Not only the political end, but also violent means became justified in a worldview that fused the two with Divine blessings. In fact, this expectation and the resolve to die have made it very difficult to deter terrorism. Thus, there has been a shift from deterrence to prevention. Aside from destroying training facilities, furthermore, there has been a massive effort at undermining the financial base in order to disrupt logistical support. A key component in that endeavor has been information, both human and artificial intelligence (Hoffman, 2004: 42; Yang, 2005: 52-59).

Third, terrorism has entailed an attempt to counter the asymmetrical power relationship by the weaker party. The concept of nuclear deterrence, contingent on second-strike capabilities of both the partners, put the US and the former USSR in an exclusive superpower category. The *Al-Qaida* was neither a superpower nor a state. Its ambitious objective has been compellence (Jervis, 2005: 62). In fact, in 1996 Bin Ladin issued a *fatwa* (religious decree) to drive US forces out of Saudi Arabia. The strategy entailed inflicting pain on Americans by moving the battleground to US mainland. Without the benefit of long-range ballistic missiles on 9/11 *Al-Qaida* managed to shatter the sense of security for the world's only remaining superpower, as was evident from Bush's 2002 State of the Union address (Bush, 2002b: 260; *The 9/11 Commission Report*, n.d.: 48).

Fourth, terrorism has demonstrated a metamorphosis into a transnational phenomenon. Arguing against an "international" label, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (n.d.: 361-362) was emphatic about this "transnational" character. Akin to "cross-national" studies in comparative politics, rather than in international relations, transnational incorporated both the external dimension of geographical space across countries and the internal dimension of society within a state. However, terrorism has been no longer limited to cross-border cooperation within a geographical region, but entailed transcontinental collaboration among non-state actors. This transformation has been facilitated by globalization, including in spheres of commerce, communication, and migration. Thus, terrorism has become, as Bruce Jentleson (2007: 364) noted in his textbook on American foreign policy, the "underside" of globalization. *Al-Qaida* had dramatically changed the geographical reach of terrorism.

Finally, for Jessica Stern (1999: 11-12), WMD introduced the "ultimate" form of terrorism because the resultant violent act would be inherently terrifying, indiscriminate, and random. States, groups, and individuals have been potential perpetrators. In his statement to the American people following the 9/11 attacks Bush (2001c: 738) characterized the act as an "evil." In a speech to the Joint Session of Congress, he specifically named Usama bin Ladin and *Al-Qaida* and vowed to defeat that terror network in a protracted campaign (Bush, 2001b: 760-761).

An important threshold in launching the Iraq War was linking *Al-Qaida* with the Saddam regime. Graham Allison (2005a: 43) identified three accountability scenarios for WMD, specifically nuclear, terrorism: state action, state-sponsored terrorist organization, and unknown terrorist group. While Allison proposed "nuclear forensics" for identifying the third type of perpetrator, for others there was convincing evidence to link Iraq to one of the first two categories. With a direct assault on the 1990s "theory of loose networks," Laurie Mylroie (2001: 6, 49-50, 55-65, 74-75, 187, 207, 240, 250) held that state-sponsored terrorism was an act of war and a national security issue for the US government. In exploring institutional linkage, for her the link between terrorism and WOT was the central argument for declaring a war against Iraq. The above conspiracy theory, particularly the issue of fingerprints in arguing the "false double" implant by Iraqi intelligence (Mylroie, 2001: 62), has been challenged by Richard Clarke, former National Counterterrorism Coordinator under the Bush administration (Thomas, 2004: 27). Distinguishing between political-logistical support and "operational involvement," furthermore, Kenneth Pollack (2002: 156-157, 180, 364), a former CIA analyst, did not see a "smoking gun" linking the Saddam regime and *Al-Qaida*.

Not having carefully scrutinized her source, Ahmed Chalabi, the reports on Iraq's WMD programs by Judith Miller turned out to be without merit (Holsti, 2011: 134). However, Miller was not the only person drumming up the Iraqi WMD threat. For effectively dealing with the strategic, WMD threat from the Saddam regime, Pollack (2002: xxix-xxx, 283-289, 368, 410) held that a "full-scale *invasion*" (emphasis original) was the only viable option for safeguarding US "vital" interest in the Middle East. In addressing doctrinal issues, the central thrust of his argument was to knock-down scenarios of containment, deterrence, covert action, and indigenous forces. Thereby, he opened the door for the doctrine of preemption against Iraq—euphemistically calling it the principle of "anticipatory self-defense" in borrowing from international law. For Pollack, the threat of nuclear acquisition was "the real reason" for a full-scale military invasion of Iraq. Along that line, Paul Pillar (2003: 160), former Deputy Chief of CIA's Counterterrorist Center, was emphatic that the "main immediate concern" was Iraq's aggressive military behavior, not sponsorship of terrorism.

While Pollack (2004: 90) subsequently admitted that the case for Iraq War was "considerably weaker" than he had argued, as will be noted later, nuclear WMD was also the position later adopted by the Bush administration. What was important in understanding the worldview of the Bush administration was that it was more in line with passionate activism of the Reagan administration than with any previous US governments in recent history.

Reenacting the Reagan Agenda

US foreign policy under the Reagan administration showed five traits: global level analysis, binary moral view, emphasis on force, rolling back communism, and defensive shield initiative. In preferring a dramatic, substantive change, Ronald Reagan inculcated the image of a visionary in foreign policy arena. His March 1983 speech publicly launched the strategic defense initiative (SDI) program to move the world from a doctrine of mutual assured destruction (MAD) to one of mutual assured survival (Hook, 2007: 167-179). In postulating to supplant a damage-maximizing strategy with a damage-minimizing strategy (Fought, 1987: vi, 3-4; Snow, 1981: 32), Reagan propounded a new moral vision for global security that focused on a strategy of defensive deterrence which would "reduce substantially" the threat of a nuclear war (Wolfowitz, 2004: 7).

Following the Reagan vision, in his May 2001 speech at the National Defense University Bush (2001a: 450-451) lamented that the world remained a "dangerous" place in the "less predictable" post-cold war environment. Expressing his resentment of the "grim premise" of MAD doctrine he wanted to "re-think the unthinkable" in calling for deterrence based on a package of "offensive *and* defensive" (emphasis added) capabilities. In particular, an effective ballistic missile defense (BMD) was needed to deal with the emerging threat of WMD proliferation. Thus, he wanted to abandon the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty to revive SDI. Pointing to a new, asymmetrical missile terror from terrorists and rogue states, Bush (2002a: 163-165) reiterated his desire to jettison the ABM Treaty in his December 2001 speech at the Citadel. While 9/11 defined George Bush's presidency, in the Citadel speech WMD became the "single commitment" that defined Bush himself.

In April 2004, Douglas Feith (2004c: 2), former US Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, testified before the House Armed Services Committee that the proliferation of WMD in the hands of terrorist networks and state sponsors would have limited US conventional military advantage by inviting unconventional warfare. Lawrence Freedman hinted that erosion of extended deterrence would have tempted other countries in the region to acquire WMD capabilities. In particular, cautioned Patrick Morgan, WMD would have allowed a regional challenger to undermine US "extended deterrence" (Bobbitt, 2002: 279, 684). That challenge of adventurism from a lesser, revisionist power amid regional nuclear stalemate was what Glen Snyder had called the "stability-instability paradox" (Jervis, 2005: 25, 63).

Robert Kagan observed that coupling of WMD and WOT became the dominant foreign policy framework for the Bush administration after 9/11 (Allison, 2005b: 129). It was precisely the *asymmetrical and destabilizing* WMD threat from terrorists and rogue states, as opposed to the earlier symmetrical and stabilizing threat of MAD, which made BMD all the more precious for Bush in the post-cold war era. While SDI came under scrutiny because of its offense-defense

mix in a bipolar system, WOT must be understood as an offensive strategy to deal with a new threat *within* a broader vision of BMD umbrella in a unipolar world.

Offense within Defense

While the December 2001 Citadel speech mentioned a previous *Al-Qaida* attempt to acquire nuclear materials, the rogue state reference was to Afghanistan under the *Taliban* regime. Earlier in October in declaring Operation Enduring Freedom, and before that on September 20th, the diatribes were also against *Al-Qaida* and the *Taliban* regime. In view of the 9/11 tragedy one could understand the Bush administration declaring war against the *Taliban* regime. However, what explained expanding the WOT battle zone to Iraq? With the iconoclastic event of 9/11, Bush transformed US policy on terrorism by categorizing it as a war. Earlier, terrorism was associated with hijacking to negotiate prisoner release. Thus, while the 1995 Presidential Decision Directive 39 by Bill Clinton elevated it to a national security issue, he called terrorism a crime. As 9/11 demonstrated a change in strategy by *Al-Qaida*, Bush also introduced a paradigm shift by calling it a war (*The 9/11 Commission Report*, n.d.: 31, 101, 153; Feith, 2004a: 3). This had implications for US retaliatory efforts and countermeasures. First, it gave a sense of justness in violating sovereignty of the "other" and was less restrictive than the Clintonial notion of "humanitarian intervention" (Gaddis, 2003: 168-170). Second, in giving legitimacy to the use of force, it made military the primary instrument of foreign policy. Finally, it put into action all the components of national power (Feith, 2004a: 3; *The 9/11 Commission Report*, n.d.: 363).

Incomplete information and inadequate analysis contributed to faulty National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) of Iraq's WMD programs. Subsequent investigations by the Iraq Survey Group did not find the "just in time" Iraqi WMD production capabilities claimed in the NIE assessment. In the post-9/11 environment Congressional oversight was weak in its unquestioned support for WOT. Except for about six Senators and a few in the House of Representatives, members of Congress did not even read NIE in the Fall of 2002 (Jervis, 2005: 115-116; Johnson, 2005: 109; Pollack, 2004: 81). Amid the controversy over WMD intelligence Feith (2004b: 4-5) remarked in a speech at the American Enterprise Institute that the "actual strategic rationale" for Iraq War was the "nature" and "activities" of the Saddam regime, including harboring and supporting terrorists, military ventures, and the use of WMD. In stating that chemical and biological stockpiles were not pivotal in the administration's decision to militarily intervene in Iraq, Feith implicitly made nuclear weapons the linchpin of WMD rationale for the Bush administration. In launching WOT in October 2001 Bush (2001d: 2-3) had warned that the "battle was *broader*" (emphasis added) and neutrality was not an option in that global struggle.

Having established a link between terrorism and mass killings on 9/11, the first salvo in WOT was directed against *Al-Qaida* and the sponsoring *Taliban* regime in Afghanistan. From avenging mass killings on 9/11, the attention turned to other rogue states aspiring to build WMD. Wolfowitz acknowledged that WMD was bureaucratically the "least common denominator" (Allison, 2005b: 133). David Frum, former speech writer and special assistant to Bush, coined the phrase "axis of hatred" to establish a nexus between terrorism and Iraqi sponsorship. Michael Gerson, Bush's former presidential speech writer, modified the term to "axis of evil." Worried about the misperception of a declaration of war, Condoleezza Rice, then US National Security Advisor, and Stephen Hadley, her deputy, insisted on adding North Korea and Iran. While Iraq had not been on the hit list in September 2001, by January of the following year that changed (Woodward, 2004: 25-26, 86-87, 92; Bush, 2002b: 259). Whereas previous concern was *sponsorship* of mass terrorism by rogue regimes, that later evolved into WMD *development* by such regimes. Iraq was the marked target in that tripod of evil.

Regime change in Iraq did not originate with the Bush administration, however. Back in 1999 Sandy Berger, National Security Advisor under the Clinton administration, was putting together a team that included Kenneth Pollack (2002: 95). The previous year, the US Congress passed and Clinton signed into law the Iraqi Liberation Act of 1998 that envisaged regime change (White, 2010: 192; Duffield, 2012: 156). In fact, the idea could be traced further back in time. James Mann remarked that the 1992 Defense Policy Guidance, drafted by Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad during the last days of George H. W. Bush administration, stipulated removing Saddam Hussein from power (Mazarr, 2007: 2). Also associated with the above Defense Policy Guidance were Dick Cheney and Paul Wolfowitz, then Secretary of Defense and Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, respectively, both of whom subsequently became members of the George W. Bush administration (Gurtov, 2005: 9). 9/11 changed outlook, and the Bush administration was resolved to implement regime change. In February 2002 George Tenet (2002: 293), former CIA Director, reaffirmed to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that Saddam regime remained "a threat" in continuing to pursue WMD. After Bush declared Iraq a threat in his UN speech the following September, the next month Donald Rumsfeld (2002: 771), former US Secretary of Defense, singled out Iraq as an "*immediate* threat" (emphasis added). In declaring Iraq's WMD program an urgent threat Rumsfeld made preemptive strike the next act in the drama.

Going to war entailed identifying the aggressor (*The 9/11 Commission Report*, n.d.: 193), and the "axis of evil" satisfied a link between Iraq's WMD program and transnational terrorism for the Bush administration. In spite of the theoretical distinction between a preemptive strike for an immediate (present) threat and a preventive strike for a potential (future) threat (Kegley, 2003: 388; Wheeler, 2005: 184-185), there has not been an agreement on the degree of immediacy and certainty of evidence (Brown, 2003: 113). Sometime ago in another context Robert Gilpin (1991: 191) had warned that faced with an unacceptable change in power balance a palatable option was to eliminate the emerging revisionist power. Consequently, there has been always the danger of a preventive war propounded as a preemptive war. As Bob Woodward (2004: 30) and Robert Jervis (2006: 9, 22) observed, in grappling with an unconventional deadly threat circumstantial evidence had been given a quantum leap of faith by the Bush administration and other proponents of the Iraq War.

In the 1990s the debate was over containment; at the turn of the century deterrence came under scrutiny (Pollack, 2002: xiv, xxiv-xxix, 415-416; Mylroie, 2001: 162). Whereas the doctrine of preemption was studied in the context of cold war deterrence theory, in the post-cold war era conditions were in place for its revival. In the 1990s the Clinton administration enshrined "humanitarian intervention," implemented through a strategy of "assertive multilateralism," as the most visible aspect of US foreign policy. Linking human rights to legitimacy, particularly in the area of minority rights, major powers could thereafter disregard sovereignty of weaker powers for failing to protect their own citizens (Kegley, 2002: 167-168; Krasner, 1999: 74-75). While that principle was assiduously applied in protecting Muslim minorities in the Balkans from "ethnic cleansing," Martha Finnemore (2004: 54, 73) noted that unilateral intervention has been "normatively suspect" in world politics.

Ashton Carter and William Perry (2000: 11-12, 18, 134-135), both former Department of Defense officials in the Clinton administration, contemplated a broad strategy that incorporated political, economic, and military components to deal with the new asymmetrical WMD threat from rogue states. What Carter and Perry identified as B-list of "imminent threats" became the A-list of "immediate threat" for Rumsfeld (2002: 771) in the case of Iraq. In identifying deterrence and compellence strategies with the psychological instrument of coercion, Thomas Schelling had distinguished both from strategies of offense and defense associated with the physical notion of brute force (Jervis, 2005: 62). Bin Ladin had brought the battle to US soil; Bush wanted to reverse the process and take the offense to the adversary (*The 9/11 Commission Report*, n.d.: 202). Not satisfied with retaliation in raising costs to the enemy, Bush (2002a: 164) wanted to inflict a "devastating" blow. Yet, in spite of the death and destruction of 9/11, the effect that Bin Ladin counted on was essentially a psychological one. In the face of WMD threat, which had a strong resonance with Bush, multilateralism and humanitarian intervention were jettisoned by the Bush administration in making US military invasion of Iraq a handy instrument of WOT.

For the Bush administration, post-9/11 security concern foreclosed any hesitation for a unilateral action. An important feature of the post-cold war era has been not just its unipolarity, but there has been a sense of "security community" in Europe that has dissipated the fear of war among major powers. Given that the US was the undisputed global hegemon and carried weight on the world stage, that very position allowed the Bush administration to distance itself from multilateral, great power global governance (Jervis, 2005: 12, 36; Press-Barnathan, 2004: 204). In view of the aforementioned international structure, it should not have been surprising to find US administrations choosing multilateralism or unilateralism to suit their perspective and interest (Jervis, 2005: 91). At the intermediate level (regional order), in the economic realm, multilateralism prevailed. However, at the basic level (Westphalian state system), in the legal-diplomatic arena, unilateralism triumphed (Ikenberry, 2003: 534, 536-537).

David Skidmore (2005: 208, 220-222) went a step further in linking unilateralism in US foreign policy to US domestic politics. Accordingly, the political structure empowered minority communities. In addition to individuals with a strong nationalist sentiment, he identified military-industrial complex and special interest as two unilateralist domestic groups that effected the direction of US foreign policy. While public opinion had the least influence, Lawrence Jacobs and Benjamin Page (2005: 120-121) found business interest exerting the most rapid and persistent influence on US government in foreign affairs. Emphasizing less enthusiasm by Jewish Americans for the Iraq War than the rest of the population, 52 percent compared to 62 percent, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt (2006: 15) directed attention to pro-Israel lobby, particularly the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee.

Post-Invasion Challenges

Victory in the battle, as George Bush (2010: 257) declared the end of combat operations in Iraq on May 1, 2003 aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln, did not translate into winning the Iraq War. Aside from leaving Israel and Iran contending for regional hegemony, regime change in Iraq had unwittingly resulted in transforming a "rogue state" on the verge of being a "failed state." White (2010: 139) has argued that the Bush administration failed to realistically plan for the post-invasion phase, but Bush has been adamant in denying that charge. Since November 2002 Hadley had been working through the multiagency deputies committee to address 10 postwar transitional challenges, with particular attention to food supply, refugees, security, and governance. Furthermore, a January 2003 presidential

directive, NSPD 24, established the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (Bush, 2010: 248-249; Woodward, 2004: 280-281). The same month, retired Army Lt. Gen. Jay Garner was recruited by Rumsfeld to "lead" humanitarian operations in postwar Iraq (White, 2010: 143).

The problem was that bureaucratic turf-war sidelined the State Department along with its year-long Future of Iraq project. After joining Hadley's office Feith managed to place the interagency planning cell for postwar Iraq policy implementation in the Department of Defense for the anticipated role by the US Central Command (Woodward, 2004: 281-282). In spite of touting demobilization of the Baath Party and the Iraqi Army as a "clean break" from the Saddam Hussein era, Bush (2010: 259) admitted overlooking the "psychological impact" of those orders. By April 2006, Iraq was mired into sectarian violence. With a grip on the supply chain of imported goods, militias began to regulate sectors of the Iraqi economy (Bush, 2010: 361; Parker, 2007: 6).

In January 2007 Bush (2007: 50-51) unveiled a "new strategy" of joint Iraqi-US operations with embedded US troops to aggressively retake and hold neighborhoods for (re)establishing order. In addition, the Bush administration set up "benchmarks" for the Iraqi government: provincial security and elections, distribution of oil revenues, reconstruction investments, and softening de-Baathification. The "more than" 20,000 additional troops for that new strategy complemented 134,000 others already on a tour of duty in Iraq (Dickey, 2007: 37). Even though the "surge" had dampened the killing spree in Baghdad, and there has been some re-Baathification at the lower echelon, it was only a respite (Enterline, 2007: 248-249).

In April 2007, Antonio Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), organized a conference in Geneva, Switzerland, for helping the Iraqi refugees. By December 2008, the UNHCR estimated the number of Iraqi refugees to be 4.7 million, about 2.7 million of whom had been internally displaced because of sectarian violence and the other two million had fled to neighboring countries (White, 2010: 260). While a small portion of the external refugees slowly returned to Iraq amid a life of despair in exile (Kaplow, 2007: 38), consequences of the Iraq War for viability of Iraqi statehood remained uncertain (Goldberg, 2008: 72). With an estimated financial costs of about half a trillion dollars, by January 2009 the casualty figures for US troops were 4,200 dead and 30,000 wounded (White, 2010: 167, 260-261). According to the Iraqi Human Rights Ministry official report on October 14, 2009, the toll for the Iraqi people was 85,694 killed and 147,195 injured.

In November 2008, US Ambassador Ryan Crocker and Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari signed the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) for the withdrawal of US combat forces from "all Iraqi territory" by December 31, 2011. On January 1, 2009, SOFA came into effect and placed the "Green Zone" and all 145,700 US troops under Iraqi government authority. As there was no easy answer and readily available solution to the quagmire in Iraq, the Bush administration was inclined to ride out the storm and hand over the Iraq Question to its successor. In February 2009, Barak Obama announced at Fort Lejeune, North Carolina, an "exit plan" from Iraq. Accordingly, 92,000-107,000 US troops out of the 142,000 stationed would leave Iraq by the end of August 2010. However, a "transitional force" of up to 50,000 troops would remain in that country till the end of 2011. On August 31, 2010, Obama declared an end of US combat operations in Iraq, with under 50,000 troops remaining in an "advise and assist" supporting role, officially closing the chapter on Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Conclusion

The 9/11 tragedy had ushered a paradigm shift in foreign policy of the US government. Forced to grapple with the new threat of transnational terrorism, the Bush administration had declared WOT. However, that transformation did not take place in a vacuum. With the collapse of the former USSR, the post-cold war US administrations were already concerned about nuclear technology falling into wrong hands. George W. Bush was forging ahead with reviving SDI for putting in place BMD for national security. Amid that image of an asymmetrical threat in an uncertain world, after 9/11 WMD terrorism became the defining foreign policy framework for the Bush administration. Focusing on counterproliferation Bush ushered a new paradigm of WOT. In the mindset of Bush administration officials, think-tanks, and interest groups, WMD threat from non-state actors was compounded by prospective rogue state sponsors. Given the added concern over erosion of extended deterrence, attention was broadened from sponsorship to weapons production. In that binary vision of the world, regime change became a viable option. The Bush administration swept aside restrictions in humanitarian intervention and embarked on military invasion.

The first act of WOT, and the concomitant policy of regime change, was played out in Afghanistan. Even with a significant headway, the enemy was still illusive in Afghanistan. The irony of US global hegemony was that it could best project its power only in a conventional manner to an unconventional threat of terrorism from non-state actors. With growing concern about collusion between terrorist networks and state sponsors, attention shifted to rogue regimes. Given the potential havoc of that threat to US hegemonic interest, particularly extended deterrence in the vital Persian Gulf region, the scope was narrowed from rogue regimes to the axis of evil. Soon the focus shifted from sponsorship to actual production of WMD, and the intractable Saddam Hussein became the target of regime change

by brute force. Within the larger context of war footing, challenge of asymmetrical threat, and destructive potential of WMD, the doctrine of preemption took hold in a unipolar world with persuaded coalition partners. Thus, a second front of WOT was opened up in Iraq, and the Iraq War began once the requisite forces were in the theater of action.

Winning the battle against Iraq did not equate to keeping the peace in that country, let alone victory in WOT. Inadequate planning for post-invasion stabilization amid force restructuring left the Bush administration ill prepared to deal with the twin forces of secular nationalism and political Islam after occupation. Even though conventional forces were the core, the role of special forces in WOT attested to the need for understanding not only regional milieu, but also local dynamics. For the world's only remaining superpower, winning the military battle was no challenge compared to establishing a stable political order thereafter. In the face of new asymmetrical threat of WMD from terrorists and rogue states, the Bush administration hurriedly grafted offensive power projection to a defensive vision of BMD umbrella. In extending the scope of WOT, ironically, with Iraq War Bush left an offensive imprint for someone who was deeply interested in a defensive shield for US national security. While WMD came to define foreign policy framework for the Bush administration, in view of growing domestic opposition it was the Iraq War rather than a strategic defense umbrella that become George Bush's legacy.

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