THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF REVOLUTIONARY LEADERS: IDENTITY,

EMOTION, AND CONFLICT INITIATION

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: The Foreign Policies of Revolutionary Leaders: Identity, Emotion, and Conflict
    Initiation

This manuscript addresses an important empirical regularity: Why are
revolutionary leaders more likely to initiate conflict? With the goal of explaining this
regularity, I offer an identity-driven model of decision making that can explain why
certain leaders are more likely to take risky gambles. Broadly, this manuscript provides a
different model of decision making that emphasizes emotion and identity as key to
explain decision making. I offer a plausibility probe of the identity-driven model with
four in-depth case studies: The initiation of the Iran-Iraq War, the initiation of the Gulf
War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the start of the Korean War. I use the congruence
method and process tracing to test the plausibility probe. I find strong support in two
cases—the initiation of the Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf War—and mixed support for the
Cuban Missile Crisis and the Korean War.

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For my parents

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation addresses an important question: Why are revolutionary states more likely to *initiate* conflict?[1] In answering that question, this dissertation deals with a number of corollary questions. How do revolutionary leaders make decisions regarding conflict initiation and significant decisions in general? Do they have goals and preferences similar to those of non- revolutionary leaders?

Before proceeding, it may be beneficial to be very clear regarding the purpose and scope of this dissertation. This dissertation is serving as a plausibility probe, seeing to what extent a theory aimed to explain nuclear proliferation—a theory developed by Hymans (2006)—can explain conflict initiation by revolutionary states. The methods used to address such a probe are the congruence method and process tracing. The methods are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

The topic for this dissertation sprang from an empirical fact: States that have recently experienced a domestic political revolution initiate disputes at higher rates (Colgan 2013; Carter, Berhard, and Palmer 2012). Scholarship addresses this relationship and this dissertation is situated in the larger causes of war literature and mostly builds upon, but also challenges works in the field. It builds upon other works by acknowledging that systemic level variables and domestic-level variables are important.

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[1] See Colgan (2013).

Steven Walt (1996, 1992), in a path breaking and seminal work, argues that war follows revolution because revolution results in a number of changes at the systemic level, such as changes in alliance commitments and changes in the capabilities of states post-revolution. Other works emphasize changes in domestic political institutions following revolution (Skocpol 1998; Colgan and Weeks 2015; Carter, Berhard, and Palmer 2012) and how those can increase the likelihood of a state initiating a dispute. Changes in a number of systemic-level variables as Walt discusses and the changes in the domestic political institutions post-revolution are doubtless important.

With that said, there is a particular lacuna in the literature, which is all the more striking in light of the topic of study. The study of revolution and war says surprisingly little about the beliefs, preferences, and identities of revolutionary leaders and how that influences conflict initiation.[2] It is striking because revolutionary leaders are likely to have unique identities. After all, they have just self-selected into and risked their lives to take part in a revolutionary movement. This dissertation posits that leaders' identities matter. Revolutionary leaders' identity concpetions, tied to a psychological process that involves emotion, pushes leaders in the direction of taking risky actions, which may be able to explain why revolutionary states initiate disputes at higher rates.

This dissertation places special emphasis on the identity conceptions of revolutionary leaders. Borrowing from the field of political psychology, more specifically, borrowing heavily from the work of Jacques E.C. Hymans (2006), I posit that revolutionary leaders are likely to hold unique identities which can then be tied to a

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[2] Some make generic statements regarding how revolutionary leaders will differ from non- revolutionary leaders. Colgan (2013) and Colgan and Weeks (2015) argue that revolutionary leaders are more likely to be revisionist, they hold preferences for changing the status quo, and have higher objective risk tolerances. But, these characteristics say little about the identity and beliefs of various leaders and assume the leaders are nominally rational.

pattern of decision-making. Revolutionary leaders' believe their states stand for both different values than other states and that their states are equal and/or superior to other states. This dissertation places emphasis on a pattern of individual, identity driven decision making that focuses more on the leader's self-expression than on changes in the external security environment or changes in domestic political institutions (Hymans 2006). While there is a great deal of validity to the extant approaches that stress changes in domestic political institutions and changes at the system level, what is missing is an explanation stressing how revolutionary *leaders* make foreign policy decisions.

This dissertation is also different from extant approaches in that it employs a different paradigm. This dissertation employs the use of constructivist concepts such as identity linked to a number of well-established findings in the field of psychology— hence the label: psychological constructivism.[3] It starts with an individual's national identity conception. This conception is rooted in social identity theory which argues that a sense of self is made via a never-ending process of social comparison—in an IR context, comparing their states to other states. Key groups serve as comparison others. The identity driven model of decision making offered in this dissertation argues that actors will experience emotion—specifically fear and pride—when interacting with key others over something of meaning or value. The emotions then result in a number of behaviors. Fear encourages inflated threat perceptions, a greater urgency to act, lower cognitive complexity, and also influences an actors ultimate goals, such as decreasing the experience of fear. Pride is associated with behaviors such as, higher relative power perceptions, an illusion of control, the need to act autonomously, and a need to impress

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[33] Psychological constructivism is a term used by Hymans (2010) and Shannon & Kowert (2011) to describe the benefits of marrying research from the field of psychology to inform constructivist concepts such as identity and norms. Hall and Ross (2015) argue that *individual* psychology ultimately provides the micro-foundations for such concepts.

ourselves with actions. All of these terms will be explained in more detail in the next chapter. It is the combination of *both* fear and pride *together* that produces the "explosive cocktail" that encourages leaders to take action— 'leaps in the dark.' They are leaps in the dark because they are likely irreversible actions and the ramifications of the actions are highly uncertain. Because of the high level of uncertainty leaders are going to rely less on calculations—making a decision that approximates a "rational choice"— and a leader will rely more on dispositional factors, such as a leader's identity. The decisions, if consistent with the theory offered in this dissertation, should be hasty and ill-thought-out.

This dissertation is not the first to discuss how misperception can result in conflict. Defensive realists stress how elite beliefs and elite perceptions of material capabilities are often causally important.[4] This is because, in the short term, power capabilities may fluctuate and leaders may operate with incomplete information. Defensive realists often see, when crafting theories of foreign policy, roles for cognitive biases, the role of foreign policy decision making, elite beliefs, and images of adversaries (Christensen, 1997, pp. 68–70; Jervis, 1976a, p. Chpt. 6; Khong, 1992; Posen, 1986, pp. 67–69). Indeed, some of the canonical works in the field feature misperception. Van Evera argues that beliefs about offensive dominance, first move advantages, and the (mis)perceptions of power fluctuations often result in conflict (Van Evera, 2001, pp. 9–11). A large body of research documents how WWI was, among many factors, caused by an erroneous belief in the cult of the offensive (J. Snyder, 1984; Van Evera, 1984). For Snyder and Van Evera, the military played a large role in propounding the myth; organizational theorists emphasize how militaries often craft offensive doctrines because

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[4] The discussion of defensive realism was heavily influenced and helped tremendously by Taliaferro's (2000) discussion of the assumptions of defensive realism.

offensive doctrines require more resources. But Van Evera notes this myth was hardly confined to the military: Europeans and other political leaders believed in the myth as well. While defensive realists acknowledge that misperception is important, the coherence of the research agenda is based largely on the assumption "that the international system is mostly, although not exclusively, responsible for states' external behavior" and that "over the long run international outcomes correspond to the relative distribution of material capabilities" (Taliaferro, 2000, p. 155).

This dissertation will take issue with the first claim. The simple fact that elites so poorly understood the nature of military capabilities—such as in the case of the erroneous belief in offensive dominance and the erroneous belief in defense dominance preceding WWII—highlights that the material world must be interpreted—the facts of the international system do not speak for themselves. This dissertation will argue that such interpretations of material capabilities can vary widely and be extremely causally important for explaining conflict initiation. What Saddam, Kim, and Castro, envisioned as feasible, others may have viewed to be wildly imprudent. Furthermore, the identity driven model of decision making can provide guidance regarding how leaders will likely interpret the material world via their own identity conception and how emotion colors such an interpretation, in contrast with some defensive realist that point to organization politics or elites having incorrect or incomplete information as the sources of misperceptions.

It should be noted that, upon a close reading of defensive realist's work, this dissertation and some of the assumptions of defensive realism are not terribly

incompatible.[5] For instance, as Taliaferro (2000) notes, "defensive neoclassical realism expects an indirect and problematic causal path between material capabilities and a state's foreign policy" (p. 155). This is because foreign policy runs through decision making, which runs through people, which runs through perceptions.[6] However, Taliaferro, saves the causal primacy of systemic level variables by claiming that "Over the long run international outcomes correspond to the relative distribution of material capabilities."[7] Aside from this statement being empirically unverifiable or unfalsifiable— one can always wait longer for outcomes to correspond to material capabilities— defensive realist carve out space and often find discussions of psychology and decision making necessary in order to explain the most important outcomes in international politics, in the short term.

The case studies to follow display the benefits of the identity driven model of foreign policy decision making. While the systemic level variables and domestic level variables were important in shaping and precluding certain actions, the identity driven model can explain aspects of the conflicts that are not able to be addressed with extant

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[5] Legro & Moravcsik (1999) argue that defensive realism use of such unit level variables is actually evidence of a "degenerative research agenda." The charge is that that defensive realists must smuggle in such unit level variables to be able to explain outcomes that systemic level variables cannot explain; making the defensive realist research agenda increasingly incoherent.

[6] Aaron Freidberg's assumptions could equally be applied to the assumptions of this dissertation: "Structural considerations provide a useful point from which to begin the analysis of international politics rather than a place at which to end it. Even if one acknowledges that structures exist and are important, there is still the question of how statesmen grasp their counters from the inside, so to speak" (Friedberg, 2010, p. 8).

[7] It is a testament to academic socialization that the assumptions of various schools of realism – "that international outcomes correspond to the relative distribution of material capabilities"(Taliaferro, 2000, p. 155) – or the 'bedrock' assumptions of offensive realism by John Mearsheimer —"no state can be certain of others' intentions" and "actors are rational" (Mearsheimer, 2014, p. 30–31)– are taken more seriously than findings in the field of psychology. Findings in the field of psychology are empirically documented features of human decision making. While the latter are merely assumptions, often taking on a normative quality about how states should behave, if only they could see the material world clearly.

theories. For instance, I argue that the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein has to be understood with reference to Saddam's belief in a conspiracy—a non-existent conspiracy—to weaken the Iraqi state and Baathist project. Saddam perceived a conspiracy, orchestrated by the U.S. with Israel and Kuwait as conspirators, via the manipulation of oil prices. All the more interesting is why exactly Saddam was so threatened by the U.S., in light of the fact that the U.S. and Saddam held some of the same strategic objectives and the U.S. was aiming to normalize relations with the Iraqi regime during this time. Furthermore, I argue that Saddam was overconfident in his theory of victory—he was both overconfident that the U.S. would not intervene and that if the U.S. did intervene, the U.S. lacked the resolve to push the Iraqi Army out of Kuwait. It was the combination of inflated threat perceptions and overconfidence that encouraged Saddam to take such a 'leap in the dark' and invade Kuwait. Saddam's National Identity Conception (NIC) provided the backdrop to conclude that the U.S. could not be trusted and the prism to view the U.S.'s actions in the most nefarious light. Saddam's NIC also placed emphasis on Iraq being a powerful state—"the central pole in the Arab Nation"—and contributed to a general level of overconfidence, which can explain why Saddam appeared to be confident in the likelihood of success. It also can explain why he made this decision without extensive prior calculation: "*Some decisions just feel right and can be made with less information*, *such as U.S. perfidy and the greatness of the Iraqi nation."* Rational choice theories can explain the same level of overconfidence with reference to information asymmetries: Saddam was provided faulty information about Iraq's capabilities. However, one would expect Saddam to become less confident in victory as more information about U.S. resolve and capabilities were revealed, which as the case study shows, does not appear to be the case. Overconfidence

and the inflated threat perceptions are better explained with reference to political psychology. The theory of identity-driven foreign policy offered in this dissertation links national identity to a psychological process that involves emotion influencing both threat perceptions and one's confidence in victory.

In the sample of cases, I argue that the identity model of decision making is much better able to explain key aspects of the risky decisions than extant theories which focus more on the changing incentives or external security environment. Below are brief summaries of the cases analyzed.

Saddam Hussein and the Initiation of the Iran-Iraq War

The case study finds strong support for the identity driven model of decision-making. There was an apparent *urgency to act* as Saddam gave his military only a few months to prepare for the invasion. A senior aid to Saddam urged caution, captured in recordings made available after Saddam's fall. The aid argued that such an attack would require more time to prepare, but Saddam pushed ahead. While the Iranian Revolution posed a number of challenges to the domestic stability of the Iraqi regime, according to Bengio (1985), Saddam overestimated the threat from Shia agitation (or domestic subversion from Iran), thus providing evidence for *exaggerated threat perceptions*. Saddam also displayed a *lower degree of cognitive complexity.* A rational for the timing of the invasion hinged on the Iranian Air Force being grounded due to the tumult and purges stemming from the Iranian Revolution. Air clashes between Iran and Iraq before the initiation of the conflict showed that while the Iranian Air Force may have been relatively weakened, the force was not grounded and was a modern and capable air force. In terms of the pride dimension, Saddam displayed an illusion of control, overlooking important details in the implementation of policy, such as not having the capabilities to

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destroy the Iranian Air Force on the ground in the initial air campaign. The illusion involves actors being insensitive to the unintended consequences of a decision, such as the attack not precipitating the collapse of the Iranian regime or forcing Khomeini to sue for peace, but actually allowing Khomeini to consolidate his power. Pride also influences an actor's ultimate goals. Saddam appeared to derive utility not just from potentially taking territory and halting subversion, but from asserting his dominance and displaying his leadership on a level equal with Iraqi's natural 'place in the sun.' Saddam displayed *higher potential power perceptions* as well, a predictable behavior stemming from the emotion of pride.

Saddam Hussein and the Initiation of the Gulf War

Evidence suggests that Saddam decided to attack Kuwait in the summer of 1990 with an apparent *urgency to act*. Saddam made the decision shortly before invading, leaving the military to scramble to prepare. Saddam believed to be subject to an international conspiracy that did not exist, validating the hypothesis that revolutionary oppositionalists will make threat assessments that are 'exaggeratedly high.' In terms of a *lower level of cognitive complexity,* Saddam relied on crude beliefs in his assessments of U.S. coalition military capabilities, believing that taking the initiative and the superior moral of the Iraqi Army would ensure victory. The *illusion of control* was on display as well. Saddam not only likely decided to invade knowing outside involvement was a possibility (U.S. intervention), but even as a number of uncertainties were resolved regarding the American led coalition's willingness and ability to eject the Iraqi Army from Kuwait, was still not only optimistic about the likelihood of success, but optimistic about his ability to negotiate a cease fire right up until the beginning of the ground campaign. Pride encourages the need to *act autonomously* as well. Saddam appeared to

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be receiving positive utility—aside from the material benefits of invasion—in putting these 'arrogant' Kuwaitis in their place. Saddam also displayed *higher relative power perceptions*, remaining optimistic about success.

Castro and the Cuban Missile Crisis

Castro did not appear to be overly concerned about two major issues with the deployment of nuclear weapons on Cuban soil: the likelihood of the weapons being discovered by the U.S. before they were emplaced; and, if the weapons were discovered, what a likely U.S. reaction would be. Both of these facts suggest that Castro displayed an *illusion of control*: Castro was both unconcerned about important aspects of policy implementation and insensitive to an unintended consequence, a premature U.S. discovery and reaction. While Castro's primary motivation was to deter a U.S. invasion, possessing the weapons also likely offered non-material benefits. The weapons offered the Cubans a degree of equality with the U.S., which had the potential to be supremely gratifying, suggesting Castro was *deriving utility from acting autonomously*, which can also explain why the deployment was arguably larger than necessary to simply deter an invasion. In terms of the fear dimension, there was an *urgency to act*. Castro reacted quickly to the Soviet proposal and agreed to the deployment in a matter of days. Castro was trying *to reduce the uncomfortable experience of fear* as well, by doing *something or anything,* explaining why serious logistical and political challenges were overlooked. Doing *something*—even if unlikely to succeed— may help an actor alleviate the uncomfortable experience of fear. While it is difficult to conclude that this is a case of *exaggerated threat perceptions*, due to the clearly hostile actions of the United States, Fidel did hold an entrenched enemy image of the United States that ensured that signals would be interpreted in a hostile fashion.

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Kim Il- Sung and the Korean War

The case of the start of the Korean War, Kim's invasion of South Korea, offers partial support for the identity driven model of decision making. The *illusion of control* was on display regarding assumptions about the initial invasion. Kim was warned that U.S. intervention was a possibility but dismissed warnings, reasoning that U.S. intervention was either unlikely or would be too late to make any difference. The plan hinged on speed: The North needed to advance quickly to precipitate the southern government's collapse and to make U.S. intervention less likely. Yet, the NKA did not possess the means to move as quickly as necessary. They lacked equipment to cross bridges and faced onerous supply lines that could not support advancing units, suggesting there was an inattention to the details of policy implementation, suggesting an *illusion of control.* Kim's plan hinged on a concomitant uprising of southern guerrillas in support of the Northern invasion. However, in the spring of 1950, reports reached the North describing the southern partisan campaign as being exhausted. According to the assumptions of rational choice, Kim should update beliefs with new information, which should have tempered Kim's optimism about the strength and level of support from southern partisans. The fact that he did not, is consistent with *low cognitive complexity*. Other aspects of the identity driven model of decision making are more difficult to test. For instance, because the KPA held a number of objective advantages, we cannot conclude that Kim saw his state as possessing an *unjustified* amount of relative power, and that he therefore had unjustified *relative power perceptions*. Still, the North faced logistical challenges, which meant the South-Korean government would have to collapse quickly for the campaign to be successful, possibly vitiating the North's advantages. Overall, this case offers partial support for the theory.

This dissertation was motivated by a number of trends in the field that have neglected the more human aspects of political science. Specifically, the neglect of emotion in the field of political science and IR; the dominance of rational choice as the de facto model of decision making, and the discounting of the importance of individual attributes in political analysis.

The neglect of emotion is all the more striking because emotion is essentially what gives meaning and value to our own lives: Our lives would be flat and colorless without affective experience, something most intuitively understand. It is no surprise that often our most salient memories are likely to be emotionally charged (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). As Elster (2009) notes, nearly all human motivation is ultimately housed in and involves emotional components. Wars and revolutions should be saturated with emotional salience; leaders are not debating the various benefits of optimal tariffs, but making decisions that will likely result in human death. Yet, prominent IR works, even in the field of security studies, often portray human struggles as impersonal, essentially affectless struggles over material resources. In addition, individual leaders are posited to be *homo economicus:* making rational choices and, after the decisions are made, leaders accurately assess and carefully calibrate future decisions with updated information. International relations theory did not always portray human actions in such unrealistic terms: classical realist texts are full of references to honor and glory and how said emotions can result in human folly (Crawford, 2000).

The neglect of the study of emotion is no longer justified for one simple reason: Any theory of decision making and thus any theory of foreign policy behavior has to account for emotion and its influence on decision making. The idea of emotion and reason as being separate, delineated spheres of operation when making decisions,

understood in Aristotlean terms as a chariot being pulled by two horses—one emotion and one reason—simply cannot be supported any longer. Research has also challenged the idea of emotion as somehow an impediment to reasoning—one has to ensure that emotional reasoning does not triumph over more prudent, rational reasoning. Both conceptions have given way to a more nuanced understanding of emotion and cognition. According to this more nuanced view, the cortical regions of the brain—areas of the neocortex that are responsible for reasoning—and the so-called 'limbic areas of the brain (areas that are activated when one experiences emotion) are deeply intertwined. This suggests that emotion influences cognition and that cognition influences emotion (Sapolsky, 2017). Rather than explaining deviations from rational decision-making, emotion is now considered to be a necessary element in rational decision-making, emotions is now considered to be a necessary element in rational decision-making. As McDermott (2004) notes "individuals who cannot reference emotional memory because of brain lesions are unable to make rational decisions at all" (p. 153).

Decisions that may be especially worthy of study in IR are likely to have a large emotional component. Emotion arouses an individual to take action. It is also one of the more effective ways by which humans change goal emphasis and is essential to help sustain behavior in difficult situations. What does this mean for the study of IR? It means that emotional components may be involved with many of the most interesting aspects of IR and the most interesting aspects reference emotion. In sum, to understand foreign policy decision making there is simply no way around studying emotion and consequential political phenomenon is likely to have emotional components (McDermott, 2004).

So if emotion is so important in terms of decision making, why has emotion been neglected in the study of international relations? Methodological and ontological commitments, such as realism's state-centric emphasis and its focus on structural forces, convinced some in the field that you really did not have to have any understanding of decision-making at all; Waltz's (1979) famous structural model is exemplary of this type of thinking. [8] But, while structure is essential in shaping the broad contours of state behavior, as Rose notes "people who cannot move beyond the system will have difficulty explaining most of what happens in international relations" (Rose, 1998, p. 165). The case studies that follow highlight Rose's point: In the decisions analyzed, the systemic material forces shaped and precluded some outcomes for sure, but did not determine the decisions made. There is simply too much slack in the international system and room for agency.

Another way around studying decision making, which may explain the neglect of emotion in the study of IR, is to adopt a rational choice framework. In this situation you can explain behavior with reference to what choice maximizes a utility function. Actors should make relatively similar choices when faced with increases or decreases in utility based on their preferences. Of course, various models of rational choice make different assumptions and there is room for actors holding different preferences, but all actors should respond to incentives in a manner that increases utility. Assuming a state to be a unified rational utility maximizer allowed for parsimonious models to be developed that hinged on changing structural variables and how that could influence a state's 'decision.' Rational choice may be understood as a normative model of decision making and some

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[8] Waltz did not offer a theory of foreign policy and thus bypassed the issue of decision making. See Bessner and Guilhot (2015) for a fascinating discussion of both classical realism's emphasis on decision making and why Waltz neglected it.

decision makers may, in fact, make decisions that resemble a rational choice, but there is an increasingly large amount of experimental evidence that humans do not make decisions in a manner that resembles rational choice.[9] Decision makers violate basic assumptions regarding transitivity. Simply asking a question in a different 'frame' leads to different responses when actors are interpreting the exact same information (See Hafner-Burton, Haggard, Lake, & Victor, 2017). More importantly, works in the field of political science have documented how elites— actual decision-makers in an IR context—may deviate systematically from rational choices. Most of this work has focused on so call 'cold,' cognitive biases. Biases of this sort are largely products of our brain's inherent limitation in processing information. This extremely productive research agenda has shed valuable light on how cognitive biases affect foreign policy (Yetiv, 2013), the role of schemas and analogical reasoning and how that influences an actors' understanding of a situation (Houghton, 2001; Khong, 1992), and how fundamental errors of attribution can cause actors to discount situational factors and privilege dispositional factors in explaining another's choices (Jervis, 1976).

Just as elites are not immune to cognitive biases, emotion is a likely similar influence on elite decision making. There is a great deal of experimental evidence to support this conjecture. As Damasio (1996) showed, actors may not only calculate the future gains of a particular decision—as rational choice would predict—but also imagine *how they would feel* when they make a decision, as documented in Damasio's influential somatic marker hypothesis. Haidt (2012) and others show how patterns of motivated reasoning, housed in emotional components of the brain, are in the "driver's seat" of

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[9] Rathbun, Kertzer, and Paradis, (2017) offer a theory for why some people may make decisions that resemble rational choices: those that are pro-self and have a high need for epistemic knowledge are more likely to make rational choices; the authors move in the right direction, offering micro-foundations as to why some may employ different styles of decision making.

decision making with rationality serving as the means to 'rationalize' our intuitions, when individuals contemplate moral decisions. Often when people make moral judgements, they *know something is wrong* but cannot explain why. Such 'moral dumbfounding' displays how some decisions just don't feel right, with actors then scrambling to construct explanations to justify said decisions (Haidt, 2012). Researchers in political science can cling to rational choice models that offers the ability to simplify reality and impose order on a disordered process, which may explain some phenomena adequately. But, eventually, researchers will have to acknowledge that emotion is an unavoidable aspect of decision making and try to develop more realistic models of human decision making.

This dissertation also contributes to a growing field that places particular emphasis on the attributes of individual leaders. In political psychology explanations can stress the causal primacy of the situational context: Put *any* individual in a certain situation, and he/she would react in a similar manner (See Houghton 2008). Likewise, some IR theories assume states will react in a similar fashion to the same systemic pressures. Just as states may act differently when faced with similar systemic pressures due to different domestic political institutions, variation on the individual dimension may cause individuals to react different to a similar situations. This dissertation stresses the importance of differences among individual leaders. In the case studies to follow, I will argue that studying the identities of individual leaders is important. A leader's identity provides the background and the raw fuel for emotional experience. The social construction of one nation standing for different values—a leader holding sharply dichotomizing identity conceptions—and ideas that a leader's nation deserves its "place

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in the sun" provide the material for interpretation: "*I should fear that state because they hold different values; we can win this war because we are a great nation.*"

The methods used for the plausibility probe include congruence testing, to establish if the predicted hypothesis match the outcomes. Process tracing is used as well to test the validity of both the theory offered in this paper and to test the theory against theories in IR (see Chapter 2 for a more details regarding data and methods). The beginning of each case study start with an assessment of alternative explanations. Implicit and explicit comparisons are offered as well in the case studies to gain more variation; counterfactuals are employed as well to offer plausible alternative paths of behavior for revolutionary leaders.

Often researchers and the public are attracted to the idea that causes of action are somehow "hydraulic," referring to the motivation for people to seek a unitary and single cause for actions (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). If a domestic explanation is emphasized this then detracts from a competing theory in a "zero sum" fashion. This dissertation emphasizes that the psychology of revolutionary leaders is an important cause of behavior. However, most complex outcomes have a number of causes. A domestic institutional explanation or a structural realist explanation is not invalidated when emphasizing an identity-driven model of decision making. Rather, the variables at the structural or domestic level may act as important permissive conditions, providing the scope conditions for a psychological explanation. Conversely, if structure is overwhelming and domestic political institutions are highly constraining, then individual attributes would likely be less important and thus non-operative (Jervis, 2013). In the sample of cases offered in this dissertation, the structural conditions did not determine in

a mechanistic fashion the choices of leaders and domestic political institutions did not overly constrain the leaders in question.

A brief word is necessary regarding the data used to test this theory. I rely on both primary sources and secondary sources to reconstruct the decisions made. Secondary sources are extremely valuable and it would be wise to rely on extant studies of foreign policy decision making based on thorough research by area studies experts. Primary sources are used in the case study of the Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf War. A wealth of documents and recordings were discovered after the fall of Baghdad and made available to researchers by the Conflict Records Research Center. Unfortunately, the Cuba and Korean cases pose significant challenges for researchers. Soviet archives have opened up allowing researchers to get glimpses at Cuba and Korea via Soviet records, yet these regimes are still opaque and difficult to analyze. This should not discourage researchers from studying these regimes, because, if it did, researchers would then allow the data to determine the question and study only states that are transparent. Researchers should try to avoid being like the proverbial 'drunk' under the streetlight, looking for his keys where the light is good rather than where the keys were actually lost.

This dissertation proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 discusses extant approaches explaining the relationship between revolution and war. The identity driven model of decision making as applied to the behavior of revolutionary states, the data used, case selections, and the methods used to marshal evidence for the theory is also discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 provides a study of Saddam Hussein's decision making, in two instances, namely, leading up to, the launch of the Iran-Iraq War and to the launch of the first Gulf War. This is by far the largest section of the dissertation and for good reason: Saddam was involved with three wars in relatively recent history. An study even

narrowly focused on explaining Saddam's decisions is extremely valuable. Chapter 4 is a

case study of Castro's decision to place nuclear weapons in Cuba. Chapter 5 is a case

study of the start of the Korean War. Chapter 6 offers some concluding thoughts.

CHAPTER II

THE LITERATURE, THEORY, AND

METHODS

The Literature

What is the relationship between revolution and war?[10] Structural realists argue

that revolutions are important as they influence variables at the systemic level of analysis.

A research agenda in the spirit of a liberal IR theory stresses the ways in which

revolutions change the capabilities of states and a state's domestic political institutions. A

third group emphasizes the attributes of revolutionary leaders.

Systemic-level Explanations

There is much to be admired in Walt's *Revolution and War* (Walt, 1996). He

outlines a number of important systemic ramifications following domestic political

revolutions. In an apparent departure from structural realism, Walt also uses a number of

ideological variables to explain the relationship between war and revolution. Yet, Walt's

analysis is more helpful in outlining the permissive or aggravating conditions that link

revolution to war.

Walt discusses a number of ways domestic political revolutions influence

variables at the systemic level. Revolutions change the capabilities of states and their

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[10] Some discuss the relationship directly, such as: (Colgan, 2013c, 2013a; Colgan & Weeks, 2015a; Foran, 2005; Goldstone, 1996; Goodwin, 2001; Kurzman, 2005; Lohmann, 1994; Maoz, 1989; Skocpol, 1979; Tilly, 1996; Walt, 1992a, 1996a)

alliance arrangements. Capabilities are diminished in the short term as the revolutionary state experiences the tumult of revolution. Temporary weakness invites opportunistic aggression from other states as they seek to exploit 'windows of opportunity' – such as the Japanese and Polish invasions of the USSR in 1919-20 (Walt, 1992b, p. 331). It is important to note that in this case the aggressor is not necessarily the revolutionary state. The change in capabilities can also lead to enhanced security competition as third parties may take actions to maintain their relative positions.

Revolutions can destabilize patterns of alliances and security commitments. South Vietnam post-1975 left SEATO; the USSR, following the Russian Revolution, left the Triple Entente; and the Iranian Revolution resulted in the U.S. losing an ally in the region (Halliday, 1999). Changes in alliance patterns generate uncertainty and destabilize alliance commitments. This can cause states—not just revolutionary states— to be less secure post-revolution, prompting action.

Misperception, according to Walt, is another route to conflict and war. Spirals of suspicion emerge as leaders of other states are unsure about the new revolutionary state's intentions, often aggravated as previous channels of communication are closed. In poor information environments, leaders rely on ideology to help interpret the intentions of other leaders. In this context, minor disputes may cascade into lurid provocations. Related to misperception, revolutionary states may be overly optimistic about the likelihood of success in exporting revolution. Walt awkwardly frames this as contributing to offensive dominance, in the context of the offensive-defense balance. Defensive realists see the security dilemma exacerbated when states are in the realm of offensive dominance. The revolutionary state is confident that the revolution will spread to other states, while non-revolutionary states feel the necessity to extinguish this movement for

fear of demonstration effects. One state is emboldened with a messianic belief in the inevitability of its cause; the other state is sensitive to cascading demonstration effects. This dynamic leaves both sides primed for action.

In sum, Walt links a change in capabilities to conflict via temporary weakness and a clash of preferences. Walt links ideological change to spirals of suspicion, misperception, and perceptions of offensive advantage. These prompt revolutionary states to be conflict prone.

This approach faces a number of limitations, not the least of which are empirical problems. Walt argues that conflict is a byproduct of systemic-level changes, and not the revisionist strategies of revolutionary states. If the latter was the case, the origins of conflict would be more directly found in leaders' ideological convictions or in the domestic politics of revolutionary states.

Contra Walt, a number of empirical studies have found that revolutionary states are more likely to be the *initiator* of disputes and not the victim of another state's aggression. This requires some elaboration because Walt and Colgan make conflicting claims about the empirical record. Walt supplies evidence that in his universe of cases, revolutionary states acted with restraint and conflict stemmed from non-revolutionary states' aggression. At times, this is the case: Poland invaded the USSR in 1920 and Somalia attacked revolutionary Ethiopia (Walt, 1992). Colgan, after expanding the universe of cases, paints a different picture. Colgan notes that "states with revolutionary leaders are more likely to act as attackers than as defenders." Colgan finds, as well, that "the increase in a revolutionary states propensity to instigate conflict, compared with non-revolutionary states, is higher than the increase in its propensity to act as the defendant" (Colgan, 2013, p. 676). "Revolutionary states have a higher rate as both the

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instigator and the defender in MIDs, but the former is far more important in driving the overall rate," Colgan concludes (2013, p. 676). This is not easily reconciled with Walt's theory as he posits that conflict is the byproduct of systemic changes not the revisionist preferences of revolutionary states. If Walt was correct and conflict was a byproduct of systemic changes, the initiation of disputes should *not* be disproportionately started by revolutionary states.

A second issue surrounds misperception as a cause of conflict. This may be acute between revolutionary and non-revolutionary states as differing ideological perspectives may exacerbate misperception (Haas, 2005). However, this underemphasizes both sides' dedication to confrontation which may stem from ideological convictions (Halliday, 1999). Leaders of both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary movements may hold beliefs that spur or demand confrontation, in which case treating conflict as based on misperception misses the point. Secondly, given that many revolutionary movements are nationalistic and anti-imperialist, it overlooks the importance of historical grievances. As Halliday argues, the "rhetoric of revolution reflects a long history of resentment of external domination, real and imagined, which no foreign policy adjustment by the state which is the object of that hostility, can remove" (Halliday 1999, p. 300).

Regarding the export of revolution and the offensive-defensive balance, Walt is correct to note revolutionary states' dedication to exporting revolution. Still, because this dedication has little relationship to any objective supply of military technology, this can easily be seen as an ideological variable—as leaders either *believe* erroneously in their ideals. Psychological aspects—particularity emotion—may play a larger role in this process.

Other realists also miss important ramifications of revolutions as they ignore the ideological dimensions of the phenomenon. This is unfortunate as many classical realists stress the importance of both the domestic politics of the revolutionary state and the ideological, non-material component of revolution (Carr, 1985; Kissinger, 2011a).[11] For structural realists who stress the importance of balances of power, a change in the balance of power is destabilizing, in the short term, as it can increase or decrease a state's relative power. Implicit in this analysis is the balance of power being *restored*. The French revolution induced a balancing coalition that not only contained Napoleonic France but also restored the Bourbon Monarchy, thereby removing the perturbation. The concept of restoring the balance is misleading as the French revolution was important not just due to the perturbation of the balance of power, but also due to the articulation of new ideas regarding the legitimate relationship between rulers and ruled (Halliday, 1999a). In this sense, 'restoring' the balance of power is impossible as the revolutionary ideas have irreversibly influenced other revolutionary movements and undermined the legitimacy of other regimes.

The State Level Explanation

This group of explanations locates the origins of foreign policy in the attributes of the state itself. Revolutions may drastically change a number of the major attributes of the state. States may be more centralized and better able to prosecute military campaigns after revolutions and changes in domestic political institutions may leave leaders with little or no institutional checks on executive power. Another group of explanations sees

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[11] Carr's analysis is primary an analysis that stresses the young Bolshevik state's struggle for survival, yet he makes numerous observations about the importance of revolutionary ideology.

foreign policy as being the 'externalization' of domestic politics.[12] In the context of a revolutionary movement, foreign policy may be used to isolate and justify the destruction of internal 'enemies' of the movement.

Revolutions may change the capabilities and formal political institutions of the state, resulting in states being more centralized post-revolution, which increases the state's ability to fight and execute military campaigns. As the state's ability to wage war grows, the state may see the use of force as a more effective means to realize its goals. Skcopol's explanations for social revolution are of note for two reasons: One, her explanation is state-centric, states must be weakened before a social revolution is possible; two, the origins of social revolution are found in the pressures emanating from the international system, as traditional states are unable to compete with powerful neighbors, thus undermining the legitimacy of the ruling elites (Skocpol, 1979). Competition may take the form of military defeat. France was both weakened and defeated in the Seven Years' War preceding the French Revolution. The defeat of the Chinese by Japan and the Ch'ng dynasty's inability to resist foreign encroachment partly explains the Chinese Revolution of 1911; the Russian Revolution was triggered in part by the setbacks in the First World War (Halliday, 1999a). The approach frames revolutions as traditional states, not fully 'modern,' being replaced by more centralized states with modern bureaucracies, partly as a result of external pressures. Skocpol's later work outlines how the revolutionary process, the process of consolidating new state organizations, produced states—in this case China, Russia, and France—that were more centralized and better able to mobilize their citizens post-revolution; "all three social

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[12] R. S. Snyder (1999) sees revolutionary states' confrontation with other states as an "externalization" of domestic politics in the revolutionary state. This will be discussed in more detail shortly.

revolutions markedly raised their nations' capacities to wage humanly costly wars" (Skocpol, 1988). States are better able to do this because the revolutionary process increases a state's capacity for mobilization and inculcates a national identity.

The capacity for mobilization is increased because during 'revolution interregnums' elites are competing for authoritarian control. The process places a premium on incorporating previously excluded groups, who are encouraged to join revolutionary organizations for both material benefits and via ideological indoctrination. Second, popular participation is necessary especially for membership in organizations that subdue other competing 'radical' groups. Organizations are created—organizations such as armies, administrations, committees, and surveillance groups— to consolidate, control, and exclude other competing groups. Ideology may be a key aspect in this process as elites use ideology and nationalism in order to mobilize their populace to take part in a risky activity, revolution. What this means is that revolutionary states emerge from the process with stronger political apparatuses which are better able to perform activities essential for war fighting.

If judging the capacity for mobilization by the force under arms and defense budget burdens, revolutions do result in post-revolutionary states holding larger and better funded militaries. (Carter, Bernhard, & Palmer, 2012), note that in a comprehensive sample of post-revolutionary states, "(states) that have experienced a social revolution have larger militaries and allocate more of their economic resources to the military than do non-revolutionary states" (2012, p. 452). Furthermore, they find that post-revolutionary states are more likely to win the wars they fight, when compared with non-revolutionary states regardless of which state initiated the conflict. They also find, consistent with Colgan's findings, that revolutionary states "are on average, more likely

to initiate an interstate war" (Carter et al., 2012), arguing that the increases in military capability may have been undertaken for aggression, not for bargaining leverage or merely to intimidate.

State building may not just involve building more capable militaries. R.S. Snyder argues that the foreign policy of revolutionary states should be viewed as part of the 'radicals' desire to consolidate power in the context of domestic politics in the revolutionary state. Radicals initiate conflict with the U.S. to "externalize their domestic conflicts with the liberal bourgeoisies, who were previously part of the revolutionary coalitions" (R. S. Snyder, 1999). This confrontation accomplishes two goals: First, it allows for the revolutionary regime to maintain the high degree of mass mobilization; second, it allows for the radicals to isolate and destroy the bourgeois elements who may have previously been part of a nationalist revolutionary movement. The bourgeoisie may have ties to multinational corporations and would therefore likely be impediments to realizing domestic revolutionary goals. This approach has a number of strengths as it has the ability to explain cases where Walt's spiral of suspicion is absent. Snyder notes that the U.S. maintained relatively cordial relations with Marxist regimes in Africa. Cases where relations deteriorated, Snyder argues, were provoked by the revolutionary state, revealing that the confrontation is a product of domestic politics in the revolutionary states and not merely caused by the misperceptions and spirals of suspicion in the aftermath of revolutions. Second, it takes seriously the revolutionary states leaders' ideology and can explain the higher rates of conflict initiation of revolutionary states. Thus, Snyder sees the states in his sample—Iran, Cuba, and Nicaragua —as provoking confrontation, because confrontation helps the radicals attempt to remake domestic political coalitions.

A revolution may result in a 'personalist' authoritarian system. In systems of this type, leaders are free from institutional constraints. One strain of democratic peace theory argues that the differences in rates of conflict between democracies and non-democracies are to be found in the differences in the degree of political institutionalization. Leaders in democratic systems are constrained by a web of formal rules, which can involve veto players (including the public) having to acquiesce in the initiation of conflict. Institutionalization can vary not just from democracy to non-democracy, but in the realm of authoritarian systems.[13] Authoritarian party systems have mechanisms to check the autonomy of leaders, say via politburo procedures or systems of party hierarchy; military juntas may have systems to discourage capricious actions by military rulers. Empirically, personalist states are more likely to initiate conflict compared to all other states, including other states with authoritarian political systems (Colgan & Weeks, 2015a). Colgan and Weeks (2015) stress the interaction of the personality type of revolutionary leader and personalist rule that results in the highest likelihood for a state to initiate conflict.

There are a number of limitations in this approach. Colgan and Week's explanation does little more than provide an outline of permissive conditions. For instance, Colgan, specifies the interaction of oil wealth and regime type (Colgan, 2013c). The interaction of oil wealth and a state experiencing a domestic political revolution results in a higher likelihood of the state being the initiator of a dispute. However, Colgan (2013) notes that non-revolutionary petro-states do not initiate disputes at higher levels than states at large, which refocuses attention back to the importance of the ideology of the revolutionary movement, as the possession of oil wealth appears to be a necessary but

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[13] There is a large literature in the field of comparative authoritarianism; see Debs & Goemans, (2010; Lai & Slater, 2006; Pickering & Kisangani, 2010; J. L. Weeks, 2012)

not sufficient explanation. The lack of domestic political institutional constraints can be viewed in a similar fashion, as being a permissive condition. Furthermore, Colgan can say only that the revolutionary movement self-selects for leaders that are risk-acceptant and desire to challenge the status quo, which cannot explain why revolutionary states clash with particular states and why such conflict may take such heightened intensity.

Snyder addresses directly the relationship between revolution and conflict. Synder can link domestic political conflicts with the foreign policy of revolutionary states, with an appreciation of the ideological dimensions as the domestic political struggles are animated by various ideological convictions. Skocpol's work has similar strengths, as she sees the domestic political institutions as being endogenous to the actual revolutionary movement, as leaders may build states that are able to carry out swift and drastic reform, which would involve executive autonomy. A limitation of Skocpol's work involves the under-determination of mass mobilization and increases in war fighting capabilities, as increases in military strength may, again, not be able to explain the targets of conflict.

Individual-level Explanations

Leading any political movement—revolutionary or within the confines of democratic competition—is risky. The amount of risk leading a revolutionary movement may be much higher, as revolutionaries could be killed in the pursuit of their goals, while leaders in other systems may face less drastic consequences. Individuals, when pondering the decision to be revolutionaries, self-select in or out of revolutionary movements. According to Colgan (2013) this makes revolutionaries, more risk-tolerant compared to the general population. Risk-tolerance is linked to conflict initiation due to the higher utility risk-tolerant individuals gain from gambles. By way of example, someone who is risk neutral is indifferent between a one dollar certain payoff and a ten percent chance of

a 10 dollar pay-off. Someone who is risk-tolerant chooses the gamble. According to

Colgan (2013), military disputes can be viewed as risky gambles; those with higher risk

tolerances are more likely to 'roll the dice.' Furthermore, risk-tolerance as a personality

preference "is relatively stable over time for an individual and quite stable across

different people," which explains, according to Colgan (2013), why revolutionary leaders

initiate disputes at higher rates (2013, p. 661). In addition to being risk-tolerant,

revolutionary leaders are ambitious as well. Leaders of this type not only may want

power as an end in it-self, but "revolutionaries are systemically more likely to come to

office with a desire to change the status quo in society" (Colgan 2013, p. 663). In sum,

revolutionary leaders possess two personality traits: They are likely to be more risk-

tolerant than the general population and they are likely to want to change the status quo.

According to Colgan (2013), the two traits make leaders more likely to initiate conflict.

Establishing that revolutionary leaders are risk tolerant may be the first step in

developing a richer understanding of the foreign policy of revolutionary states, as it is not

entirely clear what risk-tolerance or ambition means outside of a belief system or an

ideological framework, as ideology defines risk. Ideology may provide a sense of identity

which animates the leaders' drive to change the world. Colgan's approach sees leaders as

being under-socialized as well. Leaders may not hold objective understandings of risk but

see their obligations as necessary duties to their fellow comrades. Castro's dedication to

revolution abroad could be viewed not as being "ambitious" but rather as manifestations

of his feelings of obligation or solidarity. Second, Colgan's theory says little regarding

revolutionaries' actual goals, other than the goals being "ambitious" as ideology would

define the goals. In this sense, this approach has a similar limitation: risk-tolerance and

ambition may be a permissive condition.

Most of the explanations have a difficult time explaining disputes, which revolutionary states are more likely to initiate. Structural realists' approach can outline the context in which conflict takes place which is undoubtedly important. A state's relative power compared to another state is of course important, but cannot explain a particular foreign policy decision. The same limitation applies to theories that stress a leader's autonomy. Building on Jacques Hymans' study about the psychology of decision making involving nuclear weapons, below I offer an alternative explanation using a national identity conception (NIC) linked to a cluster of psychological variables. The psychological variables can explain why revolutionary states are more likely to initiate conflict.

Theory: What is missing? National Identity and Risky Decisions

What is needed is a theory that can explain the initiation of conflict and why revolutionary states are more likely to initiate conflict. Ultimately all decisions are made by individuals and while some models, perhaps in the interest of parsimony, may exclude emotion and psychological variables, emotion may be the key to explain why revolutionary states, populated with certain types of leaders, initiate conflicts at higher rates. Leaders and the emotion they experience figures prominently in this analysis. When actors experience fear and pride in conjunction, it may push leaders in the direction of taking "leaps in the dark," making it more likely leaders of this type will engage in risky gambles, and thus be able to explain a great deal of behavior of revolutionary states that seem perplexing from a rationalist standpoint.

The initiation of certain types of conflict can be seen as a "leap in the dark." Invasions or military actions that are irreversible and trigger counter events that are difficult to predict in advance—how another actor will respond to an invasion for

example—I consider to be "leaps in the dark." Contrariwise, a circumscribed military action—such as probing an enemies boundary—are less "leaps in the dark" and thus not as amenable for this analysis, as the action itself may be not as consequential and involve less uncertainty.[14] "Leaps in the dark" are decisions that have high degrees of general uncertainty and are unlikely to be subject to a strict cost–benefit analysis. Even practitioners of rational choice acknowledge that decisions that are non-routine, have ambiguous components, and entail elements of surprise are unlikely to be amenable to a cost–benefit calculation. "For if you cannot calculate the risks involved, you cannot determine if you are willing to accept them," writes Hymans (2006, p. 11).

Hymans defines a national identity conception (NIC) as an "individual's understanding of the national identity—his or her sense of what the national identity stands for and how high it naturally stands, in comparison to others in the international arena" (Hymans, 2006, p. 18). Leaders will likely attain this conception in their youth and—especially revolutionary leaders—will develop an individual, subjective understanding of their national identity. Some may be identity entrepreneurs: they are instrumental in framing their nation's identity. While fascinating, the sources of this identity is beyond the scope of this study.

Note that Hymans sees the NIC as being an *individual* identity. An individual approach is needed because what is missing in the use of national identity to explain outcomes is the marriage of national identity to a psychological process. Constructivists, in the spirit of sociological institutionalism, use national identity to explain why states do pursue certain paths based on the 'logic of appropriateness.' National identity is a shared understanding—a 'social fact.' Due to these social facts some policies are simply

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[14] Hymans's personal communication with author 4/9/2017.

'inconceivable' (Katzenstein, 1996; Wendt, 1999). Although valuable in explaining why

some options are not considered, this approach has a difficult time explaining specific

outcomes. National identities have to be linked to a cluster of emotional attributes that

accompany national identity.

Hymans's approach differs from Walt's in two important ways. One, it offers a

sharp contrast to a rational actor model. Although there may be rational explanations for

costly wars (see Fearon, 1995), some conflicts may be better explained as stemming from

emotional sources, not a rational cost-benefit calculation. Secondly, Hymans sees the

NIC as being "a conception as opposed to a mere perception of contemporary reality"

(2006, p. 19). Standard treatments of misperception see non-material variables as

skewing objective reality due to cognitive bias or limits in human cognition. Hymans

notes 'big decisions' are extremely complicated; actors are in the realm of high

uncertainty. In that context, decisions are more likely to be expressions of national

identity versus a cost-benefit calculation.

The NIC is a self–other comparison. Who are the key comparison other(s)? The

key comparison others "are outgroups that serve as the primary basis for in-group self-

definition'" (Hymans, 2006, p. 24). In social identity theory, it is the comparison between

"us" and "them," via similarities and differences, which clarifies our own sense of self

(Tajfel, 2010; for self-categorization theory, see Hogg & Turner, 1987; for a critique and

comparison, see Huddy, 2001). The key others need not be limited to another specific

state, but can be a group or set of nations—such as the "communist bloc." An individual

can have multiple identities that are activated based on what identity is contextually more

salient (Huddy, 2001). The "nationalist" identity is likely activated when interacting with

key others. Holsti (1970) argues that states have various roles in the international system

which is defined by virtue of their places in the system. Hymans, in contrast, argues that comparison with an 'other' is essential in the process, as Social Identity Theory (SIT) argues that we sharpen our own conception of self by means of a comparison with key 'others,' not merely by virtue of a role in the system.

Because this project borrows heavily from Hymans, it is important to note how it differs. One, Hymans is explaining why states desire to obtain a nuclear weapons. Hymans conceptualizes the decision to acquire a nuclear weapons as risky. So, although the decision is different, both projects see the dependent variable as risky foreign policy decisions. Two, Hymans argues and applies the NIC to *all* leaders; this project focuses more narrowly on revolutionary leaders. The narrow focus is justified because it is the working hypothesis that revolutionary states will score high on both the solidarity and status dimension (these concepts will be explained shortly). The concepts that Hymans applies to *all* states promises to explain why revolutionary states would be more likely to make risky decisions. With that said, the NIC concept could apply to all states and especially counter-revolutionary ones, yet it is the working hypothesis that *most* non-revolutionary states would not score high on the status and solidarity dimensions. The second reason for the narrow scope is for issues of manageability; I am interested in explaining why revolutionary states are more likely to engage in military disputes. Hence, the case selection is focused on revolutionary states—but this should not preclude the possibility that the theory applies to all states.

A State's NIC

I understand a NIC as involving two key dimensions. The first, the solidarity dimension, "what a nation stands for," will be associated with fear; the second, the status

dimension, "how high the nation naturally stands," will be associated with pride (Hymans, 2006).

The status dimension involves "a self-definition of how high 'we' stand relative to 'them' in the international pecking order: are we naturally their equal (if not their superior), or will we simply never measure up (Hymans, 2006, p.23)?" There are two important points often overlooked in the literature on identity and conflict. One, as Hymans notes, not all states automatically assert their equality with other states. Some states may accept their subordinate status as subalterns (Parry, 2004). Revolutionary states may be especially *unlikely* to accept their subordinate status. Revolutionary movements often involve building a national identity, asserting equality with a hegemonic power. For instance, as Patterson notes, Castro chafed at the U.S's authority in the hemisphere as "Castro vowed to jettison altogether its dependent status (Paterson, 1995a, p. 12)." Part of jettisoning the dependent status is an assertion of equality with the U.S. The second caveat involves the identification of a 'key comparison other.' As mentioned, it is the comparison with key 'others' that help the revolutionary state form its own identity. Hymans notes as well that states may feel a pressing need to assert their equality in times of status uncertainty—such as during times new states are emerging on the international arena (Hymans, 2006).

In order for the status mechanism to function, states have to believe in their ability to effectively compete with a key comparison other. Revolutionary states could hold inflated assessments of their capabilities, as they may embrace an excessively optimistic understanding of their ability to compete with the key comparison other. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam, after expelling the United States from South Vietnam, embraced the view that "everything is entirely possible" as they just beat the world's superpower

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(Chanda, 1988, p. 42). As will be discussed, the status dimension is married to a host of behaviors stemming from the emotion of pride.

The solidarity dimension's key question "is whether 'we' and 'they' naturally stand for similar or different interests and values" (Hymans, 2006, p. 22). This could be particularly pronounced for revolutionary states; it is likely revolutionary and non-revolutionary leaders differ dramatically in their core values. For instance, the Russian Revolution led to a communist regime which claimed to advance a different model of economic organization, claiming superiority over a market-based system. The Iranian Revolution led to a religiously based movement, which claimed legitimacy based on traditional or religious sources, rather than, a rational-legal authority.

A brief word is necessary regarding an important disagreement within SIT as applied to the field of International Relations. Mercer suggests that the mere existence of different groups is a sufficient condition for conflict between groups; groups essentially construct clear black and white dichotomies between their in-group and *all* others (Mercer, 1995). However, Hymans argues that this is an oversimplification, meaning that "'us and them' should not be taken to be synonymous with a feeling of 'us against them.'" The competition is lessened when the two groups' identity is "perceived to be nested within wider, 'transcendent' groupings" (Hymans, 2006, p. 22).

The transcendent identity provides a basic commonality which undermines a black and white dichotomization (Sherif, 1958). For instance, citizens of Norway and Sweden could—while not abandoning their particularistic Norwegian or Swedish identity—identify as European. The transcendent identity can explain why two different groups may compete but conflict is unlikely, while two groups with "starkly dichotomizing identity conceptions," not nested in a transcendent identity, would be more

likely to engage in conflict (Hymans, 2006, p. 22). It is likely revolutionary leaders and non-revolutionary leaders would hold just such sharp dichotomizing identity conceptions. It is the working hypothesis that revolutionary states would score high on the solidarity dimension and the status dimension.

The ideal-type revolutionary leader would fit in Table 1's top right corner. Leaders in the top right score high on the status scale, as they are asserting their equality or superiority with key others. Revolutionary leaders would likely be high on the solidarity scale, as revolutionary leaders advance starkly different values compared to key others. These values are *unlikely* to be nested in an overarching transcendent identity. Table 1 below captures the interplay between the two.

Table 1. All Leaders

	Naturally Below	Equal or Superior

The Status Dimension: Does the leader see its state as being equal or superior to key other?

	Naturally Below	Equal or Superior
Leaders see their state as holding drastically different values **The Solidarity Dimension:** Does the leader see its state as holding drastically different values than key other? Leaders see its state as holding similar values		Leaders that have led a revolutionary movement likely to see their state as being equal or superior; also likely to see their state as holding different values than key other **Saddam Hussein, Kim Il-sung, and Fidel Castro likely fall in this box**
	Leaders that have *not* come to power via a revolution likely to fall somewhere in these three boxes	

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From a NIC to Emotions to Behavior

   This section will outline how the NIC translates into emotions which make riskier decisions more likely. Three points have to be made briefly before proceeding. First, the emotions *drive* the decision making process, according to Hymans, not merely limit the possible paths of actions. Second, as noted by SIT theorists, many have multiple identities. Turner and Hogg argue that individuals contain multiple 'levels of self' (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). For instance, when one is at work one assumes a certain identity. Leaders of states find themselves in the realm of their "national level of self" when they are acting as state leaders. The previous point is connected to the third point, which is that the emotions are activated when the national self comes into conflict with key comparison others. Salient national memories are activated and drive the emotions and the decision making process (A. D. Smith, 1991). National tales of oppression, tragedy, or triumph, which leaders may not personally experience, provide the material for NIC based emotional memory (Horowitz, 2003; R. Petersen, 2017; R. D. Petersen, 2002). For instance, when Japan and China spar over various islands, leaders could experience highly charged emotions that are fed with past tales of aggression and subordination. The conflict could be much deeper than mere maneuvering for the material rights to an island.

NIC based Fear—the Solidarity Dimension

   Why would a revolutionary leader experience fear when interacting with a key other? It is likely that the state leader will feel fear because of the stark black and white dichotomization between the values of the revolutionary state and the values of a key non-revolutionary state. The fear is based in a real appreciation for the other state undermining or trying to subvert the revolutionary state, as non-revolutionary states may

see their security threatened by the success of revolutionary movements. Many times counter-revolutionary movements are in fact subverting the revolutionary state, although this may be immaterial as the revolutionary state may *believe* that they are 'surrounded' by hostile states.[15] Revolutionary France provides an example. By 1791 leaders of the Brisstin Party were 'paranoid' about the likelihood of survival in a monarchical world, "members of these parties believed that the conservative powers were firmly committed to counter-revolutionary efforts, both through external force and sponsoring ideological fifth columns in France" (Haas, 2005, p. 50). Paranoia can create self-fulfilling prophecies. "Assuming enmity, politicians dedicated to opposing ideological beliefs frequently take actions that ensure such a hostile relationship" writes Hass (2012, 421).[16] The beauty of this conception of fear is that it just has to establish leaders' fear of subversion, which can be a correct or incorrect assessment of the actions of other states.

Fear of the other results in a number of cognitive and behavioral changes. Fear leads to a *higher level of threat perceptions* **(F1),** which can result in higher threat perceptions. It can also result in a 'tunnel vision' dynamic where actors are fixated on and attribute undue significance to the threat (Cohen, 1978; Izard, 1991).

"*Lower cognitive complexity*" **(F2)** accompanies fear. Lower cognitive complexity is described by Stein as an actor's inability to make subtle distinctions and see nuance when confronted with new information (Stein, 1994a). There is also the tendency to conflate threats; simple solutions for different problems are embraced, which can result in decision makers seeing the use of military force as being more efficacious

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[15] See Hunt (2009) for a discussion on the United States' antipathy towards social revolution.

[16] It was Kennan's famous assertion that the USSR was engaging in just this type of self-fulfilling prophesy: "It is an undeniable privilege of every man to prove himself right in the thesis that the world is his enemy; for if he reiterates it frequently enough and makes it the background of his conduct he is bound eventually to be right" (X., 1987, p. 856).

(Andersen & Guerrero, 1997). For instance, Saddam Hussein reportedly embraced simple narratives about both the U.S. and Israel's ability to orchestrate conspiracies worldwide. Although there may be some truth to this, this conspiracy narrative reached epic proportions with Hussein seeing Israel and the US as being behind every move in the Middle East. This conspiratorial mindset led to Hussein's baffling conclusion that the US was somehow behind the Iranian revolution (K. M. Woods, Palkki, & Stout, 2011a).

A *greater urgency to act* **(F3)** accompanies fear. A leader may feel the need to take action, particularly hasty action. In doing so, the decision maker relies on stereotypes, terminates the search for more information, and encourages a halt in the analysis of information (Witte, 1996).

The final mechanism involves the actors' desire to *eliminate the uncomfortable experience of fear* **(F4)**. Trying to eliminate this discomfort can take precedent over eliminating the danger (Witte, 1996). Hymans argues this mechanism can explain a number of irrational reactions to danger: "from the ostrich approach to simply sticking ones heads in the sand, to witch hunts and the appeal to protective deities, or the acquisition of totems of power" (Hymans, 2006a, p. 32)

The identity based psychological mechanisms involving the emotion of fear, has the ability to explain why revolutionary states are more likely to initiate conflict. Yet, when viewed with the NIC pride mechanisms to be discussed next, not only do leaders feel the pressures to act, pride brings a menu of cognitive changes that push in the direction of taking action.

NIC Pride—the Status Dimension

As mentioned, pride measures how high the state holds itself relative to a key comparison other.[17] The pithy statement "pride before the fall" is telling, as pride, like fear, leads to a number of cognitive and behavioral effects. Pride can result in the decision maker seeing her state as possessing *an undue amount of relative power* **(P1)**, which can lead to unfounded assumptions about a state's ability to affect other states. For instance, Hussein believed before the invasion of Iran in the Iraq-Iran War, that the invasion would essentially speed-up the collapse of the Iranian regime. Saddam posited that an invasion would force Khomeini to move forces to the front which would let Bazargan—a rival power broker who was considered to be more moderate—to revolt and overthrow Khomeini. This invasion was launched under the assumption that Khomeini's had a precarious hold on power (Murray & Woods, 2014b, p. 129).

The *illusion of control* **(P2)** accompanies pride. The illusion gives actors the feeling of being *not* susceptible to mistakes or accidents. The illusion results in shortened searches for information and insufficient attention to the implementation of policy, specifically attention to the unintended consequences of a particular policy (*Competence considered*, 1990).

The need to *act autonomously* **(P3)** can accompany pride. Hymans argues that "it (pride) produces positive utility from the act of standing alone" (Hymans, 2006a, p. 34). This may explain why some revolutionary states may engage in perplexing acts from a rational-choice standpoint. They may attack more powerful neighbors with the goal of safeguarding their autonomy. Kissinger described the psychological dimensions of the Yom Kippur War. He argued that a factor in the attack on Israel was the desire by Sadat

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[17] A basic definition involves general and specific uses of the term pride: a sense of one's value (general) and specific pleasure based on achievements (specific) (Elster, 2000; Nathanson, 1994).

to break the 'illusion of Israeli dominance,' following the lopsided route in the Six-Day War. Sadat understood that early success in the Yom Kippur War and a display of tactical proficiency would make it harder for Israel to continue to dominate the Arab states (Kissinger, 2011b)

Pride as an ends in itself (**P4**) is the final mechanism linking pride to risky foreign policy decisions. As Jervis notes, at times states desire to acquire nuclear weapons to buttress their confidence in addition to responding to objective threat (Jervis, 1989). This mechanism conceptualizes pride as trying to convince actors in the state of the nation's self-worth and impressing other actors in the international system. Leaders that score high on the status and solidarity metrics, leader I label *revolutionary oppositionalists*, should display the mechanisms articulated above.

Hypothesis

*H1: Revolutionary oppositionalists will display the above discussed fear (**F1-F4**) related psychological mechanisms in their decision making process.*

*H2: revolutionary oppositionalists will display the above articulated pride (**P1-P4**) related psychological mechanisms in their decision making process.*

As Hymans notes, related to the acquirement of nuclear weapons, the interaction of pride and fear can be viewed as a two-step process. The fear feeds into the assessment of risk, which, in general, encourages leaders to overestimate the threat. Secondly, leaders are unduly confident in their ability to deal with or address the threat due to the cluster of behavioral attributes that accompany pride. Applying this same two-step

process to the initiation of military disputes, the mix of pride and fear could explain why

revolutionary states are involved in a disproportionate amount of conflict. **Table 2**

displays the interaction.

Table 2: Selected Leaders

Level of Fear	Equal to Key Other—Medium Pride	Better than Key Other—High Pride
High	**Fidel Castro**: Castro though U.S. invasion forthcoming; U.S. aiming to overthrow Castro (Bay of Pigs) and U.S. implementing economic policies to destabilize Cuba; **level of fear high.**	**Saddam Hussein 1980:** Saddam feared overthrow via domestic subversion. Iranians directly aiming to overthrow Saddam and fomenting revolution and instability in Iraq; **level of fear high**.
Medium		**Saddam Hussein 1990**: Kuwait part of a plot to destabilize the Iraqi regime; not a direct, immediate threat but a "war waged by other means" and would ultimately weaken Saddam's regime; **level of fear medium.**
Low		**Kim ll-sung**: North Korea possesses conventional superiority over South Korea; U.S. removed troops from region; l**evel of fear low.**

Nested Identities

Leaders' identities may be nested in larger identity groupings. A nested identity in

a larger grouping may influence a leader's sense of efficacy, which is important for this

analysis. To reiterate, an adequate sense of efficacy is essential to embolden leaders to

ultimately take such 'leaps in the dark;' leaders that do not possess such efficacy are

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unlikely to see their states as being able to effectively compete with key others. Remember, as the literature in Social Identity Theory notes, often identity conceptions are nested in other, wider identity conception groupings. For instance, Castro saw his state as holding different values than the United States. But he also saw his identity as being nested in a larger identity, that identity being a socialist state, sharing the same values as other socialist states. This larger identity grouping can have important ramifications in terms of a leader's sense of efficacy. Being part of a revolutionary vanguard may embolden leaders to take further risky actions, not only because they may expect support from other socialist states—The Cuban Missile Crisis would simply not have taken place without Soviet support and Kim needed Stalin's approval for his invasion—but because revolutionary states often think of themselves as being in the vanguard of a revolutionary movement. In the Cuban case, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, Castro considered himself the leader of the communist movement in Latin America, part of a vanguard bringing revolutionary change throughout Latin America. Such a small state playing such an outsized role may seem incongruous, but, as the Cuban Revolution demonstrated, the importance of objective conditions were grossly exaggerated. In Cuba, Castro led a revolutionary movement with few men and resources, why could Cuba not lead the revolution in Latin America? A similar dynamic may be seen in the case of Vietnam—a case not analyzed in depth in this dissertation. The Vietnamese Communists successfully unified their country, besting a more technically sophisticated western nation, which could then serve as a model to be emulated by other revolutionary states (Vu, 2016). This dynamic likely translates into a higher level of pride. In sum, leading a successful revolution and then claiming to be part of the revolutionary vanguard, should reinforce a leader's sense of pride.

Leaders may also have a national identity that conceptualizes their nations as being surrounded by hostile forces—Hymans refers to this as an 'us against the world' type dynamic. Paradoxically this may reinforce a level of pride. Surviving the machinations of other states that surround you may result in a leader seeing his state as being the only state capable of surviving in such an environment. Thus, while one would expect that being surrounded by hostile neighbors would result in a siege type mentality, the idea that a state can survive and even thrive in such a hostile environment may contribute to a sense of pride as well, providing evidence that only truly unique states can survive in such dangerous environments.

Methods

This project can be broken into two distinct steps. The first is to establish that the leader(s) in a state that has experienced a domestic political revolution score high on both the status and solidarity metric. The NIC is the key independent variable. The second step is to link the psychological variables to key foreign policy decisions. It is essential to link the cluster of psychological attributes to outcomes. The link is essential and should display the strength of this theory. Care needs to be taken to display the risky decision was made not primarily because of changes in systemic level variables (Walt); or because of attributes of the state (Weeks and Colgan); but because of the NIC and the emotions that follow. Each case study outlines the limitations with the extant explanations and how emotion is key to explain otherwise unexplainable aspects of the leader's behavior.

The Establishment of the NIC

Borrowing a definition from Colgan, this project defines a revolutionary leader "as one who transforms the existing social, political and economic relationship of the

state by overthrowing or rejecting the principal existing institutions of society" (Colgan, 2013b, p. 658) A revolutionary state "is simply a state/government where a revolutionary leader is currently in power" (Colgan, 2013, p. 658). Note this definition is consistent with Walts,' but different from Skocpol's, as she focuses on 'social revolutions.' A leader who takes power in a coup, assassination, or revolt would not be a revolutionary leader unless accompanied by "substantial transformation of social, economic, and political life" (Colgan, 2013, p. 658).

The Independent Variable: the NIC

The key independent variable is the NIC. The NIC can be established via the use of secondary sources and by making use of actors' speeches and writings. Care is taken to ensure that actors' writings and speeches are not just used instrumentally—to advance some political cause—but actually believed by the actor in question. Biographies and works by area specialist can help construct a national identity conception of key leaders.

The Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is risky foreign policy decisions. Risky foreign policy decisions or 'leaps in the dark' need to be used because of the problem with using a measure such as war. War, being a dyadic measure, may fail to emerge even in the context of a risky foreign policy decision. Cuba is the classic example: It adopted a provocative foreign policy while never actually fighting a 'war' with the United States. Foreign policy as a dependent variable would be needlessly encompassing, as what flows from this theory is essentially a prediction that revolutionary leaders will make risky decisions. In many ways the dependent variable is ideal: wars are risky endeavors. While

risky behavior may not be a sufficient condition for war, the behavior may be able to explain why revolutionary leaders initiate disputes at higher rates.

The cases, to be discussed shortly, feature significant variation on the dependent variable—risky foreign policy decisions. As Vertzberger (1993) notes, in order to understand decision making, risk has to be understood as both subjective – as understood in the context of an individual's beliefs—and objective—as reflecting aspects that represent facts less amenable to interpretation. An assessment of risk should also involve an appreciation for what can happen if an actor fails to act. **Table 3** summarizes the level of risk.

Table 3. Level of Risk

Decision/Degree of objectivity in assessing risk	Most objective	Relatively objective		Less objective	Least objective	Total
	Assurance of war (irreversibility of decision)	Compared material capabilities of warring parties	Compared capabilities of potential allies	Likelihood of outside intervention	Danger if not acting	
Iraq-Iran	+	-	o	o	+	+
Iraq-Kuwait	+	----	++++	+	+	+++
Cuba-US	-	o	----	-	++++	--
North-South Korea	+	--	o	+	o	o

Plus (+) means more risk

Minus (-) means less risk

Zero (o) means neutral

Saddam's invasion of Kuwait entailed the most amount of risk. Saddam was confident, for good reason, that the Iraqi Army would not face significant resistance from the Kuwaitis. However, the possibility of intervention by a powerful ally of Kuwait—the United States—made this a very risky decision. There was also a risk in not taking action. Saddam thought that the Kuwaitis and the U.S. aimed to destabilize his regime via the manipulation of oil prices (F. G. G. Gause, 2009; F. G. Gause III, 2002). If Saddam did not take action, the Kuwaitis would continue to, in Saddam's eyes, overproduce oil and destabilize his regime that was already facing acute financial difficulties (Freedman & Karsh, 1995b)

The Iran-Iraq War involved the direct initiation of hostilities with a much larger state. While the Iranian military may have been weakened due to the tumult of the revolution, Iran possessed a modern and sophisticated military. Furthermore, Saddam could only speculate how the Iranians would react to a direct attack. There was also a risk in not taking action. According to Gause (2002, 2009), Saddam attacked Iran to force Iran to cease supporting various Shia groups that were destabilizing the Iraqi state.

Kim's invasion of South Korea entailed a moderate amount of risk. As discussed in the case study, the North Koreans enjoyed conventional superiority over the South Koreans. Ambiguity surrounded to what extent the U.S. would intervene and how the U.S. would react to an invasion aimed to unify the peninsula.

Castro's decision to place nuclear weapons in Cuba entailed much less risk than the three other cases. The reaction of the U.S. was a key uncertainty. However, this act was much less provocative that a brazen annexation of territory or an invasion. After all, as Castro insisted, the USSR had as much right to support their allies as the U.S, and emplacing weapons in Cuba was not a violation of international law. The fact that they

placed *nuclear* weapons or "offensive" weapons on the island that could reach the eastern seaboard made the decision more provocative in the eyes of the U.S. But, this decision was not as explicitly provocative as invading or annexing another state. The decision was less risky because Castro had the support of the USSR, a powerful ally. There was a significant danger in not acting. Castro primarily desired the weapons to respond to what he saw as an imminent invasion of the island by the U.S. The weapons had the potential to discourage a U.S. attack. Not possessing the weapons would leave the Cuba vulnerable to an invasion.

Case Selection

Cuba, Castro: Halliday notes that Cuba had a long and sustained history of exporting revolution (Halliday, 1999b). Castro came to power via a guerrilla campaign and the subsequent abdication of Batista. Few would challenge that Castro aimed for profound cultural and political change in Cuba. [18] The analysis displays that Castro scores high on both the solidarity and status scale. The risky gamble is the decision to move missiles into Cuba, precipitating the Cuban Missile Crisis. The analysis to follow indicates that while the USSR certainly played a prominent role, Castro did in fact *decide* to place the weapons in Cuba. This decision can be considered a "leap in the dark." Castro could only speculate as to the U.S.'s response to such a novel 'threat' and propinquity to the U.S. made the move more provocative.

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[18] For various works on Cuban Foreign Policy see: (Balfour, 2013; Brenner, 1989; Castaneda, 1994; Domínguez, 1989; Paterson, 1995b)

Iraq, Hussein: Iraq had long been plagued by a series of coups and counter-coups. Saddam came to power via a coup in 1968 as the right hand man of Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, the president of Iraq from 1968 to 1979. Saddam was a key figure in the regime and increasingly consolidated his power, culminating in1979 when Saddam compelled al-Bakr to give up the presidency, resulting in Saddam as the undisputed leader of the Iraqi state. During the period before 1979, Saddam increasingly established his personal leadership and by 1977 was in command in all but name (Colgan, 2013c). Saddam was at the center of a number of important decisions, specifically the negotiation of the Algiers Treaty in 1975 (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001).

The Baathist regime transformed the structures of government, the economy, and aimed for significant changes in societal relations. Regarding the structures of government, in 1970, a new constitution was adopted and the Revolutionary Command Council was established. There was also a large overhaul of the security services, resulting in the creation of four new organizations, which proved to be much more intrusive than the security apparatus in previous Iraqi governments, according to Colgan (2013c; see also Tripp, 2002; Marr, 2018).

The economy was transformed and moved towards socialism. In 1972 the IPC was nationalized,[19] thereby nationalizing the oil industry. A number of major firms were nationalized as well, resulting in most firms in the iron, steel, petrochemical, and construction industries being owned by the state. The public sector of the economy grew to roughly 80 percent in 1977 from 31 percent in 1968. Nearly half of the urban population worked for the state by 1977. Taxes on income and sales were eliminated by the Baathist regime. Land reform was undertaken as well, which went considerably

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[19] The IPC was a consortium of foreign oil companies.

further than land reform efforts in previous regimes (Marr, 2018). State owned-coopts were established and both fertilizer and food was heavily subsidized. The Baathist regime signed agreements for technical assistance with the USSR and to help construct a large oil pipeline as well (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 2001)

The Baathist regime aimed for drastic changes in society. Women's rights were significantly expanded. Article 19 of the constitution now guaranteed "equality of the sexes" (Colgan, 2013, p. 104). Women now could drive cars, go to college, dress as they liked, and held more than 10 percent of the seats in the National Assembly. More women attended both primary and secondary schools: Women's attendance increased by 60 percent in primary and climbed from 35 to 45 percent in secondary schools. Women's literacy increased and women enjoyed more economic opportunity, according to Colgan (2013c). Women gained standing in Iraqi courts in 1978. As Sasson (2011) documented, the party became increasingly involved in public life as well. Party membership "grew from a few hundred" to nearly 1.5 million in 1984 and became increasingly active in the private lives of members (Colgan 2013, p. 105). The party prohibited the use of last names and allowed the consumption of alcohol in Shi'a mosques. The Baath party also implemented a number of large scale population relocation projects. For instance, half a million Kurds were relocated and the government offered financial incentives for men to divorce wives suspected of having Iranian ties.

Due to the above mentioned changes in the economy, government structure, and societal relations, Saddam satisfies the criteria of the leader aiming for "substantial transformation of social, economic, and political life" (Colgan, 2013, p. 658). Colgan codes Iraq as a revolutionary state. Two risky decisions are analyzed. The 1980 invasion

of Iran and the 1991 invasion of Kuwait. As the analysis outlines and discusses in later chapters, uncertainty surrounded key aspects of both conflicts.[20]

Korea, Kim Il-sung: Armstrong documents the drastic social and political change in the first five years of Kim's leadership of North Korea (Armstrong, 2004). The risky decision analyzed is the 1950 invasion of South Korea. Recently declassified documents note that while Stalin's acquiescence was required, Kim was the prime mover pushing war to unifying the peninsula. The invasion could be considered a risky decision as uncertainty surrounded a number of key aspects of the campaign to be discussed.

A Note on Case Selection

This project does not aim to mimic an experimental method of comparative case study analysis. Thus, the cardinal sin of selecting on the dependent variable is not as much of an issue.[21] This project selects on both the independent variable (leaders likely to score high on the NIC metrics, status and solidarity) and on the dependent variable (the initiation of risky decisions). As **Table Three** displays, all the decisions are risky, but differ in terms of the level of objective and subjective risk. The selection on the independent and dependent variable is justified due to the narrowly tailored research question: Why do revolutionary states initiate conflict at higher rates? Note that Colgan

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[20] See Colgan (2013c) for more details as Saddam as transformational leader, p. 102-106.

[21] Note that there does not appear to be a solution to this problem of selecting on the dependent variable for this research question. While wars are discrete events, what is an observation of a non-war? A sample of 'near misses' could be used, but this would raise the question as to whether the near misses are in fact all that different from cases of actual wars. Without a sample of near misses, the universe of cases where a decision makers does not engage in a risky decision would be limitless.

(2013) and Carter et al (2015) have already established the empirical relationship that revolutionary states initiate conflicts at higher rates.

Some schools of thought in IR argue that scholars should aim for nomothetic explanation: explanations that are "law like" and likely to take place across *all* people and states. This analysis has a more modest claim and is more akin to a mid-level theory. Leaders that score high on the status and solidarity metrics are likely to match the pattern of decision making displayed in the case studies. This dissertation also offers a contribution in explaining these important events in world history. Saddam's invasions, Kim's invasion of South Korea, and Castro placing weapons in Cuba are cases worthy of explanation in their own right, even if the theory cannot be extended to explain other cases.

Congruence Testing and Process Tracing

After an NIC has been established, the hypothesis has to be linked to the risky decision via the articulated psychological mechanisms. The link can be made via the congruence method and via process tracing. Process tracing scrutinizes the decision making process to see if leaders' made decisions based on the articulated hypothesis. The strength of process tracing lies in linking the articulated hypothesis to an outcome. In contrast to forms of quantitative analysis, it has the ability to establish causality. It has the added strength of being able to analyze the decision making process at a number of different points in time, which enables the argument to be more rigorously tested. In addition to process tracing, the congruence method will be employed to establish if the predicted hypothesis match the outcomes (A. L. George & Bennett, 2005).

How will this evidence be marshaled? The evidence can be found in a number of sources, both primary and secondary. In the case of Iraq, the Iraqi Perspectives Project offers an abundance of material, consisting of tapes of conversations with Saddam and his inner circle and documents related to war planning. The tapes provide a picture into Hussein's thoughts and fears (K. M. Woods et al., 2011a). Secondary sources are used as well to reconstruct decision making. For the Cuban and Korean cases, I rely on secondary sources.

Methodological Caveats

Are emotions observable? Crenshaw argues emotions are understudied in IR because they are difficult to observe. Emotions may be more difficult to observe, but it does not mean they cannot be documented. Crenshaw suggest "diaries, transcripts, and …post hoc interviews with actors may help actors understand the role and consequences of emotions, paying attention to the subtle ways emotions are expressed, managed, and denied, and what happened to those who express emotions in decision making settings" (Crawford, 2000, p. 131). Furthermore, this problem is hardly confined to studying emotions. International relations as a field of study deals with a number of concepts and abstractions that are essentially unobservable, posing similar problems.

A standard critique regarding studying emotions is that they are transitory and short-lived; actors may feel strong emotions at a specific time, but the ephemeral nature of emotion means it is difficult to establish when exactly an actor is experiencing said emotion. In a laboratory setting, researchers have specific tools to measure the experience of emotion in seconds or minutes. Researchers studying emotion from a far do not have the ability to specify what emotions an individual is experiencing at a specific time. Secondly, critics note that emotions are far too diffuse and complex to be tractable. How

do we know what emotion an actor is experiencing when an actor may herself be confused about what emotions are being experienced? How do we know an actor is experiencing one emotion and *that* specific emotion? Despite these difficulties, researchers in both political science and psychology argue that studying emotions is both analytically tractable and valuable (R. Petersen, 2017).[22]

Roger Petersen (2017) argues that the study of emotion is both analytically tractable and valuable and offers a framework that generates hypotheses based on specific emotions. The analytical tractability is nothing sort of a revolution of sorts in the study of emotions in the field of social psychology and neuroscience. Jennifer Learner, in a work in the *The Annual Review of Psychology* surveying the recent advances in neuroscience and social psychology, finds:

> A revolution in the science of emotion has emerged in recent decades, with the potential to create a paradigm shift in decision theories. The research reveals that emotions constitute *potent, pervasive, predictable*, sometimes harmful and sometimes beneficial drivers of decision making. Across different domains, important r*egularities* appear in the mechanism through witch emotion influence judgments and choice (quoted in R. Petersen, 2017, p. 933)

Researchers are increasingly able—instead of throwing-up their hands and claiming that emotions are simply too difficult to research—to link *specific* emotions to behavior. Before this revolution, most understood that emotion was important, but due to methodological barriers, not analytically tractable. But recent advances in neuroscience and social psychology allow researchers to establish that when average actors are treated with specific conditions, specific emotions will be elicited, and actors will behave in predictable manners based on said emotional experience.

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[22] Note that critics of using emotion could likely make the same claim regarding the micro-foundations of rational choice: do we actually observe people making 'rational choices'? Of course not. Furthermore, there is an abundance of evidence in the field of psychology that documents how humans actually do experience emotions, which would make the theoretical plausibility of the congruence of emotions and action tendencies far more reasonable than the heroic assumptions of the rational choice school.

Petersen's (2017) model involves first the articulation of the antecedent conditions linked to the action tendencies of specific emotions. The 'antecedent' actions are conditions that psychologist have reliably linked to the experience of a specific emotion.'[23] For instance, most actors with functioning limbic systems will experience fear if they think they or their loved ones' lives are in danger; anger if they feel they have been wrong or mistreated. The antecedent condition for anger is being mistreated; while the antecedent of fear would be a situation in which on feels their lives are in danger.[24] The antecedent conditions are then followed by specific action tendencies. The action tendencies are simply the behaviors associated with the specific emotional experience; of particular importance are action tendencies associated with information processing and belief formation (R. Petersen, 2017).

It may be useful to trace this process out with an example of the emotion of anger. The antecedent condition for anger is an actor's perception or the actual harming—an actor committed a bad action—against an individual or group. "The action tendency is to heighten desire for punishment against a specific actor. Under the influence of anger, individuals become 'intuitive prosecutors'" (Goldberg, Lerner, & Tetlock, 1999; R. Petersen, 2017, p. 933; R. Petersen & Zukerman, 2010). In terms of information processing and collection, actors understand the event and objects that are consistent with the original cognitive-appraisal dimension of the emotion (Lerner & Keltner, 2000). Actors more acutely experience the fundamental attribution error when they are

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[23] Petersen uses the term 'cognitive antecedent.' I prefer the term antecedent conditions because, as various schools in the field of psychology constantly debate, there is a great deal of dispute about the importance of the unconscious or cognitive aspects of emotional experience and what is in the 'driver's seat' regarding emotional experience.

[24] A colleague of mine when arguing about the futility of the study of emotions taunted me with the challenge to: "tell me what emotion I am experiencing right now." I replied that I did not know, but if someone put a gun to your head, we all could predict that you are experiencing fear.

experiencing anger, blaming people when they could theoretically blame the ostensible situation (D. Keltner, Ellsworth, & Edwards, 1993). Anger results in more stereotyping as well (Bodenhausen, Sheppard, & Kramer, 1994).

Other critiques of using psychology to study IR hinge on the samples and experiments used to construct theories in the field of psychology. For instance, to study group cohesion a sample of convenience may be used which usually consists of experiments using college students. The situations are usually highly regimented, well-structured, and limit exogenous influence in order to be able to isolate various causal mechanisms. Critics argue that the people (college students) and the situations (highly structured laboratory settings) do not resemble actual elite decision making. I offer a few rebuttals. One, Jervis (1976), Khong (1992), Houghton (2001), and others, showed that elites do not decide as rational choice models expect, meaning there is no reason to believe that elites are somehow immune from the same basic faulty reasoning as documented in a number of psychological experiments. Secondly, because decision makers in real world settings may have to make difficult decisions involving substantial losses of life, we should expect that emotions have *more* pronounced influence on elites when making these types of decisions. Hence, if anything, controlled experimental settings may *under estimate* the effect of emotion on elite decision making, because, as the critics note, the stakes are usually low in laboratory experiments.

A more substantial critique involves the idea that modern political systems have elaborate mechanisms in place to ensure that decisions are not made rashly. Decisions are structured via elaborate operating procedures, aiming to reduce the likelihood of making decisions that depart drastically from the assumptions of the rational choice model. This is a legitimate concern. However, this critique may be less applicable to revolutionary

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states. Part of the revolutionary process may ensure that leaders have a great deal of political autonomy and are unconstrained by various domestic political institutions. As mentioned, leaders in personalist dictatorships may find themselves able to make decisions unconstrained by such bureaucratic procedures, and thus domestic political institutions should be considered to be permissive conditions.

A more serious concern regarding domestic political institutions involves the decision making setting or context. As Janis notes, the decision making context may be key to explain certain features such as "group think" and other factors (Janis, 1972). Specifically, coup-proofing may result in the military offering bad advice due to a lack of professionalism or for fear of retribution (Quinlivan, 1999). In the case studies that follow, it does appear that the leaders in the sample did receive candid advice at times. I take care to take this concern seriously as I discuss the decision making process.

CHAPTER III

SADDAM HUSSEIN

Explanations for the Iran-Iraq War

Offensive realists argue the anarchical nature of the international system provides powerful incentives for states to expand territorially in the absence of systemic constraints (Mearsheimer, 2001). A successful Iraqi attack had the potential to redraw territorial lines, force Iran to halt its subversive activities in Iraq, and force the Iranians to acknowledge Iraq's leadership role in the region. Saddam envisioned a limited war, striking a weakened enemy, forcing Iran to make territorial concessions, specifically the abrogation of the Algiers treaty (Murray & Woods, 2014a; Razoux, 2015a, p. 10). The situation was favorable for an Iraqi attack for two reasons. Saddam believed the Iranian Military was weak due to the tumult of the Iranian Revolution (Murray & Woods, 2014a, p. 32) . Secondly, post the 'radical' turn and Iranian Hostage Crisis, Iran found itself with few allies, which predicted few coming to Iran's aid and a balancing logic predicted support for Iraq from the US, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf monarchies. According to offensive realists, the weakness of Iran's military and its diplomatic isolation removed the systemic constrains for Iraqi aggression. This approach implicitly assumes that a different leader would have reacted in a relatively similar fashion when faced with a similar opportunity. While the weakness of the Iranian army was a factor in Saddam's decision to invade, this explanation has a number of limitations.

In a broad sense, it sees Saddam's action as an act of opportunism: taking advantage of Iran's obsolescing weakness. While this may have been a factor, Gause's work persuasively argues that Saddam was reacting more to Iranian provocations than taking advantage of Iranian weakness (F. G. Gause III, 2002, 2009). The timing of the attack supports this interpretation: if Iraq was merely driven by Iranian weakness, the planning of hostile action should track the weakening of the Iranian military, which according to Gause (2002), began in 1977. Iraq did not attack until September 1980, after the deterioration of relations and well after the first purges in the military. The timing suggests the decision followed a spiral of hostile actions and a deterioration of relations, not just Iranian military weakness.

What was the larger geopolitical context for Saddam's invasion? A number of works emphasize how Saddam was encouraged to invade Iran by the U.S. The U.S. provided both a green light and intelligence estimates signaling the weakness of the Iranian military, thus, encouraging an Iraqi attack, according to proponents of the green light thesis.[25] The green light thesis is based on a number of assumptions about how an Iraqi attack would advance U.S. goals in the Persian Gulf. The goals included gaining leverage over the Iranian regime after the hostage crisis, the U.S. trying to improve relations with Iraq after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and based on U.S. statements after the invasion indicating that the U.S. stood to benefit from such an invasion (Brands, 2012).

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[25] Aburish, (2000), Fayazmanesh, (2008), and Hiro, (1990) all suggest U.S. complicity.

Recent works have been highly critical of the green light thesis, arguing that the green light thesis is more myth than reality.[26] Critics of the green light thesis contend that it is striking that, to this day, such an explanation still rests on no hard evidence. Proponents of the green light thesis rely on statements of former secretary of state Haig and on statements made by Abul Hassan Bani-Sadr, former president of Iran. Haig claims that Carter gave Saddam the green light via Crown Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia. Haig was not in government at the time and thus could not have any direct knowledge of U.S. policy. In addition, professional historians have been critical of Haig's claim. According to Gardner, "Haig's source may have exaggerated" (L. C. Gardner, 2010, p. 67). Likewise, historians have been critical of Sadr's claims. Sadr was president of Iran when the war began. A number of assertions by Sadr (1991) in his work *My Turn to Speak,*— where the green light thesis is propounded—has been subject to scrutiny. What is also telling, according to Brands (2012), is that to this day no hard evidence has surfaced corroborating the green light.

Besides the lack of hard evidence, critics of the green light thesis argue that the U.S. had, in fact, much to lose if Saddam invaded. Far from the invasion providing the key to solving the Iranian hostage crisis issue, the invasion could have resulted in the harming of the hostages. Carter, in his diaries, express just such a concern (Jimmy Carter, 1995, p. 516). Furthermore, the Carter administration was in the process of trying to find a negotiated settlement to this hostage crisis issue at the time, and the invasion would have disrupted such negotiations. Moreover, the larger Cold War context aimed to reduce Soviet influence in the region. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, U.S policy

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[26] "The idea of an American green light for Iraq's invasion is explored and convincingly debunked in Bryan R. Gibson, Covert relationships: American Foreign Policy, Intelligence and the Iran-Iraq War" (Murray & Woods, 2014a, p. 89). See also Raxouz (2015).

makers were concerned about Soviet influence in important oil producing regions. Thus, U.S. policy makers aimed to avoid any policies that would push Iran into Soviet arms.' An invasion by Saddam could have caused the Iranians to seek assistance from the USSR. The invasion could have also resulted in the fragmentation of Iran, providing opportunities for the USSR to improve its influence in the region (Brands, 2012).

Newly available evidence suggest that it is unlikely that Saddam perceived a green light from the U.S. Captured tapes emphasize Saddam's deep distrust of the U.S. To be discussed in detail in the following section, Saddam perceived U.S. strategy in the region to be aimed at destroying the Baathist project. Hence, it is unlikely that Saddam would have taken the U.S. pledges at face value. In addition, captured documents note that Saddam was receiving his own intelligence reports regarding the weakness of the Iranian military. Thus, he was in no need of intelligence from the U.S. signaling Iranian weakness.

Iraqi-USSR relations were strained in the period immediately preceding invasion. The shah's removal theoretically could offer the Soviets gains in the region and Brezhnev held hope that inroads could be made with the young revolutionary Iranian state. Although Khomeini was hostile to leftist movements in Iran and was critical of the USSR, Brezhnev made entreaties to Iran. Such entreaties were made during a tense time in Iran-Iraq relations, and thus likely raised concerns in Baghdad. More importantly, the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan strained relations with Baghdad. Following the invasion Saddam denounced the invasion and called for a quick end of the occupation. Moscow responded to Saddam's criticism by increasing aid to both the Iraqi Communist Party and various Kurdish groups—groups hostile to the Baathist regime (Smolansky and Smolansky, 1991). It was in this context that Saddam dispatched Tariz Aziz to Moscow

just a day before the Iraqi invasion of Iran. Kremlin leaders were surprised to learn of the attack "and furious not to have been consulted" (Razoux, 2015a, p. 82–85). The Iraqi attack on Iran with Soviet supplied arms at a time when Moscow was aiming to improve relations with Iran displeased Moscow. Moscow signaled its displeasure with the attack by suspending arms shipments to Iraq.

While various Gulf States provided robust support to Iraq during the war, Saudi Arabia was concerned about how an Iraqi invasion would destabilize the region. Saddam, traveling to Saudi Arabia and meeting King Khalid in the run up to the Iraqi invasion of Iran, was *not* encouraged to invade by the Saudi King. Rather the King expressed concerns about how the invasion would influence oil markets. Ultimately, "unable to change Saddam's mind" the Saudi King offered tacit support with conditions (Razoux, 2015a, p. 70). In sum, while Iran was isolated, the international system hardly provided clear incentives for Saddam to invade.

Saddam did receive intelligence discussing the deterioration of the Iranian military. The Iranian Air Force was weakened due to purges ranging from high ranking officers to pilots (Murray & Woods, 2014a, p. 75). The expulsion of western technical consultants resulted in the Iranian air force being unable to maintain their equipment (Razoux, 2015a). An Iraqi intelligence report indicated the Iranian air force as only having 2 of 5 squadrons flyable (Murray & Woods, 2014a, p. 76). The Iranian army was subject to purges as well. Estimates indicate over 12,000 officers were purged from the Iranian Army. The purges hurt Iran's ability to orchestrate large scale complex military operations (Murray & Woods, 2014a, p. 82). Iraqi intelligence reports relayed Iranian weakness to Saddam.

Iranian weakness was a factor in Saddam's decision to invade. However, the temporary advantage should not be considered sufficient to explain the attack. While Razoux finds a temporary force ratio favoring Iraq (Razoux, 2015a, p. 20), this advantage should not be overblown. A number of objective factors should have tempered Saddam's optimism. Iran's population is three times Iraq's; while both states have heterogeneous populations, Iraq lacks a particular socio-political cohesion; finally, the geography of Iraq offers numerous challenges: Iraqi is almost landlocked with major population centers closest to the Iranian border and is forced to export oil—its major source of revenue— overland via a pipeline through Syria or via the Shat-al-Arab into the Gulf which has the potential to be "easily controlled by Iran" (Murray & Woods, 2014a, p. 72). As in most military operations, this is an operation riddled with contingences and uncertainties. The more important question was essentially how Khomeini would react to an attack, about which Saddam could only speculate. Captured audio recordings, discussed later in the paper, indicate Saddam understood that he could not predict how Khomeini would react or who would be in the position (or 'in charge') to make the decision after an Iraqi attack. Saddam seemed to understand that there was a possibility that Iran would not immediately capitulate, as envisioned in his limited war aims.

Gause (2002, 2009) and Walt (1996) offer what I label defensive realist positions. Gause sees Saddam as reacting to legitimate threats to his domestic political stability while Walt argues that Saddam's actions were ultimately a result of misperception. According to Gause, the Iranian Revolution and its subsequent radical turn involved sharp attacks on Saddam's political legitimacy. Iranian agitation fomented general Shia uprisings coupled with attacks on the Iraqi state. Saddam, ever concerned about 'the hidden power of the Shia' (Tripp, 2002a), could not countenance these types of attacks on

his legitimacy and thus was forced to halt Iranian subversion via military means. Gause notes that the timing supports his interpretation: it was only after the subsequent deterioration of relations that Iraq entertained military strikes; mere Iranian weakness did not wet the appetite of Iraqi aggression. Other pieces of evidence suggest Saddam was reacting more to Iran provocations. Iraqi's initial gestures to the revolutionary regime were accommodating, and Saddam clearly distinguished between the modern Badr regime and its more radical predecessor. While difficult to pinpoint, Gause (2002, 2009) sees Saddam making the decision to invade in April 1980, following a series of attacks— which Saddam attributed to the Iranians—on Tariq Aziz and a funeral procession. Saddam was clearly threatened by these attacks and Shia agitation to the point of executing cleric Al-Sadr and his sister, also a Shia activist. While the killing of an opposition leader may seem commonplace in Saddam's Iraq, this was the first time the Ba'athist regime killed such a high ranking cleric. As Tripp (2002) notes, this killing was "an ominous indicator of the regimes determination to force Shia leaders into a posture of obedience (221)." Saddam made membership in the al-Dawa party retroactively illegal and a capital offence and expelled more than 40, 000 Iraqis of Iranian origin (Tripp 2002). He was clearly concerned about the challenges the Iranian revolution posed to the stability of the Ba'athist regime. Based on this logic, the only way to halt these subversive activities was an attack which would force the Iranians to halt their support for the destabilizing elements in southern Iraq.

Walt (1996) discusses the initiation of the Iran-Iraq War in the larger context of the relationship between revolution and war, featuring a case study of revolutionary Iran. Revolutions change the preferences of states and the balance of power. Those changes are insufficient to explain the initiation of conflict. What is also necessary is uncertainty and

misperception surrounding revolution, which leads to spirals of hostility. Uncertainty surrounds the new revolutionary state's capabilities and intentions. Revolutions also result, to use the language of defensive realists, in an environment of offensive dominance. The offensive dominance stems from the revolutionary states' messianic belief in the inevitability of their revolution spreading, combined with the incorrigible need for the status quo state to subvert the revolutionary process. In his discussion of the Iranian Revolution, Walt provides an explanation for the Iran-Iraq War which hinges on the spiral model. Saddam unjustifiably feared Khomeini's call for the Shia to revolt would be heeded and result in domestic instability. Walt argues that not only are the threats to Saddam's stability exaggerated, but states can take prophylactic measures to prevent domestic subversion. While the revolution posed challenges to Saddam's domestic political stability, Saddam overreacted.

I agree with Gause that Saddam was threatened by the Iranian Revolution and subsequent provocations.[27] However, while Saddam was threatened, attacking Iran is hardly the uncontested, best means of dealing with this threat. As Walt notes, states can take a number of prophylactic measures to buttress their political stability. As Bengio (1985) and Tripp (2002) note, Saddam employed a number of strategies to deal with domestic political subversion that did not necessarily involve external aggression. Furthermore, the theory outlined above argues actors not only need to be threatened, but to have a certain belief in their own efficacy – Hymans (2006) calls this a level of pride— to deal with the threat. There is still an explanation needed that bridges threat to action. I agree with Walt, as well, that misperception figured prominently in the decision to

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[27] Assessing Gause's and Walt's works hinge on the difficulty in measuring Iraq's susceptibility to internal subversion. Recent work by Gause (2015) addresses this issue.

invade. If this conflict was ultimately a product of misperception it should be housed in a more comprehensive psychological explanation which is offered in this paper.

Explanations for the Gulf War

Offensive realists highlight the incentives for Saddam to invade Kuwait. Iraq could gain valuable resources and much needed coastline by swallowing up its much weaker neighbor and it is uncontested that Kuwait could not defend itself militarily without aid from other states'. Uncertainty surrounded the potential for other states to come to Kuwait's defense, making the rationale for the invasion hinge on the likelihood of outside involvement. Realists argue that Saddam made a reasonable gamble based on inferences about likely U.S. involvement. A general trend of U.S.-Iraqi policy was based on a balancing logic against revolutionary Iran, which culminated in the normalization of relations (J. Hiltermann, 2007, pp. 37–51; Jentleson, 1994a; Karabell, 1995a). Offensive realist claim this encouraged Saddam to believe that the U.S. would not become involved if Saddam invaded Kuwait; the U.S. would overlook this transgression just as it failed to punish Iraq's use of chemical weapons and his support for various terrorist organizations. Outside the broader trend, the U.S. did not implement a successful strategy of deterrence. In the face of Saddam's bellicose language, mixed messages emanated from Washington, culminating in the famous Glaspie meeting, in which Glaspie, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, was summoned abruptly to meet Saddam. Glaspie stopped short of making a clear statement about the U.S.'s commitment to Kuwait's sovereignty. According to this view, while Saddam clearly miscalculated—this was a reasonable gamble due to the U.S. government's inability to signal its intention to protect Kuwait, which led Saddam to believe the U.S. would not become involved (Freedman & Karsh, 1995a; F. G. Gause III, 2009).

This approach has a number of major problems. Firstly, as Stein (1992) notes, the U.S. did not employ a coherent strategy to deter Saddam from invading Kuwait. Meaning that it is possible that a rational actor could have interpreted U.S. policy preceding the invasion as signaling that the U.S. was *unwilling* to become involved. However, the strategy of compellence was successfully implemented by the United States, according to Stein (1992). Compellence, as used in international relations, involves an actor coercing an opponent into giving up something the opponent already possesses, usually by threating punishment (Shelling, 1966). H.W. Bush made two very costly signals indicating that the U.S. would likely become involved in the conflict: The infamous Rose Garden statement ("this aggression will not stand") and deploying tens of thousands of troops to the region. A rational actor should have interpreted U.S. actions as clearly signaling its willingness to eject the Iraqi Army out of Kuwait. It is perplexing from a rational choice standpoint, if the invasion was an act of opportunism, as to why, when it became apparent that the U.S. would become involved—first in pledging to defend Saudi Arabia and evolving to a U.S. commitment to eject the Iraqi Army from Kuwait—that Saddam did not take or attempt a face saving off-ramp offered by French and Russian envoys, before the start of the air campaign (Freedman & Karsh, 1995a). Or Saddam could have agreed to unconditional withdrawal before either the beginning of the ground or air campaign, theoretically saving the destruction of parts of his military. Other pieces of evidence hurt this narrative. Captured recordings detail Saddam's deep distrust of the U.S. Seeing that Saddam saw the U.S. as incurably deceitful, Saddam "almost certainly could not have taken this statement (Glaspies' alleged pledge of U.S. non-involvement) at face value given his abiding fear of American hostility" (Brands & Palkki, 2012a, p. 656). Other minor issues are inconsistent with the offensive realist position or theory of

opportunistic expansion. As the Iraqi Perspective Project notes, it did not appear that the Iraqi Army was prepared to invade Kuwait, as they lacked basic maps of the small emirate (Woods et al, 2006).

It is more likely that a different motive than opportunism was driving Saddam to invade. Saddam believed in an elaborate conspiracy to weaken the Iraqi regime via the manipulation of oil prices. Kuwait was a party to this conspiracy as it was overproducing, driving down the price of oil (Freedman & Karsh, 1995a; F. G. Gause III, 2002, 2009). Captured recordings confirm Saddam's belief in this conspiracy (K. M. Woods, Palkki, & Stout, 2011b). Tariq Aziz, after the U.S. invasion and the overthrow of the Ba'athist regime, still maintains this position (K. M. Woods et al., 2011b). But, as Jentleson (1994) argues, U.S. policy during this period could *not* be said to be a conspiracy aimed at weakening the regime. As noted, the U.S. was aiming to improve relations with the regime prior to Saddam's invasion (J. Hiltermann, 2007, pp. 37–51; Jentleson, 1994a; Karabell, 1995a). Attention shifts to the origins of this elaborate conspiracy, especially during a period of attempted warming of relations with the U.S. The theory used in this paper can explain both the construction of the conspiracy and the apparent urgency to invade Kuwait.

Works in the field of comparative authoritarianism explain Saddam's behavior with reference to unit-level variables. Jessica Week's (2014) path-breaking work highlights how the preferences of leaders interact with domestic political institutions. This model features a case study of Saddam: the combination of his ambition and permissive domestic political institutions explain the initiation of the Gulf War. Jeff Colgan's (2013; Colgan and Weeks 2015) work, addressing revolutionary states and conflict initiation, stresses the importance of domestic political institutions as well,

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crafting a theory that combines domestic political institutions, the revisionist preferences and high risk tolerances of revolutionary leaders, and petro-wealth. The combination of these three variables creates a potent cocktail which explains the higher likelihood for the initiation of military disputes. Colgan sees Hussein as exemplifying this dynamic (Colgan, 2013c).

Both of these theories have little or no appreciation for the threats Saddam faced—real or imagined—and, thus, are forced to frame Saddam's actions as being acts of opportunism. It is the contention of this paper that in both cases Saddam perceived his regime to be under serious threat. While missing the systemic dimension, theories featuring domestic political institutions are valuable in outlining the context in which Saddam made decisions and should be viewed as a permissive condition. Accounts have Hussein making these decisions essentially unconstrained. Woods and Murry note that Saddam made the decision to invade Iran essentially in isolation (Murray & Woods, 2014a); Tariq Aziz claims that Hussein made the decision to invade all of Kuwait 'at the last minute,' giving little warning to the Iraqi military (Cockburn & Cockburn, 2000). A different domestic political institutions may have inhibited Saddam's ability to launch these attacks. These theories are able to explain why these regime types frequently engage in wars, but cannot provide a specific explanation for a specific war.

Saddam's NIC: Solidarity and Status

The Solidarity Dimension: "The Three Circles of Hostility"[28]

The solidarity dimension's key question "is whether 'we' and 'they' naturally stand for similar or different interests and values" (Hymans, 2006b, p. 22). Saddam clearly held an oppositional identity conception with Israel, the U.S., and Iran. I use

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[28] This phrase is Bengio's (2002)

secondary sources augmented with captured recordings to establish the key comparison other. I find Saddam's key comparison other(s) to be: *Iraq against the world*. Interestingly, Saddam sees a diverse groups a states—Iran, the U.S., and Israel—forming circles of hostility and acting in concert to thwart the Ba'athist project. Iran paired with the U.S. and Israel may appear incongruous without an understanding of Saddam's conception of pan-Arab unity and its relationship with imperialism. Saddam believed imperialists were constantly plotting to inhibit the formation of the Arab nation and aiming to retard the Arab nations' modernization and development. Ba'ath party idiom distinguished between the imperialism done by great powers driven by their ambition, which included the U.S. and the U.K, and 'Imperialism on the behalf of 'another party— this includes Israel, Iran, Kuwait, and other Gulf States (Bengio, 2002a, p. 129). This can explain why Saddam attributed many actions by Iran and Kuwait as evidence of a larger conspiracy to weaken the Arab nation. Nonetheless, he clearly saw the U.S., Israel, and Iran as having interests and values inimical to Iraq.

Americans: "Conspiring Bastards"[29]

Fundamentally, Saddam saw the conflict with the U.S. stemming from the U.S.'s close relationship with Israel. U.S. policy strengthening Israel could only come at the Arab's expense. Saddam elaborated, "There are some proven facts of American policy…keeping the Zionist entity strong at the expense of Arabs. And with such a basis, we'll find ourselves clashing with it (the U.S.) and in one way or another, and so will every genuine Arab who's ardent for his nation" (SH-SHTP-000-838, Woods et al pg. 41). Saddam continued: "whenever the American policy meets Zionist policy, it becomes

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[29] Saddam claimed that the Americans were still 'conspiring bastards' even during the alleged warming of U.S.-Iraqi relations (Brands and Palkki 2012, 626; SH-SHTP-D-000-567).

hostile; and wherever the American policy supposes it must obtain its interests at the expense of Arabs, it is imperialistic (SH-SHTP-000-838, Woods et al p. 42).

Saddam's opposition to the U.S. is all the more interesting as the U.S. and Iraq held a number of the same strategic objectives, notably trying to contain revolutionary Iran's expansion and, post-9/11, both were threatened by religiously based extremism. Even when the two states found themselves with similar strategic objectives, Saddam was still hostile to the U.S. During the tilt (1982-1988) with the U.S. supporting Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War, "Saddam's view of the United States as treacherous and conspiratorial persisted" (K. M. Woods et al., 2011b, p. 18). For instance, while the U.S. was supplying Iraq with weapons, Saddam suspected that the U.S. was helping Iran in a similar fashion, feeding Iran weapons and intelligence. Recordings document Saddam's belief that the Iranians capture of the Al-Faud peninsula was only possible with U.S. intelligence given to them. Saddam thought, as well, that the U.S. was spying on Iraq and feeding Iraq 'bad' intelligence. These beliefs were validated when he learnt of Iran-U.S. collusion during the Iran contra scandal (Brands, 2011b). Tarqi Aziz told interrogators the scandal reinforced Saddam's view of the U.S. as 'untrustworthy' and "out to get him personally."

The Zionist Entity

This section will provide three pieces of evidence—Ba'ath party language, private recordings, and Saddam's public speeches— to establish an oppositional identity conception with Israel. Saddam clearly held an oppositional identity conception vis-à-vis Israel or the 'Zionist entity.'[30] A discussion of Saddam's views of Israel should be preceded by a discussion of Saddam's anti-Semitism. While the source of Saddam's anti-

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[30] Brands and Palacki note: "there was no clean dividing line between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism in Saddam's thinking" (Brands & Palkki, 2011a, p. 141).

Semitism cannot be known, his maternal uncle who raised him may have influenced his views. Khair Allah Talah—Saddam's maternal uncle—wrote a pamphlet titled: *The Three Things God should not have Created: Jews, Persians, and Flies*. According to Woods, Palkki, and Stout (2011), the secondary literature tended to downplay Saddam's anti-Semitism, suggesting his anti-Semitism was unfairly attributed, based on his public utterances—which were made instrumentally— and in a guilt by association fashion due to his close relationship with his maternal uncle. Recordings made in private belie the idea that Saddam was an instrumental anti-Semite. Brands and Palaki reviewing transcripts of private conversations find "his vituperative public utterances toward Israel was not merely a matter of political theater or rhetorical excess, but rather indicated a perception of incorrigible strategic and ideological conflict and a desire to wage war against the Jewish state" (Brands & Palkki, 2011a, p. 135).

Although Ba'ath party idiom may be used instrumentally, the language is consistent with Saddam's views expressed in private. Ba'ath party ideology portrayed Israel as deserving of both fear and contempt. In terms of contempt, as Bengio (2002) notes, Ba'ath party organs placed quotation marks around Israel, reflecting the contested nature of Israel. Another telling term used to describe Israel in Ba'athist idiom is *al-dahkila* which means stranger or one deserving of protection. In Bedouin custom, this type of person is worthy of protection and hospitality for a period of time, but that this persona must leave after a short interval. The important point, according to Bengio (2002), is not the hospitality but the idea that "*dahkial* cannot be accepted into the tribe, so Israel can never be accepted in the Arab nation" (Bengio, 2002a, p. 135). The words *kiyan mazru* was used as well to describe Israel, meaning something foreign and had a

medical parallel meaning "strangeness, artificiality… and the possibility of rejection" (Bengio, 2002a, p. 135).

Being contemptuous of Israel without fear would hardly motivate action. Yet, Saddam appears to have held a healthy appreciation for Israel's abilities to harm Iraq. Woods, Palkki, and Stout, reading hundreds of pages of transcripts concludes that Saddam had a "respect for his adversary" (K. M. Woods et al., 2011b, p. 62). Saddam was fond of conceding that "Jews are smart" (SH-SHTP-000-561). This explains why Ba'athist idiom portrayed Israel as something to be feared. Bengio notes that Ba'athist idiom saw Israel as part of an imperialist scheme to 'balkanize' the Arab nation. Israel aimed to dominate the area, acting as a beachhead to keep Arab nations "divided, dependent, and backward" (Bengio 2002, p. 134). In recorded conversations, according to Brands and Palkki, Saddam implicated Israel in a number of schemes to weaken his regime. Saddam saw Israel behind the Kurdish rebellions; thought Israel aimed to destroy Iraq's nuclear facilities and kill senior leadership; envisioned Israel encouraging Iraq's neighbors to attack Iraq; and aimed to weaken Iraqi morale via propaganda and misinformation. Some of these claims are correct: Israel did destroy the Osirak reactor in 1981. Yet others are ridiculous, such as when Saddam apparently thought that the "television series Pokémon was, in fact, an Israeli plot to contaminate the minds of Iraqi youths" (Brands & Palkki, 2011a, p. 140).

Another telling and fascinating piece of evidence is Saddam's own fiction writing. Saddam thought of himself as an artist and a poet (Sassoon, 2011a). Shortly before the U.S invasion in 2003, Saddam was finishing a novel entitled *Be Gone Demons*. The protagonist, tellingly, is an Arab warrior fighting a Christian-Zionist conspiracy. He has three sons representing Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The son representing Judaism is

characterized as only caring for money and is expelled from the household. Thereafter, he becomes a usurer and sells weapons, using his influence to foment discontent among the tribes. The son then falls in love, which is unreciprocated. Unable to deal with the unreciprocated love, the son rapes the woman. The two other sons are portrayed in a favorable light. One does not need a degree in comparative literature to see the meaning of the allegory (K. M. Woods et al., 2011b, p. 62).[31]

The captured recordings document deep and consistent hostility towards Israel. Woods et al., reading numerous transcripts find that Saddam believed that the *The Protocols the Elders of Zion* to be an accurate "guide to understanding Zionist actions" (K. M. Woods et al., 2011b, p. 62). In a captured recording taped in the mid-1990s, Saddam explained: "Zionism has partnered with imperialism and participated in its conspiracy and political plans… for the purpose of destroying the Arab nation… destroying here may not be sufficiently understood. This means maintaining the weak start of the Arab nation and gradually reinforcing and transforming the feelings that it is incapable of forming an Arab nation…" (SH-SHTP-A-001-211 pg. 67). In 1985, shortly after an Israeli air strike on the Palestine Liberation Organization, Saddam argued that there would be no room for accommodation with Israel and the Arabs. "Even if it achieved security in the manner that we now see—meaning geographic security—the social and political security will absolutely never be achieved between Israel and the Arabs," Saddam concluded. He continued "either the Arabs are slaves to Israel and Israel controls their destinies, or the Arabs can be their own master and Israel is like Formosa's location to China at best. Without that rule, it is not possible to ease the issue between the Arabs and Israel" (SH-SHTP-V-000-567 pg. 70).

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[31] Daniel Pipes discussed the novel at: http://www.danielpipes.org/1947/saddam-the-novelist

Iran: "The Yellow Storm"

Saddam held an oppositional identity conception with Iran as well. Geography made the animosity between Iran and Iraq and take on a different and more intimate dimension. As Saddam's uncle wrote: "Iran is a dagger in the heart of the Arabs, therefore it must be removed so that the Arabs can regain their health and recover their strength, and only then can they face up to foreign enemies. As the old proverb has it: 'He who lies with us is the worst thief" (Bengio, 2002a, p. 145). Territorial disputes provided ample opportunities for conflict. Shortly after the Ba'ath party taking power in 1969, Tehran revoked the Shat-al-Arab agreement of 1937 and in 1971 the shah made territorial claims on three islands in the Gulf, which held the potential to disrupt traffic in the channel. Feeding the fears of encirclement was the shah, with U.S. backing, assuming the role of the 'police man' of the Gulf in the early 1970s. More troubling for Ba'ath party leadership, was the shah's support for Kurdish separatist movements in Northern Iraq. While the Shah and Saddam clashed, relations deteriorated further with the subsequent Iranian revolution.

As Gause notes, while the relationship between the shah and Ba'athist regime was hardly positive, both refrained from making attacks on each other's domestic political legitimacy, as "the major regional powers had come to accept the domestic legitimacy of each other's regimes" (F. G. Gause III, 2009, p. 86).[32] Post Iranian revolution, attacks from Khomeini were especially neuralgic as Khomeini made attacks on Saddam's domestic political legitimacy and openly advocated overthrowing the Iraqi dictator. In all,

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[32] According to Little, while the shah aimed to destabilize Iraq he did not aim to overthrow the Iraqi regime. Iranian and American support for the Kurdish was "little more than a spoiling operation" aimed to gain negotiating leverage *not* aimed to overthrow the Iraqi regime (Little, 2004, p. 698; Sluglett & Farouk-Sluglett, 2001).

geography and the clashes immediately preceding the Iran-Iraq War must have "menaced Iraq with the danger of partition or of a stifling encirclement" (Bengio, 2002a, p. 139).

Ba'ath party language reflected this hostility. Iran called itself Iran since the beginning of the 16th century, yet Saddam referred to Iran as Persia. Bengio argues that the regime did this for a few reasons. It reinforced the basic Arab-Persian distinction, which helped to remind the Shia of southern Iraq of their shared Arab identity and also remind other ethnic minorities in Iran of their non-Persian identity. The use of Persia also aimed to give the Iran-Iraq war "historical depth" (Bengio, 2002a, p. 140), framing the origins of the conflict as primordial. Bengio asserts as well that the use of Persia was used to stress its alleged "expansionary nature" (p. 140).

Captured recordings indicate Saddam viewed Iran as constantly involved in conspiracies in order to weaken the Arab nation. "No, they are not Turbans," Saddam explains, "the Iranians are satanic Turbans, and they know how to conspire and know how to plan sedition…" (SH-SHTP-000-561). Saddam saw Iran as a useful proxy for the U.S. and Israel to harm Iraq. Saddam thought that the U.S. provided Iran with weapons in order to urge Iran to prolong the Iran-Iraq War (SH-SHTP-A-000-555). Saddam's belief in the collusion between Iran and Israel can explain some of his views that are, absent an understanding of Saddam's beliefs, perplexing. For instance, Saddam thought the U.S. was involved with the Iranian Revolution. Without going into a detailed discussion of U.S.-Iranian relations, it is clear that the revolution was a disaster for the U.S and the U.S. was unable to predict the revolution or orchestrate it. Yet, Saddam held that "they (the Americans) are involved in the events of Iran, including the removal of the shah, which is completely an American decision" (SH-SHTP-D-000-559). As mentioned, the Iran-Contra Affair served as validation for Saddam's belief in close Iranian-U.S.

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collusion. Saddam sees Iranians colluding with Israel in the captured recordings as well. In one recording he asserts that "Iran cannot do anything without the help of the Zionist entity" (SH-SHTP-A-000-626). In another recording made in 1981, Saddam envisions a chemical attack upon Iraq by Iran, planned by the Israelis. "One day, Israel will provide the Iranians with the know-how to wage a germ and chemical attack," Saddam explained. The recordings details how Saddam thought the Iranians would be emboldened and encouraged attack Iraq with chemical weapons, with the Israelis providing the materials and knowhow (SH-SHTP-A-001-039). He also believed that the attack on the Osirak Reactor by Israel in 1981 was done with the help of the Iranians and "another international party" (SH-SHTP-000-571).

Saddam's belief in Iranian, Israeli, and U.S. collusion is not *crazy* or *insane*. As Takeyh (2011) notes, Israel pursued a periphery doctrine which aimed to cultivate relations with non-Arab states in the Middle East in order to vitiate its isolation (Takeyh, 2011, p. 66–67). As Razoux (2015, p.116) notes, at the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War, Israel engaged the revolutionary regime supplying it "not only with spare parts but with growing quantities of weapons and ammunition," as a prolonged war, weakening both states, was in Israel's interests. Furthermore, at the time at the start of the Iran-Iraq War, Israel was concerned about its more pressing and proximate threat, Iraq.[33] Yet, Iran was hardly a pliable tool of Israel. Similarly, as Iran-Contra displayed, while U.S.-Iranian collusion was possible, Saddam erred in seeing Iran-Contra not as an aberrant, rather ill-executed scheme, but rather as indicative of the U.S.'s perfidious nature, thus cementing his views about the U.S (Brands, 2011b).

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[33]Takeyh notes that Israel was also concerned about the large Jewish population in Iran; Israel also held out the hope that the Iranian revolution would be a passing phenomenon (Takeyh, 2011, p. 67).

The Status Dimension: "The Central Post of the Arab Nation"

The key feature for the status dimension "is how high 'we' stand relative to 'them' in the international pecking order: are we naturally their equal (if not their superior), or will we simply never measure up" (Hymans, 2006b, p. 23). Saddam envisioned Iraq to be a great power. In Saddam's words: "we draw a large picture of Iraq. We want to possess a weight like that of China, a weight like that Soviet Union, a weight like the United Sates, and that indeed is the factual basis of our actions" (Bengio, 2002a, p. 146). Aside from comparisons between great powers and Iraq, Saddam clearly saw Iraq as the state best able to lead the pan-Arab movement. "While often conflating the concept of self and state, Saddam believed Iraq was the only Middle Eastern state capable of achieving the proper place for the Arab nation in history," writes Murray and Woods (2014a, p. 26). Addressing a gathering of the Iraqi Military in 1978, Saddam pledged to make Iraq the firm base of the Arab nation (Bengio, 2002a, p. 36). [34] Even after the U.S. invasion and capture of Saddam, he held firm in his belief about the greatness of Iraq. Saddam told his interviewer: "God had destined Iraq for greatness. Few countries has ever led the world, yet God has given Iraq a unique gift that enabled in to 'go to the top' many times" (K. M. Woods et al., 2011b, p. 87).

In a captured recording, Saddam discussed how and why he envisioned Iraq to be the central post in the Arab nation. In the recording, consistent with SIT, he makes arbitrary– and sometimes inaccurate— distinctions as to why Iraq was the state best able

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[34] Bengio notes an apparent contradiction in Saddam's use of identity if used in an instrumental fashion. If Arab identity is emphasized, this leaves out the Kurds who are linguistically and ethnically not Arab; if you emphasize a Iraqi identity, it "raises Iraq above the others in the overall Arab revival" (Bengio, 2002a, p. 36).

to lead the pan-Arab nation. While Saudi Arabia was very rich, "the human being is missing. There is no destiny of population and no quality." Algeria is unable to lead because of its "distant location" and "the limit in the depth of its national thinking, cannot assume the leadership." Saddam elaborated that "Iraq has everything going for it… it has the depth in its civilization, it has the depth in the population density, and has various types of advanced sciences in comparison to the others and has the material capabilities…No one else can carry out this role. Iraq can make this nation rise and can be its center post of its big abode" (all quotes from SH-SHTP-000-626). Saddam went on to say that if Iraq was to fail, the whole pan Arab movement would fail as well.

Case Study: The Iran- Iraq War

Fear: "The Hidden power of the Shia"

In July 1980 high ranking military officers met in Baghdad. The Iraqi army chief of staff told the group that war with Iran was possibility and asked them to prepare—but did not provide a date or specific military objective. According to Woods and Murry the generals had an idea about the *possibility* of war with Iran in July of 1980, but "most officers got the impression that such a war would not take place for at least two years" (2014, p. 47). At a different meeting with Saddam present "he (Saddam) gave his generals a single month to prepare the army and provide him with a coherent battle plan, ignoring the fact that such an enterprise generally requires considerably more time," writes Razoux (2015, p. 7). Consistent with the theory in section 3, the evidence suggests there was an *urgency to act.*

There are two reasons as to why Saddam felt the urgency to act. One was the weakness of the Iranian Army; the second was the diplomatic isolation of Iran post-hostage crisis. Both appear to have been factors in Saddam's decisions. In a recorded conversation on September 16th – the ground and air invasion commenced on the 22nd of September—Saddam and his advisors discuss Iran's diplomatic isolation. Shibli al-Aisamy tells Saddam the benefits of attacking soon, "there is no doubt that the international circumstances, currently, are in our favor to get the land back and to conduct operations. But in the future perhaps, the international circumstances will not stay the same if things take a long time." (ST-SHTP-A-000-035). In addition to Iran's diplomatic isolation, Saddam received a report from his intelligence services on June 30 1980, outlining that Iran "has no power to launch wide scale offensive operations against Iraq, or defend itself on a large scale," that the Western embargo was making the economic situation in Iran dangerous, and that more deterioration in Iran's fighting capability is to be expected (SH-GMID-D-000-842). While these may have been factors, the timing suggests that the deterioration in relations between Iran and Iraq was a factor as well. The Iranians stormed the American embassy on November 4, 1979. According to Gause, the Iranian regime started weakening under the Shah in 1977. Although it is unclear if Saddam knew this, as he only received the intelligence report in the June 1980. Saddam apparently started planning for the attack in the summer of 1980 following a sharp deterioration in relations with the Iranian regime, not immediately following the hostage crisis or revolutionary purges. Fast forward to September 1980, in a September 16th meeting Saddam told his generals that he decided to go to war with Iran in the following days. General Ali Hassan al-Majid, told Saddam about a number of risks attacking Iran. Saddam dismissed al-Majid's arguments and "asked him, 'Ali, why do you always bring

me the bad news, never the good news" (Razoux, 2015a, p. 13)?   After this exchange he "summoned his generals and ordered them to immediately go on the offensive." While the generals had some flexibility about the proper time and date, Saddam "would not tolerate the slightest delay" (Razoux, 2015a, p. 13). In sum, while there may have been a window of opportunity, Saddam clearly felt an *urgency to act*.

Revolutionary oppositionists should make *higher threat assessments*. Following Bengio, the Iranian revolution posed a general and specific threat to the Iraqi regime. In general, it posed a threat—similar to the threat revolutionary states pose to status quo states— in the form of "a somewhat ill-defined religious challenge to the secular, modernist Ba'athist ideology" (Bengio, 1985a, p. 1) The second threat, according to Bengio, was in the form of a direct overthrow—via a rebellion—orchestrated by Shia clergy in Iran. Regarding the latter, Saddam was clearly threatened by Shia agitation and attributed internal instability to Iranian meddling. As noted, he executed notable cleric Al-Sadr and his sister in April 1980; expelled over 40,000 Shi'a Iraqis; made the Shi'a ineligible to join the military; and made membership in the al-Dawa party a capital offense (F. G. Gause III, 2009; Tripp, 2002a). While it is clear that the Iranian revolution posed a challenge to both the Iraqi and Saudi regimes, Walt (1996) and Bengio (1985), argue that Saddam likely overreacted to the threat. Regarding the first general threat, Walt (1996) argues that the revolutionary regime's "ideological message has proven less compelling than many observers originally feared" (1996, p. 261). While this assessment is made ex post, Walt is correct to note the difficulties in exporting revolution. Regarding the second threat, Walt and Bengio note that states have the ability to take prophylactic measures to bolster their domestic political stability. Bengio argues that these strategies had been "quite successful" (1985, p. 6). Bengio concludes that a combination of Shi'a

passivity, a lack of organization, the regime's 'tight grip', and the Shi'a loyalty to the Iraqi state, made it unlikely that a revolution would have been successful in Iraq. Bengio concludes by stating that "the Shia threat has been magnified beyond all proportion by the regime itself" (Bengio, 1985a, p. 12). While Saddam had valid reasons to be threatened by the Islamic revolution, he blew up the threat to unreasonable proportions, which is consistent with the theory outlined in section 2.

Fear also encourages an actor to have a *lower degree of cognitive complexity*. Actors with a high degree of cognitive complexity are able to make subtle distinctions when confronted with new information (Stein, 1994b). The air attacks' effectiveness— Saddam was aiming to ape the Israelis air attacks during the Six Days War —was predicated on an intelligence report indicating that the Iranian Air Force was effectively grounded or their capability was severely diminished. Before the air attacks and ground invasion on September 22nd, Iraqi and Iranian forces exchanged artillery fire. The artillery fire was followed by air skirmishes. On September 7th, five Iraqi helicopters entered Iranian airspace, one was shot down and the other forced to return. As Razoux notes, "this was a bitter surprise for the Iraqi pilots, who thought that Iran's F-12 air-superiority fighters were grounded" (Razoux, 2015a, p. 12). Two more air skirmished followed. An Iraqi Mig-21s shot down an Iranian Phantom; on September 10th, an Iranian Tomcat destroyed an Iraqi Su-22. Razoux notes the Iranian Tomcat is a formidable aircraft with long range capabilities. These events, preceding the air attack, should have urged caution on the Iraqi side: not only was the Iranian air force certainly not grounded, but the Iranians just displayed the Tomcat's air capacities. This *should* have reminded Saddam— who was a notorious mico-manager and assiduously monitored military actions— that while the revolution may have diminished the capabilities of the Iranian Air force, the

Iranian military was a modern, well-trained military, with equipment—provided by American during the Shah's era—that was superior in many ways to the Soviet provided Iraqi equipment. The air skirmished should have raised doubts about the Iranian air force being a non-entity or about air superiority on the Iraqi side being a given (Razoux, 2015a, pp. 8–10). A rational actor should have updated plans based on this new information.

Pride: "We have to stick their face in the Mud"

Saddam aimed for an air attack similar to the Israelis' attack on Egypt during the Six Days War, in which the Israelis were able to destroy the Arab air forces on the ground in the first few hours of the attack. Not only did Saddam error in seeing the spectacular—Israel's successful surprise attack on the Arab air force—as likely, but his air force commanders should have been aware of significant limitations in their own training and capabilities, which should gave raised doubts about the Iraqi Air Force's ability to accomplish such as task. When Saddam told air force command General Mohamed Jessam al-Joury of the attack, the General—who Razoux describes as a 'good apparatchik'—"followed the dictator's wishes" (Razoux, 2015a, p. 22). It is unclear if Saddam knew the extent of the limitations of his air force. Saddam was told directly by Shibli al-Aisamy: "they (the Iranians) also have remarkable modern military bases that are spread over the coast, which is about 860 kilometers" (SH-SHTP-A-000-835). Al-Aisamy also noted that the Iranians have an excellent navy. Saddam should have been aware of the limitations on his military capabilities. Saddam who at times discussed the most specific details—such as if the Soviets will continue to provide ammunition during the war— was untroubled with the details of the air attack and did not worry about the logistical challenges. If his military did voice concern such as when Ali Hassan al-Majid voiced concerns directly to Saddam about the risks of an attack on Iran—it is likely they

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would have been brushed aside. Consistent with the theory in offered in this dissertation, Saddam displayed *an illusion of control*. What we should see in cases of such illusion is an actor overlooking important details in the implementation of policy. There is significant evidence that important details were overlooked in the implementation of the opening air attack. Evidence suggests that this attack did not even have a chance of achieving the goals articulated by Saddam.

Consider first the basic logistical challenges of the opening air attack. Hundreds of aircraft were housed in seven military bases across Iran, some of them hundreds of miles from Iraqi air bases and across mountainous terrain. The Iraqi Air Force "was hardly capable of mounting more than 90 sorties per day… and had only limited combat experience" according to Cooper and Bishop (2002, p. 72). For comparison, the Israelis launched 700 sorties a day in the Six Days War. Razoux (2015) estimates that the Iraqi Air Force would have needed to fly over 500 more sorties to have possibly achieved the destruction of the Iranian air force. In addition, as Woods and Murry note, the command system did not have any prior experience with such a complicated attack (2014, p. 101).

Compounding a general difficult logistical feat, the Iraqi Air Force was not adequately trained for such an air attack and did not have the proper equipment to achieve the objectives set. Saddam should have known this because as part of his strategy of 'coup-proofing' he limited the Iraqi's air forces ability to adequately train (Murray & Woods, 2014a). As Razoux notes, the Iraqi pilots flew too fast to destroy certain targets and lacked the proper training to line up the Iranian Tiger planes properly on the ground. Furthermore, the Iraqi sighting system was not "designed for low altitude bombing" (Razoux, 2015a, p. 25). In addition to the training deficiencies, the planes were not properly equipped. The Iranian Air Bases, built by the Shah on the American Model,

featured large runways and housed their planes in concrete reinforced bunkers. It is likely the Iraqis were unaware of this because " the distances to Iranian Airfields limited the Iraqis to human sources of intelligence to determine the status and strength of the squadrons deployed" (Murray & Woods, 2014a, p. 100). The Iraqi Air Forced lacked effective weapons to destroy concrete hangars (Razoux 2015, p. 22). Iraqi generals also planned on prioritizing destroying the Iranians radar and anti-aircraft systems, overlooking the fact that they lack effective weapons systems to destroy such systems (Razoux, 2015a, p. 22). Iraqi planes could only hold two parachute drag bombs because the weapons load had to be reduced to allow for the maximum amount of fuel in the external fuel tanks to reach some of the Iranian Air bases (Razoux, 2015a, p. 23). In order to reach the Iranian Airfields at daybreak, the Iraqi pilots had to take off at night and fly nap-of-the-earth to escape notice. Iraqi pilots were not trained to fly at night and were not equipped with the proper navigation equipment to fly nap-of-the-earth (Razoux, 2015a, p. 22). With the Iraqi Air Force not properly trained and equipped, it is not surprising that, as Razoux notes, "the Iranian Airforce came out of the attack, which was designed to permanently ground it, unharmed" (2015, p. 26). Murry and Woods make a similar conclusion: "Sloppily planned and executed, the attempt to destroy the Iranian Air Force on the ground failed" (2014, p. 101). While many military operations are difficult and limitations become obvious with the benefit of hindsight, it does appear that neither the Iraqi Air Force nor Saddam gave pause to determine if their forces were even capable of such a mission. The air attack appears to have been planned with little attention to the details of policy implementation, which matches the predictions made in the theory section.

The ground invasion was more successful and consisted of six uncoordinated drives into Iranian territory. Murry and Woods argue that success was aided by surprise and an unprepared Iranian military (2014, p. 108). Saddam proved to have gambled correctly in this instance, as the Iranian military was weakened due to the tumult of the revolution. Yet, while Saddam may have gambled correctly, the ground invasion was poorly planned and uncoordinated, mirroring the air campaign, in which the details of policy implementation were ignored. "The invasion appears to have rested on no overall military plan or conception, nor is there evidence of clear objectives" writes (Murray & Woods, 2014a, p. 108). The Iraqi military overlooked three important facets that would prove costly. The Iraqi Army failed to seal the mountain passes that would preclude the Iranians from reinforcing the front from Tehran. Secondly, the main highway—which was of strategic importance as it linked four towns in Iran—was not secured by the Iraqis. This would haunt the Iraqis as the Iranians would use this road to conduct counter-attacks over the next two years. Thirdly, they failed to plan how they would occupy key areas. This same lack of planning will be seen in the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. The Iraqi Army seemed to have wandered into Iran without any clear goals or plans, overlooking many key objectives, which is consistent with the theory outlined in section 3. As we will see in the case of the Gulf War, Saddam displays a Pollyannaish faith that his military will accomplish their objectives with little attention to the actual details of the likely engagement.

The illusion of control also makes actors insensitive to the potential unintended consequences of a particular decision. Perhaps Saddam's most consequential gamble involved how the Iranian regime would react to the Iraqi invasion. The attack made sense strategically if it either toppled the radical regime or forced the Iranian leadership to sue

for peace. Both would halt Iranian subversion and allow Saddam to take territory. In a

recorded conversation on September 16th Saddam discusses just this topic with his senior

advisors. The debate hinges on two intertwined questions: is Khomeini in charge,

specifically does he have the military under his control? And two, is Khomeini likely to

reach an agreement with Iraq after the attack? Ali Abu Hassam argued that "there is

currently no authority in Iran to make a decision except for Khomeini. There is no one

else." Hassan continues "he is a stubborn man, who claims he is coming to liberate Iraq,

so how can he tolerate the land snatched away from him? He has to be arrogant about it."

Hassam notes—correctly with the benefit of hindsight—that Khomeini is unlikely to

compromise if attacked. Saddam responds by asking about rumors of Khomeini's death;

they both have a laugh and Saddam quips that there are similar rumors about his own

death—meaning they are rumors. Saddam agrees with Hassan regarding the likelihood

of Khomeini compromising "this is correct, Khomeini cannot (compromise)." But,

Saddam then goes on to explain that he thinks that Khomeini's authority is diminishing,

his orders are sometimes not carried out, "he says something and nobody obeys." Saddam

sees both the political and military leadership fractured, the Iranian army is "non-

Khomeini" (SH-SHTP-A-000-835). Yet, as usual, Saddam's logic is convoluted. He also

asserts that something could unite them and that something would be war. Saddam

acknowledges that an attack from Iraq may not in fact unleash the centrifugal forces and

fracture the regime, but could serve to consolidate Khomeini's power. Based on this

conversation it appears that not only does Saddam recognize that Khomeini may be

unlikely to compromise, but also that an attack may serve to consolidate his regime. He

appears to be aware of the potential unintended consequences, but this does not cause

him to question the underlying strategy or to seek more information. In sum, Saddam

clearly is aware of the dangers but decides to take a roll of the dice anyway and seems

aware—but ultimately unmoved—by the dangers of this unintended consequence.

Pride also *influences an actor's ultimate goals*. This may be especially prevalent

with revolutionary nationalists who see their place in the sun and not the gutter. Saddam

clearly saw himself as the leader of the pan-Arab movement. The attack had the ability

not merely to gain territory but also to reverse the 1975 Algiers Agreement. For Saddam,

the signing of the Algiers Agreement was a 'bitter pill', and the lack of sovereignty over

the Shatt al-Arab symbolized "subjugation and humiliation by a regional rival" (Murray

& Woods, 2014a, p. 22). In an interview with journalist Faud Matar, Saddam framed

Iraq's involvement in the war as essentially an act of regional leadership and as a duty to

thwart 'Persian' advances: "We will never allow anyone to touch the Arabness of the

Gulf, its land or its people" (Matar, 1982a, p. 146). Saddam's speeches constantly refer to

his role as unifier of Arabs and his duty to thwart imperialist designs. Framing the

conflict this way had an instrumental component: it encouraged financial support from

the Gulf States, but Saddam also portrayed himself in private conversations as a regional

leader with responsibilities. In a meeting with senior officials shortly before the invasion,

Saddam's language suggests this conflict is much more than a border squabble. Saddam

goes on to explain "we have to force their head into the mud and enforce our political

will on them (striking the table with his hand) which can only happen militarily…We

want to twist their hands until they accept the legal fact" (SH-SHTP-A-000-835). The

language used in private meetings and public speeches suggest that this conflict for

Saddam was about much more than merely halting subversion: Saddam wanted to force

the Iranians into a subordinate position with himself as rightful leader. In this sense,

Saddam appeared to derive utility not just from potentially taking territory and halting

subversion, but from asserting his dominance and displaying his leadership on a level equal with Iraqi's natural 'place in the sun.'

Pride "enhances the nation's sense of the national capability if it exerts itself, to affect others behavior" (Hymans, 2006b, p. 33). Revolutionary nationalists should display *higher potential power perceptions*. As noted, while the Iranian military was weakened, a number of objective factors should have curbed Saddam's optimism about achieving his goals. Recorded conversations provide evidence of Saddam's higher power perceptions. In a recorded conversation dated October 1980, after the air and ground attack, Saddam appears to still be optimistic about 'victory.' Note that while this cannot shed light on his decision to attack, it displays his higher power perceptions *after* more information was revealed. In October 1980, Saddam was aware of the unsuccessful air attack and the ground invasion that—while relatively more successful – did not achieve the Iraqi military's stated objectives. In this recording, Saddam notes "the military results are tilting for the benefit of Iraq… our victory will be a historic one." Saddam then continues with his generic paeans regarding the greatness of the Arab nation: "Our victory will be a historic one… a victory generations will be talking about… and your role will contribute to the development of the Arab nation and its civilization and human developments" (SH-SHTP-A-001-229). Perhaps Saddam is trying to bolster the morale of his senior officers, but it is indicative of his unsupported faith in Iraqi victory. Saddam asserts that the 'greatness' of the Arab nation will ensure 'victory' with an insouciance towards his actual military ability vis-a-vis Iran's.

Case Study: The Gulf War

Fear: There is a conspiracy to weaken the Arab Nation

Saddam was hardly the first leader to desire to incorporate Kuwait into Iraq. Iraqi leaders, such as Qasim, questioned the legitimacy of the small kingdom and held a longstanding claim on Kuwait's independence dating to 1899. Relations soured between Saddam and Kuwait following the end of the Iran-Iraq War. Evidence suggests that Saddam decided to attack Kuwait in the summer of 1990 and with an apparent *urgency to act*. This matches predictions made in the theory section, which posits that "'a heightened level of fear and threat motivates people to take some kind of action—any action" (Hymans, 2006b, p. 31). Saddam believed Kuwait was part of a conspiracy to weaken the Ba'athist regime via the manipulation of oil prices. Preceding the invasion, Saddam was able to coerce the Kuwaitis to reduce production for a two month period, yet Saddam claimed that he did not trust the Kuwaitis to keep the agreement (Freedman & Karsh, 1995a; F. G. Gause III, 2009). Based on this logic, destroying the Kuwaiti regime may have been the only way to halt the actual or the potential manipulation of oil prices. In this light, the invasion of Kuwait makes sense and can explain Saddam's desire to incorporate Kuwait into Iraq, but has a difficult time explaining the apparent urgency to act. According to Gause, "there is every indication that the decision to invade Kuwait was made shortly before the invasion, with the regime feeling intense pressure to act" (F. G. Gause III, 2009, p. 92).

This urgency can explain why the Iraqi military was unprepared for the invasion. Woods (2008) notes that the Iraqi Army lacked accurate and up to date maps of Kuwait. General Hamdani in his memoirs notes that they had to rely on tourist maps in order to navigate the city (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 67). The Navy was told thirty-six hours before the invasion, leaving "the Iraqi Navy very little planning time and almost no preparation time in the run-up to the invasion of Kuwait" (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 73). The Navy lacked the proper intelligence about the Islands they were attacking (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 77). Iraqi Army aviators were told of their pending mission *that* midnight that they would attack at 0350 that morning. "A senior officer remarked … that the operations were not planned very well and were… spur of the moment, " writes Woods (2008, 80). Even more troubling, the Iraqi army appeared to have not given much thought to how Kuwait was going to be occupied and administered (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 101).

In the case of the Iran-Iraq War, there was pressure to act due to the perceived obsolescing advantages stemming from Iran's diplomatic isolation and military weakness. In the case of Kuwait, Saddam may have felt the urgency due to his acute financial distress. However, from a rationalist standpoint attacking is hardly the unequivocalyl best means of addressing this problem. Coercive diplomacy could address his financial perils. As noted, Saddam was relatively successful in forcing concessions in the forms of aid and decreased oil output from the Kuwaitis. As Gause argues, it made a great deal of sense for Saddam to "accept the Kuwaiti offer of 500 million U.S. dollars and the Kuwaiti agreement to return to its OPEC oil production quota, pocketed the gains and then come back to the table later with other demands" (F. G. Gause III, 2002, p. 53) A theory of diversionary war could explain why he attacked, but again, has difficultly with the timing and urgency. A diversionary war would still need to be planned for it to

be adequately prosecuted. What is more likely and supported by the evidence, is that

Saddam thought he was subject to an international conspiracy to weaken his regime. The

fear induced may have provided the needed motivation to launch this gamble. As we

know, no such conspiracy existed, shifting attention to why Saddam made such an

inflated and exaggerated assessment of the threat.

As outlined in the theory section, "fear tends to create, on the cognitive level, a

predisposition toward *high threat perceptions"* (Hymans, 2006b, p. 33). Saddam believed

that Iraq was subject to an international conspiracy that did not exist, validating the

hypothesis that revolutionary oppositionalists will make threat assessments that are

'exaggeratedly high.' Remember as Jettelson notes, US policy at this time was aimed at

trying to moderate and improve relations with the Iraqi regime (J. Hiltermann, 2007, pp.

37–51; Jentleson, 1994a; Karabell, 1995a). Thus, from a rational choice perspective, it is

hard to explain why Saddam believed himself to be subject to an international conspiracy.

Saddam ascribed significance to essentially unrelated and relatively innocuous events or

changes in policy.

Saddam connected a number of independent external and internal events as being

pregnant with malicious intent. In terms of external factors, following the Iran-Iraq War,

Saddam's regime was in a precarious financial position. The regime owed a staggering

amount of money to foreign creditors: $35 billion to western lenders, $11 billion to the

USSR, and more than $40 billion to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (Freedman & Karsh,

1995a). With the price of oil around 17 dollars a barrel at the end of the Iran-Iraq War,

Hussein was facing an acute fiscal problem: more liabilities than income. He either had to

decrease expenditures or increase income (Aburish, 2000b, p. 192; Freedman & Karsh,

1995a). It was in this context that Saddam interpreted Kuwaiti 'overproduction' as part of

a larger foreign scheme to weaken his regime (F. G. Gause III, 2009, p. 99) . Saddam essentially viewed the violation of oil quotas by the UAE and Kuwait as a declaration of war. He elaborated: "war is fought with soldiers and much harm is done by explosions, killing and coup attempts—but it is also done by economic means" (Freedman & Karsh, 1995a, p. 46). For a regime that relied on a degree of patronage to ensure its domestic political stability, a conspiracy to harm Iraq financially was hardly an innocuous act (Aburish, 2000b; Tripp, 2002a).

A number of trends on the systemic level likely filled Hussein with foreboding as well. With the fall of the Soviet Union, Saddam was deprived of a powerful ally. According to Freedman and Karsh, the fall of the Soviet Union removed a check on U.S.-Israeli power in the region. "In his view, the decline of Soviet power and the disintegration of the eastern Bloc had deprived the Arab World of its traditional allies and left the arena open for a US-Israel diktat," write Freedman and Karsh (1995, p. 30).

Saddam interpreted a small shift in U.S. policy as being aimed at weakening his regime. Congress placed limits on credits for Iraqi purchases of American rice; American and British officials moved to block the export of dual use technology; and Congressional resolutions criticized Saddam for human rights abuses. Voice of America (VOC) broadcasters deeply troubled Saddam as they compared him to recently fallen dictators in Eastern Europe. Saddam was unnerved regarding negative reports in the media about Iraqi's use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq War, negative attention about Iraqi nuclear weapons programs, and a money laundering scandal involving an Atlanta Bank (F. G. Gause III, 2009, p. 92–93).

Compounding Saddam's views of American hostility, was his poor understanding of U.S. politics writ large. According to the Iraqi Perspective Project, Saddam was

confused about how Congress might not reflect the views or policies of the executive branch (Woods et al, 2006). Similarly, it is likely, according the Karabell, that Saddam "interpreted criticism from the US media as criticism from the Bush Administration" (1995, p. 39).

According to Gause (2009), Saddam thought an air strike was likely from Israel during this time, similar to the strike on the Osirak reactor in 1981. Saddam saw other actors aimed to thwart his quest for weapons of mass destruction. A Canadian scientist, Gerald Bell, was assassinated in Belgium on March 22, 1990. Bell was involved in a project to develop a 'super-gun' for the Iraqi military. Saddam attributed Bell's assassination to the Israelis (K. M. Woods, 2008a). A few weeks later, European countries impounded high-tech devices thought to be of dual use for an Iraqi weapons program (F. G. Gause III, 2009, p. 95).

Internal aspects were a cause of great concern as well. During the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam was forced to concede a degree of autonomy to the military. Upon completion of the conflict and ever concerned about the militaries ability to orchestrate a coup, Saddam aimed to purge and break the corporate coherence of the Iraqi Army (Cockburn & Cockburn, 2000). In 1988 and 1989 "scores of officers were arrested and executed" (F. G. Gause III, 2009, p. 93). Hundreds of officers were forced to retire as well. Saddam apparently saw the internal conspirators being helped by outside powers. According to Al-Bazzaz, Ba'athist offices believed "during 1989 that a number of foreign powers, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the U.S. were attempting to infiltrate Iraqi society to collect intelligence and pressure the government" (F. G. Gause III, 2009, p. 93). In May 1989 Adnan Khayrallah, a prominent Iraqi general, died in a helicopter crash. Razoux (2015) argues that this crash was no accident as was likely ordered by Saddam's son

Uday because of his belief in Khayrallah's independent sources of power and popularity within the military. In addition, three attempts were made on Hussein's life in the period of 1988 to 1990. The last two were especially troubling as one originated with the Republican Guard—Saddam's elite force—and one in which Hussein "narrowly escaped an assassination attempt by Army officers while he was riding in his car through Baghdad" (Freedman & Karsh, 1995a, p. 30).

How do we know Saddam was troubled by this conspiracy? Saddam personally brought up the Voice of American broadcasts with April Glaspie. Tariq Aziz raised the conspiracy issue with James Baker in a meeting with Washington. Via channels in the Saudi embassy, Saddam voiced concern to President Bush regarding U.S. intentions. The President aimed to reassure Saddam that there was no such conspiracy, yet, according to Tariq Aziz—especially after Iran-Contra—Saddam was unmoved by U.S. pledges. Wafic al-Sammuri, a senior Iraqi general that defected, claims that Saddam told him in March 1990: "America is coordinating with Saudi Arabia. The UAE and Kuwait are in a conspiracy against us. They are trying to reduce the price of oil to affect our military industries and our scientific research, to force us to reduce the size of our armed forces … You must expect from another direction an Israeli military strike, or more than one, to destroy some of our important targets as part of this conspiracy" (F. G. Gause III, 2009, p. 93). Wafic al-Samurri also notes that in early 1990, the Iraqi intelligence services began receiving reports "from Saddam's offices" about plans to strike Iraqi weapons facilities (F. G. Gause III, 2009, p. 93). Saddam appeared to be deeply troubled by this conspiracy. In this period of time, Saddam made his famous 'burn half of Israel speech'—"by God, we will make fire eat up half of Israel if it tries against Iraq" (Karabell, 1995a, p. 40)— and executed Iranian born British citizen, Farzad Bazoft,

resulting in the withdraw of the British ambassador to Iraq. Saddam publicly justified the execution of Bazolft and claimed that western powers were trying to frame him for developing nuclear weapons (Karabell, 1995a, p. 39).

This is clearly a case of exaggerated threat perception. There were small changes in US policy, specifically the suspension of credits for agricultural goods. Additionally there was also Congressional criticism regarding human rights abuses. But, the U.S. government was not part of an elaborate plot to weaken the Iraqi regime. In fact, just the opposite: until the invasion of Kuwait, the US was following a policy of 'constructive engagement' with Iraq (Karabell, 1995a, p. 45). As NSD-26 outlined, the Bush administration aimed to make Iraq a "pillar of US policy in the Gulf, a bulwark against Iran, and a possible ally of US interests in the Arab-Israeli dialogue, Lebanon, and the Taif accords" (Karabell, 1995a, p. 37). The US made numerous attempts to assure Saddam of its benign intent. President Bush publically reiterated his desire for continued constructive engagement; Bob Dole and Alan Simpson, two Republican senators, traveled to Mosul on April 11 1990 to personally reassure Saddam of Bush's desire for better relations; April Glaspie wrote to the Iraqis, regarding the VOC broadcasts, that "it was not the intention of the US to question the legitimacy of the regime or to interfere in its internal affairs" (Karabell, 1995a, p. 39). Yet these gestures did not move Saddam. Consistent with the theory, he essentially connected a myriad of independent events into a tapestry that involved the US and Israel orchestrating a massive campaign to destabilize his regime. Without the belief in this conspiracy, it is difficult to explain why he rushed and took the leap to invade Kuwait at the time he did.

Revolutionary oppositionalist should also display a *lower level of cognitive complexity* when interacting with key comparison others. Saddam relied on crude beliefs

in his assessments of U.S. coalition military capabilities. Saddam constantly reiterated that the U.S. was a 'paper tiger' and did not have the resolve to fight when faced with the possibility of significant casualties (Woods et al, 2006). He also relied on amorphous and difficult-to-measure metrics like morale, and placed faith in his military's ability to 'take the initiative.' His reliance on such factors allowed Saddam to be optimistic even after the sustained air campaign and in the face of an objective, superior military force. He was able to dismiss important details such as the size and technical superiority of the coalition by relying on crude beliefs about the Iraqi's fighting spirit and ability to absorb casualties. Before the invasion in a taped meeting with Yasir Arafat, Saddam explained his decision-making style, "this battle will develop... some might do calculations in regards to the nation. I do not calculate the abilities of the nation." Saddam continued: "I do not calculate in the classical way. How many artilleries, how many planes… this is important but what is more important—is that the son of the nation is able to touch the future with his fingers" (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 52). He, also, relied on a number of analogies to the Iran-Iraq War to guide his decision making.

This was exemplified with Saddam's decision to invade the town of al-Khafji on January 29th 1991. After the initial Iraqi ground invasion of Kuwait and after the beginning of the coalition's air campaign, Saddam personally oversaw a military maneuver to attack and occupy the town of al-Khafji, a town lying just on the Saudi side of the Saudi-Kuwait border. By January 17th 1991, the town was evacuated due to its proximity to Kuwait. According to Woods (2008), the rationale for the operation involved 'taking the initiative'; they hoped, as well, to force ground engagements with the coalition forces while the Iraqi forces *still* had the capabilities (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 16). Putting aside any judgments about the benefits of such an engagement for the Iraqi

side in the larger context of the conflict, Saddam was personally involved with this mission, traveling to Basra to speak to commanders. According to senior military officials present at the meeting, Saddam's rationale for the attack hinged on a number of analogies to the Iran-Iraq War. Saddam argued that they were successful in the early stages of the Iran-Iraq War because "we took the initiative of challenging the enemy and attacked it in the first two weeks of the war." He continues to explain that after we lost the initiative, the war slowed and "dragged on for eight years." Secondly, Saddam found that "this enemy'—the U.S. led coalition—lacked a level of determination and "would collapse when confronted" (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 18).

There are numerous problems with this reasoning which resulted in Saddam making erroneous conclusions, which is consistent with the theory outlined in the theory section. For instance, the basic comparison between the Iranian military and the vastly superior 33 nation coalition is extremely facile. One could argue before the air campaign that Saddam was unaware of the coalition's technical superiority. Yet, the air campaign which commenced on January 17th should have left little ambiguity as to the coalition's dominance. The Iraqi military certainly understood this, as the Iraqi military was unable to move or even resupply and repair its damaged equipment, which was something which the Iranian military during the Iran-Iraq war was never able to achieve. Furthermore, Saddam understood and made the basic decision to invade Iran with the belief that the Iranian military was weakened due to the revolutionary purges. The U.S. left little ambiguity as to their capabilities as they amassed on 370,000 troops on the Saudi border in preparation for the ground campaign. This was not an unorganized mess as Saddam thought of the state of the Iranian military. Saddam's belief in the coalition's lack of morale and dedication may be slightly more valid, yet again the reasoning is

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questionable. For instance, the benefit of this attack is predicated on the U.S. engaging with the Iraqi army on the ground. This is unlikely as the U.S. would probably not be easily drawn into a ground engagement as they have just achieved unrivaled air superiority. Saddam seemed little concerned about these details and rationalized the benefits of the attack with platitudes about 'keeping the initiative' and destroying the enemies' morale, which is consistent with a lower level of cognitive complexity. If an actor was displaying a higher degree of cognitive complexity, the actor would desire more information and not be as reliant on crude heuristics.

Military historians find the battle of al-Khafji a 'draw.' The official Iraqi Ba'athist history labeled it a major victory because it displayed the Iraqi armies' 'sophistication' against a superior force and the battle served to increase Iraqi morale (K. M. Woods, 2008a). Saddam told his senior staff in early February of the success of this operation. It seems merely confronting a superior military was providing positive utility for Saddam (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 27). As Saddam was fond of saying: "the real chance is the one you use not the one you think about" (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 197). One could not find a better quote that encapsulates Saddam's desire to take 'leaps in the dark.'

Pride before the fall

Like many wars, the overall project to incorporate Kuwait into Iraq was a risky gamble based on a number of contingencies. Saddam's project had a chance of success and some of his gambles proved correct—Saddam was not *crazy* or *insane*. This section argues that Saddam's NIC—which was revolutionary oppositionalist—can be linked to a number of behavioral, observable implications linked to the emotion of pride.

Specifically, the emotion of pride encouraged Saddam to overestimate the likelihood of success and to encourage Saddam to see events as more manageable than they were.

The theory sections discusses pride and linked it to a number of behavioral implications. The *Illusion of Control* encourages actors to feel a sense of control over events that an actor is in fact, unable to influence (Thompson, 1999). Furthermore, "such illusions short-circuit searches for information about potential unintended consequences of a given decision, and they also produce inattention to the details of policy implementation," writes Hymans (2006, p. 33). A different actor may have looked at the invasion of Kuwait as unleashing a series of uncontrollable events. He seemed to be aware of many dangers but ultimately pushed ahead with his plans. Saddam likely decided to invade knowing outside involvement was a possibility. As a number of uncertainties were resolved about the United States willingness and ability to eject the Iraqi Army from Kuwait, he was still not only optimistic about the likelihood of success, but optimistic about his ability to negotiate a ceasefire right up until the beginning of the ground campaign. At a number of junctures, Saddam pushed ahead with his plan with the facile belief that events would break his way.

For Saddam to swallow up Kuwait, a number of contingencies had to break in his favor. The gamble hinged on the likelihood of outside involvement. Offensive realists claim that Saddam thought U.S. involvement was unlikely. I argue, echoing Freedman and Karsh's conclusion, that "Saddam was sensitive to the possibility of U.S. interference" but choose to invade anyway (1995, 62). A few pieces of evidence support this claim. Saddam was a student of Middle Eastern history and certainly understood that Qasim's challenge to Kuwait's independence in 1961 invited British intervention (Alani,

1990).[35] Saddam claimed that Qasim erred in revealing his desire to incorporate Kuwait into Iraq, thereby inviting western intervention. The operational secrecy preceding the invasion of Kuwait was justified, according to Woods (2008), in order to preempt actions by the U.S, suggesting he was sensitive to the possibility of outside involvement. Iraqi intelligence reports also hinted that outside intervention was a possibility. On July 25th 1990, the director of Iraqi intelligence produced a study regarding the likelihood of outside involvement. The study "hinted that Kuwait would try to 'internationalize' any crisis and noted that the U.S. had declared that it would intervene to help Kuwait" (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 62). More broadly, Saddam saw Western powers as constantly aiming to thwart the Ba'athist project, which suggests he would find it unlikely that Western powers would stand by while Kuwait—a U.S. ally—was attacked. Furthermore, as noted, the pledges of U.S. indifference were unlikely to be believed as the captured tapes indicate that Saddam's was convinced of American perfidy. Based on this evidence it is likely that Saddam understood that outside involvement was a possibility, but decided to take a roll of the dice anyway. Immediately following the invasion on August 4th 1990, Saddam, according to Woods et al, was unconcerned about the likelihood of outside involvement, "telling his ministers 'do not worry about the small things: only pay attention to what is going on in Kuwait" (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 93). Again, Saddam made decisions with the naive hope that things would essentially 'work out.'

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[35] Iraq had longstanding claims on the territory of Kuwait. Upon Qasim taking power in a military coup in 1958, Qasim refused to acknowledge Kuwait's' independence and employed provocative language hinting at incorporating Kuwait into Iraq. The British, based on faulty intelligence, preemptively moved into the region to dissuade Qasim from action. See Alani (1990) for details. If the U.S. made a similar move— preemptively moved troops into the region before Saddam had the chance to invade—this may have precluded Saddam's 1990 invasion. Note, I concede that systemic level variables are important. The theory I employ argues that revolutionary oppositionalists are not crazy or impervious to systemic pressures, just that they are more likely to take leaps in the dark in the face of uncertainty.

His behavior between the initial Iraqi ground invasion and the beginning of the coalition air campaign (August 2 1990 to January 17th 1991) displays a similar dynamic: a Pollyannaish belief that somehow Iraq would nevertheless 'win.' Saddam gambled as well that even if the U.S. did become involved, the U.S. would be unwilling to eject the Iraqi army from Kuwait. This was based on Saddam's belief that U.S. action would be limited to air strikes or sanctions, because Saddam believed that the U.S. was a 'paper tiger.' He thought the U.S. was unable to absorb casualties and would not have the stomach for a prolonged ground campaign. As Saddam told April Glaspie, "yours is a society which cannot accept 10,000 dead in one battle" (Freedman & Karsh, 1995a, p. 276). In a recorded conversation dated August 7th 1990, Saddam explains that if the U.S. does engage "all they can do is boom, boom, and boom … so what? Nothing will happen, we will give them hell. Give me once instance when an airplane has settled a situation." Saddam continues, "We are not like Panama, people to be scared by airplanes" (SH-SHTP-A-001-233). Again this view is not unreasonable: many in the administration, notably Colin Powell, argued that economic sanctions would be the correct response or at least should be 'given the time to work' (See Woodward 2002). It should be remembered, as well, that at the time U.S. policy makers did not see ejecting the Iraqi Army from Kuwait as being a 'walk in the park.' Iraq still possessed, according to some estimates, the fourth largest army in the world (Freedman & Karsh, 1995a).

Saddam also thought that Arab states would not dare ask for U.S. support. This would preclude the stationing of troops in Saudi Arabia and would divide the Arab coalition. Saddam attempted to divide the coalition by linking Palestinian issues to leaving Kuwait and by attacking Israel, hoping for an Israeli response and forcing Arab states to ally with the U.S. and Israel against their fellow Arabs. While some Arab states

were put in very difficult positions—King Hussein of Jordan supported Iraq for domestic

political reasons—Saddam overestimated his support among Arab states and the Saudi's

ultimately agreed to allow U.S. troops to be stationed in Saudi Arabia.[36]

It is important to reiterate that Saddam is not a hands-off leader: he was directly

involved with the planning for the defense of Kuwait.[37] Furthermore, captured documents

note that the intelligence reports circulating "did not minimize the challenges ahead" (K.

M. Woods, 2008a, p. 127) . An intelligence report dated August 27 indicated that the

number of troops amassed (the coalition troops) on the Saudi border exceeded the

number needed to defend the Saudi Kingdom—showing that the coalition was preparing

not just to defend Saudi Arabia. Another report dated August 29th, indicated that "they

(the US coalition) believe that the embargo policy is insufficient as a political measure,

also they will not wait long before they attack" (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 128). Another

report dated November 4 argued "that the American administration is serious about

attacking Iraq, but we have not received any intelligence evidence that enables us to

identify the right timing of the attack" (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 129). The movement of

troops was accompanied by statements from H.W. Bush. Besides the Rose Garden

statement—'this aggression will not stand'— which may have been dismissed as an

undisciplined comment, Bush said before a joint session of Congress on September

11,1990, that "our quarrel is with Iraq's dictator and with his aggression. Iraq will not be

permitted to annex Kuwait. That's not a threat, that's not a boast, that's just the way it's

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[36] Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States were directly threatened by Iraq. Syria did not support the invasion as Saddam and Al-Assad had a longstanding contentious relationship. Mubarak was personally livid with Saddam because Saddam broke a personal pledged not to invade (Freedman & Karsh, 1995a). Jordan, Yemen, the PLO, Sudan, and Mauritania, refused to condemn Iraq. Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya, "tried to remain on the fence" (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 104)

[37] A recent book by John Nixon, a CIA analyst, claims that before the 2003 invasion Saddam had essentially disengaged from the daily affairs of running the Iraqi state to work on his novels. But, it appears, at this time Saddam is still providing "hands-on" leadership (Nixon, 2016).

going to be" (quoted in Woods 2008, 108). One could not ask for a more explicit threat with the accompanying 'audience costs.' This should have given Saddam concern: the U.S. – to use the language of rationalist choice—was sending 'costly signals' to Saddam about its willingness to use force to restore Kuwait's sovereignty.

By January of 1991 a number of uncertainties had been resolved. Congress voted to support the ground invasion; Saudi Arabia allowed U.S. troops on its soil; the coalition appeared to be relatively robust and stable; and the U.S. had amassed a large force on the Kuwaiti border. According to the Iraqi Perspectives Project, Iraqi intelligence officers were fond of reading the *Washington Post*, making it extremely likely they were unaware of these developments (Woods et al, 2006). Yet, by January 16th, Saddam still held out hope. He thought that the Iraqi's great numerical superiority and their dedication to the Arab cause would be able to inflict enough casualties on the U.S. that they would sue for peace, leaving Saddam with some of his war booty. Rationalists models have a difficult time explaining why—as the strategic landscape became clearer—why Saddam was still holding out hope for an Iraqi victory.

Captured documents and recordings indicate that Saddam held out hope for a diplomatic solution until February 22nd. Even after the air campaign, "Saddam resolved to remain in Kuwait as long as there remained even a chance of success while simultaneously readying the Iraqi government to counter the invasion of Iraq proper" (K. M. Woods et al., 2011b, p. 188) At this point, Saddam had already passed the deadline set by the UN. In this period, not only did Saddam see a powerful display of air superiority, but he received intelligence reports about the coalition's superior capabilities. There was also deterioration in his soldiers' morale—although Saddam may have been unaware of this or may have attributed reports of poor morale to coalition propaganda. In a report

dated February 18th, Saddam's director of intelligence provided what Woods (2008) calls "a pessimistic and ultimately accurate assessment." The director wrote, "we see that the dimensions of the conflict are such that we could not possibly overcome, as far as the Kuwait issue is concerned" (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 207). It is not known if Saddam personally read this report. The bombing was taking a toll on morale as well. A member of the Republican Guard, retrospectively recounting his experience in 1991, found that the bombing "had a very big psychological influence on the fighters, which led a large number to flee their corps and their defensive positions" (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 208). What may have avoided the ground campaign would have been an unconditional withdrawal (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 211). On February 22, Saddam told Aziz to announce that Iraq would withdraw from Kuwait over a three week period *if* the international community removed the sanctions against the regime. Due to the qualifier *if*, Bush took this as a conditional withdrawal and rejected the proposal. Recordings indicate Saddam was genuinely surprised that the last minute negotiations by Aziz were unsuccessful (K. M. Woods et al., 2011b). Saddam, just like in the Iran-Iraq War, held out hope that Tariq Aziz would be able to lead Saddam out of the corner he had maneuvered himself into.

The ground campaign began on February 24th 1991. Recordings capture how Saddam dealt with dispiriting information of Iraqi battlefield losses. In a recording on February 24th 1991, an unidentified male tells Saddam of reports indicating that over 500 Iraqi soldiers have surrendered and some units have been hit with over 500 artillery shells. Saddam flippantly dismisses these reports as fabrications, propaganda to diminish Iraqi morale. An unidentified male quips "the media is dirty," and Saddam responds "what they would give—they would announce things they hope to occur or what they

expect to occur" (SH-SHTP-A-000-666, 11). Later in the recording Tariq Aziz and others speculate that if the American did in fact capture thousands of prisoners, they should show them on TV, asserting that the Americans are lying. It is unclear at some points in the recording whether 'they' refers to Americans or the media, nonetheless it is clear that Saddam discounts various pieces of information, diminishing Iraqi battlefield losses. On or around February 24th, Saddam was not only discounted troubling information; he was still hoping that the coalition will crumble. Saddam elaborated, "I don't think this international coalition will continue to the end" (SH-SHTP-A-000-931). In another recording, an advisor identified as Comrade Muhammad, tells Saddam that an entire Iraqi corps was overrun, Saddam shot back, "this is lying" (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 225).

Pride encourages the need to *act autonomously* as well. Pride encourages "people (to) want to do on their own what they think they can do on their own" (Hymans, 2006b, p. 34). It is unclear what concessions Kuwait could have made to appease Saddam—they did agree to reduce oil production for a period of time. Yet, as Freedman and Karsh (1995) note, there was a status dimension motivating Saddam's actions and demands. Saddam saw Kuwait as a parasitic neighbor who did not acknowledge Iraq's sacrifice during the Iran-Iraq War. "In Saddam's opinion, the Kuwaitis did not treat him with due respect, or take his word seriously" (Freedman & Karsh, 1995a, p. 62). Saddam appeared to be receiving positive utility—aside from the material benefits of invasion and foregoing the possible benefits of cooperation—in putting these 'arrogant' Kuwaitis in their place. "Who do they think they are? They think they're better than any other Arab country and they look down on everyone else?" Saddam charged in a captured recording. In interpreting this statement, it appears that Saddam takes their non-acquiescence as an affront to his leadership (quote in SH –SHTP-A-001-232).

Saddam appeared to gain utility from merely standing up to the U.S. Note that Saddam thought the U.S. had an undue amount of influence over the U.N and often conflated actions from the U.N. as merely reflecting American influence. "The more they (the U.N) increase its resolutions, the more unbending we become," Saddam explained to Tariq Aziz in a *private* recording made in late September 1990. "I hope they will not become too adamant, because this kind of world in fact does not deserve respect. This low level of being subservient to America does not meet with any kind of respect from us at all." Saddam continued, "it is disgusting the way the American is leading them (the U.N) under its whip and brings them to any decision it wants from them" (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 108). Instead of recognizing its diplomatic isolation—only a handful of states either abstained or declared support for Saddam's invasion—he appear to relish his confrontation and derive utility by not submitting to the U.S.'s and the U.N.'s authority. After the Mother of all Battles, Saddam was fond of framing the battle as a success, simply because the Ba'athist regime survived. There are undoubtedly propagandistic reasons for this retrospective judgement. Nonetheless, Saddam constantly reiterates how Iraq 'stood up' to the Americans and survived in the face of overwhelming force. He told a group of senior officers in 1992 in a *private* conversation, "no one dared to stand against America, but Iraq, this small country with all its circumstances as a third world country, resisted America" (K. M. Woods, 2008a, p. 299). Saddam appeared to "derive utility from the act of standing alone" (Hymans, 2006b, p. 34), exactly as the theory predicts.

Consistent with theory, Saddam also displayed *higher relative power perceptions*. The higher power perceptions cannot be divorced from Saddam's flawed strategic assumptions: such as his views that the US coalition was highly sensitive to casualties

and the belief in the superior morale of the Iraqi army which enabled them to withstand the coalitions attacks.[38] Saddam also believed that dislodging an enemy from their position—attacking a fortified position—required a higher force ratio as well (Freedman & Karsh, 1995a). Saddam envisioned a direct clash between coalition forces and Iraqi forces as inflicting heavy casualties—a reasonable assumption. The U.S. coalition would likely not play to Saddam's strengths and attack the Iraqi army where they were heavily fortified. Saddam—who liked to claim to be a great military strategist—failed to predict, as the saying goes, that the enemy gets a vote. This may be understandable and it would hardly be the first time a leader failed to account for an enemy's actions. Yet, I offer a few pieces of evidence which suggest that Saddam should have been aware of these vulnerabilities.

Firstly, Saddam claimed to be a student of the Six-Day War (Murray & Woods, 2014a). He should have been aware that "numerically inferior forces can be victorious if able to exploit qualitative or tactical advantages" (Freedman & Karsh, 1995a, p. 280). One such advantage is air superiority. The air campaign forced the Iraqis to displace some of their forces to limit the destruction from the coalition's air campaign (K. M. Woods, 2008a). The defensive ratio does not guarantee success and could be overcome with technical superiority, something the air campaign should have displayed. Secondly, as Freedman and Karsh (1995) discuss, "Saddam could not ensure a heavy concentration of defense forces *all along* the line, for he could have no confidence that the coalition

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[38] It should be noted as well that Saddam's goals changed over the course of the campaign and he redefined success at different stages. The initial goal of occupying Kuwait morphed into success being defined as the regime surviving. In the case of the latter, Saddam was correct, ignoring that overthrowing the Ba'athist regime by coalition forces was never the goal of the US led coalition. This seems to suggest that utility was gained not from any objective territorial gains—such as incorporating Kuwait into Iraq—but by merely standing up to the international coalition. He also redefines success for domestic political purposes, but he seems to believe in the idea of success by surviving in the private recording as well.

would confine its attention solely to Kuwait" (1995, p. 280). While Saddam could not predict the coalitions 'left hook,'[39] he should have been aware that he did not have the resources to maintain the force ratio across such a relatively long expanse of territory. Third, Saddam should have been aware of his vulnerabilities as revealed during the Iran-Iraq War, when the Iranians were able to breach his defenses. The Iranians breached his lines with untrained Iranian teenagers and at no point did the Iranians achieve the level of air superiority that the allied campaign achieved. To boot, Saddam was forced to repulse these breaches with the heavy use of chemical weapons, which he was aware of because few people were authorized to employ their use.[40] In sum, consistent with many of Saddam's decisions, he overlooks his vulnerabilities while inflating the advantages.

Conclusion

Saddam's two cases—combined—provides the best case for the identity driven model of decision making. Saddam displayed exaggerated threat perceptions in both cases, interpreting the threat of Shia agitation out of proportion in the run-up to the Iran Iraq War and, in the case of the Gulf War, envisioning a conspiracy where one did not exist. In both cases, there was a clear urgency to act, leaving the military to scramble to prepare. Lower cognitive complexity was on display as well: Saddam relied on crude beliefs in terms of understanding how the U.S. would likely respond to an invasion of Kuwait—seeing the U.S. as being casualty adverse, and holding such views even as the U.S. signaled its willingness to intervene and employ military means to eject the Iraqi Army out of Kuwait. In the case of the invasion of Iran, Saddam did not update his

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[39] The coalition deceived the Iraqi forces by staging a decoy of an amphibious landing in Kuwait while divisions went around the front lines and encircled the Iraqi forces.

[40] Saddam was reluctant to use chemical weapons because he the thought their benefits were primarily psychological, and thus, subject to diminishing returns.

information after the initial air skirmishes *before* the invasion, which may have provided

information undermining the belief that the Iranian Air Force was essentially grounded.

The pride dimension was essential to explain both "leaps in the dark." Saddam

appeared to derive utility by defying the U.S. in the case of the Gulf War—"I was the

only one to stand-up to America"—and in acting as the leader of the pan-Arab movement

in containing the "Persian Menace" in the Iran-Iraq War. The illusion of control was

evident. As Murray and Woods (2016) document, the initial air campaign in the Iran-Iraq

War was nothing short of ambitious and it did not appear that the Iraqi Air Force had the

capabilities to accomplish such a feat, which was of little worry to Saddam. Invading

Kuwait also hinged on a number of contingencies: the U.S. would not become involved;

that the Saudis would not allow the stationing of troops on Saudi soil; and that if the U.S.

did become involved, they would be unwilling to force the Iraqi military out of Kuwait,

suggesting that Saddam underappreciated the unintended consequences of his actions.

Saddam also overestimated his own capabilities. In the case of the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam

had to overlook a number of Iranian objective advantages, but thought Iran's military was

sufficiently weakened. The case of Kuwait is telling: even after more information is

revealed about U.S.'s will and capabilities, the tapes show Saddam was still confident of

victory.

CHAPTER IV

FIDEL CASTRO

Many accounts of The Cuban Missile Crisis portray the crisis as a confrontation between two superpowers. Portrayed in this manner, Cuba is more a place where the drama unfolds, than a place where independent actors make important decisions. While the crisis was indeed a confrontation between two superpowers and the USSR held control over the nuclear weapons, portraying the conflict in this manner diminishes the importance of the Cuban decision. As Weldes (1999) notes, because the USSR needed Cuban approval, the Cubans were key players in this drama and Castro was not coerced into accepting the weapons (1999, p. 82). While Castro may have not been consulted regarding the final agreement between Kennedy and Khrushchev, Castro, according to Soviet General Gribkov, was a key player in this drama, as the decision to deploy nuclear weapons "was adopted jointly" (Blight, Allyn, & Welch, 2002a, p. 66). This analysis focuses on Castro's decisions, decisions that arguably threatened the existence of both the Cuban state and the survival of Castro's regime—a decision that was both risky and not to be taken lightly.

This case has both strengths and weaknesses. In terms of weaknesses, the triangular nature of the crisis poses complications for any analysis. The difficulty lies in trying to pick apart aspects of the crisis attributed to Soviet or Cuban decision-making. For instance, Castro disagreed with the Soviets regarding *how* to deploy the missiles. Because Castro did not have complete control over the deployment, it is difficult to

cleanly link the deployment to Castro. Nonetheless, Castro *could have* insisted on deploying the missiles in the fashion he preferred, as U.S. retaliation would likely be aimed at the Cubans. Furthermore, the USSR and the Cubans negotiated the deployment. Thus, Castro acquiescing to the nature of the deployment should be considered a decision. Another leader may have been unwilling to attach the security of her regime to such an enterprise, being able to speculate as to the risks involved.

A more serious complication involves the general opacity of the Cuban regime. While historians have gained access to the archives of the USSR, Cuban records remain difficult to access. Castro took part in the 'critical oral history project' as part of a series of conferences organized by Bright, Ally, and Welch, but Castro's statements at various conferences should be taken with a healthy amount of skepticism. Until the archives are made public or a drastic change in leadership in Cuba takes place, researchers will have to use the available evidence to make inferences about Castro's decision-making. This type of problem is hardly unique to Cuba and the opacity is surmountable.

With that said, this case offers a number of strengths. It can be considered a critical case study. If emotion figured prominently in one of the most important decisions in the Cold War, it is likely that emotion was at play in other decisions as well. Due to the seriousness of the deployment and the gravity of deploying nuclear weapons, actors should have been sufficiently incentivized to make the decisions in an atmosphere of 'cool rationality.'

Emotion being involved in decision-making does not mean that material features were unimportant: in the messy and overdetermined world of political science, one single variable does not usually explain most cases. Yet, I will argue that with the amount of uncertainty and risk involved in this decision, emotion provided the key why Castro took

such a 'leap in the dark.' Indeed, as Hymans argues, the potential cocktail of fear and pride may give an actor just such a drive to make such leaps.

This analysis is organized with reference to Hymans' theory, linking Hymans' variables to outcomes. Revolutionary oppositionalists should display the behavioral characteristics discussed in the theory section. Before proceeding to the analysis, it is important to note the limitations with the existing explanations, focused around the decision by Castro to place nuclear weapons on the island.

Why Did Castro Accept the Weapons?

Castro's primary motivation was to deter an U.S. invasion. While a major motivation, a few questions remain. Firstly, this justification cannot explain the size and scope of the deployment. Castro agreed to a deployment that went "considerably beyond Cuba's needs" to solely deter an attack on the island (Halperin, 1973, p. 166). Halperine speculates that a measured deployment designed to only deter an attack could have been accomplished with enough resources deployed and concealed in "mobile tactical units," with nuclear weapons but with limited range. The actual deployment included missiles with the potential to target major cities on the U.S. Eastern Seaboard. A smaller deployment promised additional benefits: It was less likely to be discovered (assuming the need to deploy the weapons secretly) and could give more credence to Cuba's claim that the weapons were purely for defensive purposes. In addition, as Horlick (1964) notes, if the purpose was to deter an attack on Cuba, it would have made more sense to have some ambiguity regarding who actually controlled the nuclear weapons. With the Soviets still in control, doubt remained regarding the Soviets' willingness to risk nuclear escalation in the face of an U.S. invasion.

Secondly, this also assumes the deployment of nuclear weapons was the most obvious means to deter an invasion. With the benefit of hindsight, the act had the potential to precipitate an invasion that the missiles were designed to deter. If the United States was looking for a pretext to invade, the placing of 'offensive' weapons in Cuba would have been just such a pretext.[41] What other options were available? One means would be for the USSR to offer the Cubans a formal alliance with the promise to come to Cuba's defense in the event of an invasion. Due to various dynamics in the Soviet Bloc, the USSR was not able or willing to offer Cuba membership in the Warsaw Pact (Garthoff, 1989a). Similarly, a separate, formal alliance may have complicated the USSR's relations with other communist states and may have been unavailable. Khrushchev did make a pledge in June 1960 to come to Cuba's defense in the case of attack. Khrushchev explained: "figuratively speaking, Soviet artilleryman, in the case of need, can with their missile fire support the Cuban people if the aggressive forces of the Pentagon dare begin intervention against Cuba…" (quoted in Dinerstein 1978, p. 82). According to Dinerstein, the statement represented an official position and was treated as such by the Cubans. Che Guevara "was quoted as saying that Khrushchev's statement 'showed that the imperialists could not invade Cuba with impunity'" (1978, p. 91). While the pledge was vague—possibly deliberately vague for strategic reasons—it provided some expectation that the USSR would come to the aid of Cuba in the case of invasion. The placing of nuclear weapons on the island may be a 'costly signal' to add credence to Khrushchev's pledge or to enhance the USSR's capabilities in general. But, even during the crisis, after nuclear weapons were being emplaced, because the USSR always held operational control over the nuclear weapons and due to the United States' conventional

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[41] The historian Arthur Schlesinger makes this point in Blight, Allyn, and Welch (2002).

and nuclear superiority, doubts remained about the USSR's commitment to protect Cuba in the case of invasion.[42] While the placement of nuclear weapons on the island would bolster the credibility of a claim to protect the island in the case of invasion, the value added in terms of credibility should be weighed against the likelihood of provoking an attack with which the weapons were designed to deter. For this reason, it is likely that the deployment served other objectives in addition to deterring an attack on the island.

In sum, if the defense of Cuba was the primary and only objective from Castro's standpoint, the deployment could have been much smaller. In addition, as of June of 1960 the USSR already pledged to come to the defense of Cuba in the case of an US invasion that theoretically serve the purposes of deterrence.

The second rationale offered by Castro was that he was fulfilling his "international proletarian duty." Castro told French journalist Claude Julien in 1963 "…since we are getting a large amount of help from the socialist camp, we felt we could not refuse. That is why we accepted them. It was not in order for our own defense but to strengthen socialism on the international scale" (quoted in Halperine 1973, p.168). This explanation can explain why the deployment included nuclear weapons and was larger than was necessary for the defense of the island. Strengthening the USSR's capabilities as a whole also could have indirectly enhanced Cuban security because, as Horelick notes, strengthening the USSR's ability writ large, in a world-wide confrontation, adds credibility to "Soviet strategic threats, including the threat to defend Cuba against U.S. attack" (Horelick, 1964a, p. 372)

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[42] For example, the 'hawks' in the Kennedy administration argued that, during the actual crisis, due to the United States' conventional and nuclear superiority, the USSR would not risk nuclear escalation in the case of conventional U.S. invasion (see Blight and Welch 1990).

Blight, Allyn, and Welch (2002) argue that the proletarian duty explanation was essentially an ex post facto justification, allowing Castro to appear not dependent on the USSR for security and enables him to claim he was making sacrifices for the international forces of revolution. Blight, Allyn, and Welch (2002) point out a number of inconsistencies with the proletarian duty explanation. Two Cubans close to Castro, Sergio del Valle and Emilio Aragones, explained at the Cambridge Conference that they considered the deployment to benefit the Cubans primarily for its deterrent value, which "undercuts Castro's claim that the Cuban leadership in 1962 was unanimous in its understanding of the situation" (p. 345).[43] In addition, it does not appear that Castro had a correct understanding of the composition of nuclear forces between the United States and the USSR, which would be strange if one of the primary motivations was to aid the Soviet camp in the balance of nuclear forces. From comments Castro made at the Havana Conference, Castro apparently *over*estimated the amount of nuclear weapons the Soviets possessed. In that case, it would be perplexing as to why more nuclear weapons were needed in Cuba if the Soviets already possessed sufficient nuclear weapons. If his aim was to bolster the Soviet camp, "by his own admission, he did not know that socialism needed bolstering on the world scale" (Blight et al., 2002a, p. 347). Castro's statement that he understood Soviet nuclear capabilities to be greater than in reality is strange, seeing that the missile gap was publically revealed to be in favor of the United States by mid-1961. Deputy Secretary of Defense Gilpatric's public statement and subsequent

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[43] Researchers Bright and Welch held a series of conferences with key actors from the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Havana conference took place January 1992 and the transcripts are annotated in *Cuba On the Brink,* (Blight et al., 2002a). Blight and Welch also have provided transcripts for the Hawks Cay Conference, the Moscow Conference, and Cambridge Conference, provided in *On the Brink,* (Blight & Welch, 1990).

press coverage makes it likely that Castro knew the balance was heavily in the United States' favor. In the case he knew, the proletariat duty explanation makes more sense, as placing nuclear weapons in Cuban could serve as a 'quick fix' to vitiate the USSR's inferior nuclear capabilities. But, then, Castro would have agreed to a deployment in light of what he knew to be overwhelming U.S. nuclear and conventional superiority in the region, which could hardly augur well in the case of escalation.

At the Havana Conference, Castro claimed that he was unconcerned about the details of the deployment because he was deferring to Soviet expertise (see Blight, Allyn, and Welch 2002; Szulc 2000, p. 583). The Soviets' possessed more experience doing this sort of thing, Castro claimed.[44] Again Castro may be trying to deflect blame onto Khrushchev for what was arguably an ill-thought-out and poorly executed plan.[45] Nonetheless, it remains puzzling why Castro would have been so insouciant regarding such important details or not insisted on certain details, seeing that Cuba could face the brunt of U.S. retaliation. As will be discussed, on a number of issues it does appear that Castro did defer to the Soviets in terms of important details of the deployment. This simply brings up more questions: why did he trust the Soviets? Why did he assume that the Soviets would risk their security and relations with the U.S. for Cuba, especially in light of the relatively new alliance between the USSR and Cuba?

What explains the size of the deployment in the absence of the proletarian duty explanation? Blight, Allyn, and Welch (2002) offer a non-material explanation which is

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[44] To be discussed shortly, while the Soviets had more experience than the Cubans, the Soviets did *not* have any experienced with a deployment of this size and on such a scale.

[45] If Castro's goal was protection from invasion, you could have expected Castro to have claimed victory post-crisis, as Castro theoretically gained a non-invasion pledge from the United States. However, a deeply entrenched enemy image and the contingent nature of the pledge may have caused Castro to doubt the pledges' veracity (see Garthoff 1989).

consistent with the findings of this dissertation. In conjunction with the deterrent value of the weapons, weapons of this type "would be supremely gratifying. At one stroke the deployment would raise Cuba, for the first time, onto a geopolitical plane with imperialism" (Blight et al., 2002a, p. 345). "They would put Cuba, in Edmund Desoes's phrase, 'on the summit'" (p. 349). Notice the status dimension: the weapons allowed Cuba a degree of equality with the United States, which must have been highly gratifying.

Did Castro have a Choice?

Before proceeding, a caveat should be discussed: did Castro have a choice in accepting the weapons? In early 1962, according to Acosta (2002), both the Soviets and Cubans were increasingly concerned about the likelihood of an U.S. invasion, which prompted the USSR to assist the Cubans in strengthening their defense capabilities. According to Khrushchev's memoir, Khruschev had the idea to place nuclear weapons in Cuba while on vacation in Bulgaria in May 1962 (Khrushchev & Crankshaw, 1970).[46] Later that May, Khrushchev met with senior officials to discuss if the Cubans would be willing to accept the weapons. To highlight the contingent nature of the deployment, senior advisor Anastas Mikoyan and the Ambassador to Cuba Aleksandr Alekseev, both doubted that Fidel would agree to such a proposal due to the risks involved (see Lebow and Stein 1995, 73–74). In late May, a Soviet delegation secretly traveled to Cuba. In Cuba, Fidel met with Soviet General Biryuzov and discussed the nuclear deployment idea. According to Acosta, they discussed the type of weapons and how the deployment would be carried out; Biryuzov "explained the deployment would be done quickly, in secret, and under cover" (Acosta, 2002a, p. 101). Fidel asked for time to discuss the

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[46] Garthoff (1989) argues that Khrushchev had the idea before his vacation to Bulgaria.

deployment with the ORI. In the meeting *the following day* with the ORI, Fidel agreed to the deployment.[47] On June 10th Biryuzov reports about the meeting to the Presidium, prompting the Soviet Ministry of Defense to prepare deployment plans. On July 2-17 Raul Castro travels to Moscow to discuss the shipments. Another delegation on August 27 to September 2, composed of Che Guevera and Emilio Aragones, traveled to Moscow *with revisions dictated by Fidel to the draft treaty*.

A few points should be highlighted. The Soviets thought Castro did indeed have a choice. If the situation was one of acute dependence, Khrushchev's advisors would have suggested that Castro had no choice but to take the weapons. In addition, both parties stress this was an agreement negotiated between the Cubans and the Soviets. I am not aware of any accounts arguing that Castro was coerced into taking the weapons.

Castro's NIC

The Solidarity Dimension

The United States was not only Castro's key comparison other, but it is clear that Castro held a dichotomizing identity conception with the United States. To reiterate, the solidarity dimension's key question "is whether 'we' and 'they' naturally stand for similar or different interests and values" (Hymans, 2006 p. 22). Castro understood Cuba and the U.S. as standing for different interests and values. According to Domínguez (1989), a central idea animating Cuban foreign policy under Castro was "a deep hostility towards the U.S. government and towards many U.S. values" and that "the imperialist enemy is a world system that must be met with global struggle" (p. 3).

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[47] The Integrated Revolutionary Organization (ORI) at the time was composed of: The Secretariat Fidel Castro, Deputy Secretary Raul Castro, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, Osvaldo Doritcos Torrado, Emilio Aragones Navarro, and Blas Roca Calderio (Acosta 2002, 101-2).

Starting broadly, according to Liss (1994a), Castro viewed U.S./Cuban relations as part of a larger North/South conflict. According to this view, the North possesses great financial and industrial resources that translate into economic power and the control of advanced technologies. The South possesses natural resources and inexpensive labor, but is "inordinately indebted to the North's financial institutions" (Liss, 1994a, p. 103). Omitting various details, the North's dominance of economic resources results in an "inequality in trade relations" and spurs economic crisis, specifically high inflation in the South. Castro explained to Federico Mayor Zaragoara, a former UNESCO Director, in early 2000, "Latin America, like the rest of the Third World, is the victim of a world economic order imposed on it from outside…Divided and balkanized, seduced by illusory visions for progress and development… Latin American countries run the risks of losing their independence for ever and being annexed by the United States" (quoted in Skierka, 2006, p. 310). According to Castro, the U.S. and the North, could, but is likely unwilling, to change various policies which would result in more beneficial trade and "greater internal democracy in the underdeveloped states" (Liss, 1994a, p. 103).

Castro's version of the history of U.S./Cuban relations is one of neocolonial dependent development. According to Castro, in the early nineteenth century, the U.S. government allied with Cuba's white landowners and annexationists to preserve slavery on the island. The Platt Amendment was a legal means "to infringing on Cuban Sovereignty" (Liss, 1994a, p. 99) and even after the removal of the Platt Amendment, reciprocal trade agreements and U.S. multinational corporations' foreign direct investment in Cuba, linked the two countries and economies, ensuring U.S. dominance of Cuba's mining industry, electricity production, telephone and transportation services, sugar production, and banking. Castro was well aware of the United States' economic

role, as he grew up in an area with a high concentration of U.S. multinationals (Szulc, 2000). And while Castro was wealthy by Cuban standards, "the sight of foreigners flaunting their affluence and protected by their own armed guards from the hungry eyes of the local population … left a lasting impression on Fidel" (P. G. Bourne, 1986, p. 20).

More importantly, Castro claims to be a student of Jose Marti. "Marti was always Castro's role model" writes Szulc (2000, p. 92). "Fidel… developed a powerful identification with Marti," the biographer Bourne (1986) writes, "and in a way he worshiped him" (p. 27). Castro believed that Cuba possessed no greater "poet, essayist, and journalist who believed in the power of ideas accompanied by action" than Marti (Liss, 1994a, p. 33). Statues of Marti stand as symbols of revolutionary culture throughout Cuba, not statues of Marx or Lenin. Fidel, in tribute to Marti, even wrote a series of essays about his role model (Liss 1994, p. 33). In March 1949, a group of U.S. Marines, in an act of drunkenness, urinated on a statue of Marti. For Cubans and Castro this was a "unspeakable insult to their country," and Fidel organized a guard to protect the statue all night (P. G. Bourne, 1986, p. 57).

Marti held distinct views of the United States' role in Latin America. According to Weldes (2000), Marti "considered an aggressive and imperialist United States to be chief among 'our common Latin American dangers'" (p. 176). Marti, after living for fifteen years in the U.S., came to view the greatest threat to Cuban independence as annexation from the United States (Perez, 1990, p. 78).[48] It should be noted this anti-imperialist strain of thought is hardly unique to Fidel or Marti, "The tradition of the entire Cuban left, from Chibias to the communist was doctrinally 'anti-imperialist," writes (Draper 1969, p. 110)

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[48] Marti was also highly critical of American culture, see Perez (1990, 78-81)

The influence of the U.S. was felt in the domestic politics in Cuba preceding and during the revolutionary period. Fidel attributed U.S. pressure as key in canceling a mission to attempt to oust the Dominican dictator Raphael Trujillo in July 1947 (P. G. Bourne, 1986, p. 41); Bourne (1986) argues that Chibias, a political leader and mentor of Fidel, lost his election bid "partly because he lacked the United States backing" (p. 54). What was extremely salient for Fidel was the U.S. role in backing Batista during the revolutionary period, specifically the U.S. provision of weapons to Batista. This is the subject of some contention, as Blight, Allyn, and Welch (2002) argue that the U.S. provided arms to Batista with the "condition that they *not* be used to maintain internal order." By March 1958, Secretary of State Dulles announced a total embargo of arms to the Cubans, aside from weapons that the Cubans have already purchased in full (p. 416). While U.S. support may have been more limited than imagined by Fidel, he saw first-hand the decimation of the peasant population and the death of a child of a close acquaintance, which he attributed to arms supplied by the United States. The idea of the U.S. protecting the "venal and corrupt Batista" against a defenseless population "had a deep effect on Fidel" (P. G. Bourne, 1986, p. 155). Shortly thereafter, he penned this letter to Celia Sanchez:

> When I saw the rockets firing…at Mario's house, I swore to myself that the Americans were going to pay dearly for what they are doing. When this war is over, a much wider and bigger war will commence for me: the war that I am going to wage against them. I am aware this is my true destiny (quoted in Bourne 1986, p. 155).

Bourne argues that Che Guevara was influential in terms of Castro's understanding of the United States. Che had first-hand experience with U.S. imperialism: he was present in Guatemala during a U.S. orchestrated coup. In Che's eyes, the U.S. was willing to overthrow a democratically elected president to thwart social change, in order to protect U.S. financial interests. Partly due to this experience, Che's "strongest political emotion was a deep-seated hostility towards the United States" (P. G. Bourne, 1986, p. 117). Bourne argues that Che "infused him (Fidel) with his own emotion and bitterness toward the United States, adding an element of passion to Fidel's intellectual views on the subject" (P. G. Bourne, 1986, p. 117). After the revolution, Che constantly warned Fidel that the greatest threat to the revolution was U.S. intervention (P. G. Bourne, 1986, p. 157).

The Status Dimension

The key feature for the status dimension "is how high 'we' stand relative to 'them' in the international pecking order: are we naturally their equal (if not their superior), or will we simply never measure up?" (Hymans, 2006 p. 23) Fidel made it clear that Cuba would no longer tolerate being seen as the United States' subaltern. Speaking extemporaneously over the radio in April 1959, Fidel expounded that he would not follow U.S. dictates in the region, even if it meant confrontation with the United States. "Some fainthearts warn that Cubans must respect the cold war policies of the United States, that 'we exist only because the United States allows us to" Halperine writes, paraphrasing Castro's message, "Well our attitude is we defend our right to live by our own principles… this is a real revolution… This revolution will take its place as one of the greatest political events in history" (Halperin, 1973, p. 2). The strong anti-imperialist messages of the revolution spoke to a desire to resists U.S. influence which

was based on an assertion of equality with the United States. Conversely, if Castro did not see Cuba as an equal player, it would be fitting for Cuba to follow the dictates of a much larger more developed power.

After the revolution, according to Draper (1969), Castro thought of himself not only as the leader of Cuba, but as the leader of "the communist movement in Latin America" (p. 53) and demanded to be treated equally with other communist leaders, even leaders of much larger countries, such as Mao Zedong. Draper opines that this may seem delusional, but Castro just displayed, in the successful Cuban Revolution, that the importance of objective conditions are grossly exaggerated. In Cuba, Castro led a revolutionary movement with few men and resources, why could Cuba not lead the revolution in Latin America? Fidel understood Cuba as the 'example' of revolution in Latin America, superseding the Chinese and Russian example. And it would be Castro in the position to pass judgment on "who is not correctly following the 'Cuban example'" (Draper, 1969, p. 53). Furthermore, while in a position of dependence with the Soviet Union, Castro made clear that Cuba does not see itself as a subordinate with the USSR. Discussing Castro's and Cuban foreign policy over decades, Dominquez concludes that "there is little evidence that Cuba acts in international affairs simply at the bidding of the USSR. Fidel Castro's Cuba is no one's puppet" (Domínguez 1989, 4). This evidence suggests that Castro thought of Cuba as either an equal if not superior to other countries in the region.

Case Study: The Cuban Missile Crisis

The Pride Dimension

According to Hymans, oppositional nationalists should display the behavioral characteristics stemming from the pride dimension, including an *illusion of control*.

"Such illusions short-circuit searches for information about potential unintended consequences of a given decision, and they also produce inattention to the details of policy implementation," writes Hymans (2006, 33). Langer argues that the illusion entails an "expectancy of personal success higher than an objective probability would warrant" (Langer, 1975, p. 311).

This section will focus on two major issues: First, what was Castro's role in the implementation of the missile deployment? Second, did Castro anticipate a reaction by the United States? If so, what type of reaction did he anticipate?

Both Castro and Khrushchev appeared to be aware of the likelihood of the deployment being discovered before the weapons were emplaced, which would complicate the deployment. The size and logistical challenges of the deployment should be discussed before proceeding. It involved a medium range missile division, two air defense missile divisions, four motorized rifle regiments, two regiments of tactical cruise missiles, a helicopter regiment, navy assets, a missile regime for coastal defense, and a brigade of patrol boats (Acosta, 2002a). The deployment involved 42,000 troops (Blight et al., 2002a, p. 58). More important than the technical details of the deployment, was the Russian's inexperience with deploying weapons in another hemisphere. According to Soviet General Gribkov, "never before in the history of the Soviet Armed Forces and in the history of Russia had we transported so many troops to the other side of the ocean" (Blight et al., 2002a, p. 59). Not just a logistical feat, the plan hinged on, by Khrushchev's design, the United States not discovering the missiles before the weapons were emplaced. The missiles would have to travel over 7,000 miles secretly and be emplaced on an island only 90 miles from the U.S. coastline (Fursenko & Naftali, 1997, p. 191). If the U.S. did discover the missiles before emplacement, the Cubans would be

exposed to a reaction by the United States. The clandestine nature of the deployment was not the only issue: all this had to be done in a relatively short period of time, around 70 days, as the Cubans and the Soviets were emplacing the weapons to deter what they thought to be an imminent invasion. Famously, Allison and Zelikow (1999) argue that the launch sites were built in an identical fashion to other sites in the USSR and not camouflaged due to the standard operating procedure. In addition to organizational procedure, time constraints likely contributed to the lack of proper camouflage. As Acosta notes, the engineering crews were under tremendous pressure, which may explain the lack of camouflage as well (2002, p. 122–3) .

Castro was concerned about the United States' reaction if the deployment was discovered before the missiles were operational. Che Guevera and Emilio Aragones, at the behest of Fidel, traveled to the USSR in August 1962 to discuss this issue. They asked Khrushchev what would happen if the missiles were discovered before they were properly emplaced. Khrushchev replied: "You don't have to worry; there will be no big reaction from the U.S. And if there is a problem, we will send the Baltic Fleet" (Blight et al., 2002a, p. 351). Aragones recalls that they "looked at each other with raised eyebrows" (p. 351). At the Havana conference, Castro explained to the conference members, "we (Castro is speaking) did not think that the Baltic Fleet would solve the problem" (Blight et al., 2002a, p. 84). While Guevera, Aragones, and Fidel Castro, might be falsely claiming they knew of this vulnerability in light of the subsequent discovery of the missiles, Khrushchev's explanation should have raised a number of concerns for Castro. Khrushchev's explanation makes little sense. If there would be "no big reaction from the U.S.," when why not just make the deployment public? In addition, the Baltic fleet reference is almost comical. As Welch notes, the last time the Baltic fleet "left

Russian waters on a distant mission" it was "annihilated by the Japanese in 1904" (p. 351). "In 1962, the mismatch in the Caribbean would have been even greater" and the fleet "would be incapable of offering timely or effective assistance" in the case of the missiles being discovered (Blight, Allyn, and Welch 2002, p. 351; see also Fursenko and Naftali 1997, p. 195)

In defense of Fidel, he may have not cared about the deployment being discovered to the point of canceling the agreement, as his preference was for a *public* defense pact. However, there were costs associated with a discovery of a *clandestine* deployment, as compared to a publically announced defense pact. Castro recognized the discovery was a propaganda victory for the 'imperialists.' The secretive nature of the deployment implied that the deployment was illegal. Castro maintains to this day that this was a lawful act and thus there was no need for the type of subterfuge employed by the Russians. McGeorge Bundy and Theorodre Sorenson, both member of the ExComm, agreed that the secretive nature of the deployment influenced U.S. options and they argued, at the Cambridge Conference in 1987, that "a public deployment of the missiles would have greatly constrained American options" (Blight & Welch, 1990, p. 205). In addition, the *secret* deployment of offensive weapons could possibly better serve as a rationale for a preemptive invasion from the United States. Castro could have insisted that the only way the weapons could be placed on Cuban soil was in the form of a public defense pact.

Khrushchev and Castro should have been and were aware of a number of vulnerabilities in the plan. "U.S. intelligence regularly flew high-altitude U-2 reconnaissance planes over Cuba, almost guaranteeing that Kennedy would discover the truth before completion of the operation," writes Fursenko and Naftali (1997, p. 191). Khrushchev was an avid consumer of intelligence reports and was likely aware of this

vulnerability. According to Acosta, the Soviet high command was well aware that the Cubans did not have the assets to deter or shoot down the high altitude planes (2002a, p. 122). Khrushchev tried to find a solution to this problem by prioritizing the deployment and emplacement of SA-2 surface to air missiles before the nuclear missiles. The SA-2s would theoretically be able to deter the overflights by shooting down the U-2s. Blight, Allyn, and Welch are skeptical about the ability of the USSR to shoot down the U-2s prior to the discovery of the missiles, even if Khrushchev permitted them to do so. They argue that as of October 18th, the USSR had only "9 of 22 SA sites operational" (Blight et al., 2002a, p. 415). Note that this may not appear to be as easy a solution as it seems: the USSR shooting down U-2's would hardly have gone unnoticed and may have drawn more attention to the military build-up on the island, although this may have diminished the likelihood of the nuclear weapons being discovered.[49] At the Havana conference, Castro blamed the Soviets for overlooking the U-2 issue, arguing that the Soviets should have made sure that the U-2s were unable to fly over, "It's incredible to me that those planes were allowed to fly over," Castro remembered (quoted in Acosta 2002, p. 122).

According to Acosta (2002), Raul Castro directly conveyed concerns to Fidel after Raul and Soviet General Biryuzov inspected possible sites on the island for the weapons to be emplaced. On the inspection tour Raul got familiar with the size of the weapons and the number of personnel involved. Raul Castro "doubted, and has since stated, that the Soviets could transport the twenty-meter-long missiles to Cuba, without being discovered by the enemies' intelligence services," writes Acosta (2002, p. 103). He

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[49] CIA director at the time John McCone's initial hunch regarding Soviet weapons on the island was due to the emplacement of SAM sites. He speculated that those sites essentially had to be placed there to protect something, not just as general anti-aircraft weapons for the purposes of repelling an U.S. invasion, this suggest that shooting down the U-2s would have brought more attention to the buildup on the island (Dobbs, 2009).

reported his concerns to Fidel, "but there was confidence in Soviet expertise in such matters" (Acosta, 2002a, p. 103). Fidel had to be aware of the difficulty in concealing the weapons because he was involved in the details of the deployment, Fidel had to relocate "hundreds" of families to make room for the missile sites (Lebow & Stein, 1995, p. 85)

Remember this is an island that by Castro's own admission was subject to U.S. clandestine actions since the revolution. As Dobbs (2009) notes, the U.S. held a number of intelligence assets on the island. As the missiles were transported around the island, it is likely that these assets would see such a large deployment of missiles being transported. In late August 1962, Cuban security services intercepted radio reports from Cuban agents regarding a large number of Soviet troops and material moving through the Island. Fursenko and Naftali (1997) argue that if Cuban intelligence services were picking up this type of information via radio chatter, it is likely that the U.S.—with better intelligence sources—were picking up this information or more as well. Indeed, as Dobbs (2009) discusses, reports of nuclear weapons on the island trickled in to U.S. intelligence agencies, but, ironically, were dismissed because it was believed to be extremely unlikely that the Soviets would place nuclear weapons in Cuba.

The ties between Cubans still on the island and the Cuban exile community in Miami posed another problem. Reports circulated in the U.S. press in early August about Soviet activity on the island. Acosta argues this information came from the Cuban émigré community in the U.S., when they received information regarding Soviet military activity from Cubans on the island (Acosta, 2002a, p. 126).

In sum, Castro did not stop a plan advanced by Khrushchev that seemed to have had a number of serious vulnerabilities, the most conspicuous being the overhead flights. Moreover, when Cuban officials asked Khrushchev about what would happen if the

missiles were discovered, Khrushchev offered a solution: sending the Baltic fleet. Castro's said years later that he found this explanation wanting and likely did at the time.

Castro's decision to initially agree and/or not to halt the deployment can be interpreted in a number of ways. The first is that Castro engaged in a calculated gamble in a similar fashion as Khrushchev. The gamble makes much more sense in the context of the fear dimension. It is possible, if Castro thought an invasion likely, that he was willing to take any action—even if only partially likely to succeed—to alleviate his fear. Furthermore, in Castro's mind, "the impending invasion would be viewed as the equivalent of a nuclear holocaust" (Blight & Brenner, 2002, p. 21). Thus, risking nuclear holocaust is acceptable if a conventional invasion is viewed to be just as devastating and likely to happen. Going along with the Soviet deployment may have had the advantage of at least taking action, any action that offered a solution to what Castro saw as a likely U.S. invasion with full knowledge that the plan would only be partially likely to succeed. This should be taken as support for Hymans's theory: Castro supported a plan with a likelihood of success that was unjustified based on objective conditions.

Another explanation is that Castro—as he claimed at the Havana conference regarding a number of important details—essentially decided to defer to the Soviets' expertise, putting his faith in their ability to successfully deploy the missiles. This would suggest support of Hymans's theory as well, as Castro is essentially outsourcing the details of policy implementation.

Castro's faith in the USSR's ability to successfully deploy the weapons and his general belief that the USSR would come to Cuba's aid in the case of invasion, is all the more striking in light of the recent history of Cuban-Soviet relations in the period between the Cuban Revolution and missile deployment. As Robbins notes, "Moscow

approached the Cuban revolution with a great deal of caution—even more caution than it was simultaneously exercising in Asia or Africa" (C. A. Robbins, 1985, p. 139). All through 1959 the Soviet press was careful to describe the revolution in positive terms, but "was careful not to imply any offer of possible Soviet support" (p. 139). In early 1960, after Castro implemented a number of progressive policies, the Soviets warmed to the regime and pledged its support but carefully avoided any concrete pledges—Robins describes it as "disinterested support." This all changed in July of 1960 when, according to Robbins, Khrushchev offered the Cuba military support. Khrushchev stated, "figuratively speaking, should the need arise, Soviet artilleryman can support the Cuban people by missile fire if the aggressive forces from the Pentagon dare intervene" (quoted in Robbins 1985, p. 141). Robbins argues this was an abrupt change in policy: after "a year and a half of qualified endorsements and only the most nebulous commitments," Khrushchev "threw caution to the wind" and pledged his support to a relatively new socialist state that was in the United States' principal sphere of influence. Such abrupt changes in policy and level of support may have been a cause for concern to another leader. Furthermore, regarding the reliability of Cuba's Soviet ally, outstanding non-trivial issues were still unresolved regarding the need to 'export revolution' and disagreements over Marxist doctrine.[50] As Brenner (1990, p. 12) notes, relations between Cuba and the USSR were "strained in the early part of 1962 and…Soviet aid was provided at a reduced level in June." Notwithstanding the panegyrics regarding

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[50] Robbins notes that while the Cuban revolution was anti-imperialist and, more importantly, anti-U.S., it was hardly the ideal state to receive the support of the USSR. It had "no industry, no proletariat, and, most importantly, no communist party leading their struggle" (C. A. Robbins, 1985, p. 137).

international solidarity, this was an 'uneasy alliance,' which makes it all the more perplexing as to why Castro was so trusting of his Soviet ally.[51]

The need for concealment hints that the Soviets were concerned about a possible U.S. reaction, which brings up another question: What did Castro expect the U.S. reaction to be, either if the missiles were discovered prematurely or if they were revealed after the election? Fidel told journalist Tad Szulc (2000) after the crisis, "I was convinced that a very tense situation would be created, and that there would be a crisis" (p. 582). This, again, may be a comment informed by the benefit of hindsight, because as Brenner (1990) notes, "The prevailing view is that neither the Cubans nor Soviets gave much thought to the U.S. reaction, and had no contingency plan for it" (p. 123). In the event that the weapons were properly emplaced and discovered, he may have assumed, as did Khrushchev, that the U.S. would have no choice but to 'swallow' the fact of the deployment—in a fashion similar to how the USSR had dealt with the stationing of U.S. weapons on their border. However, on September 4, Kennedy warned "against the introduction of offensive weapons in Cuba" (Brenner, 1990b, p. 123), and on September 13th, he warned again about the consequences of Cuba becoming "an offensive military base of significant capacity for the Soviet Union" (Hilsman, 1967, p. 121).[52] These comments were made after the initial decision to deploy was made, yet they should have challenged the idea that that the U.S. would simply accept wallow the weapons in Cuba. It is likely that Castro was aware of these statements. Castro must have been aware of the general political climate in the United States. As Lebow and Stein (1995) note, the

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[51] See also Dinerstein (1978) for a discussion of USSR's relationship with the new Cuban state.

[52] Pressman (2001) argues Kennedy made these comments largely for domestic political reasons. Indeed, he may have, and Khrushchev's insistence that the missiles be revealed *after* the election suggests that Khrushchev was aware of the political pressures acting upon Kennedy.

summer and fall of 1962 was a period of public concern in the United States regarding the 'Cuban problem,' due largely to the alleged build-up of Soviet troops on the Island and due to Republican charges that the Kennedy administration was lackadaisical regarding the buildup. Although these developments happened after the initial decision was made, "Since the Bay of Pigs in 1961, Cuba had constantly been in the headlines" and it would be reasonable to assume that the discovery of nuclear missiles on the island would put tremendous political pressure on Kennedy to 'do something' (Lebow & Stein, 1995, p. 81).

Deferring to Soviet expertise on this point is perplexing as well. Perhaps the Soviets had more experience deploying nuclear weapons, but Castro, by his own admission, thought that he had a better understanding of 'Americans,' so it is strange to see Castro defer to the expertise of the Soviets in regards to understanding a possible reaction from the United States (see Blight, Allyn, and Welch 2002).

In sum, either Castro did not give much thought to a possible U.S. reaction or he was aware of the possibility that the deployment would precipitate a crisis but decided to proceed anyway. The former should be taken as support for the theory because it suggests that he was insensitive to the likely consequences of a given decision: a strongly negative reaction from the United States. The latter suggests that Castro engaged in a calculated gamble, because it had the potential to reduce the uncomfortable experience of fear.

Pride should influence preferences over strategies as well, in the *need to act autonomously*. Hymans argues that pride should "produce positive utility from the act of standing alone, even if the ultimate material objective of the act could be more easily or fully achieved by cooperation" (p. 34). A major motivation for the deployment was what Castro perceived to be the deterrent value of the weapons. Yet, as Blight, Allyn, and

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Welch (2002) argue, possessing the weapons offered the Cubans a degree of equality with the U.S., which had the potential to be "supremely gratifying. At one stroke the deployment would raise Cuba, for the first time, onto a geopolitical plane with imperialism" (p. 345). The weapons offered the ability to the Cuban of asserting their equality, by virtue of denying the U.S. the ability to invade the island by force. Moreover, the act itself was also an assertion of equality. Castro always stressed the right of Cuba to deploy *any* weapons on its territory, and that the U.S. did not have the right to determine what type of weapons the Cuban's possessed. This is why Castro claims he always rejected the U.S.'s distinctions between offensive and defensive weapons. As Castro told the Havana conference in 1992, "…we always said that Cuba considered it had a sovereign right to have whatever type of weapons it thought appropriate, and no one had any right to establish what kind of weapons our country could or could not have" (quoted in Weldes 1999, p. 35). Castro stressed the legality of his action by reference to U.S. prior actions, as he explained to Suzlc "…in the same way that the U.S. had missiles in Italy and Turkey, in the same way as the United States has bases in all parts of the world around the Soviet Union, we, a sovereign nation, considered we had the absolute legal right to make use of measures in our own country" (2000, p. 582). Castro could have followed the U.S.'s 'rules' and only accepted defensive weapons, but this would have entailed a recognition of the U.S.'s authority and status in the region. Castro was hoping the weapons would force the U.S. to treat Cuba not as a subordinate satellite in a U.S. dominated sphere of influence, but as a sovereign state capable of negotiating and accepting whatever agreements it deemed necessary for its security.[53] The comparison to

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[53] The status aspect was apparent on the U.S. side, "During the ExComm deliberations it quickly became clear that the United States could not afford to allow Cuba to be seen as its equal. Allowing the Soviet

the U.S. is telling: by Castro's logic, the Cubans are merely doing what the U.S. is doing, which would not be an issue if the U.S. treated Cuba as not only a sovereign state, but as a state with equal standing to the U.S. "We were defending these rockets with amazing fervor and love," Fidel said in secret speech in 1968, "for the first time we were participating *in a certain state of equality* with an enemy that had been attacking and provoking us incessantly, and we were really enjoying such a different and new situation…" (quoted in Blight and Brenner 2002, p. 32).

The pride dimension has the ability to explain a number of otherwise perplexing aspects of the crisis. Rather than being relieved when an agreement was reached and hostilities avoided, Castro was extremely angered at not having been consulted or included in the negotiations. The Soviets were perplexed by Castro's anger; from the Soviet perspective, Castro, having just escaped nuclear holocaust, was pettifogging and angered about a "diplomatic slight" (Blight & Brenner, 2002, p. 75). For Castro this was much more than a diplomatic slight, however. Had he been included in the negotiations, that undoubtedly would have made an agreement harder to reach and could have meant an agreement more beneficial to Cuba, but there was a non-material aspect as well. Castro resented not being included in the participation and in the consultations *as an equal partner*; he later told the Havana conference, "We were really very irritated over the fact that an agreement was reached without our participation, or without consultation with us… it provoked great indignation because we realized that we had been some type of game token" (quoted in Weldes 1999, p. 36). As Bright and Brenner (2002) argue, the Soviets could have included one of Castro's demands—a token demand— in the

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weapons to remain in Cuba, Kennedy said on October 16th, 'makes them (the Cubans) look like they're coequal with us…" writes (Weldes, 1999a, p. 213)

negotiations, such as the need to negotiate directly with Cuba over the removal of the missiles. Kennedy may have not accepted this—though Bright and Brenner (1990) argue it would have been difficult to reject a proposed Cuban participation if it offered a 'solution' to the crisis. Negotiations may have dragged on as a result, but Cuba would have been involved. Castro explained in a NBC interview in 1993, that it would have been satisfactory for Cuba to merely take part in the discussions (Lechuga, 1995, p. 255). What likely angered Castro was that Cuba was denied the "the sovereign right to negotiate its own fate" (Blight & Brenner, 2002, p. 13).[54]

Another perplexing aspect of Castro's behavior was his refusal to allow UN inspections on the island after the initial agreement was reached. Resisting the inspections certainly had a symbolic component, but it also had real costs. Technically the agreement—which included a non-invasion pledge by the U.S.—never went into force because it was predicated on inspections verifying the removal of the missiles. If U.N. inspections were completed it could offer "a binding juridical commitment lacking in Kennedy's statement to Khrushchev" (Halperin, 1973, p. 196). Allowing the inspections and thereby accepting the pledge, could have appeared "to anyone accept Fidel, as a real turning point in revolutionary Cuba's uncertain and extremely costly struggle for survival," possibly providing an initial *modus vivendi* between the two adversaries (Halperin, 1973, p. 196). Castro did not give much weight to the pledge, seeing it as worthless. By not allowing inspectors, however, the Cubans would appear to be in breach of the agreement, which may have made it easier for a future administration to attack the island.

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[54] As social psychologists Susan Fiske notes, non-inclusion can be a particularity acute form of scorn and non-recognition, see Fiske (2012).

The pride dimension may be able to shed light on this dynamic. Castro may have been gaining utility by the act of "standing alone," denying the UN, and by extension the United States, the ability to inspect the island. As Castro told the Havana conference years later, "it is pretentious for another country to determine what we have the right to do in our country. Cuba is a sovereign state" (Blight et al., 2002a, p. 217). Castro makes reference to how Cuba and the U.S. are treated differently in his justification for resisting inspectors: "If the Soviets and the United Nations both trusted Washington's public promise not to invade Cuba, why then did the U.S. government doubt that the USSR would remove the missiles?"(quoted in Acosta 2002, 184). Castro was fond of arguing that they should perform inspections on U.S. training sites, sites used for the training of Cuban exiles. This may seem like minor debating points, but again Castro highlights the issues of Cuban equality and the need to not be subject to U.S. mandates. "We have not given, and have no intention of giving, the U. S. Congress any of our sovereign prerogatives," Castro told the Havana conference regarding his motives for resisting inspections. The language used to describe the inspection is telling as well: The inspections were "humiliating" (Lechuga, 1995, p. 134); "another attempt to humiliate our country" (Blight et al., 2002a, p. 217).

The Fear Dimension

As Hymans discusses, the experience of fear should encourage *an urgency to act*. In this case, it is difficult to directly attribute an urgency to act to Castro, as he reacted to a Soviet proposal, yet the evidence suggest there was such an urgency. Hymans' predicts "this demand for action leads to haste in the decision making process" (p. 31). A reconstruction of the initial decision suggests it took place over a short period of time. To

reiterate, Khrushchev had the idea mid-May 1962. Commander Biryuzov's secret Soviet

delegation met with Castro and made the proposal on May 29th. According to Acosta

(2002), Fidel convened the ORI and *the following day* made the decision in principle to

deploy the nuclear weapons. In the meeting with the ORI, according to Acosta, Fidel

argued for acceptance of the weapons for two reasons. The missiles would "strengthen

the socialist camp"[55] and, according to Acosta, those present at the meeting agreed it

would be a powerful deterrent for U.S. action. Acosta's reconstruction suggests there was

not a discussion of the balance of nuclear forces; no discussion of the possible U.S.

reaction; and no discussion regarding the motivation of the Soviets. Again, even taking

the rationale to strengthen to socialist camp at face value, there was no discussion of what

exactly "strengthen the socialist camp" entailed. The only concern voiced involved how

other Latin American would react to the deployment. Acosta portrays it as essentially a

snap decision: "All members of the ORI secretariat…without hesitation, and thinking

honestly with a truly internationalist sentiment agreed to say yes to the Soviet proposal"

(Acosta, 2002a, p. 102–103). While Acosta's recollection may be subject to political

manipulation, the timing suggests that the initial decision was made *over a period of*

days. Due to the logistical challenges and the possible repercussions, it seems a decision

of this sort would have required more planning and deliberation.

Another aspect of the fear dimension involves actors taking action *to try to reduce*

the uncomfortable experience of fear, "as the experience of fear is physically

uncomfortable and mentally oppressive, the urge to decrease the fear… can become as

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[55] Unfortunately, Acosta is relying on Castro's explanation from the Havana conference to reconstruct
some of Castro's decision-making. As noted, Blight, Allyn, and Welch (2002) suggest this is essentially an
ex post facto justification. Acosta also uses "Minutes of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in
Cuba" as well to reconstruct this meeting, which unfortunately may be subject to the same ex post facto
tinkering.

important to the individual as the urge to decrease the danger," writes Hymans (p. 32). This prompts actors to take action—any action—which may or may not decrease the actual danger an actor faces. This may explain why Castro rather unreflectively accepted the weapons: While it may not have decreased the danger—though it would have, if done correctly, offered a deterrent to a U.S. invasion—it offered Castro *the ability to do something*, rather than merely wait for what he perceived to be an imminent invasion. It may also explain why he overlooked a number of challenges and problems with the overall plan as articulated by Khrushchev. Castro told journalist Tad Suzlc after the crisis,

> we preferred the risk, whatever they were of great tension, a great crisis… to the risks of the impotence of having to wait, impotently, for the United States invasion of Cuba… At least they gave us a nuclear umbrella, as we felt much more satisfied with the response we were giving to the policy of hostility and aggression toward our country (p. 582).

This quote suggests that while the deployment may not have been ideal for the purely defensive purpose of defending the island, it offered the ability to reduce the experience of fear by the actor taking action and gave Castro the ability to exercise some control over the situation.

Fear should result in *inflated threat perceptions*. In this case, it is difficult to conclude that threat perceptions were inflated because it is plausible that any actor would have interpreted U.S. actions as hostile and correctly perceived the United States' desire to see Castro overthrown. Indeed, a number of Soviet decision-makers, including General Gribov, thought an U.S. invasion likely. The reasons for this are well documented. According to Brenner, Cuban officials in 1962, believed the United States would follow

the Bay of Pigs debacle with a large-scale invasion and subsequent U.S. polices were understood in such a context. According to the Cubans, the economic embargo was part of a plan to "destabilize and destroy their government" (Brenner, 1990b, p. 118). The U.S. was instrumental in suspending Cuban membership in the OAS, which the Cubans understood as setting the diplomatic table for an invasion. The U.S. was entertaining a plan to overthrow the Cuban government as part of Operation Mongoose, tentatively scheduled for October 1962. This was a multistage plan, whose final stage involved a military invasion of the island. The initial stages of Mongoose involved destabilizing the Cuban government and economy with acts of economic sabotage, terrorist acts by ex-patriot groups, and the dissemination of propaganda via radio broadcasts. A series of naval exercises involving the mock overthrow of a dictator name Ortsac—Castro backwards—in Puerto Rican waters was likely interpreted as the preparation and planning for an invasion. While this exercise was scheduled to take place after Castro's decision to deploy, it is possible the Cubans knew of the plans. Finally, Castro could not have been ignorant of various members of the U.S. media and members of Congress' explosive rhetoric regarding the need to eliminate the 'Cuban threat' (see Brenner 1990, p. 17–122 for this paragraph). The inferences Castro was making were quite reasonable and it is likely that another actor would have come to a similar conclusion regarding hostility from the United States.

With that said, this does not mean that the United States was in face planning to invade the island. It appears that official policy was to destabilize the regime up to the point of military invasion. Both Robert McNamara and Arthur Schlesinger, two advisors close to Kennedy during this period, insisted at the Havana conference years later, that Kennedy never—other than during the actual Missile Crisis—entertained plans of

invading the island. "I can say unequivocally that President Kennedy never expressed to me this belief that the U.S. should invade Cuba," McNamara recalls (Blight, Allyn, and Welch 2002, p. 160). Schlesinger echoes McNamara, discussing an invasion *before* the actual crisis, "at no point was a military invasion contemplated" (Blight et al., 2002a, p. 159). Other considerations likely discouraged a U.S. invasion. A full scale invasion would pose a problem for U.S. diplomacy in Latin America (Halperin, 1973, p. 103). In addition, invading the island could result in a protracted civil war, not to mention American casualties, which, according to Raymond Garthnoff were estimated to be around 18,500 (Blight, Allyn, and Welch 2002, p. 163).

While Castro may have perceived United States' hostility accurately after the Bay of Pigs and before the Missile Crisis, Castro's entrenched enemy image of the United States should not be overlooked. Castro frequently assumed the worst from the United States. As Halperine notes, "Fidel was predicting an invasion of Cuba and organizing a student and workers' militia to meet it" even before the Bay of Pigs invasion (Halperin, 1973, p. 75). Innocuous acts were interpreted as threating gestures from the United States, such as the United States embassy in Cuba possessing stickers that were used to label U.S. property. According to the Cubans, the existence of "the stickers could only be explained as preparation for invasion" (Halperin, 1973, p. 78). On March 4 1960, the *La Coubre,* a French ship with weapons being delivered to Cuba, exploded in a Havana harbor. While "No proof of sabotage was actually produced by the Cubans, and the cause of the explosion was never officially established" Fidel immediately blamed the United States (Szulc, 2000, p. 515). Castro insisted that this was a "logical deduction" since the United States had an interest in denying the Cubans arms (Halperin 1973, p. 76; see also Quirk 1995, p. 302). The following day Castro gave "an immensely emotional oration" at

the funeral services bemoaning the United States' interference in Cuban affairs (Szulc, 2000, p. 515). While there may have been an instrumental component to this reaction, because blaming the United States may have bolstered Fidel's domestic political legitimacy, this does not mean that Fidel did not genuinely believe the United States to be involved. As Fettewies (2015) notes, scholars err in assuming that if a belief advances a material goal then the belief in insincere, as if "political elites are unable to hold multiple, reinforcing ideas simultaneously" (2015, no page). Thus, even if Castro succeeded in using the explosion of the *La Coubre* for political advantage, this does not mean that Castro did not believe that the United States was involved. In sum, while it is difficult to conclude that his is a case of exaggerated threat perceptions, due to the clearly hostile actions of the United States, Fidel did hold an entrenched enemy image of the United States that ensured that U.S. behavior would be interpreted hostile.

Conclusion

Hymans's theory resolves some of the otherwise perplexing aspects of this case. The anger Castro displayed following the denouement of the crisis suggests that the nuclear weapons were much more than mere instruments of deterrence. As the pride section outlines, it is likely that Castro was deriving utility from the act of standing alone, specifically possessing weapons that offered the Cuban state a degree of equality with a much stronger neighbor, which in turn promised a higher degree of autonomy from the United States. Moreover, the pride dynamic can shed light on the general overconfidence displayed by Castro, particularly his overlooking key vulnerabilities of the deployment.

The evidence suggests that there was a general urgency to act and that Castro was taking action to alleviate the uncomfortable experience of fear, which is consistent with Hymans's theory. Due to the particulars of the case, it is difficult to conclude that this is a

case of exaggerated threat perceptions, yet it does appear that Castro held an entrenched enemy image of the United States. In sum, the weapons clearly offered material benefits, but the bundle of behavioral characteristics that stem from the emotion of fear and pride, can explain why Castro was likely to make suck risky decisions.

CHAPTER V

KIM Il-SUNG

Explanations for the Korean War

Orthodox accounts of the Korean War see the invasion of South Korea as a

preconceived communist conspiracy, with Stalin pulling Kim's strings, with support from

Communist China (Armstrong, 2013, p. 12). As Jervis (1980) and Mercer (2013)

document, U.S. policy makers did, at the time, see the invasion of the South as the

actions of a monolithic communist bloc, primarily instigated by Stalin, explaining why

U.S. policy makers reevaluated the 'threat' from a now united and embolden Sino-Soviet

Bloc to be much higher than in the period before the invasion (See also Foot, 1985 for

U.S. policy makers' reactions).[56] This account proved half correct—there was indeed

planning between Stalin, Kim, and Mao – but it incorrectly conceptualizes Kim as being

manipulated by Stalin, when in fact, the prime mover pushing for invasion was Kim.

There is more evidence that it was Kim that manipulated Stalin in terms of invading the

South than the other way around (Armstrong, 2013, p. 11).[57] More important, this account

fundamentally mischaracterizes Kim's motivations, seeing Kim as an agent of an

international communist movement, while his major goal was to unify the Korean

Peninsula under Northern rule and thereby consolidate his power and eliminate the

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[56] This reevaluation of the threat, according to Jervis (1980), resulted in an explosion of U.S. defense spending and the proliferation of agreements between the U.S. and its allies to 'contain' communist expansion, highlighting the importance of the Korean War in international history.

[57] This is not an entirely new revelation. Khrushchev in his memoirs, argued that it was Kim's idea to start he war not Stalin's (See Khrushchev pg. 145-47).

reactionary, pro-Rhee elements in South Korea. Spreading communism was, at best, a secondary concern (Armstrong, 2004, p. 2).

Revisionist accounts place emphasis on the essentially civil nature of the war. Bruce Cumings (1990), the most prominent advocate of the revisionist view, sees the conflict in Korea as essentially a civil war internationalized by U.S. intervention. Cumings sees U.S. intervention based on a political economic logic, captured by 'world systems theory.' Not only did the U.S. misperceive the nature of the war, but used the opportunity to advance Acheson's goal of a U.S. led global economic hegemony. "The foundation of Achesonian containment in East Asia was a world economy logic, captured by his metaphor of a 'great crescent,'" writes Cumings. "Here was the crucial background to Acheson's extension of containment to southern Korea [in 1947], his later elaboration of a 'defensive perimeter' in Asia, and his decision to intervene in the Korean War" (Cumings, 1992, p. 49). As with the orthodox accounts, revisionists proved to be half correct explaining Kim's actions. Revisionists erred in diminishing the role of the USSR or Chinese— Kim did act with the approval and coordination of the Soviets and Chinese. They proved correct in emphasizing the civil nature of the conflict. Of particular importance is the essentially contested nature of the 38th parallel. As Cumming stresses, the 38th parallel was *not* an internationally recognized boundary (Armstrong, 2013, p. 15). This fact may reduce the risk associated with Kim's invasion of the South and it should be distinguished from Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, which was an internationally recognized boundary. Also important to note is the *de facto* conflict going on before the invasion, as Cumings see the North's invasions as an escalation of an already well developed civil war—Kim's invasion was the denouement of a civil war, not the start of a conventional war. While Kim's actions were a drastic and clear escalation of

hostilities, it was not unreasonable for Kim to fear a possible South Korean attack, supplying some rationale for Kim's subsequent explanation that he was reacting to Southern provocations.

Recently available works featuring declassified Russian and Chinese sources have been able to shed considerable light on this controversy. It is now clear that Kim pressed for invasion as early as mid-1949, with a reluctant Stalin withholding support (to be discussed in more detail below). Stalin eventually agreed to support the invasion, but only after maneuvering the Chinese to pledge support as well and by fundamentally limiting the USSR's involvement in the campaign. Kim, in gaining Stalin's support, argued that the invasion would be swift and easy; would be greeted with a concomitant uprising of support from guerrillas, supporters of the North Korean regime in the south; and the U.S. was not likely to intervene and if the U.S. did, it would be too late to make any effective difference. Indeed, as orthodox school suggests, there was a conspiracy of sorts, but it was Kim that was the major actor pressing for invasion.

This chapter argues that the identity-driven model of decision making can shed considerable light on Kim's decision to invade and resolve some otherwise perplexing aspects of the case. For instance, why was Kim so optimistic about a likely concomitant guerrilla uprising in light of the fact that the guerrilla movement in South Korea was essentially exhausted? Why did Kim brush aside warnings about the *possibility* of U.S. intervention? Why was the invasion rushed and why did the North Koreans not have the resources to complete the objectives of the initial ground invasion? Kim likely overlooked such complications because, finally, unification was within his grasp. This had to have been of great emotional significance to Kim, as much of his life had been the life of a guerilla fighter. The emotion associated with prospective unification likely

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helped determine how Kim interpreted the likelihood of success of an invasion and pushed Kim in the direction of taking such a 'leap in the dark' and invade South Korea.

Kim Il Sung's NIC

The Solidarity Dimension: North Korea against the World

The solidarity dimension's key question "is whether 'we' and 'they' naturally stand for similar or different interests and values" (Hymans, 2006b, p. 22). Kim's NIC is one of "North Korea *against* the world."[58] A useful visual for understanding Kim's NIC is of ceaseless waves crashing against rocky shores; the waves are symbolic of the never-ending attempt of enemies of the North Korean regime to harass and attack it. Usually a member of the Kim family "stands guard" on the shore "as waves of a hostile world crash ineffectually against the rocks" (Meyers, 2012, p. n.p.). Murals of this sort are commonly featured in North Korean propaganda. This section will argue for such an interpretation of Kim Il Sung's NIC: Kim viewed Korea as standing for different interests and values than most of the world.

The historical record of Kim's early life, suggests he was a dedicated nationalist, fighting foreign occupation and resisting foreign influence. While official North Korean biographies are undoubtedly hagiographic, exaggerating Kim's exploits as a guerrilla fighter, there is substantial evidence that Kim was a dedicated nationalist. [59] Even if the

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[58] This assessment is borrowed from Hymans (2008).

[59] Of the more risible stories in the official biographies of Kim, features Kim explaining the details of "dialectical materialism" to a group, at the tender age of five.

North Korea regimes' official biographies of Kim are untrue, they can be indicative of

Kim's NIC, the national "myths" an accurate reflection of how the Kim sees himself. The

secondary literature is in agreement with the interpretation that Kim was a dedicated

nationalist before the Korean War. Kim was "genuinely consumed by patriotic anti-

colonialism who, while still in his teens, embraced communism as the key to

independence and justice for Koreans" writes Martin (2004, p. 12).[60] Kim grew up in a

region known for its "strong currents of nationalism and Communism" (Lee, 1967, p.

375). Some ambiguity surrounds Kim's official residence in his early years, but most

sources, including colonial Japanese records, find that, around 1924-25, Kim's family left

Korea for Manchuria's Kirin Providence. Ironically, Kim, the dedicated Korean

nationalist did not grow up in Korea. However, it was an area known to have "been

heavily populated by Koreans and had become a haven for Korean nationalists" (Lee,

1967, p. 375). It was a "highly politicized environment," with a number of nationalist and

communists groups organized military academies collecting taxes and recruiting fighters

(Lee 1967, p. 375). It is not surprising, according to Lee, that Kim joined a local League

of Young Communists "as early as 1926 when he was a middle school student in Kirin"

(Lee 1967, p. 375). He was imprisoned for eight months by the Chang Tso-lin regime for

his association with said organizations.

Official regime propaganda, published after Kim seized power, portrayed him as

descending from a lineage of Korean nationalists. Communist sources claim that Kim's

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[60] Some may see a conflict between being a dedicated nationalist and a communist, as the latter suggests the importance of being part of an international, class-based movement. However, as Lankov notes, Kim's understanding of communism had both national and social dimensions. East Asian communists were not just attracted to the communist ideology because of its promise of social equality, but because of its strong anti-colonial messages and was seen as a means of national revival, offering a path to "leapfrog" stages of development and escape colonial dependence (Lankov, 2013). "Korea, like Vietnam, was a country recently released from colonial rule, and in both of these countries the communist movement has been closely associated with anticolonial nationalism" writes Armstrong (2003, p. 2). See Vu (2016) for a similar interpretation of the Vietnamese communist movement.

father had participated in the March First Movement of 1919, which landed him in prison. Kim's official biography, *With the Century*, tells of his great-grandfather's role in the attack on the U.S.S. *General Sherman*, which ran aground in Korea in 1866.[61] According to Kim's autobiography, his grandfather, upon hearing "imperialist aggressors" were sailing up the Yanggak Islet and killing Koreans with its cannons and guns, raping women, and stealing property, sprang into action, joining a campaign that ultimately resulted in the destruction of the American ship.[62] Both claims may be apocryphal, parts of one of the stories created by the regime to bolster Kim's claim to dynastic leadership. Kim's fathers experience may be highly plausible: the March First Movement, a nation-wide movement in Korea, involved one to two million people "and it is conceivable that Song-ju's father (i.e., Kim's father) had also joined the demonstration" (Lee, 1967, p. 375). Nonetheless, even if both stories are false, it does shed light on Kim's NIC. Kim desires to be seen as descending from generations of freedom fighters, willing to die to punish imperialist aggressors and safe-guard the independence of the Korean people.

North Korean Communists never tire of stressing Kim's credentials as a guerrilla leader. Again, while much of his experience may be embellished for propaganda purposes, the historical records suggest Kim was a dedicated guerilla fighter. Both the South Korean Government and the Japanese occupational authorities acknowledged Kim's role as a guerrilla leader. The majority of Kim's guerilla activities were with the

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[61] The *Sherman's* anchor – the ship's guns were taken and hull burned—hung on the main gate to Pyongyang as a warning to outsiders who may attempt to enter Korea uninvited. In 2000, the *Pueblo*—another U.S. Naval vesicle and subject of controversy in U.S. –North Korean relations— was placed on display alongside the monument to the *U.S.S. General Sherman*, reminding Korean's "they must maintain their vigilance against American imperialism" (Armstrong 2013, p. 154).

[62] This story is told in *With the Century*, (vol 1, pg. 10). Also, see Martin (2004, p. 375).

Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army around 1934 to 1940. The group was directed by

the Chinese Communist Party, a fact usually omitted by the North Korean regime when

discussing Kim's partisan activities (Armstrong, 1995, p. 7). Two significant events

helped build Kim's reputation with both the Japanese authorities and the Korean people.

Starting in November of 1933, Kim and his forces engaged in a three-month battle with

Japanese forces. The Japanese aimed to starve the group out with a siege, but were

unsuccessful. Kim and his partisans snuck through enemy lines to attack the Japanese

from the rear. This raid was a notable event in his guerilla experience. Kim, then twenty-

five years old, led two- hundred men into Korea at night, killing Japanese police officers

and stealing supplies and money from local property owners. The Japanese followed the

partisans back into Manchuria, only to be ambushed by Kim's forces. The forces, behind

rocks on a mountain-side, pushed large boulders down the mountain on the attacking

Japanese (Martin, 2004). Such tactics were typical, according to Martin. Kim's bands

were known to use subterfuge: "The guerrillas used surprise attacks, sniping, ambush

night warfare and feints, luring the enemy into defensive zone of their own choosing,"

writes Martin (2004, p. 39).

Armstrong notes that the guerilla fighters had some success between 1936 and

1939, but "the years between 1939 and 1941 'could be called the period when our forces

suffered loss,' as Kim euphemistically puts it" (Armstrong, 1995, p. 9), resulting in Kim

fleeing Manchuria for safe haven in the USSR. While official state mythology paints an

inaccurate picture, Kim was unquestionably highly dedicated, fighting against great odds.

Armstrong describes Kim's group of partisan fighters as having "tremendous

determination to win against overwhelming odds, willing to take enormous and at times

foolhardy risks" (1995, p. 9). Furthermore, Kim appeared to be genuinely dedicated to

the cause. The partisans "felt themselves the only legitimate representative of a people oppressed by imperialism and 'feudal vestiges," writes Armstrong, " who attempted to link themselves with the poor peasantry of the remote Manchurian countryside in order to win back for them the land stolen by ruthless invaders" (1995, p. 9). Dae-Sook Suh argues that Kim became "then the most wanted guerrilla leader in Manchuria. He persisted in the hopeless fight without much support, but he endured and did not surrender or submit to the Japanese" (Suh, 1995, p. 46).

While official regime propaganda regarding Kim's guerilla experience may be inaccurate, it does shed light on how the regime sees itself. Kim's guerilla experience provides "the central founding myth of the North Korean state" (Armstrong, 1995, p. 9), and it is at "the heart of Korean propaganda, storytelling, and arts" (D. Byman & Lind, 2010, p. 53). North Korean propaganda stresses Kim's role in the heroic anti-imperial struggle, offering an origin story for the North Korean regime. Kim's guerilla experience justifies the Supreme Leader or *suryong* system, an ideology that sees Kim II Sung as the "sun of the nation" and "eternal president of the republic" (D. Byman & Lind, 2010, p. 52); Armstrong argues that Kim "became a kind of substitute and symbol for the family of the Korean nation" (Armstrong, 2002, p. 222). Kim played the led role in this founding myth, as he leads his nation to salvation from foreign oppression. His nomadic experience—wandering in the Manchurian wilderness—is symbolic of the exile off all Korean people who were strangers in their own occupied homeland. In the guerilla myth, Kim's role is of the "filial son of an anti-Japanese fighter, descended from a pantheon of revolutionary ancestors; Kim's filial son, Kim Jong-Il, carries on this tradition" writes Byman and Lind (2010, p. 52). To be sure, the propaganda surrounding the guerilla myth has an instrumental component. It justifies the privileged position of the North Korean

guerilla elite, stressing that without the sacrifices and loyalty of this group, liberation would have been impossible. The myth also serves a legitimating function for the Kim dynasty, the legitimacy stems from Kim's role as resisting—against great odds—foreign domination and influence. However, just because the myth serves an instrumental function, does not mean that Kim does not hold such an identity conception.

The role of the Manchurian experience in justifying Kim's leadership suggests a high degree of nationalism and xenophobia prevalent in general in the regime, which may be the product of the North Koreans regime's propaganda. This xenophobia may be justified as Korea found itself at the mercy of great powers in modern history. While the NIC stresses North Korea against the world, certain groups are singled out for special vituperation. Bruce Cumings argues that North Korea "is first of all, and above all, an anti-Japanese entity," and "that anti-Japanese sentiment is drummed into the brains of everyone in the country" (quoted in Byman and Lind 2010, p. 53).[63] North Korean propaganda for domestic consumption portrays the Japanese as an "inherently evil race that can never change, a race with which Koreans much forever be on hostile terms" (Meyers 2012, p. 135).

The U.S. is subject of a great deal of demonization as well, because, according to the Kim regime, the U.S. is responsible for dividing the peninsula, engaging in various atrocities, and allying with the Japanese to subjugate Korea.[64] North Korean propaganda,

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[63] The Japanese occupied Korea from 1910 to 1945.

[64] Cumings (1990) argues that the North's anti-U.S. propaganda is more a product of U.S. war crimes committed *during* the Korean War. Indeed, the U.S. engaged in a great deal of bombing of civilian populated areas. However, as Meyers notes, "no other country has born a grudge for so long"; there was intense anti-American propaganda disseminated *before* the Korean War; and finally, much of anti-U.S. propaganda is not about the Korean War, suggesting the origins of such propaganda are not strictly in response to the U.S.'s actions during the Korean War (See Meyers 2012, p. 150).

according to B.R. Meyers, has deeply racial overtones and portrays Americans as bastards, jackals, and swine, "who have snouts rather than noses and who croak rather than die" (D. Byman & Lind, 2010, p. 53; Meyers, 2012, p. Chpt. 5). School children are subject to nationalist propaganda at early ages. For instance, a primary school math textbook asks: "the brave uncles from the Korean People's Army destroyed six tanks of the wolf-like American bastards. Then they destroyed two more. How many tanks did they destroy all together?" (quoted in Byman and Lind 2010, p. 54) In propaganda meant for domestic consumption, "U.S. Imperialism" and "America" "are used interchangeably and Americans are referred to routinely by the term '*nom*' or 'bastards.'" (Meyers 2012, p. 135).

South Koreans are portrayed as being fundamentally compromised by their interaction with "impure elements" and as tools of American masters. Thus, the North can be the only true representatives of a pure Korean nationalism. The regime goes to great lengths to scrub the record clean of any evidence the North was aided or is somehow dependent on foreign powers. This is all the more striking because of the North dependence on the USSR in the early days of the regime and its dependence on external aid. Kim's autobiography omits mention that it was the Americans and the Soviets that ultimately destroyed the Japanese empire.

One can see this nationalism and xenophobia reflected not just in the regime's propaganda, but also in the regime's official policy. At the heart of the regime is its official *Juche* ideology, which is typically translated as "self-reliance, or as solving your own problems under all circumstances" (D. Byman & Lind, 2010, p. 52).[65] It encourages

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[65] Hymans notes another irony. The *Juche* ideology may have been borrowed from nationalist *kokutai* ideas of the Japanese, North Koreas' former colonists. B. R. Meyers (2012) argues that race-based nationalism as

North Korean citizens to creatively solve various problems independently. In the economic realm it stresses the need to resist entanglement by capitalist enemies and the benefits of a policy of economic autarky. The South Koreans, in the North's view, are guilty of the opposite of *Juche,* which is *sadaejuui*, meaning to be reliant on a foreign power (Hymans, 2008, p. 265).[66] Aside from the *Juche* ideology, the North Korean regime implements other policies that signal the regimes desire to reject foreign influence of every sort and from every provenance" (Hymans, 2008, p. 266) For instance, after Kim came to power, the regime engaged in a major "Koreanizing" campaign of the language, which aimed to "extirpate all traces of the historic Chinese as well as Japanese influence" (Hymans, 2008, p. 266). Far from being a mirror image of the USSR, North Korea while nominally a "communist regime," claimed to practice Korean or "our style" socialism.

The Status Dimension

The key feature for the status dimension "is how high 'we' stand relative to 'them' in the international pecking order: Are we naturally their equal (if not their superior), or will we simply never measure up" (Hymans, 2006b, p. 23). According to B.R. Meyers, the North Koreans see themselves as "part of a uniquely pure and virtuous

opposed to Juche's notions of self-reliance is much more prevalent than what Meyers sees as an incoherent Juche ideology; either way, both are evidence of the regime's xenophobia and nationalism.

[66] Critics argue that the origins of the Juche ideology can be traced to Kim's famous December 1955 speech, which would postdate the Korean War. Furthermore, Scalapino and Lee (1973) argue that the formulation and articulation of the Juche ideology followed an internal logic: its aim was to consolidate Kim's control and leadership by isolating the various Soviet and Chinese factions in the North Korean leadership. Regarding the timing of the Juche speech, "Kim's nationalism was hardly new; he had spent his entire youth until the age of thirty-three as an anti-Japanese fighter…Nothing in his Juche speech was a radical departure from Kim's earlier statements on Korean nationalism, going back to the immediate postliberation period" (Armstrong, 2013, p. 92). While the public articulation of the Juche ideology in 1955 may have served an instrumental purpose, it does not mean that it did not accurately reflect Kim's NIC, one of oppositional nationalism.

race" and that "racial pride always requires constant awareness of an inferior other" (Meyers 2012, p. 130). Meyers continues by adding, "if the child race is uniquely pure, it follows that no non-Koreans are to be regarded as equals" (Meyers 1012, p. 129). North Koreans exhibit "lofty moral attitudes" and are uniquely "virtuous." This virtue can be a liability: To be "uniquely virtuous in an evil world but not uniquely cunning or strong is to be as vulnerable as a child" (Meyers 2012, p. 79). The race is vulnerable to evil outsiders in the absence of a great leader "who can turn its purity into a source of unity and strength" (Meyers 2012, p. 80). Meyers argues that the regime uses the color white in many of its depictions of Kim and features Kim with North Korean children as evidence of the purity of the Korean race. Kim is often photographed on a white horse, a purity symbol.

DPRK propaganda does not insist that Koreans are better at everything than outsiders; obviously some races are taller and more affluent than North Koreans. Indeed, some North Korean propaganda portrays South Korea as being affluent. Perhaps this was necessary after it became increasingly difficult to convince North Koreans that the rapidly developing South Korea was a "living hell." However, the affluence masks "ethnic contamination," which is all the more striking when compared to the North Koreans who are "as pure as the water they drink" (Meyers, 2012, p. 155).

States friendly to the DPRK are portrayed, in official DPRK propaganda for domestic consumption, as essentially being tributary states, sending congratulations to the great leader and the DPRK on their great achievements. For all the aid and patronage given to the DPRK from the USSR, the USSR gets little or no thanks in the propaganda meant for domestic consumption, and the USSR is certainly not portrayed as being superior or more advanced. Meyers argues that the USSR is "looked back upon with

contempt." For instance, in a novel produced by the DPRK, Kim Il Sung "chuckles about how he learned Soviet secrets by getting Brezhnev drunk;" and there are "frequent sneers (in the novel) about how the USSR collapsed 'without firing a shot'" (quoted in Meters, 2012, p. 130). Tellingly, when foreigners and DPRK citizens interact, in official regime propaganda for domestic consumption, the foreigners are usually portrayed as being respectful and obsequious, while the locals (North Koreans) reply "informally as if to subordinates" (Meyers 2012, p. 131). In interactions between the DPRK and the U.S., the U.S. is usually portrayed in a manner suggesting that the U.S. is afraid of Pyongyang's strength and unity; the U.S. is portrayed as being ready to negotiate, usually "kneeling down or waving the white flag" of surrender. Interestingly, in North Korean propaganda, North Korea is portrayed as being on equal footing with the U.S. In a propaganda novel, a fictional U.S. ambassador says to the North Korean envoy, "That's right, you're a superpower. A superpower like America!" (Meyers 2012, p. 144).

Case Study: The Korean War

The Pride Dimension

Pride produces the need to act autonomously. Youngjun Kim argues, explaining the origins of the North Korean garrison state that Kim's desire for a large army– which would take the form of the KPA— was not merely to safeguard North Korea's security. But, a large army was necessary to safeguard North Korean independence and autonomy.

In an emotional speech announcing the establishment of a Pyongyang Academy in 1945, Kim expanded on the importance of the academy: [67]

> In former days when their country was lost to the Japanese imperialists because they had no powerful national army of their own, the Korean people were subjected to colonial oppression and cruel exploitation. A glimpse at the house here in Chiul-ri is a clear enough indication of the harsh humiliation the Koreans underwent under the colonial rule of Japanese imperialism. The Japanese discriminated against Koreans at every step even in dining rooms and lodging quarters and exploited Korean youth like beasts of burden. A person without a homeland is always destined to lead a life more miserable than a dog in a house of death. This is quite true. Under Japanese imperialist rule, our people were forced to live with pent-up grievances. Not only in Chiul-ri but everywhere else in our country you can find traces of the sorrowful, piteous life the Koreans had led under the tyranny of Japanese imperialism. Why, then, shouldn't we be consumed with animosity towards the Japanese? Our people can never allow such humiliating slavery to be imposed on them again. We must not fail to build by our own efforts an independent and sovereign democratic state and found our powerful regular army (Youngjun Kim 2017, p. 123).

Kim stressed the burning desire for autonomy and independence that would accompany a strong military, with emotionally salient language like humiliation and slavery. What is also noticeable in this speech is a lack of discussion of the need for world revolution, of capitalist exploitation, or of other concerns of the international communist movement. Notice that Kim did not mention the strong alliance nor military support from the USSR. Kim focused, as usual, on nationalist themes: such as national pride and independence.

Autonomy for the North Korean state could never be achieved without the unification of the peninsula. On the eve of the North's invasion, Kim justified it in terms similar to those in his address to the Pyongyang Academy. During an emergency meeting he had called on the morning of June 25th, 1950 he declared that

> Rhee Syng's puppet army invaded to North along all places along the 38th parallel. I sent a warning message to the enemy to stop their invasion, but the

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[67] The Pyongyang Academy trained officers which would then populate the officer core of the KPA (Youngjun Kim, 2017).

enemy continually invaded 1-2 kilometers northern part of the 38th parallel and tried to occupy all area of North Korea. We faced difficulties and dangers. We have to decide now whether we would be slaves of imperialist countries or peaceful people of independent country. We have to fight against Rhee Syngman's army. We have to start our revolutionary war for liberation against them. Our army had to start counterattack against the enemy to win the war (Youngjun Kim 2017, p. 15).

Kim's explanation was technically incorrect. The North's invasion was not a reaction to a South Korean invasion, as indicated by Kim himself in 1975, when he let slip "we will not invade the south again" (Kim 2017, 136). But an appreciation for how Kim conceptualized the war makes this distinction less important. As the revisionists stress, Kim thought a state of war already in existence in the summer of 1950. Before the start of the conventional war, both North and South engaged in intensive espionage and even assassination campaigns. Kim Il-Sung himself was almost the victim of a terror attack (Kim 2017, 136). The prominent South Korean politician Yo Unhyong and Kim Ku were both assassinated. What is most telling is the language the DPRK used to describe the war. This was not a war between states: Kim and Kim Tu-bong, the nominal head of the DPRK, both stressed publically that the goal was to release the 'captured' South Korean government. South Korea was captured by traitors and "the objective of liberation war is to remove traitors to our nation and to liberate the South Korean people," declared Kim Tu-bong. The "South Koreans are our family" explained Kim Tu-bong (Kim 2017, p. 136). Thus, according to Kim, true independence could only be achieved by removing the traitors and the imperialist puppet movement in South Korea. Kim's lifelong goal was to resists foreign occupation. He clearly regarded the South Korean government as being captured by imperialist, alien, and foreign sources. When the foreign occupier was defeated, the South Koreans could then rejoin the Korean family. This interpretation

stresses that Kim likely would gain tremendous utility from achieving his goal of ridding the Korean peninsula of foreign occupiers.

Just as in the cases of Fidel Castro and Saddam Hussein, their actions offered undeniable material benefits. But certain actors tend to gain tremendous non-material utility that stems from a particular NIC. Leaders that conceptualize their nations as being 'great,' likely gain more utility. For Fidel the weapons would allow Cuba to avoid being pushed around by the U.S., alleviating its subordinate status. For Saddam the war allowed him to act as the rightful leader of the pan-Arab movement, placing Iraq in its rightful 'place in the sun.' And for Kim, unification would advance the goal that animated his life as a guerrilla fighter, namely: ensuring that Korea would not be dominated by foreigner aggressors.

Pride can result in the decision maker seeing her state as possessing an exaggerated amount of relative power, leading to unfounded assumptions about the state's ability to affect other states. Kim had ample reason to be confident about the KPA's ability to defeat the ROK's army. Because the KPA held a number of objective advantages, it is difficult to conclude that Kim saw his state as possessing an *unjustified* amount of relative power.

The KPA held a number of advantages. Broadly, they benefited from the largess of outside powers, specifically support from the Soviet Union and the return of fourteen-thousand battle-hardened Koreans fighting in the Peoples Liberation Army. They also benefited from the active insurgency campaign in the South. More specifically, the KPA benefited from a more experienced officer core, better capabilities, and from readiness problems with the ROKA.

Soviet advisors that had served in the Red Army during WWII provided the KPA with combat-trained advisors. This advantage was limited, however. While the advisors took part in the planning of the attack, Stalin limited their involvement during the invasion to specific units, because he feared captured advisors could provide irrefutable evidence of Soviet collusion. Conversely, while some officers in the ROKA included veterans of the Japanese service, "these officers varied widely in professional skill, devotion to Korean nationalism, and character" (Millett, 2010, p. 29). Many of the best officers in the ROK were suspect due to either active collaboration with the Japanese occupation or because they had fled from the North. Of tremendous benefit to the KPA was the recent addition of three infantry divisions released and returned to Korea from the People's Liberation Army providing combat-trained personnel.

Soviet tanks and field artillery assets gave the North a distinct advantage in terms of mechanized warfare. As Millett documents, the medium T-34 tank armed with an 85mm main gun and the self-propelled SU-76 gun were especially effective due to the ROKA's lack of mechanized assets (Millett, 2010, p. 32). During the invasion, the South lacked weapons that could penetrate the "frontal hull armor or turret of the T-34" (Millett, 2010, p. 35). The ROKA lacked anti-tank mines and ROKA infantry platoons were forced to try to disable the tanks with other anti-tank demolitions in the "hands of sacrificial gun crews" (Millett, 2010, p. 35). In addition to the tank advantage, the Soviets provided field artillery assets with longer ranges than the field artillery assets provided to the ROKA by the United States, giving the KPA an advantage. Millett concludes that the coupling of the tank and field artillery advantages "doomed any" defensive position of the ROKA. Matthew B. Ridgeway provided the following description:

Considering the relative strength and combat readiness of the forces that faced each other across the 38th parallel in June 1950, it was a marvel that the North Korean armies were delayed at all in their drive to overrun all of South Korea…Nor did the ROKs have any gun capable of slowing a tank. It was as if a few troops of Boy Scouts with hand weapons had undertaken to stop a Panzer unit (Quoted in Kim, 2017, p. 4).

The ROKA was not combat ready. In June 1950, the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) concluded that the ROKA had "serious readiness problems" (Millett, 2010, p. 29). The KMAG concluded that the ROKA was not adequately equipped to repel an invasion from the North. Of particular concern was a lack of equipment, such as ammunition, spare parts, and other military equipment. KMAG concluded that in June 1950, on the eve of the invasion, the ROKA could fight for no longer than 10 to 15 days. Additionally, the ROKA had difficulty training because a number of units were actively fighting an insurgency in South Korea. Four divisions of the ROKA patrolled in a campaign against communist subversion. Overall, Millett concludes, "that only about half the battalions in the South Korean army had any chance of fighting the North Koreans as a cohesive force, even at the battalion level, let alone in regimental and division operations" (Millett, 2010, p. 30)

If the North possessed a number of advantages, it nevertheless had an Achilles heel: the North "had no logistical sustainability" (Millett, 2010, p. 37). This meant that the ROK had to either capitulate or collapse quickly after the North occupied key areas; absence such capitulation, the KPA would face serious logistical challenges. In a longer campaign, the KPA must capture the South Korean National Railroad to Pusan, also accompanied by a two-lane major road. Alternatively, the KPA had to control the East and West Seas to gain access to various ports, and, even in the event of controlling both seas, the ports were accessible only via an underdeveloped road system designed for

farmers' carts. Controlling these assets was essential for the functioning of the KPA's supply lines and to deny either the ROKA or the U.S. – in the case of U.S intervention—the use of these assets. "A long war, measured in months instead of weeks, worked against the North Koreans, even without the timely intervention of American air power and ground troops…the North Koreans planned for a short war since it was the only war they could win," Millett concludes (2010, p. 37).

Kim was reasonably justified in being confident about success. He was not "insane" or "crazy" in launching an attack to unify the country. Yet, Kim likely noticed the strengths while missing or glossing over various liabilities, such as the logistical challenges and the complications that would arise in the event that the South Korean Government did not collapse quickly or if the United States intervened.

Achieving the overall political goal of a military campaign may depend on avoiding the involvement of third parties (Blainey, 1988). Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait would have been successful in the absence of U.S. intervention, for example. The same is true of Kim's goals in the Korean War: In the absence of U.S. involvement, the KPA held a number of advantages that predicted success for the North Koreans. Yet, if the U.S because involved, the KPA would face two crucial problems. First, while the KPA held a number of advantages, the U.S. had a distinct advantage in terms of air and naval support. Support from the Soviet Union could at best neutralize this type of support and Stalin in any case made clear that such support would be limited.[68] Second, as already noted, a long campaign worked against the KPA. U.S. intervention had the potential to complicate the KPA's plan for a quick and easy victory and to thwart Kim's plan for

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[68] Both Chen (1996) and Weathersby (1993) document Stalin's reluctance to provide such support for fear of direct clashes with the U.S.

unification. Hence, a decision maker would seek to gather all available information regarding the likelihood of U.S. involvement. While Kim could find plenty of evidence, to be discussed shortly, that the U.S. would likely not intervene, Kim brushed aside warnings from Mao and did not appear to plan adequately for the possible contingency of a U.S. intervention.

Kim thought U.S. intervention unlikely, telling Stalin that the U.S. would either not intervene or intervene too late to make any difference (Weathersby, 1993a; Zhihua, 2000, p. 62). Did Kim have enough information to conclude that the U.S. was unlikely to intervene? On what did Kim base this belief? The theory offered suggests that revolutionary nationalists should shorten searches for information about such possible complications and take the leap regardless; the illusion of control, stemming from the emotion of pride, shortens searches for the possible consequences of a given decision. In this case, a possible consequence of the invasion was that the U.S. would intervene. Instead of adequately assessing the likelihood of U.S. involvement, Kim pushed forward with an irreversible full-scale invasion.

Did Kim have reason to believe the U.S. would become involved? A strong case can be made that the U.S. did not employ a successful strategy of deterrence (George and Smoke, 1974). This case of unsuccessful deterrence is well known. In March 1949, President Truman, based on the advice of the NSC, determined that 7,500 American soldiers stationed in South Korea should depart by June 1949 (W. Stueck, 1981, p. 154). President Truman declared, on January 5, 1950, that the U.S. would not challenge the claim that Taiwan was not part of China, signaling a less assertive U.S. in the region. In January 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson left South Korea out of the 'defense perimeter speech.' Four months later, in May 1950, Senator Connally asserted that

"whether we want it or not," South Korea may have to be abandoned to the Communist" (W. Stueck, 1981, p. 153), and Russia "could overrun Korea just like she would probably over-run Formosa when she gets ready to do it" (Stueck 1981, p. 153). As George and Smoke (1974) note, what is important was not Connally's remark, but that "such statements often spark strong disclaimers, but Acheson responded merely by recounting American efforts to establish and maintain an independent republic below the thirty eighth parallel" (Stueck 1981, p. 153). In May 1950, U.S. intelligence services noted a large buildup of North Korean military assets on the border. Alexander Sachs, a consultant in the Office of Strategic Services, briefed Paul Nitze, director of Policy and Planning in the State Department, regarding the troop build-up, suggesting a likely invasion. Even in light of a likely North Korean invasion, the U.S. did not issue an explicit warning to the North Koreans. Stueck (1981) concludes that U.S. actions did *not* provide "a consistent pattern that conveyed deep American commitment" (p. 161). Hence, a decision maker may reasonably concluded that have concluded that South Korea was a low priority of the U.S., and predict no U.S. involvement.

Yet this would require the North Koreans to overlook signals that made the U.S. involvement more ambiguous. The State Department made significant efforts to signal interest in the peninsula. In the fall of 1949, the U.S. Navy visited South Korea with two destroyers and an American cruiser. In January of 1950, when the U.S. House of Representatives cut aid to the ROK, Acheson ensured that the funds were reversed. Ambassador-at-large Phillip Jessup visited Korea in January as well. Six months later, and shortly before the onset of hostilities, John Foster Dulles visited South Korea and spoke to the National Assembly. Dulles assured the South Koreans: "You are not alone; you will never be alone" (quoted in Stueck 1981, p. 154).

Much has been made of the infamous defense perimeter speech. According to Zhihua, Acheson speech "caught the attention of both Mao and Stalin" (2000, p. 54) during Mao's visit to the Soviet Union in February 1950. Stalin was impressed with the speech after he read it carefully (Zhihua 2000, p. 54). Because the speech stressed the imperial design of the Soviets on the Chinese border in an attempt to split the Sino-Soviet alliance, both Mao and Stalin were concerned about Acheson's attempt to drive a wedge between the China and the Soviet Union. The speech did signal a less assertive U.S. in the region, which, according to Zhihua, may have been a factor in Stalin changing his mind about supporting an invasion. Yet, while Stalin may have interpreted the speech as signaling a less assertive U.S. in the region, Stalin was still very concerned about U.S. intervention to the point of taking a number of steps to preclude a clash between U.S. and the Soviet troops.

How did Stalin and Mao gauge the likelihood of U.S. intervention? Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue (1995) argue that both Stalin (Stalin after January 1950) and Mao thought U.S. intervention unlikely. Some background is required as Stalin's views about U.S. intervention changed over time. Zhihua (2000), on a close reading of declassified Russian documents, finds that in October of 1949, Stalin was reluctant to support a North Korean invasion because of two factors. First, the North Koreans were not prepared and, second, Stalin was concerned about possible U.S. intervention (Zhihua 2000, p. 51). By January 1950, Stalin's views had changed. Zhinhua argues that while the North Koreans still may have been unprepared, the "international situation" had changed, as a number of developments at the international level encouraged Stalin to agree to the attack. Zhihua sees role played by the changing relationship between Communist China and the USSR as explaining Stalin's new perspective. The victory of the communists in China was both

an opportunity and problem for the USSR. The communist victory predicted further advances for the communist movement in Asia, but it also challenged Stalin's leadership of the communist movement, as China could now make a leadership claim, or at the very least, force Stalin to treat China as an equal. Stalin was also concerned the Chinese would pursue rapprochement with the United States. This dynamic encouraged Stalin to offer concessions such as giving the Chinese Eastern Railway back to the Chinese, to ensure they did not move into the western camp. According to Zhihua, the concessions jeopardized the Soviets strategic position in the region and they forced Stalin to pursue new means with which to achieve Soviet objectives. The means involved reassessing the strategic importance of the Korean peninsula, specifically the warm water port of Pusan and the peninsula's value as a 'buffer zone' in the case of Japanese revanchism. Thus, according to Zhihua, the Sino-Soviet treaty led to a reevaluation of the Soviet strategic position and to a decision to acquiesce to the attack.

While Stalin's views about the importance of Korea had changed and the defense perimeter speech signaled a less assertive United States in the region, Stalin was careful not only to limit Soviet involvement in the attack, but also to implicate the Chinese in the attack. He did so by making Kim gain Mao's support for the invasion. He told Kim: "If you should get kicked in the teeth, I shall not lift a finger. You have to ask Mao for all the help" (Zhihua 2000, p. 63). Thus, while Stalin may have been more sanguine after the events in early 1950 about U.S. involvement, he was still hedging his bets and tried to minimize the consequences of a possible U.S. intervention.

Because much of the case for the failure of deterrence emphasizes the importance of the defense perimeter speech, it is useful to see how the North Koreans interpreted the speech. The speech was far from being a pellucid signal of U.S. intentions, and,

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according to Cumings (1990), the North Koreans misinterpreted the speech. Based on

captured North Korean documents, "it turns out that the North Koreans thought Acheson

included the ROK in his perimeter, a bit of a daunting fact for Acheson's presumed

failure of deterrence" (Cumings 1990, p. 423). The North Korean Press, ran an account or

a summary of the defense perimeter speech, saying "Acheson's view was that those

countries inside what he called the defense line, meaning those subjugated countries,

Japan, the Philippines, and *South Korea*, such countries would be America's direct

responsibilities" (Cumings 1990, p. 424). Thus, it is difficult to conclude that the speech

unequivocally signaled U.S. indifference to South Korea. In addition, it is a questionable

assumption that—even if they translated the speech correctly to exclude S. Korea—the

North Koreas would take the speech at face value. "The premise has always been

stupefyingly improbable," writes Cumings, "that Stalin of all people, or for that matter

Kim Il-sung, would be misled by a public speech into thinking the United States would

not defend South Korea." Cumings elaborates, "Stalin's usual modus operandi was

probably to put negatives in front of Acheson's public statements, a first cut at discerning

enemy intentions"(1990, p. 410). Armstrong comes to a similar conclusion: "neither the

Chinese nor the Soviet leadership believed the Acheson speech signaled that the US

would not intervene in Korea" (Armstrong 2013, p. 17). The North Koreans likely

scrutinized the speech harshly and did not take it at face value. Pyongyang labelled the

speech full of "lies" and "demagoguery," "'a noisy chorus' that, the implication was,

masked his (Achetson's) real intention to 'prepare a war against the national liberation

struggles in Asia" (Cumings 1990, p. 426). [69]

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[69] Some strategic empathy could have problematized other signals about U.S. intentions in the region. The
removal of troops from South Korea may have been more a product of bureaucratic politics than a

In February 1950, Mao and Stalin met to discuss the Sino-Soviet treaty and had the opportunity to discuss Kim's plans to unify Korea by force. According to Shi Zhe, the translator who accompanied Mao on his trip to Moscow, Stalin told Mao that he and Kim discussed Kim's plans to unify the peninsula by force and asked Mao "if there existed any condition unfavorable to his plan, such as whether the Americans would intervene" (Chen 2010, p. 101). "Chairman Mao did not answer immediately," according to Shi Zhe, but eventually replied, "The Americans might not come in because this is Korea's internal affairs, but the Korean comrades need to take American intervention into account" (Chen 2010, p. 101). Mao held a number of reservations about Kim's plan, but according to Shi Zhe, Stalin told Mao that "Kim Il-sung would attack the South no matter what happened" (Chen, 2010, p. 101). He went on to discuss Kim's "mood." "He will only listen to the voice of his idea, not the voice against his idea; he was really young and brave," Stalin told Mao (Chen 2010, p.101). Based on this evidence, Mao thought U.S. intervention unlikely but *possible,* and thought that Kim and his "Korean comrades" needed to take a possible U.S. intervention into account.

As mentioned, Stalin forced Kim to gain Mao's approval for the invasion, which Kim did during a trip to Beijing in May 1950 (Zhihua, 2000, p. 66). During this meeting, Mao directly warned Kim about the possibility of U.S. intervention. Some context is necessary to understand Mao's reasoning. Mao may have been disingenuous in issuing this warning, not because he was trying to dissuade Kim from invading, but because it would thwart Mao's plans for invading Taiwan. Mao's reservations voiced to Stalin

reasonable signal of a U.S. lack of resolve. Regarding the perimeter speech, Acheson was in a strategic bind: He did not want to embolden Rhee and was concerned that if he transparently signaled his commitment to Korea, the 'China Lobby' would likely desire a similar pledge of support for Taiwan (see Cumings 1990, p. 428-9). The North Koreans may have not understood the nuances of U.S. foreign policy making.

about the need to account for U.S. intervention may have been disingenuous as well. When Kim, at Stalin's behest, met Mao to ask for permission to invade, Mao raised a number of concerns about a North Korean invasion. Chinese Marshal Peng Dehuai who was present at the meeting recalled, "Mao raised the dire possibility of American intervention, but Kim did not take it seriously" (Thornton 2000, p. 107). The North Korean leader insisted that "he would achieve victory within a month, and that the United States could not deploy its forces before then" (Thornton 2000, p.107-8). Interestingly, Kim stressed that he did not need assistance from the Chinese and that: "the NKA would 'solve the Korean problem' on its own" (Thornton 2000, p. 108). While Kim's comment to Mao may have been intended to stress the fact that this was a *fait accompli*, it does suggest an insouciance disregard of the possibility of outside involvement. While the reasons why Mao warned Kim may be complicated, Mao directly told Kim not to rule out U.S. intervention.

According to Youngjun Kim's, a faction of KPA leaders was concerned about U.S. intervention. North Korean Defense Minister Ch'oe Yong-gon worried that the North Korea War plan was infeasible due to the possibility of U.S. intervention. Ch'oe Yong-gon was close to Kim. They both served in Manchuria and Russia. Ch'oe was one of the few to refer to Kim by his first name in private, suggesting a close relationship. "Choe had had a skeptical view of the KPA's preemptive attack of the South because of the possibility of American intervention" writes Kim Youngjun (2017, p. 17). However, there are no primary source documents suggesting that Ch'oe discussed his concerns directly with Kim Il-sung. The Minister of Commerce, Jang Swoon, in an emergency Cabinet Council early in June 25, 1950, voiced his view directly to Kim Il-sung, stating that they should be careful "about starting an entire attack along the 38th parallel because

of an American intervention." Kim Il-sung responded by "scolding him: 'Siwoo, you are stupid. Think Again. How will the United States come without the Soviet intervention? You are such a fool!'" (Kim, 2017, p. 17). Saddam Hussein would dismiss similar voiced by his inner-circle regarding the feasibility of his attack on Iran in 1980, flippantly dismissing their concerns without exploring their validity.

Besides the possibility of U.S intervention, the war planners overlooked other important factors that diminished the likelihood that the North Koreans would achieve its objectives. Hindsight bias may make these limitations obvious only after the fact, yet another decision maker may have been more sensitive to the various problems in the North Korean plan.

The illusion of control can explain some otherwise perplexing aspects of the North Korean invasion. Thornton (2000) argues that the North Korean war plans were "jejune," meaning that the North Koreans envisioned a simple victory: NKA troops would seize Seoul, guerilla uprisings would envelop the country, and the South Korean regime would collapse. According to Yu's recollection, the leadership was "bewildered" by the fact that the ROK did not collapse immediately following the invasion (Thornton 2000, p. 231). The plan may have worked if either the South Korean government collapsed or if the U.S. did not intervene. Because the war plan did not take these possibilities into account, a number of logistical problems became apparent relatively quickly.

It is important to discuss one caveat before proceeding. Thornton argues, provocatively, that this war plan was essentially formulated by the Soviet Union with Kim's approval. According to Thornton, Stalin deliberately aimed for the North's invasion to be unsuccessful. Stalin's larger geopolitical goal was to push the Chinese into

the Soviet camp and away from the Americans. To that end, it was essential for the U.S. to intervene. Intervention by the U.S. would then invite Chinese intervention, predicting a clash between the Chinese and the U.S., pushing the Chinese into the Soviet camp.[70] Thus, according to Thornton, the logistical problem and strategic flaws make sense in light of Stalin's deliberate aim to draw the U.S. into the conflict. While this complicates the analysis, it is still perplexing why Kim would have agreed to a plan with such obvious strategic flaws.

Kim stressed that U.S. intervention was either unlikely or would be too late to make any difference. The North Korean assault would be done quickly, in blitzkrieg fashion. "Speed was the essence to prevent American lodgment," writes Thornton (2000, p. 236). However, the North Korean advance proceeded slowly, which Appleman (1992) argues was a major strategic flaw. This is partly explained by the fact that the North Koreans did not have the proper equipment to cross rivers. Sophisticated equipment was not required to cross many rivers, yet some rivers, the Han River for example, required "floating bridges" or other "large scale river crossing equipment" (Thornton 2000, p. 233). The Soviets did not provide this type of equipment and the North Koreans "were forced to devise time-consuming ad hoc measures to surmount Korea's numerous river obstacles" (Thorton 2000, p. 233). While this may seem like typical 'fog of war' type miscommunication and poor foresight, if speed was of the essence to prevent U.S. intervention and precipitate the fall of the South Korean regime, it is perplexing why the North Koreans were not adequately prepared to cross such terrain.

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[70] If Thornton is correct, Stalin may have been too clever by half: Prolonging the war may have left the Chinese and North Koreans dependent on the USSR, but what the North Koreans and Chinese perceived as the Soviet Union's lackluster support—the Soviets provided air support but "neither the CVPA (Chinese) nor the KPA got the full support from the Soviet military that they hoped for" (Armstrong 2013, p. 47)— may have contributed to Sino-Soviet split a mere two years after the Korean War's conclusion.

The North Koreans did not move fast enough to occupy Pusan, an important port city, which would have precluded its use by the U.S. Denying the U.S. the use of this critical port could have both discouraged U.S. intervention and, in case the U.S. nevertheless decided to intervene, made it costly and time consuming for the U.S. to take the port. Thornton argues that the original Soviet plan did not call for the occupation of this critical port, evidence consistent with Thornton's theory that Stalin aimed to encourage U.S. intervention. But it also raises questions why the North Koreans would have overlooked such important measures.

The North Koreans experienced command and control problems stemming from the Soviet Union's role in the planning and execution of the campaign. Before the attack, Stalin withdrew advisors from combat units and "along with them, their communications" (Thornton 2000, p. 230). The capture of Soviet advisors would provide the U.S. with tangible evidence of Soviet support, Stalin feared. It is ironic that the U.S.'s initial reaction was to implicate, correctly, the Soviets in the attack in light of Stalin limiting the USSR's role in the conflict. The U.S. correctly understood that the North Koreans would not and could not take such a gamble without support from the USSR. But the U.S. incorrectly interpreted the campaign as part of a larger Soviet plot, not appreciating that while the USSR acquiesced to the attack, Kim was the prime mover pushing for an attack. Thus, the Soviets would likely have been implicated in an attack regardless of the degree to which they were actually involved. "Soviet complicity was therefore a foregone conclusion, with or without the presence of advisers in combat units," writes Thornton, "But their absence would have a critical effect on the conduct of battle" (2000, p. 230). The withdrawal of Soviet advisors resulted in communication problems in the initial campaign. Thornton cites Ambassador Shtykov's report of the

initial invasion. Communications were lost "from top to bottom. The General staff…

already on the first day did not direct the battle, since it did not have firm communication

with a single division" according to Shtykov's recollection (quoted in Thornton 2000, p.

230). In addition to the communication problems, the removal of the Soviet advisors,

deprived the North Koreans of valuable, experienced military commanders. "The

command staff of the KPA does not have battle experience, after the withdrawal of

Soviet military advisors, they organized the battle poorly, they used artillery and tanks in

battle badly and lose communications," wrote Ambassador Shtykov (quoted in Thornton

2000, p. 230). The removal of the advisors before the attack, produced a predictable

problem with the campaign: trying to communicate with the units after the removal of the

communication assets (see also Kim, 2017, p. 131).

The Fear Dimension

Kim Il-Sung had been urging Stalin to support an invasion since the fall of 1949.

At this time, Stalin was reluctant to support an invasion unless it was in response to a

South Korean attack. This suggests that the North Koreans should have had a plan for

invasion already in 1949. However, according to Thornton (2000), based on Yu's

testimony, "the planning for the war was done quickly, literally at the last minute, and

was not completed by the time the war began" (2000, p. 229). The plans were formulated

"at the end of about one months' work," Yu recalled. Troops were already maneuvering

for an "imminent assault" as the plans were being completed (Thorton 2000, p. 229).

Youngjun Kim (2017) argues that the KPA was not adequately prepared for the

invasion of South Korea. The KPA engaged in a number of battalion-level exercises

before the ground invasion, but there were no exercises conducted at the division or regimental levels. With division and regimental exercises conducted over the course of several years, Youngjim Kim concludes that the war would have looked much different, and some of the problems—lack of supplies, logistical problems, and the general lack of preparation—woud have been attenuated. Ju Young Bak, a former KPA engineering officer, remembered on the eve of war "that the KPA needed more operational and strategic level exercises and more time to foster team work between the units coming from China in summer of 1949 and the spring of 1950" (Kim 2017, p. 209). "KPA needed one or two additional years for training and preparing its logistic, supplies, and reserve forces…the lack of preparation on the part of KPA was mainly because of mistakes in planning the timing to invade, not because of the quality of the KPA soldiers" writes Youngjun Kim (209). "The KPA soldier and units should have bene trained fully before the invasion and spent more time preparing its logistics and reserve force. The KPA did not need to start its invasion in June of 1950" concludes Youngjun Kim (2017, p. 209).

Decision makers, when experiencing fear, are likely to act urgently to alleviate the associated discomfort, according to the theory offered in this dissertation. This appears consistent with Yu's and Youngjun Kim assessments of the KPA's war planning. It is likely that Kim overlooked various flaws in the plan and also pushed ahead without higher level training exercises, because, while taking action may not decrease the danger an actor faces, it can decrease the associated discomfort with the experience of fear.

A competing rational explanation makes it difficult to conclude this urgency had psychological origins. Mao Zedong's designs on Taiwan encouraged both urgency and secrecy in the war planning. Mao correctly understood that Kim's attack on the south

could jeopardize his plans for attacking Taiwan, resulting in Mao and Kim racing to be the first to unify their respective states. This dynamic surely contributed to the secretive nature of the war planning. The Yenan faction—a faction of Koreans close to the Chinese—had to be excluded from the planning, out of concern that if the Yenan faction was included, Mao may have been informed regarding the timing of the invasion. Numerous recollections suggest that Mao knew of the likelihood of an attack against the south, but not the timing. While the evidence is consistent with a psychological explanation, it is difficult to distinguish empirically the rational explanation—that Kim and Stalin were aiming to beat Mao to the punch and be the first to attack—from a psychological explanation, that Kim was acting to alleviate the uncomfortable experience of fear.

An assumption of most, if not all, rational choice models is that actors update their beliefs with new pertinent information. Decision makers with low cognitive complexity have a difficult time making new or subtle distinctions when confronted with new information. This section will argue that Kim should have known that robust support from southern insurgents would have been unlikely to materialize as a result of an invasion.

Kim's plan involved a concomitant uprising of guerillas to hasten the fall of the Rhee regime. In April 1950, Kim persuaded Stalin to support the invasion because "guerrillas in the southern provinces would support the KPA" and "there would be an uprising of 200,000 communists in South Korea" (Weathersby, 1993a, p. 31). While Kim may have misled Stalin regarding the likelihood of an uprising, the KPA's invasion plans incorporated such uprisings and/or support from southern communists, suggesting that it is unlikely that Kim disingenuously marshalled these arguments to gain Stalin's approval

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for the invasion. The head of the Korean Workers Party in the South, Pak Hon-yong, assured Kim that "once we … occupied Seoul, then 200,000 South Korean Workers Party members who were in hiding throughout South Korea would rise up and revolt, toppling the South Korean regime" (quoted in Thornton 2000, p. 229). According to Yu, a North Korean general involved in the planning of the attack, "assurances that uprisings would accompany the invasion was 'one of the major factors in hardening Kim Il-song's resolve to invade" (Thornton, 2000, p. 230).[71] Yu stresses that the assumption of an uprising can explain the failure to seize Pusan because the North Koreans had assumed that local guerrillas would seize it (Thornton, 2000, p. 230).

Such optimism regarding support from southern sympathizers hardly seemed warranted in the winter and spring of 1950, because this was a difficult time for the southern guerrillas. The ROKA, augmented with local police, cracked down on the southern insurrectionists, killing key leaders and displacing thousands of guerrillas. In November 1949, ROK forces killed "important guerilla leader Choe Hyon" (Cumings, 1990, p. 402). Brigadier General Roberts, the leader of KMAG (Korean Military Advisory Group), claimed that 6,000 guerrillas were killed in November 1949 to March 1950. Roberts characterized operations in March 1950 as an "all-out mop-up campaign (that) broke the backbone of the guerilla movement" (quoted in Cumings 1990, p. 402). While organizational dynamics may have encouraged Roberts to inflate that figure, Cumings finds internal reports that "put the total guerilla dead since October 1 at 4,996, so Robert's figure seems plausible" (Cumings, 1990, p. 403).

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[71] According to Thornton, General Yu Song-chol was a "former North Korean Operational Bureau Commander, who translated the Russian-designed plan into Korean and helped to formulate a war plan based on it, provided a unique insider's account to that war plan and it hasty formation" (Thornton, 2000a p. 229)

Northern attempts to help the southern partisans were unsuccessful. Two groups, sent to help the "sagging fortunes of the southern partisans" (Cumings, 1990, p. 403), were both destroyed. The first group was destroyed by the 10th regiment of the ROKA in March and April of 1950. On April 9th 1950, in a clash with ROK forces, the second group was severely weakened, killing 76 guerrillas and their leader, Kim Tu-hyon. In sum, Cumings concludes that May and June of 1950 marked a "new low" for guerilla activity in the south.

Cumings argues that "North Korea materials bear out the sense that the guerilla struggle was exhausted, if not destroyed by the spring of 1950" (Cumings 1990, p. 404).Yi Sung-yup, a leader of the communists in the South, wrote in March explaining the reasons for the travails of the southern guerrillas. He stressed the loss of key commanders and tactical errors, such as being too harsh with the local population. Kim Sam-yong, a southern communist leader, in March of 1950, noted that the suppression forces—the ROKA forces—were "incomparably better armed" (Cumings, 1990, p. 404). Kim Sam-yong did mention that it was likely that guerilla activity could expand in the spring. Other scholars, echo Cumings conclusion. "…all communist organizations, except a few in the mountainous southwestern corner of South Korea, had collapsed by the time the Korean War broke out" (Nam 1974, p. 80). "Through many guerrilla battles for two years prior to June 1950, the ROK Army had weakened insurgency movements within the southern areas of Korea, and consequently faced few uprisings behind the front lines," writes Kim (2017). ROKA's apparent successful 'winter offensive' combined with the southern communist reports to the North, should have provided Kim with evidence that his rosy prognostications regarding a southern insurrections were unfounded.

Two alternative explanations should be discussed. One involved southern communists feeding Kim misleading information to encourage Kim to invade, deflecting attention away from the failure of the southern partisans to gain control over the south. According to this view, Pak Hon-yong, the communist leader in the south, provided Kim with misleading information regarding the likelihood of a southern insurrection. In this case, the faulty assumptions would have a rational explanation: Pak provided Kim a false expectation of support in the south. According to Cumings (1990), this explanation is unlikely. Pak had little or no military experience and little power in the North. Furthermore, in 1955, the Kim faction, accused Pak of manipulating the North into invading. Because the accusation was made after the completion of the war, Cumings argues Pak's execution was largely to scapegoat Pak in light of the disappointing outcome of the war, and not due to his misleading prognostications (see Cumings, 1990, p. 404; see also Nam, 1974 p. 92-95).

A second explanation involves the failure of the southern campaign as actually precipitating an invasion. Kim stood to gain by reuniting the country while the Pak faction was weak, leaving the majority of the credit for unification to Kim. If this were true, this would still be a very risky gamble and would be all the bolder because Kim could not expect support from the southern partisans. While this would suggest a different underlying motivation—to solidify domestic control rather than to unify the nation—it then suggests that Kim would have been optimistic about unification *without the support of the southern partisans*.

What is likely is that Kim pushed ahead with his plans in light of the travails of the southern partisans, which makes sense if an actor is operating with low cognitive complexity. Another actor may have updated their information to reflect the fact that it

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would be unlikely an uprising of southern partisans would greet the invasion; or, at the very least, the uprisings would be desultory. This had real consequences for the invasion, specifically the inexplicable lack of an attempt by the KPA to seize the port of Pusan. As Thornton notes, "Kim had not attempted to seize the key port militarily because he assumed that a locally inspired uprising would secure it for him" (Thornton, 2000a, p. 230).

North and South Korean leadership both feared a preemptive attack from the opposite side. Syngman Rhee took increasingly aggressive stances toward the North after uprisings in the South, orchestrated by the communist South Korean Workers Party. Rhee feared a preemptive attack from the North and asked the U.S. for heavy weapons and equipment to address such a threat; the U.S. was reluctant to provide such weapons due to concerns that is would embolden Rhee to launch his own preemptive attack. While Rhee continually employed bellicose language toward the North, according to Youngjun Kim (2017), "the ROK Army did *not* prepare for preemptive strike anytime between 1945 and 1950" (p. 135). However, even with the lack of preparation for an attack and lack of support from the U.S., the North Koreans still did not trust Rhee to abstain from attacking. North Korean agents in the South reported South Korean preparations for war and such reports resulted in "both North Korean and the Soviet Union overestimating the strength of the ROK Army and the danger of a first strike" (p. 135). Thus, there was exaggerated threat perceptions, but the source of the exaggerated threat perceptions rests with North Korean SKWP agents. The Soviets exaggerated the threats as well because they were highly dependent on the same reports from North Korean sources in the South. Youngjun Kim discusses the psychological dynamic—albeit on a small scale—explicated in this manuscript: not only did the North Korean agents overestimate the likelihood of an

attack from the South, they also overestimated their "capability to achieve a revolution in South Korea because of their revolutionary passion and aspirations" (Youngjun 2017, p. 137). These agents in the South were essentially engaged in a guerrilla war and feared their survival due to persecution by ROKA. Due to the circumstances and the likely background of the agents, the agents were likely experiencing fear, which can explain why they both overestimated the threats the North faced from Rhee and overestimated their ability to realize their objectives with support from the North. "During the guerilla battle of 1948-49, the members of the SKWP and the guerilla forces…the pro-North leaders of guerrilla forces in South Korea, continually reported an overestimation of their achievements to Pyongyang and showed their unrealistic fantasy and revolutionary romanticism for their success of revolution in South Korea," writes Yougnjun Kim (2017, p. 137) This section can offer partial support for the hypothesis of revolutionary oppositionalists exaggerating threat perceptions, yet it is difficult to document the same dynamic directly with Kim Il-sung.

Conclusion

This analysis offers support for the identity driven model of decision making with some caveats. Some of the hypotheses were difficult to establish without eliminating all the confounding factors. For instance, many—including Stalin and Mao—thought U.S. intervention unlikely in the case of a Northern invasion, making it difficult to claim that it was an egregious display of an *illusion of control*. With that said, Kim did dismiss concerns voiced by both Mao and by members of his inner circle warning about the possibility of U.S. involvement, which may have induced a higher degree of caution in another actor. There appears to be clear evidence of an *urgency to act:* the initial ground invasion appeared to be ill-thought out and rushed. *Lower cognitive complexity* was on

display, with the failure of Kim to update information regarding the likelihood of a concomitant uprising of South Korean guerrillas. The need to act autonomously was on display as well, as it appeared that Kim stood to gain a tremendous amount of utility by achieving his goal of unification. In a striking parallel to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran in 1980, it does not appear that the North Koreans possessed the right materials, equipment, and training to effectively complete the objectives set out by the initial ground invasions, which is evidence for an *illusion of control*. In sum, this case offers partial support for the identity driven model of decision making.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This dissertation served as a plausibility probe. How well did the identity-driven model of decision making explain the empirical relationship between revolution and war? Some cases provide more support than others: The cases featuring Saddam Hussein provide strong support, while the Cuban and Korean cases both offer partial support due to a lack of evidence.

The initiation of the Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf War both provide evidence for the identity-driven model of decision making. Saddam displayed exaggerated threat perceptions in both cases, overestimating the threat of Shia in the run-up to the Iran Iraq War and, in the case of the Gulf War, envisioning a conspiracy where none existed. In both cases, there was a clear urgency to act, leaving the military to scramble to prepare. Lower cognitive complexity was on display as well: Saddam relied on crude beliefs about how the U.S. would likely respond to an invasion of Kuwait—seeing the U.S. as being adverse to causalities, and persisted in holding this view even when the U.S. signaled its willingness to intervene and employ military means to eject the Iraqi Army from Kuwait. In the case of the invasion of Iran, Saddam did not update his beliefs after the initial air skirmishes that took place *before* the invasion. These skirmishes, should have undermined his belief that the Iranian Air Force was essentially grounded.

The pride dimension was essential to explain both "leaps in the dark." Saddam appeared to derive utility from defying the U.S. in the case of the Gulf War—"I was the

only one to stand-up to America"—and in acting as the leader of the pan-Arab movement in containing the "Persian Menace" in the Iran-Iraq War. The illusion of control was also evident. As Murray and Woods (2016) document, the initial air campaign in the Iran-Iraq War was nothing short of ambitious. It did not appear that the Iraqi Air Force had the capabilities to accomplish its goal, which was to destroy the Iranian Air Force on the ground. Invading Kuwait also hinged on a number of contingencies: The U.S. would not become involved; the Saudis would not allow the stationing of troops on Saudi soil; and, even if the U.S. did become involved, they would be unwilling to force the Iraqi military out of Kuwait. These contingencies suggest that Saddam underappreciated the possible consequences of his actions. He also overestimated his own capabilities. In the case of the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam overlooked a number of objective Iranian advantages, and thought Iran's military was sufficiently weakened. The case of Kuwait is also telling: even after more information is revealed about U.S.'s will and capabilities, the tapes show that Saddam was still confident of victory.

Castro's decision to accept nuclear weapons from the USSR offers partial support for the identity-driven model. Castro did not appear to be overly concerned about two major issues with the deployment of nuclear weapons on Cuban soil: The likelihood of the weapons being discovered by the U.S. before they were emplaced; and, if the weapons were discovered, what a likely U.S. reaction would be. Both of these facts suggest that Castro displayed an illusion of control: Castro was both unconcerned about important aspects of policy implementation and insensitive to an unintended consequence, a premature U.S. discovery and reaction. While Castro's primary motivation was to deter an U.S. invasion, possessing the weapons offered Castro a degree of equality with the U.S., which had to be supremely gratifying. Castro likely derived

utility from such an act, which may also explain why the deployment was larger than necessary to simply deter an invasion. In terms of the fear dimension, there was an urgency to act. Castro reacted quickly to the Soviet proposal and agreed to the deployment in a matter of days. Castro was trying to reduce the uncomfortable experience of fear as well, by doing something or anything, explaining why serious logistical and political challenges were overlooked. Doing something—even if unlikely to succeed— may help an actor alleviate the uncomfortable experience of fear. While it is difficult to conclude that this is a case of exaggerated threat perceptions, due to the clear hostile actions of the United States, Fidel did hold an entrenched enemy image of the United States that ensured that signals would be interpreted in a hostile fashion.

The Korean case offers partial, caveated support for the identity driven model of decision making. The illusion of control was on display regarding assumptions about the initial invasion. Kim was warned that U.S. intervention was a possibility but dismissed the warnings, reasoning that U.S. intervention was either unlikely or would be too late to make any difference. The North Korean war hinged on speed: The North needed to advance quickly to precipitate the Southern government's collapse and to make U.S. intervention less likely. Yet, the NKA did not possess the means to move as quickly as necessary: They lacked equipment to cross bridges and were forced to construct long supply lines that could not support all advancing units, which in turn suggests there was an inattention to the details of policy implementation, suggesting an illusion of control. Kim's plan hinged on the invasion triggering an uprising of southern guerrillas in support of the North. However, in the spring of 1950, reports reached the North describing the southern partisan campaign as being exhausted. According to the assumptions of the rational choice school, an actor should update beliefs with new information. If Kim

updated his beliefs, he may have been less optimistic about the strength and level of support from southern partisans. The fact that he did not, is evidence that he was operating with a lower degree of cognitive complexity. Other aspects of the identity driven model of decision making are more difficult to test. For instance, because the KPA held a number of objective advantages, it is difficult to conclude that Kim saw his state as possessing an unjustified amount of relative power, making it difficult to concede that Kim had unjustified relative power perceptions. With that said, the North faced logistical challenges, which meant the South Korean government would have to collapse quickly for the campaign to be successful, possibly alleviating the North advantages. Overall, this case offers partial support for the theory. **Table 4** offers a summary of the findings.

Table 4. Summary of Findings

Cases								
	F1 **Urgency to Act**	**F2** **Lower Cognitive Complexity**	**F3** **Exaggerated Threat Perceptions**	**F4** **Reducing of Fear**	**P1** **Higher Power Perceptions**	**P2** **The Illusion of Control**	**P3** **Need to Act Autonomously**	**P4** **Pride as an ends in itself**
Hussein Iran-Iraq War	+++	+++	+++	++	++	+++	+++	+
Hussein The Gulf War	+++	+++	+++	++	++	+++	+++	++
Castro The Cuban Missile Crisis	+	++	N/A	+++	+	+++	+++	++
Kim The Korean War		++			++	++	++	+

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Plus signs (+) indicate strong support for the identity-driven model of decision making

Blank spaces indicate an absence of support for the theory

N/A indicates non-applicability, due to the difficulty of attributing the behavior to the

identity driven model of decision-making and not another source[72]

Limitations of the Identity-Driven Model of Decision Making

The Problem of Aggregation

This dissertation focuses on individual leaders.[73] However, the relationship

ultimately needing explanation is the relationship between *states* that have experienced a

domestic political revolution and conflict initiation; the empirical relationship established

is one of *state* behavior. Because we are explaining state behavior, there is an

aggregation issue: individual behavior has to pass through other domestic political

institutions to ultimately get to state behavior. This problem is not confined to this

dissertation; a number of works that place causal primacy on the individual level face a

similar problem.[74]

One way around this problem is to assume, as was done in this dissertation, that

because the regimes discussed were essentially personal dictatorships and the leaders are

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[72] Another source being a rational response to objective actions or conditions. For instance, Castro was *correctly* interpreting U.S. hostility; not a matter of exaggerated threat perceptions. Thus, it is difficult to attribute the behavior to the identity-driven model.

[73] See Waltz (1959) for a discussion of the various levels of analysis.

[74] See Hafner-Burton, Haggard, Lake, & Victor, (2017, S18-21) for a discussion of the aggregation issue.

acting in times of crisis, that it is a safe analytic wager to assume the causal primacy of

individual traits. In many cases, this may be a reasonable assumption.[75]

However, there is reason to believe that the decision making setting may be

important in terms of explaining the foreign policies of revolutionary states.[76] For

instance, take Janis's (1972) famous 'groupthink' formulation. This refers to the tendency

for individuals to be reluctant to voice contrary views because it would diminish the

cohesion of the group (Janis, 1972). Groups that are highly insulated and homogeneous

ideologically are more likely to show the signs of groupthink, according to Janis.[77]

Notice these are traits likely to apply to revolutionary states. In fact, most of the leaders

in this dissertation relied on a small group of revolutionaries, individuals usually

considered to be members of the vanguard of their respective movements. Castro, Kim,

and Saddam, all relied on a small group of intimates that likely shared very similar

ideological outlooks. Aside from the group think dynamic, groups that lack

methodological procedures for decision making and groups composed of individuals that

lacked experience, tended to make decisions in which all various options were *not* fully

considered and they tended to not use all the available information when making such

decisions (See Saunders, 2017).[78] This research suggest that the decision making setting

may exacerbate the quality of decision making and contribute to various misperceptions.

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[75] See (D. L. Byman & Pollack, 2006; Jervis, 2013) for a discussion regarding when individual traits are likely to be important for outcomes in terms of foreign policy.

[76] For an excellent book length discussion of decision making as applied to foreign policy analysis see Schafer & Crichlow (2010).

[77] On group insulation see Hybel, (1993); Schafer & Crichlow, (1996, 2001.) On group homogeneity see George, (1980); and Schafer & Crichlow, (1996).

[78] On methodological procedures see Dyson & Preston (2001), t' Hart, (2010), and 't Hart, (1990); on group experience see t' Hart (2010); Schafer & Crichlow, (1996).

The important point to highlight is that in revolutionary states, the decision making setting may amplify some of the traits that push in the direction of risky actions; while the decision making setting in a non-revolutionary state—because there are more defined protocols for decision making and procedures to ensure all relevant data is scrutinized—may encourage leaders to more thoroughly analyze data and slow down the decision making process, factors that may discourage hasty or risky decisions.

Another manner in which the decision making setting may fundamentally differ and influence decision making is in states that have been "coup-proofed." Making a distinction between state and regime security, Quinlivan (1999) noted that "coup-proofing" is a conspicuous feature of many militaries in the developing world, including Iraq, which featured prominently in his analysis. Saddam was sure to place many regime loyalists from Tikrit in important military positions. In addition, Saddam's reputation for ruthlessness made subordinates reluctant to deliver negative information or take the initiative on the battlefield for fear of retribution (Woods, Pease, Stout, Murray, & Lacey, 2006). This hurt the quality of military expertise, because officers were reluctant to anger the dictator by suggesting his plans were unfeasible. Recall that Saddam had no prior military training, although he did grant himself a high military rank (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991). According to this view, Saddam was not wildly optimistic but rather surrounded by sycophants, supplying inaccurate advice about the feasibility of his various plans.[79]

Although there may be some truth to this, two points should be remembered. First, regarding the Iraqi case, although "sycophancy played a role in Iraqi decision making," we should not exaggerate its importance (Baram, 2012). "Although most of Saddam's advisers were willing to let his assumptions and assertions stand even when

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[79] See K. M. Woods & Stout (2010) for a fascinating discussion regarding this dynamic.

they recognized them to be optimistic, there were usually at least some voices of dissent raised." At key moments, according to Baram, "influential members of Saddam's inner circle challenged his delusional propositions, and some even did so without suffering punishment. . . .(p. 77)" According to Baram, Saddam would either ignore the objection or just rationalize it away. Post makes a similar point: "Although Saddam's advisors' reluctance to disagree with his policies contributes to the potential for miscalculation, his advisors are able to influence the accuracy of his evaluation . . . by providing information and assessments" (Post, 1991, p. 220; see also Woods & Stout, 2010).

Second, the NIC may cause an intelligence or security regime to take on certain characteristics. According to Christopher Andrews, an intelligence historian, "one of the main purposes of the intelligence services of a one-party state is to reinforce the regime's misconceptions of the outside world" (quoted in Woods & Stout, 2010, p. 36). An example may be helpful. As Post notes, discussing the "crisis" in the regime during the Gulf War, Saddam dismissed a number of officials: "Technical experts" were replaced with family members and regime loyalists, sacrificing a degree of professionalization for members that were 'intensely ideological and fiercely loyal' (Post, 1991, p. 220). In light of this general dynamic, it is not surprising that members of Saddam's inner circle would reflect Saddam's general paranoia, reinforcing the siege mentality within the regime. Institutions were important and may have exacerbated the poor decision making, but they were outgrowths of Saddam's sense of external persecution, which was the product of his NIC, hence reversing the causal direction.

Interaction between the individual level and the domestic political setting can be modeled. As discussed in this section, various decision making settings can exacerbate

poor decision making. As Saunders (2017) notes, however, often the decision making

setting features explicit protocols and standards that aim to reduce hasty decision making.

For instance, some bodies may have protocols to ensure that all stake holders are

included in a particular decision and that all options are fully considered; such protocols

may ensure that decisions are not made in haste (see Saunders, 2017). In this case, a

focus on individual decision making may be less warranted.

A way to model this interaction is offered by Lake (2009) in the "boxes within

boxes" approach.[80] In this approach, political processes in one box (individual

preferences) is treated as inputs into another box (decision making setting). This

dissertation would explain the political preferences of revolutionary leaders (one box),

which would then be traced to the decision making setting (another box). The interaction

between the two may prove to be analytically valuable: Certain individual traits may

interact with various decision making settings to greatly influence the decision making

process. For instance, the NIC of various leaders may be highly important in certain

decision making settings as some settings may amplify the decision making tendencies of

leaders. Care should be taken to ensure that the setting is either unimportant in terms of

lessening the causal primacy of individual traits or the box within boxes approach would

be needed to model the interaction between individual traits and the setting to understand

how the individual dispositions are (or not) influenced by the decision making setting.

Fear and Risk Taking

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[80] See also Lake & Powell (1999) for more details of the "box within boxes" approach.

In the *Shattered Crystal Ball*, political psychologist James Blight argues that during the Cuban Missile Crisis, what ultimately discouraged the U.S. from launching an invasion or attack on the island was the *fear* of starting a nuclear exchange with the USSR (Blight, 1992). Fear resulted not in more risk taking but less—fear discourages leaders from taking leaps in the dark, according to Blight (1992). Subsequent research in social psychology has backed up this assertion: fear is, generally, associated with less risk taking (E. J. Johnson & Tversky, 1983; Dacher Keltner & Lerner, 2001; Lerner, Gonzalez, Small, & Fischhoff, 2003; Lerner & Keltner, 2000). In Damasio's (2005) card playing experiment, it was individuals, with damage to their limbic or emotional systems, that made extremely risky bets in the card playing game. Damasio concluded that fear provided valuable somatic information regarding the riskiness of the bets. Those with damaged limbic systems did not experience fear, and thus lost their monies earlier than the other players.[81] It would appear that Hymans and Bright and are making the opposite behavioral predictions stemming from the same emotion. Future research would be necessary to resolve this apparent contradiction.

Hymans would likely respond that—as he stressed throughout *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation* (Hymans, 2006)—that it is not just fear, but fear accompanied by pride that pushes for risky behavior. It is the interaction between the two emotions—and not just fear alone that results in more risk taking behavior. While this may be true, this complicates the relationship between a specific emotion and a behavioral outcome. Researchers would have to document the mix of two emotions that result in various outcomes and not just one specific emotion. Another possible rejoinder is that, on closer

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[81] As Mercer, (2010a) discusses, the somatic information can also influence how information is assimilated—if your beliefs are updated with new information—and the somatic information can influence the strength and resistance of such emotional beliefs.

inspection, the different behavioral predictions of Blight (1992) and Hymans (2006) may be more apparent than real. The only variable that is directly challenged by the claim that fear is associated with less risk taking is the greater urgency to act. The other variables—lower cognitive complexity, actors trying to reduce the uncomfortable experience of fear, and inflated threat perceptions— do not directly predict more risk taking. But, the urgency to act clearly pushes actors in the direction of taking risky action.

The case studies in this dissertation can shed some light on this controversy. In the two cases coded as being high on the fear dimension—the 1980 invasion of Iran and the Cuban Missile Crisis—only one involved relatively more risk. Saddam's invasion of Iran was risky because this assured war with Iran. This would be inconsistent with fear being associated with relatively less risk taking. But, as noted, Saddam is high on the pride dimension. It is possible that pride overpowers the fear dimension's tendency for less risk taking. Castro agreeing to place weapons in Cuba is conceptualized as involving less risk because, as Castro stressed, this was not an act of war and not a violation of international law. The risk involved a failure to appreciate a likely U.S. (over)reaction. This case would provide evidence of fear being associated with relatively less risk. Interestingly, Castro is also relatively lower on the pride scale than Saddam. This provides very tentative support for the idea that pride may be key to overpower the risk avoidance tendencies of fear.

The two cases lower on the fear dimension—the invasion of Kuwait and Kim's invasion of South Korea—are both relatively lower on the risk taking dimension. Both cases were acts of war, but the risk involved complications stemming from outside

intervention, to which there was various degrees of ambiguity about the likelihood of outside involvement. These two cases associate less risk taking with relatively less fear.

If Lerner, Li, Valdesolo, & Kassam's (2015) prognostication—that researchers will be increasingly able to link specific emotions to various action tendencies—proves true, researchers will be better able to understand how specific emotions induce specific behaviors, and the possible interactions of such emotions. Attention would then shift to try to understand how and when most people experience specific emotions and how such emotional experiences would vary depending on individual characteristics.

The Outside-in Critique

Hunt (2009b) argues in *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* that the U.S. has displayed an antipathy towards leftist revolutions. Revolutionary states often threaten the norms and rules of the international system, which then encourages counter-revolutionary movements (Halliday, 1999b). Revolutionary states find themselves in hostile and unforgiving environments. In addition, leaders that take power via extra-legal means have to worry about being overthrown via a coup, orchestrated with or without external support. Castro's Cuba qualifies as a state that found itself in a hostile environment: After a subsequent degradation of relations, the U.S. implemented economic sanctions and attempted to overthrow Castro via the Bay of Pigs invasion (See Bonsal, 1971; Pérez, 2002). The NIC could be the product of such external hostility (Jervis, 2007). This suggests that NICs are instrumental and *chosen* for a specific purpose. In the absence of such hostility, revolutionary leaders would not form oppositional NICs. This dissertation, following Hymans, does not place special emphasis on the origins of such identity conceptions; Hymans argues that the origins of such NICs are "quite evidently highly

complex" (Hymans, 2006a, p. 208). Yet, future research would be necessary to discuss the origins of an individual's NIC and to what extent such a conception is the product of an external hostile environment.

Related to both the idea of coup proofing and recognizing that revolutionary leaders may find themselves in hostile and unforgiving environments, is the idea that some of this 'structural paranoia' –which in this dissertation is conceptualized as exaggerated threat perceptions—is in fact, a rational response to real threats that most dictators face. Many dictators do face real threats via covert action either orchestrated internally, externally, or some combination of both. It may be a reasonable strategy to assume the worst in the face of likely external or internal threats. As discussed in this dissertation, Saddam may have erred in seeing a unified and coherent strategy to destroy the Baathist project, but many U.S. actions validate his, in some cases, correct interpretations of U.S. hostility. The U.S. did support a Kurdish rebellion in the late 1970s in Northern Iraq, and the U.S. did provide Iran arms during the Iran hostage crisis (Brands, 2011c). In Baathist Iraq, where coups and counter-coups were relatively common, it may in fact have been a reasonable strategy to always assume the worst. In this case, the inflated threat perceptions would be structural—any leader in such a situation would display a structurally induced paranoia.[82]

With that said, it is difficult to explain Saddam's hostility to the U.S. without reference to his NIC. For instance, while the U.S. did destabilize the Iraqi state at times, official U.S. policy was aimed at helping Saddam at key points as well. During the Iran-Iraq War, the U.S supplied valuable intelligence (which Saddam thought was 'bad') and assisted in reflagging oil tankers in the Gulf in the late stages of the Iran-Iraq War

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[82] Thanks to Prof. Cramer for bringing up this issue.

(Murray & Woods, 2014b; Razoux, 2015b). Indeed, Murray and Woods (2014) stress that U.S. assistance during the Iran-Iraq War, may have ensured Saddam's survival. It is a testament to the power of the NIC and human psychology that actors can discount pieces of evidence that signal a more nuanced policy—the U.S. may help or hurt Saddam depending on larger geopolitical circumstances—and pick out the hostile actions as reflecting "incontrovertible proof that Washington was indeed a dangerous strategic foe given to conspiring with Iraq's worst enemies" (Brands, 2011c, p. 382).

Policy Recommendations

A number of general policy recommendations stem from the lessons learned from the four cases. Firstly, in political systems where power is highly concentrated, it is more likely that individuals will be making key policy decisions. Understanding the NIC and belief system of leaders is therefore essential. Variables at the international level and the level of the domestic political system may provide various incentives for conflict, but, as this dissertation has shown, an understanding of individual psychology may be needed to explain certain conflicts.

Secondly and related, analysts should not be overly reliant on assessing material capabilities when determining the likelihood of conflict and interpreting leaders' intentions. Hoffmann (1968) notes that U.S. policy making often took on an "engineering approach"—trying to simplify complex problems by focusing on the technical capabilities of other states. It is striking that in the two cases of conflict initiation by Saddam Hussein, a number of his goals were incommensurate with his actual capabilities.

Saddam's aim to destroy the Iranian Air Force and his belief that he somehow could prevail against the U.S. during the Gulf War are cases in point. Researchers could take more seriously what other leaders say—typically dismissed by researchers as being 'cheap talk' or aimed at domestic audiences—and not to rely too much on what are typically seen as costly signals and therefore more valid signals of a leaders' intensions.[83] While leaders' speech may not be clear indicators of future intentions, what leaders say can shed light on their NIC and how they likely will react to U.S. actions. For instance, while the Saddam's "burn half of Israel" speech should not be taken literally, it can indicate that Saddam is highly concerned—or rather fearful—and would raise the likelihood of exaggerated threat perceptions, encourage an urgency to act, and decreased cognitive complexity; it is evidence of the general fear dynamic and the behavioral consequences. According to Karsh and Rautsi, April Glaspie, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq preceding the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, downplayed Saddam's bellicose rhetoric because Glaspie assumed it was for the purposes of coercive diplomacy (Karsh & Rautsi, 1991, p. 27).

Thirdly, policy makers need to employ a healthy level of strategic empathy. This means that some leaders may view the world fundamentally differently than other leaders. Lessons leaders learn from significant events, may also vary wildly. Saddam did not learn from the Iran-Iraq War that wars are fundamentally unpredictable and costly, but instead learned other lessons that validated his view of his own strategic acumen (K. M. Woods & Stout, 2010). Historians have a large role to play: In order to empathize with a leader, it is essential to understand leaders' experiences—specifically traumatic

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[83]Woods & Stout (2010) make a similar point: "A good starting point (for policymakers) might be to assume that foreign leaders mean what they say publicly, no matter how odd these public pronouncements may sound. Saddam, it turns out, was quite sincere in this way" (p. 38).

life events that psychology highlights as being more available in one's memory (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). Policy makers can be aided not only by historians but also by political psychologists. Leaders' past experiences can become important parts of one's identity. As discussed in this dissertation, the NIC becomes the raw fuel for emotional experience. Saddam's view of the Kuwaitis as ungrateful and as not being sufficiently deferential to Saddam's status, is based on his view of himself as the leader of the Arab world, defending the eastern flank of the Arab world against 'Persian" advances. Due to the psychological process tied to emotion and identity, as evidenced in the clear motivated biases displayed by Saddam at numerous occasions, there is clearly a role for political psychology in the analysis of foreign policy decision making.

Be Aware of the Fear Dynamic

In both cases coded high on the fear dimension, leaders took action to alleviate the uncomfortable experience of fear. What this means is that if leaders feel that they are going to be attacked, they may take any action to decrease such fear. Note that such actions may not reduce the objective danger, but give the leader a palliative in the form of taking *any* action. Castro was clear on this point. Even if taking the weapons from the USSR did not objectively reduce the danger his regime faced, such action gave him the ability to try and control a dangerous situation. Policy makers should not be surprised when leaders take what appear to be strange actions in the face of threats. Thus, whatever gain could be made by threating regime change, would have to be tempered by the concern that such language could push such leaders into taking risky action.

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Often it is essential for leaders to signal their intentions regarding the actions of other states. Deterrence failures often involve states not adequately signaling that it is willing and able to come to another state's defense.[84] This dissertation contributes to a growing field that stresses how deterrence may not rest on rational foundations;[85] psychology needs to be incorporated to understand how leaders actually interpret threats and attribute behavior. While this may mean that deterring certain leaders is quite difficult, it also means that the U.S. does not have to be constantly concerned regarding its reputation for resolve and credibility, because some leaders will draw their own conclusions about U.S. behavior consistent with prior beliefs. This does not mean that the U.S. should never aim at deterring certain behavior. The U.S. should try to make its signals as clear as possible, because ambiguous signals provide more means for leaders to arrange the signals in a way consistent with their prior beliefs. U.S. policy-makers should find a middle ground between clear signaling and not threatening other states. Threats can exacerbate the fear dynamic; not clearly signaling provides room for the best possible interpretation via the pride dimension.

Be Aware of the Pride Dynamic

Dominic Johnson (2009) argues that overconfidence is a baseline tendency in human psychology. However, Johnson also argues that a level of overconfidence can vary across individuals. Johnson does not assume all leaders will manifest the same

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[84] The literature on deterrence is huge, see Dafoe, Renshon, & Huth, (2014) and Huth (1999) for an overview.

[85] See Mercer (2010b) for a critique of rational deterrence theory.

degree of overconfidence, and argues that the "Saddams" and "Hitlers" of the world would likely be on the extreme end. People with high self-esteem reinforce their positive illusion despite negative feedback (2009, p. 39). In addition, various situational factors may exacerbate overconfidence (D. D. P. Johnson, 2009, pp. 38–42). Positive illusions are more "likely to be engaged, and to become extreme, in threatening circumstance" (D. D. P. Johnson, 2009, p. 47).

The lessons for policy makers is that individuals with grandiose visions may destabilize the international system. As this discussion has shown, there are a number of paths for such destabilization. The illusion of control may be especially apparent in leaders with grandiose visions. Kim's invasion of South Korea serves as a useful example. Kim did not see an invasion of the south as potentially resulting in a number of unintended consequences, such as U.S. intervention. Kim's plan also involved assuming various outcomes that were far from assured: That the Northern forces would move quickly enough to preclude U.S. involvement and that a concomitant southern uprising would greet the Northern invasion. Saddam's invasion of Kuwait serves as another example. Saddam's plans were based on a number of assumptions. The important point to remember is that variation on the pride dimension can help policy makers understand that certain types of leaders are more likely to take leaps.

Conclusion

One motivation for this dissertation was to highlight the problems with using the assumptions of rational choice as the de facto model of decision making to explain

outcomes in international politics. This dissertation offered a different model: an identity driven model of decision making. The identity model of decision making predicts that some leaders when making decisions that involve a high amount of uncertainty, are going to rely less on calculations—making a decision that approximates a rational choice— and will rely more on dispositional factors, such as a leader's identity. The decisions, if consistent with the theory offered in this dissertation, should be hasty and ill-thought-out. For policymakers this means that leaders' decisions may often appear strange or even delusional when judged by the standards of rational choice. This means that rational choice may be an inappropriate model for prediction and explanation. This may be disturbing for both academic and policymakers; another highly replicated finding in the field of psychology is that individuals crave certainty.[86] But, understanding under what circumstances leaders are likely to engage in motived reasoning could prove to be extremely valuable. As Woods and Stout (2010) note, while Saddam was deluded, the U.S. was also deluded in in not understanding how Saddam was deluded.

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[86] See Gardner (2012) for a discussion about how analysist are often overconfident in their predictions and the underlying psychology that encourages people to crave certainty.

APPENDIX

DICUSSION OF SOURCES

The purpose of this section is to give the reader an understanding regarding the sources used to write this dissertation. Note that this is not a comprehensive list of works read or consulted; such a list would be far too long. This is merely a sampling of the most useful works and a brief discussion of their contribution to the topic at hand; what I found useful and the sources strengths and weakness in terms of methodology. A work not being mentioned in this discussion of sources does not mean the work was not used in this dissertation.

Saddam Hussein: The Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf War

A number of sources were used to explain Hussein's most consequential decisions and his National Identity Conception (NIC). Works can be grouped into three broad categories. Biographies and works by area studies scholars were essential to provide the general information about Iraqi politics and Saddam's background. The second category included works discussing the specific causes of both the Iran-Iraq and Gulf War and were equally valuable. And finally, I relied on primary sources via the Iraqi Perspective Project via the Conflict Records Research Center,[87] in the form of transcripts and documents made available after the fall of the Baathist regime. Primary sources included

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[87] See the CRRC for more information, http://crrc.dodlive.mil/

transcripts of discussions with Saddam and his top officials; intelligence assessments; and other documents from the Baathist regime. The IPP and the Conflict Records Research Center provides access to the materials online. I also relied on works that used such transcripts, such as *The Saddam Tapes* (K. M. Woods et al., 2011a), works by Woods (K. Woods, Lacey, & Murray, 2006; K. M. Woods, 2008b), Brands (2011, 2012), and Brands and Palkki (Brands & Palkki, 2011b, 2012b), that make use of such primary source documents.

The fall of Saddam Hussein's regime resulted in the recent availability of an abundance of new sources, resulting in a flurry of new scholarship on the Iran-Iraq War and works on Saddam in general. This dissertation benefits tremendously from the use of resources from the Iraqi Perspective Project, including transcripts of recorded conversations discussing a range of issues. Before the fall of Saddam's regime, scholars were forced to analyze both decisions to invade from afar; the new transcripts allow researchers to understand the actual decision making process in the regime. With that said, this dissertation also consulted a variety of secondary sources and works published before the release of the new materials by area studies scholars and historians. The secondary sources proved to be extremely valuable as well, as the transcripts are difficult to 'read' outside of the larger context. The secondary sources provide the backdrop to understand the newly available materials.

In constructing Saddam's NIC, I relied on biographies of Saddam Hussein, such as (Aburish, 2000b) *Saddam Hussein: The Politics of Revenge* and Karsh and Rautsi's (2002), *Saddam Hussein: A Political Biography*, provided highly readable, pertinent background information of the famous dictator. Many forget Saddam's life as a

revolutionary before his tenure as a dictator. The biographies document Saddam's Spartan and violent childhood in Tikrit, an attempted coup and subsequent escape, exile in Egypt, and time in Iraqi prison for revolutionary activities, making for lively reading. Aburish, in particular, displays the revolutionary character of Saddam's rule; Saddam engaged in large scale modernizing—such as programs to eradicate illiteracy in Iraq—aiming for drastic change in Iraqi society. As with Kim Il-sung and other dictators, Saddam commissioned essentially hagiographic works. Matar's (Matar, 1982b), *Saddam Hussein: The Man, his Cause, and the Future*, is such a work. Matar's biography should be read with a heavy dose of skepticism, but does provide a view of how Saddam conceptualized Iraq and his views of other countries. Matar's biography also is useful in that it features lengthy transcripts of dialogue with Matar. The transcripts should be read with a degree of skepticism as well, recognizing that it may have been edited.

After the fall of the regime but before he was executed, the CIA and the FBI interrogated Saddam; such interrogations provide interesting insight into the workings of the Iraqi regime and the misperception leading to the 2003 invasion of Iraq and were useful for this work in documenting how Saddam viewed the U.S. *Debriefing the President* by Nixon (2016) discussed Saddam's convoluted views of the U.S. Saddam—perhaps understandably—did not understand why the U.S. and Iraq were not working together to combat Islamic extremism after The 9-11 Terror Attacks. Nixon's work may problematize aspects of Iraqi foreign policy. According to Nixon, by 2003, Saddam was largely resigned from the daily governing of the Iraqi State, spending his time writing novels and poetry. Saddam considered himself a writer and artist (Sassoon, 2011b).

Saddam was actively involved in the start of both wars and, thus, this critique does not apply to the case studies in this dissertation.

In a wave of new scholarship, Hal Brands, offers a series of highly illuminating articles discussing Saddam Hussein's foreign policy write large, addressing a wide variety of subjects. Brands directly addresses why Saddam invaded Iran. In a striking parallel to the findings in this dissertation, Brands argues that Saddam's motivation defies easy categorization: it was a mixture of defensive motivations and opportunism stemming from the appearance of Iranian weakness. Furthermore, stressing non-material factors, Brands argues that the invasion was influenced by Saddam's own "exalted self-perception," again displaying the importance of 'pride.' Interestingly, Brands argues that Saddam envisioned using the victory in the war against Iran as a subsequent 'spring board' for an attack against Israel (Brands, 2011c). This latter finding is especially interesting in light of my assessment of Saddam's NIC. The NIC of Saddam against the world can explain why he constructed collusion between Israel, Iran, and the U.S., when many actors would see collusion between Iran and the U.S. and Israel as being unlikely;[88] Saddam self-conception as being the leader of the pan-Arab movement can explain why he envisioned such a large role for Iraq the in region, safeguarding the Arab Nation against Persian or Israeli machinations.

Brands and Pallki's assessment of how Saddam viewed the U.S. and Israel also influenced my interpretation. What is absolutely clear in a reading of the transcripts and in Brands and Pallki's interpretation, is the inherit distrust Saddam held towards the U.S.; Saddam consistently viewed Americans as 'conspiring bastards.' Support from the U.S.

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[88] As usual, Saddam's paranoia is often somewhat justified: the U.S. and Iran did collude during Iran-Contra; Israel and Iran did share the same enemy—Iraq—opening space for some cooperation. However, the idea that the U.S. and Iran were somehow strong allies also misses the mark.

in the Iran-Iraq War and the fact that Saddam and the U.S. held some of the same strategic objectives did little to vitiate Saddam's mistrust. With such a deeply entrenched enemy image of the U.S., Iran-Contra was all the evidence Saddam needed to verify his beliefs in the perfidy of the U.S.; Iran-contra solidified his view that the U.S. was a strategic enemy that could not be trusted (Brands, 2011a; Brands & Palkki, 2012b). This belief can help explain why, during the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam thought the U.S. was feeding him 'bad' intelligence. But, also, and directly causally related the invasion of Kuwait as argued in this dissertation, why Saddam was able to construct a belief in an elaborate conspiracy by Kuwait, the U.S., and Israel, to destroy the Baathist's project.

Brands and Palkki also discuss Saddam's views of Israel. The transcripts help finally put to rest a number of canards about Saddam. Scholars often asserted that Saddam's anti-Semitism was used in an instrumental fashion. As made clear in the transcripts and Saddam's own fiction writing, Saddam was deeply anti-Semitic. The transcripts—the conversations were in private and thus not as likely to be used in such an instrumental fashion— document Saddam's deep hostility towards Israel, the role Israel played in motivating Saddam's nuclear program, and Saddam's fear of an attack by Israel before the initiation of the Gulf War (Brands & Palkki, 2011b).

The relationship with the Department of Defense, the Iraqi Perspectives Project, and the Conflict Records Research Center, poses minor methodological concerns. For instance, *The Saddam Tapes*, a collection of transcripts organized by topics with editorial introductions by the authors, were commissioned in order to be submitted to the U.S. Department of Defense. The transcript topics are obviously geared toward addressing issues pertinent to U.S. foreign policy—such as Saddam's views of WMD and his views

of Israel and the U.S. Aside from the edited volumes, I read hundreds of transcripts provided by the CRRC. The selection of transcripts offered online and the topics chosen to be translated, could be subject to such manipulation, in a similar fashion as *The Saddam Tapes*. I augmented a reading of the transcripts with secondary sources from other area specialists. This helped ensure the transcripts matched the conclusions of other area scholars. While it may be the case there is an abundance of material that the CRRC did not translate or make public due to its lack of relevance to U.S. foreign policy, these transcripts provide the best available information regarding the actual foreign policy decision making in the Iraqi regime.

Instrumental in providing a NIC of Saddam was (Bengio, 2002b) *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq*. Bengio aims to understand modern Iraq via an analysis of political discourse of the Baath Party and Saddam Hussein. Bengio does this with an in-depth analysis of Saddam's public speeches. Jerry Long's (2009) *Saddam's War of Words*, provides an analysis of Saddam's speeches in the run-up to and after the invasion of Kuwait. Long stresses the instrumental aspect of Saddam's language: Saddam's language involved invoking Islamic tropes and images from Muslim history. Saddam did this to try to gain and keep various Arab states out of the U.S. led coalition. Long takes the approach that Saddam's language was largely employed instrumentally. The way language is used to justify, in an instrumental fashion ones rule, is a reason some discount political speeches as being disconnected to the actual beliefs of various political leaders; Bengio's work, which takes Saddam's language seriously, faces such a criticism. If the only available information was Saddam's public speeches, this critique would be more valid. However, critics error in assuming that just because language

advances another goal in an instrumental fashion, it is somehow not reflective of the leaders true beliefs. Secondly, it is also possible that beliefs that are formed originally for some instrumental fashion, over time, become part of the leaders belief system (see C. J. Fettweis, 2013) for a discussion of this dynamic.)

With that said, my analysis is less subject to this criticism for a few reasons. I augmented Bengio's analysis, in forming Saddam's NIC, with records from the IPP. Transcripts included Saddam's *private* discussions. Because many of the discussions are private, it is less likely that Saddam used such utterances for an instrumental purpose. It is likely that Saddam would only think the statements would be made public in the unlikely event that his regime was overthrown. Having read hundreds of Saddam speeches and uncountable pages of transcripts, including transcripts of private conversations, it is clear that Saddam was not merely employing his rhetoric in an instrumental fashion. Even after Saddam was captured, he steadfastly held to his beliefs about the greatness and uniqueness of the Iraqi nation. Furthermore, work by Brands and Pallaki should eliminate any doubt as well regarding Saddam's views of Israel, the U.S., and Iran.

Works discussing Iraqi politics writ-large were essential to understand the environment Saddam operated within. Tripp's (2002b) widely read, *A History of Iraq,* was my starting point for understanding Iraqi politics. Sassoon (2011b), using newly available sources, discusses Baath party politics. While this work was not specifically about Saddam's foreign policy, Sassoon displayed the importance of the Baath party in Saddam's era. Sassoon shows that membership in the Baath Party was often a requirement for employment in the Iraqi state. Such an understanding of Baath Party

membership could have informed subsequent U.S. occupation policy. Specifically, if Baath party membership was not an indication of ideological conviction but, instead, as Sasson argues, membership was more perfunctory for the purposes of patronage, the full scale de-Baathification, pursued by the U.S., would have been unnecessary. This work proved indispensable for an account of the general politics of Saddam's Iraq.

I consulted a number of works discussing the start of the Iran-Iraq War. According to Murray & Woods (2014c), two military historians, the Iran-Iraq War was one of the largest contemporary wars in terms of deaths—conservative estimates put the death figure around 400,000, including both Iraqi and Iranian—and longest—lasting over 8 years—yet, curiously, the least studied in modern history. Before the availability of new sources, works such as Hiro (1990) and Karsh (2014), provided explanations stressing the deeper, structural forces that led to conflict.[89] In the language of international relations theory, there are immediate and remote causes, the structural or remote causes provides the context in which an actor find herself situated; immediate causes explain the specific decisions in such contexts. Iran and Iraq's historical enmity, often framed as being a Persian and Arab primordial hostility, and the regional balance of power and how that, in particular, prolonged the Iran Iraq War, both provided the context in which Saddam's decision was made. While extremely valuable in outlining the larger structural forces, these works tend to neglect—perhaps due to a lack of sources— specific discussions of Iraqi and Iranian decision making, which is of particular importance for this dissertation. With the availability of new materials after the fall of Saddam and new

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[89] There is a large literature on the Iran-Iraq War. See Hiro (1990), Khadduri (1988), and Takeyh (2010) for overviews.

research focusing on the Iranian side, recent works have, thankfully, focused more on both Khomeini and Saddam's specific decision making and strategy.

Two recent works incorporating new sources are (Razoux, 2015b) and Murray & Woods, (2014c). Murray and Woods aim to fill this void by focusing more narrowly on Iraqi and Iranian decision making and strategy. Murray and Woods work is highly valuable due to its use of sources and analysis of Hussein's overall military strategy. The authors make use of the Iraqi Perspective Project resources, a U.S. sponsored program to capture and catalogue various documents, recordings, and transcripts left over after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime; they also had access to a tremendous amount of internal Iraqi archives and staff to translate and transcribe various documents. Part of the archives includes detailed discussions of internal Iraqi deliberations regarding invading Iran, offering rare access to a normally opaque regime. Additionally, the authors conducted interviews with members of the former regime. With that said, neither Woods nor Murray speak Arabic and, thus, some primary sources in Arabic are omitted; a notable memoir by Wafiq al-Samarra'I is not cited for instance.

Razoux (2015b) *The Iran-Iraq War*, is a valuable and needed addition to scholarship on the conflict. Razoux makes use of the same newly available materials from the Iraqi Perspectives Project as Murray and Woods, but also provides other valuable primary source documents. Of particular note is Razoux's use of primary sources to provide a picture of both Iranian and Iraqi military assets and personal; Razoux documents the amount of support from Iran and Iraq from foreign sources throughout the conflict. Of particular interest is the drastically lopsided support for Iraq from Western powers. Razoux argues this robust support was key to prolonging the war. Interestingly,

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Razoux documents how foreign support for Iraq resulted in Iranian terrorism aimed towards French and other targets, in retaliation for support for Iraq. Western support for Iraq, specifically funding the conflict, overlooking Iraq's use of chemical weapons against Iran, and naval support from the U.S., can help explain features of Iranian foreign policy writ large after the Iran-Iraq War and Iran's distrust of Western powers, persisting to this day (See Tabatabai and Samuel, 2017 for a fascinating discussion of this dynamic).

Western support for Saddam after the start of the war should not be taken as evidence that the U.S. approved of Saddam's invasion. Both of these works offer conclusive documentation refuting the claim that the U.S. gave Saddam Hussein a 'green light' to invade Iraq. This explanation—perhaps reflecting a U.S.-centric analysis of the Iran-Iraq War and world history in general—was often part of scholarly writing about the start of the war. Dilip Hiro (1990) asserted that the U.S. induced Saddam to invade and provided a green light; Siad Abruish (2000) made a similar claim. With both of these works and a particularly interesting journal article by Hal Brands (2012), this canard can finally be put to rest. In fact, both Murray and Woods and Razoux, as discussed in this dissertation, display that the alliance system hardly determined Saddam's actions. These works are essential to refocus attention back to the key actors, Saddam Hussein, from analysis that tended to conceptualize the U.S. as being the locus of activity and somehow determining many of the choices of leaders of peripheral nations.[90]

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[90] This, perhaps, can be explained with reference to human psychology: most IR scholars have more access to decision makers in the U.S. and can better document U.S. foreign policy compared to foreign policy making in the developing world, and, thus, tend to overemphasize the U.S.'s causal role in many conflicts, seeing the U.S. as somehow responsible for *everything* that happens in the developing world. One explanation for an egocentric bias is that actors have more access to their own actions compared to others, thus they tend to overemphasize their own role when making causal attributions (Nisbett & Ross, 1980).

F. Gregory Gause's (2002; Gause, 2009) works proved to be extremely valuable for this dissertation in terms of explaining the start of both the Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf War. Gause argues that Saddam was motivated, in both cases, to address threats to his domestic political stability. Gause is an Arabic speaker and incorporated primary source documents in his book length treatment of the international politics of the Middle East and offers detailed analysis of both decisions. Gause constructs how Saddam and other high ranking Iraqi Officers interpreted the threat from the Iranian revolution and, based on Gause's readings of works by Wafiq al-Samarra'I, a highly ranked general in the Iraqi Army who defected from the regime before the U.S. invasion, and testimony from a notable newspaper editor in Baghdad, how Saddam viewed Kuwait's actions in the larger context of Iraq's domestic political stability and the price of oil. In Gauses analysis, threats to domestic stability quickly get equated with a rationalist response to some sort of material or ideological threat; ideological in the form of fomentation of revolution by Iranians in Iraq by exploiting Iraq's large Shia population—e.g. the Iranians did pose a genuine threat to Saddam's domestic political stability. As this dissertation displays, and building on Gause's work, objective threats have to be interpreted; and emotions colors such interpretation. Additionally, as argued, emotion was key to explain why Saddam was confident enough to take such leaps in the dark. Gauses implicit assumption regarding the rationality of such decisions has a hard time explaining the psychological dynamic explained in his dissertation. Why did he overstate the threat and why was he unjustifiably confident in victory in both cases? The psychological dynamic, which is beyond the scope of Gauses's analysis and discussed in this dissertation, can explain why

and how such threats translated into action via the emotion of fear and can explain the essentially impulsive and hasty decision process.

In justifying my conclusion that Saddam overestimated such threats to his domestic political stability, I relied on Bengio's (1985b) discussion of the relationship between the Baathist regime and its Shia population and Walt's, (1996b) work regarding revolution and war. Bengio argues that Saddam employed a number of strategies to deal with the 'Shia problem'—domestic repression, co-option, and patronage—and that Saddam blew the threat posed by the Iranian Revolution out of proportion. Hussein's attack against Iran is seen by Walt (1996) as a textbook case of misperception, both about the threat posed by the revolution and about the ability of the Iranians to respond to Iraq's attack. Even assuming that Saddam was reacting to an objective threat to his domestic political stability, the theory employed in this dissertation can explain why Saddam was confident enough to launch such an attack and why he also underestimated his opponent's capabilities.

I relied on a number of works in my discussion of the start of the Gulf War. For general context, including the military, economic, and diplomatic dimensions of the conflict, Freedman & Karsh, (1995b) was extremely valuable. Bob Woodward's *The Commanders* was helpful in providing detailed discussions of U.S. policy making after Saddam made his faithful decision. Regarding U.S. foreign policy in the run-up to the invasion, Jentleson, (1994b) offers an in-depth analysis of U.S. policy toward the Iraqi state, starting first with the 'tilt,' which refers to U.S. support for Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War and up to the invasion of Kuwait. Jettleson offers a pointed critique of U.S. foreign policy, arguing that the U.S. could have sent clearer signals to the Iraqi dictator regarding

how the U.S. would react to an invasion. Karabell (1995b) also offers a journal length treatment of U.S. foreign policy during the late Regan administration (See also (J. R. Hiltermann, 2007). Both works find a U.S. Administration aiming to normalize relations with the Iraqi regime. In light of the aim for "constructive engagement" with the Iraqi regime, Saddam's persistent belief in a U.S. orchestrated conspiracy to weaken his regime is especially interesting; as argued in this dissertation, it appears to be clear evidence of exaggerated threat perceptions.

I relied heavily on K. M. Woods (2008b) *The Mother of All Battles* for an assessment of Iraqi preparations for invading Kuwait. Woods served as a principal in the Iraqi Perspectives Project and was an analyst with the Joint Forces Command Institute for Defense Analysis, in addition to being a former U.S. Army officer. Woods offers some of the only detailed accounts regarding how the Iraqi regime prepared for the invasion and occupation of Kuwait, based on materials made available after the fall of Saddam's regime. As noted in the analysis in this dissertation, Saddam left his military quite unprepared for the invasion; the Iraqi Army did not have adequate maps of the small emirate and did not have any sort of adequate plan to occupy Kuwait (K. M. Woods, 2008b). Norman Cigar (1992) offers valuable insight for some of Saddam strategic assumptions—such as the fragility of the U.S. led coalition. Woods and Stout (2010) document how—while not directly related to the questions in this dissertation but relevant for assessing Saddam's actions in the run-up to the 2003 invasion—Saddam viewed the outcome of the Gulf War not as being a strategic defeat, but, in fact, evidence of the prowess of the Republican Guard. In Saddam's view, the fact that the U.S. stopped short of overthrowing his regime was evidence both of his abilities as a military/strategic

thinker and, importantly, evidence of the U.S.'s lack of resolve and its sensitivity to casualties (K. Woods et al., 2006; K. M. Woods & Stout, 2010). All the works plaint a picture of Saddam highly engaged in the policy process and certainly not detached from the major decisions.

Fidel Castro and the Cuban Missile Crisis

The literature on the Cuban Missile Crisis[91] is large and is accompanied by an equally large literature on U.S./Cuban relations.[92] For the purposes of the Cuban case study, I focused on specific aspects of the crisis, which then subsequently guided my use of sources. However, I also had to gain an understanding of the larger geopolitical context, to provide the context in which various decisions were made; due to that consideration, I had to consult the larger literature on the crisis. Because this case study analyzed Castro's decision to place weapons in Cuba, I use literature that focused on the motivations of the Soviets and Cubans for emplacing the weapons. Related to the motivations to place the weapons in Cuba, I was interested in understanding how the Cuban's and Soviet's viewed the risk involved, the overall feasibility of the plan, and how the policy was implemented, in order to address the psychological dynamic discussed in this dissertation. To address Castro's perceptions of U.S. policy, I used works discussing U.S. foreign policy before the crisis. In order to construct a NIC of the Cuban leader, I used numerous biographies of Castro and various works by area studies scholars.

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[91] For general analysis see: (Grahm Allison & Zelikow, 1999; Allyn, Blight, & Welch, 1989; Nathan, 2016; White, 1995); for works that focus more on U.S. decision making see: (Grahm Allison & Zelikow, 1999; May & Zelikow, 2002; Stern, 2003, 2005).

[92] For U.S./ Cuban relations see: Benjamin, (1992); Morley, (1987); Smith, (1988); Welch, (1985).

Often in international politics, there are a variety of both material and nonmaterial benefits for an action. This applies to the decision to place nuclear weapons in Cuba. In order to explain why Castro ultimately accepted the weapons, it was necessary to gain an understanding of the posited benefits the weapons offered. This task was doubly difficult because the weapons offered the Soviets and the Cubans different, but, at the same time, similar benefits. For instance, both may have gained from an increase in Soviet capabilities; strengthening the Soviet camp offered tangible benefits for both states. But, Cuba and Soviet preferences may have diverged as well: for the purposes of deterring an attack on the island, it may have made more sense for the Cubans to have operational control over the weapons, eliminating any ambiguity as to the likely use of nuclear weapons in reaction to a U.S. invasion; however, the Soviets may have been reluctant to concede too much control to the Cubans for fear of losing control in terms of crisis escalation. Due to these concerns, it was necessary to analyze both the material and non-material benefits the weapons claimed to offer the Cubans *and* Soviets.

A number of works focus on the Soviet decision to place weapons in Cuba. (Horelick, 1964b) offered one of the first analysis of the Soviet motivations for emplacing the weapons in Cuba. Horelick argues that the Soviets were likely motivated by a mélange of benefits the weapons offered, including the standard explanation that the primary reason for deployment was to deter a U.S. attack. Emplacing the weapons offered, from the Soviet prospective, a relatively cheap and easy means to vitiate U.S. superiority in a number of dimensions. As became increasingly clear, the USSR was far behind in the nuclear arms race; while the weapons would not drastically alter the nuclear balance of power, it would complicate a U.S. first strike capability. There was mounting

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evidence the U.S. was advancing in terms of a number of technological, diplomatic, and strategic dimensions, according to Horelick. In this context, the weapons offered a solution to a "whole range of military-political problems confronting the Soviet Union" (Horelick, 1964b, p. 377). Horelick's work was also useful in problematizing a number of aspects of the deployment. Horelick noted that the size of the deployment was larger than necessary for purely defensive purposes; the issue of who would control the weapons and how that related to the deterrent value of said weapons was discussed as well.

Fursenko and Naftali's (1998) work was extremely valuable for gaining an understanding of Soviet motivations and how the deployment was implemented. This work was based on U.S.-Russian collaboration and used Russian archival sources, made available after the fall of the Soviet Union. Regarding the decision to place weapons in Cuba, the authors find a great deal of evidence for the standard explanation: historians are justified in placing emphasis on the essentially defensive nature of the deployment. Yet, they stress other rationales, reinforcing the defensive motivation, in a similar fashion as Horelick. In the face of western advances on a number of dimensions, the deployment offered a means to remind the U.S of Soviet power. But, the authors highlight another motivation, often overlooked: Khrushchev wanted to reassure the Cubans of Soviet support. Fursenko and Nafali provide details regarding how the deployment was implemented. The authors provide evidence that Khrushchev was aware of overhead flights over Cuba conducted by the U.S.; they discuss the logistical challenges, sending such a large amount of resources 7 thousand miles without notice from the U.S. (Fursenko & Naftali, 1998, p. 191). Garthoff (1989b) offers a general account of the Crisis but with special emphasis on the Soviet side and his account was useful to

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establish the broad strategic environment in which the Russian and Cubans operated; Garthoff interview numerous Soviet colleagues and used archival sources.[93]

Brenner (Blight & Brenner, 2007; Brenner, 1990a) provide much needed insight into *the Cuban's* desire for the weapons. As Brenner documents, Castro had ample reason to fear an U.S. attack. The Cuban's believed that the U.S. would follow-up the Bay of Pigs invasion with a larger sustained attack and that the economic embargo and removal of Cuba from the Organization of American States was aimed to destabilize the regime; Cuban agents had infiltrated the Operation Mongoose teams and were, while not totally privy to the plan, aware of a possible invasion orchestrated by the U.S. Especially interesting for the purposes of this dissertation, is Brenner's discussion of how the Cubans thought the U.S. would react to the emplacement of nuclear weapons. According to Brenner, the Cubans did not give much thought to how the U.S. would react nor developed a contingency plan to deal with U.S. reactions. Brenner notes that the Cubans-Soviet relations were strained during this time and Castro desired to place Cuba under the Soviet nuclear umbrella. Castro also appeared insouciant regarding how the weapons would be deployed and held a certain faith in the USSR's ability to emplace the weapons.[94]

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[93] See also *Operation ANADYR: US and Soviet generals recount the Cuban Missile Crisis*, (Gribkov, Smith, & Friendly, 1993)

[94] It should be noted that while a number of accounts immediately after the crisis noted the essentially defensive nature of the deployment, the Kennedy Administration, at the time of the crisis, could not conceive that the weapons were emplaced for a defensive purpose. As (Weldes, 1999b) notes, U.S. policymakers viewed the deployment through the prism of their own belief system; including such beliefs as the USSR's essentially aggressive nature, the Monroe Doctrine—making the deployment seem all the more provocative, and did not see Castro as a legitimate leader, discounting Castro's agency in the decision.

Castro explained his actions and rational for emplacing the weapons, in person, in

a conference organized by Blight, Allyn, and Welch—the Havana conference, which was

part of a larger series of conferences.[95] The Havana Conference took place over a series

of three days in Havana and was accompanied by a subsequent book entitled, *Cuba on

the Brink* (Blight, Allyn, & Welch, 2002b). The book included lengthy transcripts of

dialogue accompanied by editor comments and analysis by Blight, Allyn, and Welch. The

editors argue that they engage in critical oral history; this entails using actor's experience,

newly declassified materials, and critical oral examination, to illuminate and enlighten

key historical events. The conference featured a number of U.S. academics and

policymakers, such as McNamara (former Defense Secretary), the historian Arthur

Schlesinger Jr, and academics such as Raymond Garthnoff and Wayne S. Smith; Russian

Federation participants included Alexandr Alekseev (Soviet ambassador to Cuba) and

General Gribkov. Various Cubans participated, the most notable being Castro himself.

Castro spoke to a number of issues discussed in this dissertation at the Havana

Conference. He noted that he essentially deferred to Soviet expertise regarding how the

deployment would be implemented. This type of information is extremely valuable, yet

should not, as the editors— Blight, Allyn, and Welch —note be taken at face value.

Castro may have been deflecting blame away from the fact that he overlooked a number

of the logistical vulnerabilities of the deployment. The editors provide lengthy written

analysis problematizing much of Castro's comments and are highly critical of many of

Castro's claims. At this conference, Castro again made the point that the weapons were

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[95] Researchers Bright and Welch held a series of conferences with key actors from the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Havana conference took place January 1992 and the transcripts are annotated in *Cuba On the Brink,* (Blight et al., 2002a). Blight and Welch also have provided transcripts for the Hawks Cay Conference, the Moscow Conference, and Cambridge Conference, provided in *On the Brink,* (Blight & Welch, 1990).

wanted primarily for defensive purposes. But, also and interestingly from the pride dimension, also asserted, that he viewed the deployment of the weapons as perfectly legal and not all that different from the U.S.'s deployment of similar missiles in Europe. This then prompts the question, if Castro believed the action to be legitimate, why did he acquiesce to the deployment being clandestine?

Acosta (2002b), provides a book length treatment of the crisis from Castro and Cuba's perspective. Acosta interviewed key actors and conducted research in Cuban archives, documented in the appendixes of the work. Acosta documents operation Mongoose and the palatable fear the Cubans were laboring under before the weapons were emplaced in Cuba. Of particular interest was Acosta's description of the logistical challenges of the deployment and he provides details regarding the size and scope of the deployment. Like much scholarship from the Cuban side, this work has to be taken with some skepticism. Acosta asserts, as Castro did at the Havana Conference, that they accepted the weapons to advance the global cause of communism. As noted, Bright, Ally, and Welch are skeptical of such claims; yet Acosta's work does provide the context and much needed empathy for the Cuban side.

A number of works looked at Cuban Foreign Policy[96] in general and thus are helpful in explaining the Crisis. Dominguez's work, *To Make the World Safe for Revolution* (Dominguez, 2009), is a valuable general overview of Cuban Foreign Policy. Dominguez makes clear that while Cuban may have operated under the confines of USSR hegemony, the Cubans had an autonomous foreign policy. Dominguez details that Cuba's support for revolution abroad is based largely on *Cuban* priorities. Gleijeses (2002), using archival sources and based on information from interviews conducted in

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[96] See also Erisman (1985) and T. Smith (1988).

Africa and Cuba, offers a comprehensive history of Cuban policy toward Africa in the late fifties and thru the 1960s. Gleijeses argues that Cuba was motivated by ideological mission, identification with African independent movements, and self-interests in creating a bloc of Cuba friendly states, to stand guard against the encroachments of U.S. imperialism.

Works about politics in revolutionary Cuba broadly were useful in either providing the context in which the decisions were made or in tangentially discussing the origins of the Crisis. Castañeda (2012) argues in, *Utopia Unarmed*, that the Cuban Revolution was a disaster for Latin America, as it pushed a whole generation down the path of armed revolution, as opposed to electoral reform. Sweig (2009) uses Cuban archives to take a detailed look at the revolutionary political struggles before Castro took power; Bunck's (2010) work looks at cultural change in Cuba, documenting how difficult cultural change was to implement even in revolutionary Cuba. Lee Anderson's (2010) biography of Che Guevara was helpful as well. Anderson had access to previous unpublished diaries, letters, and other materials provided by Aleida March, a confidant of Che. Anderson also conducted interviews in over five countries. Works on Che were useful due to his close relationship with Castro.

I consulted numerous biographies of Fidel Castro in constructing Castro's NIC. Arguably, no other leader has received such attention from the American public, both in terms of scholarly fascination and interest from the general public. In addition to biographies, Playboy Magazine, Mike Wallace of 60 Minutes, and Barbara Walters have all interviewed the famous dictator. Like Saddam, many forget Fidel's highly eventful life before ruling Cuba, which included a great deal of intrigue. A few notable

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biographies place special emphasis on Fidel's early life. R. Quirk (1995) published a notable highly critical biography. Most of Quirk's biography focuses on Fidel's early life, including his early revolutionary period, most of the biography focuses on the 1950s and 1960s. Quick does include a discussion of the Cuban Missile Crisis. It is difficult to downplay how critical this biography is; Fidel is consistently portrayed as being mercurial, impulsive, intellectually limited, and self-centered. I consulted Ted Szulc (1986) biography of Castro as well. If Quick's erred in the direction of being critical, Szulc paints a much more sympathetic portrait. He was able to interview Castro number times, interviewed other key leaders in the Castro regime, and spend 9 months in Cuba conducting research. I found P. Bourne (1986) psychological biography of Castro particularly useful. Boure's book was useful in illuminating three specific areas: Fidel's view of the U.S, specifically the U.S. role in supporting Batista; his relationship with Che Guevara, and Che's influence on Fidel; and, his powerful identification with the revolutionary hero, Marti. See also (Skierka, 2014) for a useful biography of Fidel.

Lionel Martin published an interesting book with a more pointed political goal: arguing that Fidel Castro was a dedicated Marxist in the 1950s. When Fidel became a communist is of no small importance. One school of thought conceptualizes his migration to Marxist-Leninism as a necessary transformation to gain largesse from the USSR— which was necessary due to the bristling hostility from the leader of the capitalist camp, the U.S. Martin argues and provides evidence that Fidel was a communist well before the U.S. could have possibly pushed Fidel into the arms of the USSR. Liss (1994b) discusses Fidel's belief system *in toto*. Liss agrees with Martin that Fidel was a dedicated communist before the onset of hostilities with the U.S. His work, although tangled in a

mess of Marxist-Leninist academic jargon to the point of being unreadable, was valuable

in outlining Fidel's belief system and was used in this dissertation.

Memoirs from those close to Fidel offer insight into the famous dictator. Halperin

(1972) spent six years in Cuba and offers descriptions of Fidel's actions and comments/

statements attributed to Fidel; however, because memoirs of this type are based on access

to the Cuban leader, it is likely that the authors are highly sympathetic to their subject.

Franqui (1980), a member of Castro's inter-circle until he broke with Fidel over the

invasion of Czechoslovakia, wrote a memoir. Franqui was a custodian of state archives

and microfilmed numerous records and letters; he also interviewed numerous actors for

his memoir. Journalists offer valuable yet informal analysis of Fidel and such works were

useful on some topics, see Lockwood (2003) and Mankiewicz & Kirby (1975).

In terms of U.S. policy preceding the Crisis, I found Bonsal's (1971) work

extremely valuable. He offers an illuminating account of U.S. policy before the Crisis,

Bonsal was ambassador to Cuba from January 1959 to late October 1960. He argues that

U.S. policy was not overtly hostile to the Cuban state in the early years of the revolution,

but Castro was vehemently nationalist and anti-U.S. Bonsals is critical of policy starting

in early 1960; the refusal to refine Cuban oil and the reduction in the sugar quota, may

have left Cuba with few options other than relying on support from the USSR. C.

Robbins (1985) work was influential as well; she argues that, as a general theme, the U.S.

consistently overestimated the 'Cuban threat.' It is difficult to discount the importance of

Weldes (1999b) work. As one of the first works I read on the crisis, it shows how

indispensable 'social facts' and shared understandings were in essentially constructing

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why the Cuban Missile Crisis was, in fact, a Crisis; and how U.S. policymakers could not conceive of a defensive motivation for the deployment.

Kim Il-sung and The Korean War

All the works used to explain the start of the Korean War are influenced by a number of factors, some of which may pose difficulties in researching Kim Il-sung's decision to invade South Korea. Because of the general opacity of the regime, scholars have to employ a number of techniques to gain sufficient information and data. In addition, and a problem more specific to the Korean War, scholars differ in their emphasis on the importance of internal or international factors—was the Korean War fundamentally a civil war or an international conflict?—which then guides and focuses subsequent research. Research that sees the Korean War as fundamentally an international phenomenon, tends to focus on the actions of not just Kim, but other players as well—particularly Soviet and Chinese leadership, moving attention away from Kim's decisions; indeed, much of the new information regarding the start of the Korean War is based on information from Russian and Chinese interactions and communication with Kim.

This latter point touches on larger concerns in Cold War scholarship. Tony Smith (2000) argues that scholarship needs to be reoriented towards, what he labels 'pericentrism:' to take the view of the periphery, non-great powers, when explaining major events. According to Smith, for too long scholarship has focused on the major powers as being the prime movers of the major events in the Cold War. Smith argues

that, quite often, it is the smaller actors that have been the drivers of Cold War history

and scholars have neglected this important aspect. Thanks to recent works based on

declassified Soviet and Chinese sources, Kim's role in the start of the Korean War cannot

be discounted; Weathersby (1993) documents 48 cable appeals from Kim to Stalin

seeking support for unification by military means. However, some scholarship still

privileges the importance of the major powers; in *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao and*

the Start of the Korean War (Goncharov, Lewis, & Xue, 1995b)*,* Kim is notably absent

from the title. Same for Thornton's *Odd Man Out: Truman, Stalin, Mao, and the Start of*

the Korean War (2000). Kim, the main driver of invasion, does not appear in the title of

either major work. This, of course, is understandable, as the great powers are obviously

important—Kim could not act without Stalin's approval. With that said, much needs to

be done to explain Kim's decision making. Some of the works in this discussion of

sources used, aim to explain Kim's decision; but some aim to explain Kim's decision

within a larger framework of Cold War politics, still implicitly suggesting that it is the

great powers' decisions that are ultimately of primary consequence.

Few states are more difficult to research than the DPRK. The combination of its

lack of transparency combined with the regimes diplomatic isolation leaves scholars with

few resources to marshal. With that said, the obvious importance in explaining this state's

behavior requires researchers make do with the available resources. In order to ensure

that research questions are problem or phenomenon driven, not data driven—scholars

should not just research "where the light is good" but should focus on explaining actions

of political importance. Few could argue that the Korean War is not worthy of such

research.

Researchers have dealt with this challenge in a number of ways. Some rely on the testimony of North Koreans who have defected from the regime; others use diplomatic correspondence with the North Korean regime from other DPRK friendly states; while others have made use of captured documents and other resources found during the U.S. occupation of the North during a brief period in the Korean War.

Nam (1976) offers a valuable and readable account of the North Korean Communist Leadership from 1945 to 1960. Initially, the leadership of the communist movement was composed of three major factions—the Yenan faction (Chinese Communists), the Soviet Faction (Kim's faction of Korean-Soviet Communists, although Kim has differences and purges some within this faction as well; Nam refers to Kim's group within the Soviet faction as a 'sub group'), and the native communist cells that survived under Japanese occupation (domestic communists). Nam offers a detailed account of Kim's steady consolidation of control as Kim methodically expelled and purged the non-Soviet factions from power over a fifteen year period. What is left is a group of leaders around Kim that share Kim's guerilla, Manchurian military background.

The book paints Kim as an adroit manipulator and savvy political operator, recognizing favorable moments to purge 'disloyal' members. Kim purged most of the domestic communist after the Korean War, a propitious moment to focus blame after the Korean War; Kim also survived challenges to his growing 'cult of personality' with attacks on his leadership in 1956. At times Kim patiently waits, recognizing when various factions have to be propitiated. For instance, Kim could not purge the pro-Chinese's faction during and after the Korean War, because he was dependent on Chinese assistance. While the book offers an impressive bibliography, there is little new sourcing

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that cannot be found in Scalipino and Lee's massive *Communism in Korea* (Scalapino &

Lee, 1973).

Lankov's (2002) *From Stalin to Kim ll-sung: the Formation of North Korea*,

offers an account of the Soviet's role in the formation of the DPRK, based on newly

declassified Russian materials. Like Nam, Lankov documents the factional struggles as

being key to explain various political changes. According to Lankov, Soviet influence

after the Korean War declined, and a number of show trial and purges result in the further

consolidation of Kim's control. Lankov argues that until the late 1940s, Soviet policies

aimed to minimize factional rivalries in the DPRK, but rivalries intensified as the USSR's

role declined.

The North Korean Revolution by Charles Armstrong (2004) is a magisterial

account of how North Korea moved from Japanese occupation to a Marxist–Leninist state

with distinctive Korean particularities. Of particular importance for this dissertation are

two topics for Armstrong: The Manchurian experience for both Kim and the DPRK

leadership; and how, while dependent on Soviet largess, the DPRK would never become

"the pliant and dependable satellite" (Armstrong, 2004, p. 242) of the USSR. Regarding

the first point, Armstrong notes how the Manchurian experience is an area of loss,

sacrifice, and exile for Koreans. This time in exile is given 'mythical' status in North

Korean official history and is centered on the activities of Kim. This experience fostered

secrecy, determination, a fierce nationalism and anti-imperialism, and little tolerance for

dissent, all in the name of safeguarding Korea's autonomy. Arguably, much of the current

regimes nationalism can be traced to the Manchurian experience.

The Manchurian experience was also Kim and his group's first experience with local rule. The first experiences with land reform and other forms of local government were first tried in this area and subsequently exported to North Korea following Japanese occupation. These first experiences with local control proved to be far more lasting templets for governance than either Soviet or Chinese guidance, highlighting a theme of Armstrong's book: "the DPRK represented to a significant extent the 'Koreanization' of Soviet communism, not the Sovietization of North Korea" (Armstrong, 2004, p. 241).

Chinese-Korean joint experience in Manchuria created deep bonds but also lasting distrust and hostility between the two. Armstrong documents the 'Minsaendan incident,' in which a number of Koreans—including Kim Il-sung[97]—were accused of being members of The Minsaengdan, a group of pro-Japanese Koreans seeking help from Japanese and recognition from the Japanese. Over one thousand Koreans were arrested and expelled from the CCP. Armstrong argues this incident helps explain "the Korean communists' insistence on autonomy within the movement and their emphasis on national autonomy—despite close relations with the Chinese—after Korea was liberated" (Armstrong, 2004, p. 30).

Regarding the second point, Armstrong stresses the continuity between the Japanese colonial experience and with deeper cultural norms in Koreans society. For instance, while Marxist-Leninist teaching stresses the need to diminish class or status distinctions, such distinctions where deeply ingrained in the Korean experience, and, thus, not changed even with the DPRK's professed dedication to Marxist-Leninism, which can explain why, to this day, Korean remains a highly segmented, hierarchal society.

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[97] Kim was exonerated in 1934.

Armstrong relies on a voluminous amount of documents captured form the DPRK in the short occupation by U.S. forces during the Korea War, housed in the U.S. National Archives (called RG 242). Such documents consist of US intelligence reports; record seized by U.S. forces in Korea; and CIA studies. RG 242 was declassified in the late 1970s. Armstrong argues these documents provided the best view regarding how the DPRK built society from the 'ground-up.'

One means to deal with the opacity of the DPRK is to rely on the few states that had or have diplomatic correspondence with the hermit kingdom. A series of works have made use of declassified Soviet and Chinese archives. A work that makes use of both Chinese and Soviet archives to discuss N. Korea's foreign policy writ large is Armstrong's, *Tyranny of the Weak* (2013). In this work, Kim is clearly in the driver's seat of North Korean foreign policy; Kim took the lead planning and convincing both Stalin and Mao to support the invasion. The book documents how Kim manipulates and gains support from both the Chinese and Russians through the vicissitudes and changing alliance patterns of the Cold War, playing both the Soviets and Chinese off one another at various points—but always safeguarding Korea's autonomy. The use of Russian and Chinese sources helps shed considerable light on a number of important aspects of North Korean foreign policy, such as its economic policy, the famines in North Korea, and how the North Korean navigated the foreign policy landscape after the fall of the USSR. However, in both of Armstrong's works, only a few pages are dedicated to explain the start of the Korean War.

Szalontai (2006) relies on Hungarian diplomatic archives, supporting his contention that the North Korean regimes unique characteristics are due to the particulars

of the North Korean leader—Kim Il-song. According to Szalontai, of particular importance was Kim's intense nationalism. This nationalism caused Kim to discount the goals of the 'communist' or 'Soviet bloc' and focus more narrowly on the conflict with Seoul—"America's puppet' according to Kim. This intense nationalism resulted in the diplomatic isolation of the North Korean regime.

Ree (1990) relies on Soviet secondary published sources to understand Soviet policy toward Korea during the immediate post war years, 1945 to 1947. Ree sees the Soviets playing a larger role; while the North Koreans retained the peoples committees (another export of the Manchurian experience), the Soviets were able to exercise as much control as the U.S. was providing in the South. Rees' study is limited to its narrow chronological focus and its narrow use of sources and may have benefited from using other archival sources, such as RG 242 as Cumings (1992) and Armstrong (2004) exploit.

Uncertain Partners (Goncharov et al., 1995b) draws on both declassified Russian and Chinese sources and uses biographies, histories, and memoirs, to explain, primarily, Sino-Soviet cooperation and the origins of the Korean War. There is little doubt regarding Kim's role as the prime mover regarding an invasion of the South thanks to *Uncertain Partners*. The authors marshal an impressive amount of evidence showing it was Kim, pressing a reluctant Stalin and Mao, for concessions and support for his invasion of the south. Stalin is concerned about U.S. involvement and is unwilling to risk conflict with the U.S. for Korean unification; Mao would prefer to focus and defeat the U.S. backed Kuomintang at home and pursue (or not preclude) the possibility of improved U.S.-Chinese relations. Kim convinces a reluctant Stalin that the U.S. will not

intervene and Mao, reluctantly, due to pressure from the Soviets and a similar assessment about U.S. intervention being unlikely, agrees. The authors' claim Mao only reluctantly agreed to enter the conflict after the U.S. crossed the 38th parallel, providing evidence for the orthodox interpretation that Mao was primarily motivated for defensive reasons, Mao could not tolerate an unfriendly state directly on its boarder and only acted when the Soviets were unwilling to provide more robust support. [98]

From the Russian side, Katheryn Weathersby (1993) offers a number of works explaining Soviet foreign policy based on declassified documents from the Central Committee of the Soviet Foreign Ministry (CPSU). Weathersby argues that Soviet foreign Policy went through a number of distinct phases shortly before the Korean War. The first phase was based on the need to control strategically important areas, such as Pusan and Inchon. When it appeared control over these areas was not likely without confrontation with the U.S., Stalin aimed for firm control of North Korea, via a friendly North Korean government, headed by Kim. In March-April 1950, Stalin's policy changes as he now supports Kim's invasion of the South based on U.S. involvement being unlikely. Weathersby, in a similar fashion to Thornton, argues that, while not able to conclusively document, Stalin was motivated to support Kim due to concerns of a possible U.S.- Chinese rapprochement.

A number of works address the start of the Korean War via declassified Chinese sources. *After Leaning to One Side: China and its Allies in the Cold War* (2011), Shen and Li, Chinese independent historians, use Chinese Foreign Ministry declassified

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[98] Whiting's (1960) seminal work: *China Crosses the Yalu*, stresses Chinese' concerns about U.S. proximity to the Manchurian area as being key to explain, an essentially, defensive action by the Chinese. The U.S. crossing the 38th parallel, in the face of Chinese' warnings, forced a reluctant action in order to preserve its territorial integrity, according to Whiting.

materials and Russian sources, arguing that Mao's entry into the Korean War was taken in response to American intervention—which Mao had not expected—and was not planned in advance. Overall, this work interprets Chinese Foreign policy as being primarily in pursuit of Chinese national interests and not driven by ideology to the degree Zhang and Chen suggest (to be discussed shortly). Other chapters document the bitter disagreements over strategy, command, and logistics, between the Chinese and Koreans and a discussion of Kim's fear of the growing power of the Chinese Faction in Korea, which ultimately resulted in the ejection of Chinese forces in 1958.

Chinese foreign policy looks much different in Zhang's (1995) *Mao's Military Romanticism,* as Zhang stresses the importance of ideology guiding Chinese actions. Mao held a romantic view of China's role in the region: viewing their revolutionary cohort as being liberators, ensuring foreign powers did not dominate the region. Mao held a belief in the power of violence to act as a catalyst for historical progression. What makes fascinating reading is Mao's views of Chinese capabilities and their ability to confront a more powerful and technically sophisticated enemy, relying on surprise and superior moral. This has implications for an explanation of Mao's involvement in the Korean War: far from being reluctant and only entering for defensive realists' reasons—according to this view, the Chinese traditionally viewed Northern Korea as a 'buffer zone' and it was essential that this area not be controlled by hostile forces—Mao was spoiling for a fight and more than willing to enter the conflict to ensure that the Americans do not become 'dizzy with success.' Zhang's work was written largely from Chinese documentary collections, memoirs, and histories, sources from the Chinese military, and offers a valuable source for Chinese foreign policy.

Chen Jian (1996) emphasizes, as well, the fundamentally revolutionary nature of Chinese Foreign Policy. Chen's work is based on published Chinese sources and interviews with the Chinese actors involved. Animating both Chinese intervention in the Korean War and the Sino-Soviet alliance, was Mao's belief that the U.S. was an imperial power and an enemy; conflict could only be postponed and was inevitable. Mao supported Stalin and Kim's plan to unify the peninsula, seeing U.S. intervention as unlikely. However, stressing the opportunity aspect of the conflict opposite the 'crisis' aspect, Chen in a similar fashion as Zhang, notes that the U.S. crossing the 38th parallel, while a factor, was not a seminal event as originally portrayed. Chen argues that the warning to the U.S. regarding the importance to stop at the 38th parallel, was essentially tactical. This warning allowed he Chinese to be seen as essentially acting defensively, possibly fracturing the cohesion of the enemy camp. Chen argues that Mao's decision to intervene was made before the crossing of the 38th parallel and even before the Inchon landing; Zhang (1995) also notes that Mao entertained entering the conflict well before the U.S. crossed the 38th parallel.

American historians have looked at the Korean War from a number of dimensions. In a broad sense, some stress the international dimensions of the conflict. For instance, Jervis (1980) argues for the seminal importance of the Korean War in terms of Cold War history: the Korean War pushed the Cold War into a new distinct phase of militarized competition and encouraged the Cold war to take on a contest for control of the entire world.

U.S Foreign Policy preceding the invasion and the U.S.'s subsequent reaction to the invasion is the focus of much scholarship. Rosemary Foot (1985) argues that the

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reaction of U.S. policy makers was to see the invasion as a product of a monolithic

communist movement, advancing the goals of global communism, not a civil war

initiated by Kim for national unification. Other discuss how the war was difficult to 'sell'

to the American public because of its limited nature (Fehrenbach, 1995). British historian

David Rees (1984) argues that the Korean War should been seen as a success: the U.S.

fought a limited war to limit aggression.

Of particular importance for this dissertation is an analysis of U.S. foreign policy

immediately preceding the invasion. Stueck (1981)using archival sources from both the

U.S. military and State Department, argues that while Dean Acheson, U.S. Secretary of

State at the time of the invasion, was certain of the need to demonstrate 'credibility' in

the face of an expansive USSR, the military saw little strategic value in Korea and was

wary of dedicating scarce resources to defend the Korean peninsula. Congress, largely

due to the infamous 'China lobby,' was more concerned about protecting Taiwan from

Chinese aggression. Due to such bureaucratic infighting, the Truman administration had a

difficult time making clear signals regarding a possible military commitment to the

peninsula. Yet, as Struck documents, a consensus emerged with Truman and Acheson

regarding the need to resist communist aggression even in peripheral areas, such as

Korea.

Allen Millett (2015), an American military historian, has perhaps provided the

most detailed account of the military history of the Korean War, in his trilogy, the first

volume dealing with the outbreak of the conflict. Millett, echoing scholars such as

Cumings, places emphasis on the civil nature of the conflict. In *The War for Korea:*

1945-1950, A House Burning, Millett finds that the Korean peninsula was embroiled in a

civil war dating back to 1948 and the uprising on Cheju Island. Millet uses South Korean

military record and oral testimony to claim that both the North and the South were

engaged in a military competition to actualize their various ideals for the Korean nation.

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