

FAILED SECURITY: REALISM, INTERVENTIONISM, AND THE PATH TO
INSECURITY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since its rise to superpower status following the end of World War II, the United States has taken upon itself to be a nation builder, a promoter of democracy through force, and erstwhile global protector of human rights.¹ The pursuit of this interventionist foreign policy has led the United States to engage in nation building sixteen times – of which only four could be reasonably termed successes, i.e. “democracy was sustained...ten years after the departure of U.S. forces” – Japan and Germany post-WWII and Grenada and Panama in the 1980’s.² Additionally, the United States has pursued multiple large-scale, undeclared wars, two in the name of the containing or restricting the influence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) throughout Asia, and two in the name of preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction or disrupting and destroying terrorist networks in the Middle East and West Asia. This does not account for the numerous small-scale interventions, overt and covert, that the United States has, and is currently pursuing, ranging from embedding U.S. Special Forces with the Nigerian Army to combat Boko Haram to CIA involvement in fomenting a coup against the democratically elected President Allende of Chile in 1970.³

All told, “[s]ince the end of World War II, there have been 248 armed conflicts in 153 locations around the world. The United States launched 201 overseas military

¹ *It must be noted that this work is intended to introduce an idea, one that is to be further developed in a later, larger work. Consequently, due to scale there is a shortage of empirical research and some causal links are given an overview rather than the full exploration they deserve.*

² Minxin Pei and Sue Kasper, "Lessons from the Past: The American Record on Nation Building," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Policybrief24.pdf>. 1-2.

³ Eric Schmitt, "3 Special Forces Troops Killed and 2 Are Wounded in an Ambush in Niger," *The New York Times*, October 4 2017.; Central Intelligence Agency, "CIA Activities in Chile," <https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/chile/>.

operations between the end of World War II and 2001.”⁴ In other words, from 1946 to 2001, the United States has been directly involved in 81% of armed conflicts, and the numbers have only increased with the 2001 and 2003 invasions of Afghanistan and of Iraq, respectively. Additionally, best case estimates indicate that 85-90% of casualties of war are civilians, “with about 10 civilians dying for every combatant killed in battle.”⁵ Of course, this is only a reflection of the most immediate costs of conflict, the World Health Organization (WHO) Commission on the Social Determinants of Health have indicated that

“war affects children’s health, leads to displacement and migration, and diminishes agricultural productivity. Child and maternal mortality, vaccination rates, birth outcomes, and water quality and sanitation are worse in conflict zones. War has contributed to preventing eradication of polio, may facilitate the spread of HIV/ AIDS, and has decreased availability of health professionals. In addition, landmines cause psychosocial and physical consequences, and pose a threat to food security by rendering agricultural land useless.”⁶

Conflict is incredibly destructive, both in the immediate short-term, i.e. loss of life and the sheer expense of conducting war, and in the long-term with the costs of decreased health outcomes and threats to food security. There is also the consideration of the role conflict has on the United States’ ability to achieve its stated foreign policy goals, as well as its ability to prevent backlash to its interventionist policies. For example, following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, favorable opinions of the United States saw a marked decline, “[i]n Indonesia, positive opinions of Americans have fallen from 65% in 2002 to 42% [2004]; in Turkey, favorable opinions declined 19 points.”⁷

⁴ William Wilst et al., "The Role of Public Health in the Prevention of War: Rationale and Competencies," *American Journal of Public Health* 104, no. 6 (2014). e34.

⁵ Ibid. e34.

⁶ Ibid. e35.

⁷ Michael P. O’Connor and Celia M. Rumann, "Fanning the Flames of Hatred: Torture, Targeting, and Support for Terrorism," *Washburn Law Journal* 48 (2009). 657-658.

With such limited successes, and at such an exorbitant price, how might critical constructivist scholarship facilitate a change in the minds of policymakers in such a way that the interventionist policies are replaced with more noninterventionist policies that nonetheless are effective in ensuring regional and international security? The argument presented here is, U.S. interventionism appears to be dependent on a society trapped in a neorealist paradigm that assumes a very narrow definition of security and promotes that the most effective means to ensure U.S. security is to pursue interventionist policies – this is despite evidence that seems to indicate that these policies have weakened U.S. security, rather than strengthen it.

The intent is to move through U.S. foreign policy post-WWII to the present to show how the neorealist conceptions of security has spurred a shift towards interventionism and a permanent institutionalization of militarism that, despite arguments from realists, has been damaging not only to U.S. interests, but the rest of the world as well. Next, a discussion of what ‘security’ is, and how a broader definition might better match U.S. interests. Finally, an alternative is suggested, drawn from the field of critical security studies, as well as a potential method of implementation.

2. NEOREALISM AND SECURITY

In 1959, Kenneth Waltz published *Man, the State, and War*, in which he argued that while the role of individual leaders and the domestic makeup of states has a hand in creating conflict – it is states, which are “unitary actors who, at a minimum, seek their own preservation and, at a maximum, drive for universal domination,” that motivate conflict.⁸ And ultimately, it is the anarchic condition [the lack of a higher authority to direct the actions of states] that compels state behavior.⁹ To quote Waltz,

[a] state will use force to attain its goals if, after assessing the prospects for success, it values those goals more than it values the pleasures of peace. Because each state is the final judge of its own cause, any state may at any time use force to implement its policies. Because any state may at any time use force, all states must constantly be ready either to counter force with force or to pay the cost of weakness. The requirements of state action are, in this view, imposed by the circumstances in which all states exist.¹⁰

This new theory of international relations, one that Waltz later expanded on in *Theory of International Politics*, established a new explanatory model dubbed structural realism, and broke from the classic realism of earlier generations, such as Hans Morgenthau’s which relied on the idea of the flawed human to explain the interactions between states.¹¹ Instead, Waltz argued that it is the system of states itself that compels states to act in a manner that is inherently confrontational as they pursue policies to ensure their own survival.

⁸ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Relations* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co., 1979). 118.

⁹ *Man, the State, and War*, 3rd ed. (NYC, NY: Columbia University Press, 2001 (1959)).

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 160.

¹¹ Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth W. Thompson, and David Clinton, *Politics among Nations*, 7th ed. (NYC, NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 2005). 3-17.

In 2001, John Mearsheimer published *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, a new theory of international relations that built from Waltz's argument. In his work, Mearsheimer claims "that the structure of the international system forces states which seek only to be secure nonetheless to act aggressively toward each other."¹² To undergird his argument Mearsheimer relies on five assumptions: 1) the anarchy condition, 2) presence of offensive forces, and 3) the presence of uncertainty ["the fact that states can never be certain about other states' intentions"], 4) great powers act in a rational manner [able to think strategically to ensure their survival], 5) and that survival is the primary goal of all states.¹³ Naming his theory offensive realism, Mearsheimer goes on to argue that since a state's ultimate goal is to be secure, i.e. ensure its survival, and that the system itself forces conflicts, the best situation a state could find itself in would be one of power unassailable.¹⁴ Namely, it is in a great power's best interests to, at the least, be a regional hegemon, and to actively work to frustrate the rise of any potential competitors.

This new theory of offensive realism, which shares the same bedrock assumptions as Waltz's, differs from Waltz's in its explanations for the pursuit of power. While Mearsheimer argued that maximizing power is strategically wise, and hegemony would be ideal, Waltz argued from a position of 'defensive realism' that relies on the balance of power model which states, "it is unwise for states to try to maximize their share of world power, because the system will punish them if they attempt to gain too much power," i.e.

¹² John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2001). 3.

¹³ Ibid. 3.

¹⁴ Ibid. 4-14.

if a state gains too much power, other states will actively move to limit the more powerful state's ability to acquire more power until a balance is achieved, so it is in a state's best interest to preserve what it has rather than grasping for more.¹⁵ As mentioned however, both models have the same foundation, namely that every state is driven by survival, which is achieved through security, and the result is conflict as states act within a structural system bound by uncertainty, anarchy, and the presence of offensive forces to secure that survival.

Moving to U.S. foreign policy, under the neorealist model, some version of the Cold War was inevitable post-WWII. Following the defeat of Germany, and United Kingdom losses in the Suez Crisis (1956), there remained two superpower states, the United States and the U.S.S.R., under neorealism models this pitted two states desiring unmatched power against each other.¹⁶ Under the defensive realist side of neorealism, the Cold War was a bipolar balance of power where one state could not reasonably overcome the other – thus limiting conflicts to proxy conflicts, i.e. Korea, Vietnam, etc. The offensive realists, much like the defensive realists argue that balance of power was integral in the Cold War, however they take a slightly different tack. Within offensive realism, the Cold War was not just a quest to balance power against a threat to security, but a concerted drive by states to exploit “opportunities to increase their own power or weaken rivals.”¹⁷ Nonetheless, both sides of neorealism argue that the balance of power

¹⁵ John J. Mearsheimer, "Structural Realism," in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, ed. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). 72.

¹⁶ *The term superpower refers to “a state that has the capacity to project dominating power and influence anywhere in the world...and so may plausibly attain the status of global hegemon.”* Lyman Miller, "China an Emerging Superpower," *Stanford Journal of International Relations* (2005).

¹⁷ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. 329.

was necessary to maintain the survival of both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., and that structural factors forced them into this contentious relationship that lasted nearly fifty years.

In terms of U.S. foreign policy, this belief of pursuing relative power gains to improve or maintain global positioning is problematic. As mentioned earlier, the U.S. has been directly involved in 81% of armed conflicts since WWII – under a neorealist model, it makes sense for the U.S. to exercise its power to maintain primacy – however, this exercise of power to maintain power also has significant secondary effects that actually inhibits the U.S.’s ability to maintain power and security. The clearest example of this is the previously mentioned Cold War, the ideological fundamentalism that led to a securitization of the U.S.S.R. as an existential threat to the U.S. embedded the U.S.S.R. as a permanent enemy in the minds of the U.S. populace, as a conflict that could only end in a zero-sum solution, in this case, the U.S.S.R. collapsed, and the U.S. “won” the Cold War.

Within the near fifty years of the Cold War however, the quest for overwhelming power spurred numerous interventions across the globe. As an example of post-WWII interventionism, the Korean War stands out, namely the U.S. role in exacerbating an already tense situation, and securitization leading to a multi-year, high casualty conflict rooted in perceptions of relative power with long-ranging consequences. This is not to say that the U.S. was incorrect in scaling up the conflict on Korea peninsula as a response to Soviet-backed aggression, however, the lead up to the conflict set the stage and pattern for future U.S. interventions. And while these demonstrations of force, both overt and covert, may have contributed to the U.S. remaining a hegemony post-WWII, the sheer

costs associated with a permanently at war military, the lives lost, and the long-term damage to virtually every region in the world makes, combined with the failures of the U.S. to meet its stated goals in the majority of its interventions, seem to indicate that the concept of maintaining relative power, and by extension security, through force, at all costs, is neither particularly effective or efficient.

3. IDEOLOGICAL FUNDAMENTALISM AND SECURITIZATION

In 1947 George Kennan published his soon to be famous article, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct” in *Foreign Affairs* under the pseudonym Mr. X. Within, Kennan claimed that Soviet ideology framed the world as an inherent struggle between capitalism and socialism – and that consequently, although the Soviets would not actively pursue armed conflict, they would look for opportunities to expand their ideology into capitalist states and their allies.¹⁸ Kennan also framed the Soviet ideology as inflexible, with the actual mechanisms of the state apparatus as being fluid and changeable, in short, the Soviet state would not change its core perceptions of the capitalist/socialist dichotomy in the foreseeable future, even if the actual moves of the state did not necessarily reflect that core ideology.¹⁹ Finally, Kennan proposed a “firm policy of containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counterforce at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interest of a peaceful and stable world.”²⁰ This interpretation of Soviet behavior, specifically Kennan’s suggestion of containment later became a core tenet of the Truman Doctrine, and influenced the U.S. approach to the Cold War, to varying degrees, until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.²¹

While Kennan later lamented that he had been misinterpreted, that his arguments for containment did not mean unlimited geographical opposition to the Soviet Union on every front, nonetheless, the concept of containment was fully realized in NSC 68

¹⁸ G.F. Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 65, no. 4 (1947). 859.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 858-859.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 867.

²¹ Michael Beschloss, *Our Documents: 100 Milestone Documents from the National Archives* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2006). 194-195.

published in 1950.²² Furthermore, the framing of the conflict in NSC 68 between the Soviet Union and the United States, carried with it significant connotations of the desire to maintain power primacy [i.e. the ability to significantly influence events] while also describing the conflict as one of freedom versus slavery.²³ With the adoption of NSC 68 we see a concerted effort to frame the conflict in terms of ideological fundamentalism [“which assigns enemy status because of what the other *is* – its political identity – rather than how it behaves”], and it is within this context that the Cold War became a us versus them conflict, one that could only end with a clear victor or loser.²⁴ From NSC 68:

Thus unwillingly our free society finds itself mortally challenged by the Soviet system. No other value system is so wholly irrevocable with ours, so implacable in its purpose to destroy ours, so capable of turning to its own uses the most dangerous and divisive trends in our own society, no other so skillfully and powerfully evokes the elements of irrationality in human nature everywhere, and no other has the support of a great and growing center of military power.²⁵

Additionally, this ideological fundamentalism – that the Soviet Union was irredeemably evil – led to a series of securitization moves from the Truman administration as they convinced the U.S. public that the Soviet Union was indeed a threat to American values, and as such justified an increased military posture to counter the threat.

Securitization, or the framing of a potential threat as an existential threat to justify extraordinary actions to seemingly counter the threat is a key concept in the reimagining of identities.²⁶ But, for securitization to work three conditions must be met, 1) a

²²Paul Nitze et al., "A Report to the National Security Council - NSC 68," https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/10-1.pdf.; Charles Gati, "What Containment Meant," *Foreign Policy* 7 (1972). 34-35.

²³ Nitze et al. 4-7.

²⁴ Ken Booth and Nicolas J. Wheeler, *The Security Dilemma: Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics* (London, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). 65.

²⁵ Nitze et al. 9.

²⁶ K.M. Fierke, *Critical Approaches to Critical Security* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2015). 110-111.

representative acting in an official capacity must name the threat and identify reasons why it is a threat [the object and referent object, respectively], 2) the audience must accept the reasoning, and 3) the audience must agree to the proposed emergency procedures.²⁷ And we see this securitization repeatedly during the buildup to the Cold War, both within the official policy stance of the U.S., and also through speeches given by Truman to justify his containment policy. In a speech given to a joint session of Congress, Truman actively called for providing support to Greece and Turkey as a means to sway them away from Soviet designs,

[o]ne way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio; fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms. I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.²⁸

In other words, the Soviet Union was described as an existential threat not only to the American way of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness, but also to all free-loving people in the world, a threat that deserved special actions by the executive to defend and protect that freedom. And arguably it was effective, Truman was not only reelected in 1948, but his policy of containment survived in some form until the end of the Soviet Union in 1991, and was reconstituted in new form by the Clinton administration under

²⁷ Ibid. 110-112

²⁸ Harry S. Truman, "Transcript of Truman Doctrine," <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=81&page=transcript>.

the moniker of *dual containment*, meant as a means to inhibit Iraq and Iran from expanding their influence within the Middle East.²⁹

This is not to say that securitization is wrong, or even ill-advised, it stands to reason that the presentation of a threat for the purposes of enacting extraordinary policy measures may be reasonable if the threat itself is justifiable as existential, i.e. a territorial incursion by another state may very well require the executive to rally the populace via securitization to counter the threat. Where the problem arises, however, is when the process of securitization is driven by the previously mentioned ideological fundamentalism. The presentation of another state as irredeemably evil hardens positions and closes out options of peaceful resolution beyond zero-sum solutions – in fact, presenting the other as an existential threat, a threat that is rooted in a presumption of “a basic conflict between the idea of freedom under a government of, and the idea of slavery,” not just closes out options of non-zero-sum solutions, but invites conflict in the name of being the only defense against a direct threat to a state’s core values.³⁰ The relationship between securitization and ideological fundamentalism does present a chicken-egg scenario however, the point being that it is the pairing of the two together, rather than being one or the other, that creates a zero-sum situation and increases the chances of conflict.

With that said, the circumstances that led up to the Korean War [1950-1953] were somewhat unusual in that Korea was a bifurcated nation with the Soviet-backed regime in

²⁹ Martin Indyk et al., "Symposium on Dual Containment: U.S. Policy toward Iran and Iraq," *Middle East Policy* 3, no. 1 (1994).

³⁰ Nitze et al. 7.

the north and a U.S.-backed regime in the south, and while both states had made legitimate attempts to reconcile the two regions following the withdrawal of Japanese forces after the end of WWII, by the late 1940's it was obvious that neither great power was willing to make the necessary concessions for a peaceful resolution.³¹ This tension was furthered by the very real possibility that a unified Korea would seek retaliation for thirty-five years of brutal occupation by Japanese forces, further complicating U.S. interests in the region.³² While the U.S. did make a good faith effort to have the 'Korean problem' arbitrated by the newly-formed United Nations, having submitted a resolution in 1947, by that point tensions had become so high that the Soviet Union boycotted the discussions, effectively neutering the Security Council.³³ Moving forward to 1950, Truman had become mired in the difficult position of needing another crisis to "prove to the American people that he and the Democratic Party were not soft on Communism, to extend containment to Asia, to shore up Chiang's position on Formosa [Taiwan], to retain American bases in Japan, and most of all to rearm America and NATO...[t]he whole package envisioned in NSC 68."³⁴ All of these pressures culminated on June 25, 1950 when North Korean troops, supported by the U.S.S.R. and the Peoples Republic of China (PRC), invaded South Korea.

Truman issued a response the next day with an address to Congress in which he formally extended the Truman Doctrine to Asia, expanding military aid to the French in Indochina [later Vietnam] and the Philippines, as well as sending the Seventh Fleet to

³¹ Stephen E. Ambrose and Douglas G. Brinkley, *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy since 1938*, Eighth ed. (London, England: Penguin Books, 2011). 114-116.

³² *Ibid.* 116-117.

³³ *Ibid.* 115.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 114.

Formosa.³⁵ Four days later, on June 30th, Truman ordered ground troops into Korea, a position that originally started as an attempt to push North Korea back to the 38th parallel, but by September 1, 1950 had transformed into an effort to liberate Pyongyang from Communist control.³⁶ With the change in goals, the American military, led by General Douglas MacArthur, pushed north of the thirty-eighth parallel, drawing China into the conflict and changing the conflict from protecting South Korea to a potentially four-front war.³⁷ Once the reality of the situation became apparent, that liberating Pyongyang would require a war with the PRC and the U.S.S.R., the U.S. returned to its previous position of containing communist forces to North Korea.³⁸

As a result of the rapidly escalating conflict on the Korean Peninsula, a conflict that ultimately claimed nearly three million lives and has cost the U.S. nearly \$2.8 billion [adjusted for inflation] a year since the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement in 1953, Truman and Dean Acheson [Secretary of State] were able to rapidly expand military capability – dramatically increasing the defense budget, expanding the nuclear arsenal, and extending military bases around the world – in the name of containment.³⁹ When the Truman administration left office in 1953, they had left behind, in the words of Walter Millis,

an enormously expanded military establishment, beyond anything we had ever contemplated in time of peace...It evoked a huge and apparently permanent

³⁵ Harry S. Truman, "Statement by the President on the Situation in Korea,"

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=13538>.

³⁶ Ambrose and Brinkley. 118-119.

³⁷ Ibid. 120-121.

³⁸ Ibid. 122-123.

³⁹ Ibid. 122-123: CNN Library, "Korean War Fast Facts," Cable News Network (CNN), <https://www.cnn.com/2013/06/28/world/asia/korean-war-fast-facts/index.html>.: Mike Baker, "Ap: Costs of Us Wars Linger for over 100 Years," Associated Press, <http://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-ap-costs-of-us-wars-linger-for-over-100-years-2013mar19-story.html>.

armament industry, now wholly dependent...on government contracts. The Department of Defense had become without question the biggest industrial management operation in the world; the great private operations, like General Motors, du Pont, the leading airplane manufacturers had assumed positions of monopoly power...⁴⁰

In effect, the Truman administration had laid a blueprint for the conceivable future – a militarized U.S. with global reach, an implacable enemy in communism, a nuclear arms race, and the justification for intervention, in the name of containment, wherever the U.S. felt action was needed.

When Eisenhower took office in 1953, he took the policy of containment even farther, establishing a new doctrine that posited the “falling domino” principle...a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly.”⁴¹ Within this new doctrine, containment was no longer sufficient, rather, as John Foster Dulles claimed, it was a policy with a significant economic cost and little to no chance of victory.⁴² While there was a disconnect between the rhetoric provided by the early Eisenhower administration and its policies – early administration policy was a continuation of Truman’s – the new rhetoric laid the groundwork for an even more interventionist policy; an approach to foreign policy that justified liberalization from the threat of communism, rather than just containing it to already controlled territories. Much like Truman laying the groundwork for containment, Eisenhower relied on rhetoric to reinforce communism – and by extension PRC and the Soviet Union – as implacable enemies involved in a war against

⁴⁰ Ambrose and Brinkley. 123.

⁴¹ Dwight Eisenhower, "73 - the President's News Conference," The American Presidency Project, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=10202>.

⁴² Ambrose and Brinkley. 128.: David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998). Loc. 506.

freedom and the only solution could be a zero-sum resolution with a defined victor and loser. Within this new approach to foreign policy, driven by the failures of the Eisenhower administration to stop the spread of communism in Vietnam, and the concerns of American businesses in the developing world – a shift in the pursuit of U.S. interests was adopted. Namely, in a new institution that had been created under the Truman administration, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) – whose director, Allen Dulles, was the brother of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles.⁴³

The CIA's first experiments in regime change began in Syria in 1949, under the Truman administration. Faced with a Syrian regime and population that was turning against the U.S. for its support of Israel and the refusal of the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) to terminate its Trans-Arabian Pipe Line (TAPLINE) in Syria, Truman felt that an unfriendly regime in Syria could compromise his strategic goal of containment.⁴⁴ Consequently, Truman authorized Stephen Meade and Miles Copeland, both CIA officials, to reach out to Chief of Staff Husni Zaim, a rabid anti-Communist who according to the CIA was a ““Banana Republic dictator type” who “did not have the competence of a French corporal.””⁴⁵ According to declassified documents, these meetings began in November 1948, and by March 14, 1949 Zaim and Meade had completed their planning for the coup – two weeks later, students “protesting government corruption and mishandling of the war with Israel took to the streets, and on 30 March Zaim staged his coup, arresting [Skukri] Quwatly [President of Syria] and Azm and

⁴³ Ambrose and Brinkley. 140-146

⁴⁴ Douglas Little, "Cold War and Covert Action: The United States and Syria, 1945-1958," *The Middle East Journal* 44, no. 1 (1990). 52-53

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 55.

suspending the constitution”⁴⁶ This initial action led to more than a decade of CIA of involvement in Syria, and contributed greatly to a poisoning of Arab-American relations that had historically been quite friendly, and arguably gave the Ba’athists the Anti-Western ammunition they needed to foment their own coup in Iraq in 1963, an event that has haunted U.S. interests in the region from the 1980’s to the present day.⁴⁷

Eisenhower, having seen the success of Truman’s CIA in Syria, accelerated CIA operations around the world, including in Iran, Guatemala, and Indonesia. While all these actions had massive ramifications for their regions, many of which are still seen today – such as the continued instability in Guatemala and Central America – it was perhaps the 1953 coup in Iran that stands as the best example of covert American operations overseas and the consequences of short-term thinking versus long-term effect.

The Eisenhower administration, after failing to negotiate a compromise between British oil interests and the Prime Minister of Iran Mohammad Mosaddegh, authorized a joint mission with the British MI6 to foment a coup to remove the Prime Minister from power.⁴⁸ While the full involvement of the U.S. in the coup is still somewhat unclear, there is quite a lot of evidence – mostly gleaned from diplomatic communications between the U.S. and Britain – that the involvement was significant: ranging from advice, use of CIA assets in Iran, and “covert efforts to monitor and manipulate the political process in Iran.”⁴⁹ Arguably, the partnership between the U.S. and Britain was

⁴⁶ Ibid. 56-57.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 74-75.

⁴⁸ Scott A. Koch, ““Zendeabad, Shad!”: The Central Intelligence Agency and the Fall of the Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq, August 1953,” ed. History Staff (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1998). 13-14.

⁴⁹ Mark J. Gasiorowski, “The 1953 Coup D’etat in Iran,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19, no. 3 (1987). 261-262, 268.

successful with Mossadegh being forced from office on August 19, 1953, and later convicted to a three-year sentence for attempted rebellion.⁵⁰ Furthermore, U.S. sponsorship of the coup had substantial negative outcomes with long ranging impacts. First, that any “hope of establishing a democratic alternative to the Shah had...been lost,” second, the reestablishment of an Iranian dictatorship, in the form of the Shah, significantly contributed to the events of the 1978-1979 Iranian Revolution that placed the clergy in power and the resultingly poor relations the U.S. and Iran have experienced since.⁵¹ Finally, this action acted as a fielding test for the CIA, demonstrating the effectiveness of covert operations to influence governments, operations that were quickly repeated throughout the world as the CIA increasingly became an institutionalized arm of U.S. foreign policy.

Consequently, within a decade of WWII, the U.S. had settled on a foreign policy of Soviet containment through “compellence” – even if that meant deliberate regime change, and regardless of considerations of long-term damage that may come from such destabilizing operations.⁵² Through the institutionalization of the military as an offensive force, combined with the use of covert action when blatant military action was ill-advised, the U.S. had created what is arguably a new kind of empire. An empire ideologically opposed to communism, but willing to accommodate strongmen who

⁵⁰ The New York Times, "The C.I.A. In Iran: Key Events in the 1953 Coup," The New York Times, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/world/mideast/041600iran-coup-timeline.html?mcubz=1>.

⁵¹ Gasiorowski. 278-279.

⁵² *Art describes compellence as an offensive deployment of military power to stop or otherwise influence an adversary's action, action that is rooted in neither defensive or deterrent considerations.*: Robert Art, "The Four Functions of Force," in *International Politics: Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues* (London, UK: Pearson, 2012). 164-171.

openly practiced human rights violations, illiberalism, and ruinous economic practices – as long as they did not side with the Soviets.⁵³

These practices of ideological fundamentalism and securitization, and the reliance on an institutionalized use of offensive forces in the name of security was again demonstrated in the Vietnam conflict [1950-1967]. While relations between Vietnam and the U.S. were initially sympathetic, as Ho Chi Minh and his anti-Japanese resistance fighters had rescued downed American pilots during WWII, they quickly were brought into ideological opposition as France attempted to reestablish colonial control following the war.⁵⁴

After the May 1954 defeat of France at Dien Bien Phu, Vietnam was bifurcated at the 17th parallel into a northern state led by the Communist Ho Chi Minh and a southern state led by the American-backed Ngo Dinh Diem.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the U.S., France, Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia, the Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan came together in 1954 to create the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), which was purposed to prevent communism from spreading into the region, and obligated the signers to protect South Vietnam should it be attacked from outside forces.⁵⁶

After a full-scale revolt against the despotism of Diem began in March 1960, Secretary of State Dean Rusk “warned his countrymen of the dangers of a Far Eastern Munich, thereby equating Ho Chi Minh with Hitler and raising the dreaded specter of

⁵³ Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War* (NYC, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013). 178-193.

⁵⁴ Richard W. Stewart, ed. *American Military History*, vol. II, Army Historical Series (Washington, D.C.: United States Army, 2010 (2005)). 289.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 290.

⁵⁶ Ambrose and Brinkley. 190-192.: Office of the Historian, "Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (Seato), 1954," U.S. Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/seato>.

appeasement.”⁵⁷ As a result, Kennedy authorized the sending of military advisors to South Vietnam to support the Diem government against the revolutionaries that Diem had labeled the Viet Cong (VC). Additionally, Kennedy dispatched his Vice President Lyndon Johnson in 1961 to survey the situation and report back to Washington. Johnson, in his report, stated that the South Vietnamese would be able to defend itself should the U.S. increased its support with more training and equipment.⁵⁸

The vast majority of the Kennedy administration agreed that not only was preserving an independent South Vietnam vitally important to U.S. interests, specifically by preventing it falling to communist forces, but that sending Diem additional resources was the only way for the South Vietnamese to remain independent, despite evidence that Diem had over the course of the previous ten years become despotic in his rule – arresting dissenters, refusing to hold elections, and opening what were effectively concentration camps under the guise of ‘strategic hamlets.’⁵⁹ By the time Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, and Johnson assumed the presidency there were 15,000 military advisors in South Vietnam, and the domestic military had risen from 850,000 to one million active duty service members, with a commensurate rise in budget appropriations to support the increased burden.⁶⁰

The conflict erupted into a full-scale crisis on August 2, 1964 when the USS *Maddox* reported being attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats in the Gulf of Tonkin while on patrol.⁶¹ A second attack was reported by the *Maddox* and the USS

⁵⁷ Ambrose and Brinkley. 193.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 194-195.

⁵⁹ Ibid.193-196.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 196.: Stewart. 298.

⁶¹ Stewart.306.

Turner Joy [a second destroyer Johnson ordered to join the *Maddox* after the earlier attack] on August 4th.⁶² The same day, Johnson addressed the nation stating that he had petitioned Congress for “authority to use “all necessary measures” to “repel any armed attack” against American forces.”⁶³ Congress obliged by passing the Tonkin Gulf Resolution unanimously through the House of Representatives, with only two dissenters in the Senate, and provided the Johnson administration with the authority to “promote the maintenance of international peace and security in southeast Asia,” and to “prevent further (Communist) aggression.”⁶⁴

Johnson immediately began ordering the deployment of logistics troops and authorized increased air strikes targeting positions in North Vietnam; four months after the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was signed U.S. military strength in South Vietnam had grown to 50,000 with more deployments planned – by the end of 1967 as the fighting continued to escalate, U.S. forces deployed to South Vietnam numbered nearly 490,000.⁶⁵ By the time the final U.S. forces withdrew from Vietnam in 1975, nearly nine million Americans had served in the Armed Forces, and almost 3.5 million had been deployed to Southeast Asia.⁶⁶

This is admittedly a shortened overview of the U.S.’ second longest war [depending on when one wishes to count as the start of the Vietnam conflict]. For the purposes of this paper, the key parts are 1) the buildup in the early 1960’s and 2) the

⁶² Pat Paterson, LTC (USN), "The Truth About Tonkin," *Naval History Magazine*, February 2008.

⁶³ Ambrose and Brinkley. 200.

⁶⁴ U.S. Senate, "Tonkin Gulf Resolution, Senate Roll Call Tally Sheet," ed. US Senate (Washington, D.C.1964).

⁶⁵ Stewart. 307-310.

⁶⁶ "Military Health History Pocket Card," U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, <https://www.va.gov/OAA/pocketcard/m-vietnam.asp>.

outcomes of the conflict. Of note, while it was not Kennedy that started building up forces in Vietnam, that honor belongs to Truman – it was Kennedy who escalated the buildup by sending in Special Forces units to begin training anti-Communist forces in South Vietnam.⁶⁷

Moreover, the rhetoric utilized by Kennedy to justify U.S. support of South Vietnam closely mimicked that of the earlier Truman administration, framing the conflict with communist states as an existential crisis, as a dangerous ideology that must be contained, and the importance of the mantle of the U.S. as the protector of freedom.⁶⁸ The Johnson administration doubled down on Kennedy’s rhetoric after the Gulf of Tonkin incident, stating “[i]n the larger sense this new act of aggression, aimed directly at our own forces, again brings home to all of us in the United States the importance of the struggle for peace and security in southeast Asia.”⁶⁹ It was this language that led Congress to authorize the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution three days after the attack, and while it would not be reasonable to claim this as a wholly successful securitization move, the American population never supported the Vietnam War [in 1964 two-thirds did not have an opinion of the conflict, and popular opinion had begun to turn against the conflict by early 1967].⁷⁰ The language did convince Congress to give Johnson the authority to prosecute a war without an actual Congressional Declaration of War resolution – despite

⁶⁷ Daniel DeFraia, "Which Is America's Longest War, Afghanistan or Vietnam?," Public Radio International, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2012-10-19/which-americas-longest-war-afghanistan-or-vietnam>.

⁶⁸ Ambrose and Brinkley. 194.

⁶⁹ Lyndon B. Johnson, "Gulf of Tonkin Incident Statement," U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany, <https://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/speeches/rhetoric/lbjgulf.htm>.

⁷⁰ William L. Lurch and Peter W. Sperlich, "American Public Opinion and the War in Vietnam," *The Western Political Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (1979). 22.

allegations that the Johnson administration misled the public and Congress regarding the nature of the August 4th attack.⁷¹

Second is the outcome of the conflict. It would be difficult to argue that the Vietnam War had a direct impact on U.S. security, however an argument for indirect effects can be made. First, of the ~3.5 million servicemembers who deployed to southeast Asia during the conflict, ~ 47,000 were killed in combat with an additional ~10,000 killed in non-combat related incidents – additionally, ~153,000 were wounded, with a still unknown number suffering from long-term illnesses associated with the use of Agent Orange and other herbicides, as well as substance abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder.⁷² Furthermore, best estimates seem to indicate that the war cost ~\$141 billion [~\$661 billion adjusted for inflation], with an additional \$23 billion being spent for veteran healthcare each year since, a significant sum of funds that could have been used for domestic development or international aid.⁷³

Moreover, the U.S. lost the Vietnam War. The stated objections of the administrations had been to contain the expansion of communism and ensure South Vietnam remained a free, democratic state. After the Fall of Saigon in 1975, South Vietnam was absorbed into North Vietnam as a communist nation, which it still is to this day. Also, analysis of polls seems to indicate that public trust in the institutions of government reached an all-time low from 1968-1974 before beginning to rise again in the

⁷¹ H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty* (NYC, NY: HarperCollins, 2011). 108.

⁷² Electronic Record Reference Services, ,, "Vietnam War U.S. Military Fatal Casualty Statistics," National Archives, <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/vietnam-war/casualty-statistics>.

⁷³ Mike Hixenbaugh and Charles Ornstein, "Agent Orange's Legacy May Make Us Rethink the Cost of War," *The Virginian-Pilot* 2016.: "U.S. Spent \$141-Billion in Vietnam in 14 Years," New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/1975/05/01/archives/us-spent-141billion-in-vietnam-in-14-years.html>.

mid-1980's.⁷⁴ While it is difficult to point directly at the Vietnam War as the primary driver of the decrease in trust during the period [there was a recession from 1973-1975, and of course, Watergate 1972-1974], nevertheless, the timing of the dip is remarkably consistent with the escalation of military activity after the Gulf of Tonkin incident and the heaviest fighting of the war.

In the end, institutional trust of the government was damaged by the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, a large number of Americans deserted to avoid the draft, thousands became casualties, a significant amount of U.S. treasure was spent on the conflict, both in immediate conflict costs and long-term post-service care costs – and in the end, the conflict had provided no measurable benefit to U.S. security. And, while the U.S. did not see a measured improvement in its security position following the Vietnam conflict, it also did not experience a decrease in its security. Vietnam fell to communism, as did Cambodia and Laos, however, the threat of expansion stopped there – Japan, Guam, South Korea, Hawaii, or any other U.S. interests were not threatened. At best, the Truman through Johnson administrations were partially right in warning of communism spreading, but they were wrong in arguing that such an expansion would be a threat to U.S. security, they were wrong about to what extent the expansion would occur, and very likely, and this is a topic for another work, it is entirely within the realm of possibility that Cambodia and Laos, and possibly Vietnam, would not have been taken over by communist regimes had the U.S not intervened.

Moving forward, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 the U.S. faced a new problem, a massive institution geared towards conflict without an ideological

⁷⁴ Jack Citrin and Donald Philip Green, "Presidential Leadership and the Resurgence of Trust in Government," *British Journal of Political Science* 16, no. 4 (1986). 435.

opponent. Clinton, as previously mentioned, redirected this force from a Soviet-focused effort to containing the likes of Iraq and Iran. In the interest of preventing undesirable behaviors from these two states, specifically the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and the financing of non-state actors acting against the interests of the U.S. – Clinton authorized heavy sanctions and the significant use of force against both regimes.⁷⁵ None of which seems to have worked, Saddam Hussein stayed in power until the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and Iran continued its WMD program as well as the funding of organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas, which the U.S. has labeled as a terrorist organizations.⁷⁶ What is significant about the Clinton push for dual containment however, is that it was a revival of a failed Carter administration policy, a policy that was in response to Middle East oil embargos and the 1979 Iranian Revolution, and marked the gradual shift from a grand strategy against the Soviet Union, to a new strategy that focused, in many ways, on maintaining “the ever-increasing affluence that underwrites the modern American conception of liberty.”⁷⁷

It might be simplistic to argue that the Carter Doctrine, and later the dual containment strategy was solely rooted in a desire to secure oil supplies, however, as previously mentioned, a major catalyst for the coup in Syria was contention over the ARAMCO pipeline, Carter was driven, in large part, by the 1973 Oil Crisis, and Clinton saw a similar crisis should Iran follow through with its perennial threats of blockading the Straits of Hormuz.⁷⁸ This is in stark contrast to the actions in Korea and Vietnam, which

⁷⁵ Stephen Pelletiere, "Landpower and Dual Containment – Rethinking America’s Policy in the Gulf," *Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College* (1999). 1-3.

⁷⁶Ben Hubbard et al., "Iran out to Remake Mideast with Arab Enforcer: Hezbollah," *The New York Times* 2017.:Pelletiere. 22-24.

⁷⁷ Bacevich. 183.

⁷⁸ *America’s War for the Greater Middle East* (NYC, NY: Random House LLC, 2016). 3-49.

were much more ideological in nature and justified as necessary for the survival of the state solely on the basis of freedom and democracy.

Nonetheless, the similar strategies of Carter and Clinton for influencing foreign powers followed the same modus operandi that was established by Truman, cemented by Eisenhower, and has been practiced by every administration since: argue that the adversary is irredeemably evil, make a perfunctory attempt at negotiation, apply severe economic sanctions, escalate with military force. This dogged attachment to interventionism as a necessary component of maintaining security is not only remarkably consistent across administrations, but it is definitive of the neorealist position, the anarchy condition and presence of uncertainty forces the state to continually use its power. The reality is, this aggressive use of force has effectively turned the DoD into a “Ministry of Global Policing,” an occupation that it is singularly poor at exercising, and one of the main contentions of this work.⁷⁹

While the Clinton administration did acknowledge that non-state actors were a threat to national security in the 1990’s after the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, the U.S. did not adopt a new ideological opponent to replace the Soviet Union until the 2001 World Trade Center attacks, after which George W. Bush proclaimed in a television address that

[a] great people has been moved to defend a great nation. Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shattered steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve. America was targeted for attack because we are the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep that light from shining.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ *Washington Rules: American’s Path to Permanent War* (NYC, NY: Metropolitan Books, 2011). 21-23.

⁸⁰ George W. Bush, "Presidential Address," C-SPAN, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?165970-1/presidential-address>. 1:06

In one brief, twenty-four-minute speech, Bush realigned U.S. foreign policy, using the same language of securitization and ideological fundamentalism that Truman and NSC 68 had used fifty-one years prior. This was quickly followed, just twenty days later, by a declaration of war, not on a state actor, but on terrorism itself.⁸¹ Once again, the U.S. found itself embroiled in an ideological war, but this time, rather than having a state actor that fulfilled the role of both physical and ideological threat, as a target the U.S. was faced with networks of non-state-actors with differing goals, little in the way of organizational structure, and the war itself was one of annihilation, rather than containment.

Obviously, there are issues with such an approach, namely how one can hope to defeat terrorism, especially when tracing the rise of many of these groups, one can see that many of them stemmed directly from U.S. interventions, i.e. al-Qaeda, as we know it today, was born from U.S. funding of *mujahedeen* during the Soviet-Afghan War of the mid-1980's, and morphed into an anti-Western group when Osama bin Laden, citing U.S. interventions as his main motivation, obtained leadership.⁸² Understandably, this is a vast simplification of a movement that started in the 1940's with Sayyid Qutb and U.S. support of Israel, but the fact remains that the West's 'enemy number one' grew out of U.S. actions over the previous century.⁸³

⁸¹ "Text of Joint Address to Congress," The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/21/september11.usa13>.

⁸² Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower* (NYC, NY: Vintage Books, 2011). 139-145.; Stephen M. Walt, *Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy* (NYC, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005). 100.

⁸³ Wright. 9-37.

Nonetheless, the Bush administration prosecuted its Global War on Terror (GWOt) in October of 2001 with the invasion of Afghanistan with the reasoning that the Taliban were harboring al-Qaeda but refusing to surrender them to U.S. forces. This has led to the longest running conflict the U.S. has been involved in – as of 2018, the war is seventeen years old, has cost \$45 billion a year, claimed 3555 service members lives, and just between 2009 and 2017, the lives of 28,291 civilians with another 52,355 injured.⁸⁴ Additionally, not only has the war cost the U.S. significantly, in terms of lives and treasure, but the impacts on the Afghanistan social fabric may well be immeasurable. In 2015, ISIS, a group notorious for its extreme violence declared its presence in Khurasan [“a historic name for the area encompassing Afghanistan, Pakistan and parts of India”], killing hundreds in car bomb and suicide attacks as it strove to acquire territory, as well as torpedoing potential peace negotiations between the various Afghanistan factions.⁸⁵

Taking the ideological fight even farther, Bush declared in his annual State of the Union Address that Iran, Iraq, and North Korea were part of an “Axis of Evil” intent on the destruction of the American Way of Life, not only was the enemy framed in the zero-sum terms of good versus evil, but the GWOt was expanded from al-Qaeda and the Taliban to any state that openly opposed U.S. values or interests.⁸⁶ Over the course of

⁸⁴ Afghanistan Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Reports, "Annual Report 2017," United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/15_february_2018_-_afghanistan_civilian_casualties_in_2017_-_un_report_english_0.pdf.; ICasualties.org, "Operation Enduring Freedom," <http://icasualties.org/oef/>.; <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/pentagon-says-afghan-war-costs-taxpayers-45-billion-per-year>

⁸⁵ *It should be noted that ISIS is a hyper-violent extremist group and started as a sub-sect of al-Qaeda, opposing Western interference in Middle Eastern affairs.*: Rezaul H. Laskar, "Is Announces Expansion into Afpak, Parts of India," HT Media, Ltd, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindustan_Times.; Simon Tisdall, "Islamic State Attacks Show Group Is Intent on Killing Afghan Peace Hopes," Guardian Media Group, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/01/afghanistan-us-look-taliban-for-help-isis-attacks-rise>.

⁸⁶ George W. Bush, "Text of President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address," The Washington Post, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/onpolitics/transcripts/sou012902.htm?noredirect=on>.

the next year, the Bush administration consistently ramped up the rhetoric towards Iraq, including the famous “[b]ut we don’t want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud” by then-National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and then-Secretary of State Colin Powell’s 2003 speech to the U.N. attempting to gain international cooperation for the invasion.⁸⁷ The implication being that Iraq was developing WMD’s and the U.S. was facing an existential threat, rhetoric that almost perfectly imitated the early Cold War rhetoric that justified so much of U.S. interventionism in the 1950’s and ‘60’s.

In hindsight, it has become obvious that Iraq had stopped its development of weaponry in the 1990’s, and due to sanctions and repeated bombings from the Clinton administration was economically on the edge of collapse. Nonetheless, the Bush administration pushed forward, and on March 19, 2003 authorized the invasion of Iraq, ostensibly to capture its WMD factories, depose Saddam Hussein, and bring democracy and freedom to the people of Iraq.⁸⁸ In the end, the Iraq War lasted just under nine years and had devastating effects for the region and the U.S.: 4,555 U.S. casualties, at least 182,272 civilian casualties with some estimates reaching as high as 800,000, and long-term costs exceeding \$8 trillion.⁸⁹ Regionally, the Iraq War had an even greater cost as al-Qaeda in Iraq, which had not existed before the invasion, splintered into multiple groups such as ISIS, emboldened Boko Haram and al-Shabaab on the African continent,

⁸⁷ Wolf Blitzer, "Search for the 'Smoking Gun'," CNN, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/01/10/wbr.smoking.gun/>; Jason M. Breslow, "Colin Powell: U.N Speech 'Was a Great Intelligence Failure'," Public Broadcasting Station, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/colin-powell-u-n-speech-was-a-great-intelligence-failure/>.

⁸⁸ George W. Bush, "Bush Declares War," CNN, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/03/19/sprj.irq.int.bush.transcript/>.

⁸⁹ Watson Institute, "The Costs of War Project," Brown University, <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2017/Costs%20of%20War%2C%20Brown%20University%20%281%29.pdf>; ICasualties.org, "Operation Iraqi Freedom," <http://icasualties.org/iraq/>.

and the Iraqi infrastructure and technocracy were almost completely destroyed – additionally, perceptions of the U.S. dropped significantly throughout the Middle East,

[f]avorability ratings of the U.S. “policy toward terrorism” dropped in Lebanon from a high of 30% in 2002, to 10% in 2004. In Saudi Arabia, approval of America’s policy toward terrorism dropped from 30% in 2002, to 2% in 2004. During the same time period, attitudes in the United Arab Emirates toward the U.S. policy on terrorism dropped from 37% to 9%.⁹⁰

All told, the U.S. invasion of Iraq was a complete failure by any measure, although there are scholars who argue that the failure was not with the invasion, or the motivation to do so, but rather in the lack of planning for an extended occupation, i.e. Nadia Schadlow, who argued that the prime difficulty in the Iraq War was the lack of organizational structure, and tensions between the administration and the military.⁹¹ Even such a prominent scholar and government servant, however, shows the inherent problem with U.S. foreign policy – to Schadlow, it was not the decision to intervene that was mistaken, it was the execution. This is a mentality that has been carried out consistently throughout administrations from Truman to Trump, and likely one that will continue long after. But, at such a high cost to American interests, to lives around the world, and the very stability of the world, this short-sighted reliance on force as the primary arm of foreign policy, as history has shown, is doomed to fail over and over again.

⁹⁰ O’Connor and Rumann. 653.: Claire Felner, "Nigeria’s Battle with Boko Haram," Council on Foreign Relations,

⁹¹ Nadia Schadlow, *War and the Art of Governance: Consolidating Combat Success into Political Victory* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2017). 238-263.

4. DEFINITIONS OF SECURITY

Discussed to this point are the origins of neorealist models, their seeming influence on U.S. foreign policy, and some of the major interventions the U.S. has embarked upon in its quest for security. What has not been provided is a definition of security, or how the concept of security is tied into perceptions of U.S. military force. The concept of security however, is vitally important for any state, namely as a means for ensuring the state's survival. Where the problem seems to reside, especially in the U.S., is in perceptions of what security is.

Mearsheimer defines security as the ability of states to “maintain territorial integrity and the autonomy of their domestic political order,” in short, security is the method of ensuring survival.⁹² Waltz, similarly, takes the approach that “[i]n anarchy, security is the highest end. Only if survival is assured can states safely seek other goals,” like Mearsheimer the claim is that survival is the goal, security is the method of ensuring that survival, and the exercise of power is the tool that is used to accomplish the goal.⁹³ Both of these approaches have their roots in classical realism, that security “is to be about the pursuit of freedom from threat and the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity and their functional integrity against forces of change, which they see as hostile.”⁹⁴ Namely, protection against external influences on a state that would adversely affect a state's sovereignty.

⁹² Mearsheimer, "Structural Realism." 74.

⁹³ Waltz, *Theory of International Relations*. 126.

⁹⁴ Barry Buzan, "New Patterns of Global Security in the Twenty-First Century," *International Affairs* 67, no. 3 (1991).

This narrow definition of security is inextricably bound up in perceptions of power, the exercise of power to ensure security is dependent on conceptions of relative power, i.e. power differences are exploited to either frustrate one's potential competitors [offensive realism] or protect what one already has [defensive realism]. From this perception of relative power comes the conception of zero-sum competition mentioned earlier, the outcome of a conflict is irrelevant if the state's sovereignty is maintained or improved. To a neorealist, the actions of a state are not bound by any moral consideration, rather, as long as the state survives, the action is considered correct. Consequently, the neorealist position, and what seems to be the U.S. policy position, is one of instanced security events: a threat is identified, the threat is removed, security is achieved, repeat as necessary.

This position of instanced security has been reflected repeatedly in U.S. foreign policy since the end of WWII. Consider again the staging of a coup to overthrow Prime Minister Mossadegh of Iran in 1953, while Mossadegh's potential leaning towards an alliance with the U.S.S.R. was perceived as a security threat to U.S. interests under the name of containment, there does not seem to be any consideration given by the Eisenhower administration to the potential of any backlash the reinstated Shah might have on Iranian perceptions of the U.S. A backlash that culminated in the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the overthrowing of the Shah, the installation of the Ayatollah Khomeini, and ultimately pitting Iran and the U.S. against each other in a new zero-sum conflict. Similar reflections of instanced security events can be seen in the long-term outcomes of the Korean War, the training of *mujahideen* by the CIA to oppose the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, or the U.S. support of Contras in Central America during the 1980's. Each

of these events have come back to haunt the U.S., whether it is the \$2.8 billion per year spent on post-service care for Korea War veterans, the 9/11 attacks stemming from a frustration with U.S. involvement in Middle Eastern affairs, or the flood of migrants fleeing violence and poverty from states torn by decades of U.S. sponsored civil war.⁹⁵

In effect, an argument can be made that U.S. sovereignty has only been threatened twice in its history, the War of 1812 and the Civil War; and while other attacks on U.S. soil have occurred, namely the events of Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the attacks of 9/11 in 2001, these attacks did not reasonably threaten U.S. sovereignty. Yet, the U.S. policy towards security since it abandoned the isolationism of the pre-WWII era, has been one of constant response to an existential crisis – either in the form of communism during the Cold War era, to the rise of drug trafficking in Central and South America during the 1980’s, or to terrorism in the post-9/11 era.

Granted, it is difficult to argue that as the international arena settled after WWII, some version of the Cold War would not have occurred, however, to briefly dip into counterfactualism, if the U.S. had had a more nuanced view of security, and its use of power on the world stage, would the Cold War have escalated and hardened positions to such an extent that it did? In the same vein, would 9/11 have occurred if the U.S. had been more mindful of its exercise of power in the Middle East? Perhaps the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the subsequent destabilization of the Middle East, and explosion of non-state actors could have been avoided had the U.S. adopted a more non-zero-sum approach to security. These are obviously huge what-ifs that cannot be

⁹⁵ Baker.

definitively answered, however looking forward, conceptions and applications of security and relative power can be addressed.

As of now, only one conception of security has been addressed, namely the definition provided by the neorealists, the definition that U.S. foreign policy seems to have adopted post-WWII. That zero-sum conception of security seems to have driven the U.S. to engage in a global campaign of interventionism that has, on one hand possibly secured U.S. hegemony, but on the other reduced U.S. security. One of the scholars attempting to broaden the concept of security is Karin Fierke. The core of Fierke's approach to international relations is drawn from the school of critical security studies, and while her work is undeniably centered in feminism, she does share many characteristics with the constructivist school, namely a rejection of the structuralist description of international relations, an examination of how identities shape states and societies, and the role of the individual within the larger context of the state and the international system, i.e. the role of agency.⁹⁶

While a more conventional constructivist, such as Alexander Wendt primarily addresses the theoretical application of processes on the state and the international system, Fierke focuses more on the individual, especially those who are deprived of protections and denied power. From this foundation, Fierke is attempting to redefine security from the classic definitions that prioritize military might and response threats, to a more encompassing conception that includes not just the aggressor and the aggresse,

⁹⁶ *Constructivism, as a school within IR, pushes back against the structuralist/neorealist position with the core idea that "significant aspects of international relations are socially constructed, that is, historically contingent rather than necessary consequences of the nature of international politics."*: Patrick Thaddeus Jackson and Daniel H. Nexon, "Whence Causal Mechanisms? A Comment on Legro," *Dialogue IO* 1, no. 1 (2001). 1.

but all those who benefit from protection.⁹⁷ This redefinition of security can include anything from civilians unwillingly caught in a conflict between states, to those who suffer famine as result of climate change, to those who are adversely effected by significant economic downturns.

Under such a redefinition, “[t]he state may be at one and the same time the protector of its population and source of threat to it.”⁹⁸ Furthermore, “security *does* different things at different times and in different places,” i.e. security is “situated on a spectrum” dependent on the relationships between those being protected and the body providing protection.⁹⁹ David Campbell takes this redefinition even farther, arguing that security is dependent on interpretations of the potential for danger, rather than the actual presence of threat.

The example Campbell uses is the 1991 invasion of Kuwait, arguing that the large military reaction to the invasion was not a reaction to a threat to U.S. security, but rather a result of “[t]hose indebted to a power-politics understanding of world politics, with its emphasis on the behavior of states calculated in rational terms according to the pursuit of power, understood the invasion to be an easily observable instance of naked aggression against an independent, sovereign state.”¹⁰⁰ In short, it was not that Saddam Hussein’s invasion was a threat to the sovereignty of the U.S., but rather, it was a threat to U.S. power and perceptions of the world [perceptions rooted in U.S. primacy and an international order of sovereign states] that drove the counterattack from the U.S.

⁹⁷ Fierke. 15.

⁹⁸ Ibid. 15-17.

⁹⁹ Ibid. 197.

¹⁰⁰ Campbell. Loc. 97.

Furthermore, Campbell makes the two-fold argument that first, U.S. “foreign policy [can] be understood as a political practice central to the constitution, production, and maintenance of political identity.”¹⁰¹ And second, that because the concept of security and use of force is wrapped up in U.S. identity, the state is trapped into a process of reproduction that places it in such a position that “should the state project of security be successful in the terms in which it is articulated, the state would cease to exist.”¹⁰²

Pulling together Fierke and Campbell’s arguments gives a new definition of security, as well a new perspective on post-WWII U.S. foreign policy. First, that the U.S. practices an aggressive form of compellence not because it is structurally bound by an anarchic international order, but rather as a practice of repetition that has made aggression a necessary component of the inherent ‘American identity.’ Second, that what constitutes security is dependent on the relationships between those protected and the body providing protection, and that security is also dependent on the perceptions and interpretations of those relationships and the threat, or lack of, they present to each other. All of which is to say that at heart, “security is about being and feeling safe from harm or danger,” rather than the narrower definition that neorealism provides [and the U.S. practices] which “emphasizes the *means* of threatening, or the use of force by a state,” i.e. the practice of maintaining and acquiring power rather than providing protection.¹⁰³

With this in mind, one can reasonably argue that 21st century U.S. interventionism may be protecting the population from the dangers of non-state actors however, the money spent on these conflicts, overt and covert, is being drawn away from potential

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Loc. 173.

¹⁰² Ibid. Loc. 227

¹⁰³ Fierke. 15.

social welfare projects – removing protections from the U.S. population, while also inflaming anti-Western opinions giving more legitimacy to actors that oppose the U.S. and its interests. While the threat of an improvised explosive device on U.S. soil may be reduced, the risk of being ill without adequate access to healthcare rises and recruitment for ‘terrorist’ organizations increases, resultingly, current security practices often have concurrent negative outcomes in that they often produce more insecurity, or protection, in the end. A practice seen on the world stage most recently in Iraq, where an interest in creating a more secure U.S. has had the unintended consequence of making the U.S. less secure via an explosion of non-state actors [‘terrorists’] and less funds being available for vital domestic programs.

From this redefinition also comes a new perception of fear and trauma, an issue as equally important domestically as internationally. Fierke defines trauma as the “moment of painful awareness that the infrastructures of life, which provide the foundation for feelings of security or protection, rest purely on social construction.”¹⁰⁴ Consider that the U.S.-backed ‘*contra*’ wars, while controversial in the U.S. had little direct costs, yet for Nicaraguans it was, and still is, a major point in their history, with the death of at least 30,000 civilians; for the sake of comparison, that is the equivalent of the U.S. losing approximately 1.8 million to violence – a shredding of civil society that Nicaragua still has not recovered from.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, the 1986 bombing of Libya had little effect on U.S. interests, in fact, Reagan received a significant popularity boost domestically, but the preceding events that led up to the bombings – oil embargoes and the withdrawal of U.S. companies from Libya – had a significant effect on the well-being of the Libyan people,

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 149.

¹⁰⁵ Walt. 101-102.

depriving them of vital oil revenue and, of course, making them a victim of U.S. bombings.¹⁰⁶ Within this context it is understandable how anti-American opinions may harden, leading to such positions as Gaddafi funding chemical weapons programs and supporting groups that preached anti-Western rhetoric – the very infrastructures of these population’s lives were torn apart, creating a social construction that reflected their new reality.¹⁰⁷

Both of these populations experienced fear as a daily factor of their lives, few things are as terrifying than knowing one is in danger and not knowing when or where that danger is going to strike. For the Nicaraguans, it is fear of cartels, contra retaliations, and the breakdown of basic social services – for the Libyans, the fear of bombs striking in the middle of the night was later compounded by Gaddafi’s reactive use of military and police forces on the Libyan people, and still later by the chaos following the French-led, U.S.-assisted 2011 bombing campaign. Conversely, the U.S. population experienced its own fear, a manufactured fear of existential threat, propagated by the Reagan administration, which furthered ingrained the legitimacy of using indiscriminate violence to compel behavior.

While the sources of fear were qualitatively different, in all cases they had similar effects, a consolidation of identity centered around fear. And this fear, the manufactured or realized production of insecurity carries with it a type of trauma that is expressed in different ways, within the U.S. that fear is institutionalized into the collective mindset as an allowance for extraordinary actions, namely allowing the suspension of normal

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 103.: Ambrose and Brinkley. 330-332.: British Broadcasting Corporation, "President Obama: Libya Aftermath 'Worst Mistake' of Presidency," BBC, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-36013703>.

¹⁰⁷ Ronald Bruce St. John, *Libya: From Colony to Revolution*, 2nd ed. (London, UK: OneWorld Publications, 2012). 201-204.

politics and traditional liberal democratic principles – as happened with the PATRIOT Act post-9/11 which allowed for expanded use of surveillance, inhibitions on travel, and the indefinite detention of immigrants – just as happened with the Libyan and Nicaraguan populations, a new reality of social construction was born of trauma and fear.¹⁰⁸ While the PATRIOT Act was a result of the 2001 World Trade Center attacks, the popularity boost that Reagan received immediately after the Libyan bombings [51% to 76%] indicates that the majority of the U.S. population viewed Gadhafi as a threat that needed to be removed, as opposed to a manufactured threat, furthermore it reinforced the Cold War mentality that force is the appropriate response to all challenges to U.S. primacy – which is a trauma in and of itself, one that has its clearest expression in the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003, respectively.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Fierke. 122-131.: Jim Sensenbrenner, "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA Patriot Act)," ed. 107th Congress (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2001).

¹⁰⁹ Adam Clymer, "Tension in Libya: Polling the American Public; a Poll Finds 77% in U.S. Approve Raid on Libya," The New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/1986/04/17/world/tension-libya-polling-american-public-poll-finds-77-us-approve-raid-libya.html>.

5. RESPONSIBILITY AND ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

U.S. foreign policy, specifically the role of post-WWII interventionism, seems to be either a reflection of neorealist models, or neorealism reflects U.S. foreign policy. Whether neorealist models influence policy makers or vice versa is a question for a much larger work. What matters here is that U.S. interventionism has been rooted in a narrow conception of what constitutes security, based on perceptions of relative power, and reflected in instanced security questions that do not consider the potential repercussions that using compellence as the primary means of ensuring security might have. Consequently, U.S. foreign policy, while it may have assisted with maintaining U.S. hegemony [and there are further questions regarding the role geographic location and economic output have had on U.S. hegemony], taking such a zero-sum approach to security has also damaged U.S. security by depriving its population of protections.

The simple answer to correcting this deprivation is for policy makers to adopt an alternative conception of security, such as the one proposed by Fierke, and in effect, deriving a new calculus for when the application of force is necessary to preserve sovereignty, rather than simply the preservation or expansion of power. However, what a new calculus would look like in practice is well beyond the scale of this work. The more important question at hand is not *what* a new calculus would look like, but *how* could the conditions be created that a new calculus could be formulated?

To begin to answer this, responsibility must first be assigned. In the United States, only two entities have the constitutional power to authorize a deployment of military force; under Article 1, Section 8, Clause 11, the Congress has the power to declare war. Under Public Law 93-148 [the War Powers Resolution of 1973], the

Congress vested the president with the power to deploy the military for 90 days without congressional approval; only requiring the president to advise the Congress of the nature of the threat and the intent to use military force to counter it.¹¹⁰

Since the Congress has not declared war since June 1942, bringing the U.S. into WWII, every unilateral engagement [those not mandated by alliance agreements such as NATO] the U.S. has been involved with since September 1945 has been at the order of the Executive, with tacit approval given by the Congress via Authorizations for Military Force [AUMF]. And while an argument can be made for the effect of advisors on executive decision making, ultimately the order to deploy military force, outside of congressional mandate, lies with the president. However, arguing that the president is solely responsible for U.S. foreign policy is simplistic, in even a nominal democracy the chief executive is chosen through elections, which means that while the executive may issue the order, the population gives that executive the legitimacy, through elections, to do so. This is a long way of saying that while the president holds responsibility for U.S. interventionism, ultimately the executive is indebted to the population, and so the responsibility lies with population and the decisions they make in the voting booth.

Thus, if we draw from David Campbell's work, that states exist not as closed 'black boxes,' but rather as a series of institutionalized patterns of behavior [remember, every president from Truman to Trump has followed the same pattern of interventionism], and we acknowledge that the electorate has an impact on the chief executive, then it stands to reason that the pattern of the *state* can be disrupted to

¹¹⁰ U.S. Congress, "Concerning the War Power of Congress and the President," U.S. Congress, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-87/pdf/STATUTE-87-Pg555.pdf>. 555-556.

accommodate a new perception of security and foreign policy, if the pattern of the *individual* is disrupted.

To accomplish such a feat, Fierke argues for an emancipation – through a process of immanent critique – that “begins with critique and is primarily about the act of freeing, whether from assumptions that blind us to alternatives or from structures of power that constrain human potential.”¹¹¹ Immanent critique is the

“critical evaluation of practical norms and social practices internal to some society or culture, together with the conviction that this requires assessing the rationality or worth of those conventional norms and practices by drawing on resources internal to the society or culture of which they are a part.”¹¹²

In effect, immanent critique is an emancipatory process that allows an observer to question the practices of a system while being a part of that system, assessing the “rationality or worth of conventional understandings and standards.”¹¹³ By assessing the current norms in light of its actual value [practices, norms, and outcomes], rather than its normative value, a practice of immanent critique helps the observer to push back against conventional norms and propose change.

Fierke elaborates that the process of immanent critique, in light of the earlier discussion on security, in the pursuit of emancipation, or as Booth and Wheeler referred to it, as transcending the security dilemma, is a realignment that pulls us away from the “‘we’ in the West emancipating those who suffer elsewhere, a reflexive process of immanent critique begins with freeing ourselves from the assumptions, among others, a militarized understanding of security.”¹¹⁴ From such a position, this realignment opens a

¹¹¹ Fierke. 184.

¹¹² Dan Sabia, " Defending Immanent Critique," *Political Theory* 38, no. 5 (2010). 685.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* 687.

¹¹⁴ John Herz defined the security dilemma as “a structural notion in which the self-help attempts of states to look after their own security needs tend, regardless of intention, to lead to rising insecurity for others as

space to view the role of conflict, the role of the state in security, the very nature of power structures, and to take a more objective view of the pursuit of relative power, specifically through considering the impact on the individual and how those impacts add up to change the identity of a society and by extension, that of the state. To accomplish such an emancipation, moving from a war-like perception of security to a cooperative perception, in which the state concerns itself with the broader definition of security that considers not just territorial or interest-based protections, but also the effect actions have on the individual at all levels – requires a change in identity, a change in the very thought processes behind policy-making.

Booth and Wheeler make the argument that the root of insecurity lies in the problem of uncertainty, and that to ‘transcend’ that problem, one must engage in a ‘logic of trust,’ rather than one of fear.¹¹⁵ While Booth and Wheeler use game theory to demonstrate that trust can not only be effective in reducing uncertainty, and by extension the potential for conflict – to effect their change in identity they rely on John Herz’s work on *survival research*, which “deals with the question of how human survival in a reasonably satisfying environment can be ensured in the face of threats ranging to a possible extinction with which the entire human race is now confronted.”¹¹⁶

To bring this research into the reality of policy-making, Herz proposes the education of the “international civil service as a potential “universal class” in the Hegelian sense of a group outside and thus above the various societal “interests,” a class

each interprets its own measures as defensive and measures others as potentially threatening.”: John Herz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma," World Politics 2, no. 2 (1950). 157.: Fierke. 184.

¹¹⁵ Booth and Wheeler. 227-257.

¹¹⁶ John Herz, "Global Survival: The Challenge and Its Implications for Thinking and Acting," *The Journal General Evolution* 59, no. 3-4 (2003). 136.

able to rise above considerations of mere parochial concern.”¹¹⁷ Booth and Wheeler, using Herz’s ideas, contend that using these ideas of a scholarly approach to the study of survival combined with educating influencers in the intricacies of the security dilemma would in turn, help policy-makers better manage the “existential problem of uncertainty,” and by doing so, contribute to a more cosmopolitan world with a higher chance of long-term human survival.¹¹⁸

There does seem to be a major issue with centering the security dilemma as the primary point of education. While the security dilemma, in all its complexity, does describe the problem of uncertainty, and lays the groundwork for describing the effectiveness and benefits of trust building, at heart, the security dilemma is an explanatory model and students could just as easily take away a confrontational approach towards the international arena, rather than a more cooperative approach, depending on the ideology of the institution and individual instructors – relying solely on the individual to make a rational choice can easily backfire. Secondary to this, the strategies of the ‘logic of trust,’ and relationship building rooted in Booth and Wheeler’s ideas of transcending the security dilemma rely on conflict resolution and mitigation, rather than prevention. Which when considering that nearly all of the military conflicts since 1945 are U.S. instigated, does not resolve the problem of intervention – but rather, like Nadia Schadlow’s work, considers the conflict after it has already started.

Finally, Herz, Booth, and Wheeler center their education proposals on the previously mentioned “international civil class,” namely the policy-makers, journalists,

¹¹⁷ Booth and Wheeler. 261-268.: Herz, "Global Survival: The Challenge and Its Implications for Thinking and Acting." 140.

¹¹⁸ Booth and Wheeler. 263-264.

and writers that drive and cover international events.¹¹⁹ This class factor creates two new problems, 1) it is an inherently top-down approach which tends to not be effective in the long-term, 2) the unspoken assumption that identities are shaped down, an idea that Wendt, Fierke, and Campbell push back against in their work. Instead, Booth, Wheeler, and Herz are placing their proposal in the classic imaginings of the international arena, that those structural factors, previously mentioned, are indeed immutable, and do not directly address one of the primary problems that Fierke's work speaks to, that of the impacts on perceptions of relative power and the structure of power itself.

This is not to discount Herz's work, but rather to suggest that it is not necessarily sufficient to fully enable the change needed to realign perceptions of security. Booth and Wheeler make a very strong argument in *The Security Dilemma* for the importance of policy makers to understand the many intricacies of the security dilemma, as well as the role uncertainty plays in escalating conflict. While such a program may very well catch a large portion of future policy advisors, considering that the majority of federal elected officials in the U.S. do not have degrees in international relations or similar, it stands to reason that only a small portion of the decision-makers would actually be educated as Booth, Wheeler, and Herz envision. Nonetheless, catching those future policy advisors just as their interpretations of the international system are being formed would be invaluable.

Fierke, on the other hand, with her treatment of definitions of security and her proposal for emancipation presents methods for redefining perceptions of relative power through steps that can be taken at the individual level to change the identity of a society.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. 261-262

As such, she breaks her proposal for moving towards emancipation down into two sections, dialogue and care.¹²⁰ Dialogue, the “equal ability to speak and be heard,” is rooted in a type of universal consent that “requires openness and reflexivity between agents who are willing to engage in conversation involving reciprocal critique and in which there is no certainty of who will learn from whom.”¹²¹ The shared experience from open and frank dialogue opens the door to relationship building, which in turn creates shared interests, shared identities, and ultimately opens the space that allows for those who traditionally have no voice to be heard. Dialogue itself however, is not just an event, but a process – one that requires involved parties to distance themselves from their currently assumed identities, such as the assumed superiority that the West holds towards non-Westerners, as well as a recognition that each member participating in the conversation is as much an end unto themselves as the other participants.

It is this “attempt to move beyond a stark identity...often the foundation of conflict, towards some form of common identity and language that would make talk – as distinct from fighting – possible.”¹²² From this foundation of egalitarian speech, not only are new relationships founded, but new perspectives are introduced – namely the role that Western perceptions of power have on the non-Western, non-European populations, i.e. relative power can be reconstituted not as a necessity for maintaining power, but as a choice actors take that can cause significant harm, and in the case of U.S. interventionism, an action that causes harm with little to no benefit for any of the parties involved.

¹²⁰ Fierke. 186- 201.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* 188, 187.

¹²² *Ibid.* 187.

This process of dialogue is one we have seen in action innumerable times through history, even recently, the EU was formed on reaching past historical identities to craft a new community built on shared interests – discovered and enacted via dialogue. It should be noted however, that the EU did not form out of a vacuum. While it would be difficult to prove causation without significant process tracing, the European continent was presented with an extraordinary set of circumstances in the 20th century. After WWII, Europe was left utterly devastated, in the words of Keith Lowe

[i]magine a world without institutions. No governments. No school or universities. No access to any information. No banks. Money no longer has any worth. There are no shops, because no one has anything to sell. Law and order are virtually non-existent because there is no police force and no judiciary. Men with weapons roam the streets taking what they want. Women of all classes and ages prostitute themselves for food and protection.¹²³

In effect, starting in 1945, Europeans were afforded the opportunity to decide what kind of society they wished to build, and having survived the horrors of WWII so shortly after WWI, it is not surprising they wished to create a more cooperative and peace-seeking society. Additionally, they had the economic and military resources of the U.S. to finance and protect them as they rebuilt, as well as the looming specter of an expansionist Soviet Union to further motivate cooperation, rather than returning to the pre-WWII status quo of competition. It is entirely within the realm of reason to argue that the EU could not have formed had the catastrophe of the world wars and the support of the U.S. after the wars not occurred.

Nonetheless, while the EU does have its issues [Brexit comes to mind], and there are certainly problems regarding perceptions of who is ‘more European’ in the

¹²³ Keith Lowe, *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II*, (NYC, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 2012). Loc. 97-104.

community – it is a community of shared identity that was not only built on dialogue, but has accepted that dialogue is the most effective method to resolve conflicts within the union before they erupt into violence. The U.S. and the EU however, seem to both suffer from the same problem, to greater or lesser degrees, when it comes to dialogue. Both entities seem capable of dialogue within their groups but are unable to break the Western/non-Western dichotomy.

Consider that the EU was able to build consensus within its bloc on the shared identity of being European, but not build similar amity with its constituent states' former colonies in Africa or the Middle East – similarly, the U.S. has a strong dialogue with the EU, built on shared ties of history, as well as with Canada and Mexico built on shared interests, but has little in the way of dialogue, specifically in terms of community, with the rest of the world. And it seems unlikely that the U.S. will engage with destitute Yemeni, Libyan, or Nicaraguans displaced by conflict about the role the U.S. has played in reducing their security, not because the U.S. would not want to, but rather, because they are unable, the language does not exist, and the identity built around relative power and the superior Westerner versus the inferior non-Westerner dichotomy is too entrenched to easily overcome.

The second concept that Fierke proposes, care, is significantly more elusive. The concept of what constitutes care is subjective to the situation, on one hand feminist notions of care revolve around “attention to the needs of the particular individual as well as the importance of human relationship,” on the other, once a conflict has started, it is difficult, if not near impossible, to provide for the needs of those harmed and even more

so to build relationships with those most greatly affected in a conflict.¹²⁴ Furthermore, providing care for those in need oftentimes reinforces rather than disrupts traditional notions of power, i.e. humanitarian aid may be beneficial to the affected, but the same concept of the superior power aiding the inferior reinforces the divide of identity that prevents the involved parties from coming together in meaningful dialogue. Nonetheless, Fierke reinforces that, despite the difficulties with how care is provided, it should

“start from the standpoint of the one needing care or attention and requires that we meet the other morally, adopting their perspective, and looking at the world in these terms...a notion of care is not only a moral concept but...a political one as well, one which helps us to ‘rethink humans as interdependent people,’ and as a ‘strategic concept to involve the relatively disenfranchised in the political world.”¹²⁵

The end result of these two concepts is that care is the final objective, and dialogue is the medium to achieve that goal, and while this is a simplistic breaking down of Fierke’s argument, the importance of building relationships is one that is echoed by Booth and Wheeler in their ‘logic of trust.’ Granted, Fierke takes the concept farther than Booth and Wheeler do, targeting the structures of power rather than state behavior, the final outcome is similar – a means to reduce conflict by recognizing the needs of the other. These two concepts of dialogue and care, however, are interdependent – one cannot grasp what care, if any, is needed without dialogue, and meaningful dialogue cannot exist without a capacity and attention to care.

¹²⁴ Fierke. 196.

¹²⁵ Ibid. 196-197.

Furthermore, while dialogue is a process, it is composed of constituent pieces, all of which are learned skills that can fall under the umbrella term ‘wise reasoning.’¹²⁶

Wise reasoning can be defined as

“the combined utility of certain metacognitive strategies when navigating uncertainties people face in their lives...[s]uch strategies include the appreciation of contexts broader than the immediate issue, sensitivity to the possibility of change in social relations, intellectual humility and search for a compromise between different points of view.”¹²⁷

In short, while wise reasoning is only weakly related to empathy laterally, it is the skill set necessary to place oneself into an empathetic space, which in turn, allows for dialogue to progress by opening up the possibility of perceiving issues from another’s point of view, as well as providing the cognitive tools needed to reason for the exercise of care. This ability to create an empathetic space and opening up dialogue using the tools provide by wise reasoning directly addresses one of the core contentions of the structuralists, that uncertainty is immutable and ever-present.

As Fierke and Campbell mention, conflict is driven by fear, which in turn is driven by uncertainty or the inability to know the unknown. Thus, the means to overcome uncertainty is to know the unknown, and wise reasoning gives the individual the tools necessary to establish relationships, to overcome inherent hesitations regarding the unknown, opening a path to understanding the other, and consequently reducing uncertainty and the potential for violence.

At this point, one approach described is the exercise of dialogue and care to build relationships across common interests to build new identities that take a broader view of

¹²⁶ Justin P. Brienza and Igor Grossman, "Social Class and Wise Reasoning About Interpersonal Conflicts across Regions, Persons and Situations," *Proceedings. Biological Sciences* 284, no. 1869 (2017).

¹²⁷ Ibid.

what security means, the other approach is one of training a select class of policy influencers in the art of the security dilemma to drive a rethinking of the conflictual relationships of the international arena. Both approaches have their faults – Herz’s approach is a top-down solution, which while it may eventually change identities, stands a lower chance of system-wide impact than a more egalitarian approach, additionally this approach is rooted in structural power hierarchies that have created many of the problems that they are attempting to solve.

Conversely, Fierke’s approach is sound in its abstractness, changing definitions and identities to build relationships, upending traditional power structures, and contributing to reducing or preventing conflict – however, she provides no practical mechanisms to institutionalize these new practices into the collective identity so that they “come to confront individuals as more or less coercive social facts.”¹²⁸ Additionally, a solidly bottom-up approach, without buy-in from those in power, would create a crisis of interests with one side wishing to change the societal order, and the other wishing to preserve the status quo, these types of internal conflicts tend to end in violence as one party is labeled revolutionaries and the other authoritarianists.

Combining the two approaches, Herz’s practicality with Fierke’s abstractness, produces something new and potentially feasible, an across the spectrum education that incorporates the best of Fierke’s theory into the collective identity of the U.S. population, while also furthering the cause of survival research in scholarly circles, and by extent,

¹²⁸ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992). 399.

potentially making the pursuit of such research more palatable to mainstream academia as new perceptions of power are incorporated into a new national identity.¹²⁹

¹²⁹*Herz's more modest proposal was rejected as too controversial by the journal of the American Political Science Association.*: John Herz, "An Internationalist's Journey through the Century," in *Journeys through World Politics*, ed. J. Kruzel and J.N. Rosenau (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1989). 261, n. 9.

6. LEVERAGING PUBLIC EDUCATION

An argument for utilizing the public education system for such a project can be made on a few fronts, first on saturation, according to 2018 figures, approximately 91% of school age children are enrolled in some stage of public education.¹³⁰ Effectively being able to capture an overwhelming majority affords an opportunity that no other institution in the U.S. can match. Concededly, some public institutions have been successful in changing patterns of behavior, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has used its safety belt ad campaign, combined with increased prosecution from law enforcement officials to drastically increase instances of safety belt use [90.1% in 2016] – nevertheless, “Buckle up. It could save a life” or “Click it or Ticket” are much simpler messages than the ones proposed by Herz or Fierke.¹³¹ The complex set of skills involved in developing wise reasoning would necessarily, require years of training to acquire, let alone master, but the length of time a student spends in public education, combined with the large capture rates creates the conditions that a well-crafted program would need to succeed.

Next, the U.S. is already using its public education system to shape identities. And while the question of indoctrination has been a contentious one in the U.S. public education system since its founding, some iteration of indoctrination has always occurred, whether it was ‘duck and cover’ drills during the early Cold War or the merits

¹³⁰ National Center for Education Statistics, "Back to School Statistics," Department of Education, <https://www.google.com/search?q=national+center+for+education+statistics&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-b-1-ab>.

¹³¹ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "Seat Belts," Department of Transportation, <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/seat-belts>.

of manifest destiny.¹³² Secondary students across the country learn their basic civic responsibilities from social studies courses, they learn core social interactions and mores from the supervised playground [how many were told, “We don’t hit” by teachers], even the most basic functions of communication, language – which shapes identities and perceptions of the world – is taught and refined in the education system.¹³³

On the darker side of shaping identity, the greater American ideology is shaped in the schoolhouse, the superiority of the American way of life is ingrained through a relentlessly positive light being shined on American history. In the American South, the Civil War is still taught as an issue of state’s rights, rather than primarily as a fight hold the Union together that became a fight to abolish slavery. Across the country little time is given to the massacres of the Native Americans in the 19th century, but what time is used is excused under the rightness and necessity of manifest destiny. Women are given a similar treatment, Susan B. Anthony is mentioned for her role in winning voting rights for women, Harriet Tubman for her work with the Underground Railroad, but little is said about the women who programmed the moon landing or were instrumental in cracking Enigma. In September 2018, the Texas School Board voted to remove Hillary Clinton [the first woman to seriously contend for the presidency, and an influential figure on American politics] from the state curriculum, while keeping references to Moses and the controversial pastor Billy Graham.¹³⁴

¹³² William A. Reid, "Practical Reasoning and Curriculum Theory: In Search of a New Paradigm," *Curriculum Inquiry* 9, no. 3 (1979). 187-188.

¹³³ John J. Gumperz, ed. *Language and Social Identity*, 2 ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

¹³⁴ Alejandro De La Garza, "Texas Board of Education Votes to Remove Hillary Clinton and Helen Keller from the State’s Curriculum," *Time Magazine*, <http://time.com/5397204/texas-board-of-education-remove-hillary-clinton-helen-keller/>.

All of these examples are deliberate choices by actors to shape the collective knowledge, the identity of the society, they also act to reinforce currently existing structures of power, which are translated into the hierarchy that gives power to the arguments justifying U.S. intervention. Yet, if identity can be shaped one way, it can just as well be shaped the other way – the tools needed to change these identities, wise reasoning, dialogue, the capacity to care, can be taught in the schoolhouse just as systematically as the skills needed to communicate via the written word are taught.

On the other side, the arguments against such a program are quite strong – the sheer effort needed to push an entire society to change its fundamental values and perceptions of its role in the world are, quite probably, near insurmountable. After all, John Herz was deemed too controversial by his colleagues in academia, an institution that lauds itself on its pursuit of knowledge, for his rather modest proposal of training a class of influencers in the vagaries of the security dilemma – expanding to the greater public will face even stiffer resistance as new ideas challenge traditional roles, mores, and norms. Similarly, while survival research has grown since the 1990's, it still has not come into the mainstream despite repeated warnings of the danger involved with continuing to refuse to face the existential threats the human race now confronts. The challenge of tackling structuralism, of convincing an entire society that it needs to reevaluate itself and approach problems in a manner that allows for all voices to be heard is one that minorities and feminists have been struggling with for centuries – and one to which this author currently has no satisfactory answer.

A second argument revolves around the practical considerations, even should the political and popular will be garnered [which seems increasing unlikely with the growing

polarization in the American political system] for such a program to be implemented, the process for doing so is murky. Due to the nature of the federalist system in the U.S., states control curriculums – and as happened with states opting out of Medicaid expansion under the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, those who control the levers of power do not always act in their constituencies’ best interests.¹³⁵ And, while the federal government has significant power to affect state policies, especially through block funding, it is highly likely that a judicial challenge to such a program would be successful – stopping it before any gains might be realized.¹³⁶ The sheer difficulty of attempting such a program is daunting in the extreme, however, much like many other programs that have slowly gained acceptance nationally, there is a case that individual states can implement such programs on their own and let their success speak for itself.

Finally, there is the question of curriculum itself – how does one create a curriculum that specifically addresses the necessary skills needed to change identity? Specifically, there has been a growing body of researchers arguing that these types of reforms are needed in the school system, that relying solely on practical skill sets related to career acquisition is insufficient for a strong society, and is actively causing harm as students lose more abstract abilities in favor of the more practical, instead a more

¹³⁵*Texas consistently has the lowest insured rates in the country, as well as some of the poorest health outcomes.*: Benjamin D. Sommers, "Medicaid Expansion in Texas: What's at Stake?," The Commonwealth Fund, <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2016/apr/medicaid-expansion-texas-whats-stake>.

¹³⁶ *The federal government was able to successfully raise the drinking age across all states in the mid-1980's by threatening to deny states federal transportation funding.*

balanced approach is suggested, one that gives “equal and simultaneous attention to both critical thinking and character development.”¹³⁷

Roadmaps to accomplish this have been laid out, relying on the development of dialectical thinking, context-specific interactions, and the instructor acting more as a guide encouraging students to their own conclusions, rather than just a medium for the transferring of facts.¹³⁸ However, much like survival research this body of research has not reached the mainstream, in fact it appears that no state [state in terms of international relations] has made a dedicated, systematic effort to transform its education system to accommodate such a curriculum, despite the potential gains.

There is however, one last, overriding argument *for* such a program of education to be implemented in the U.S. – the argument of necessity. Whether it is the long-term effects from seventy years of U.S. intervention coming to fruition, the continuing threat of nuclear weapons, the rising environmental crisis from climate change, or the rise of nationalism and a new age of competitiveness in the international arena, the human race is facing what is likely, an unprecedented crisis.¹³⁹ And while it is not the U.S.’ obligation to take on the responsibility of managing this crisis – that would be a continued reinforcement of the status quo in terms of power relations and structures – it does bear some responsibility to “[a]ct in such a fashion that the effects of [its] action are

¹³⁷ Alina Reznitskaya and Robert J. Sternberg, "Teaching Students to Make Wise Judgements: The "Teaching for Wisdom" Program," in *Positive Psychology in Practice*, ed. Alex P. Lineley and Stephen Joseph (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004). 181.

¹³⁸ Alex P. Lineley and Stephen Joseph, eds., *Positive Psychology in Practice* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004).

¹³⁹ William Walker, *A Perpetual Menace: Nuclear Weapons and International Order* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012).: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, "Summary for Policymakers of Ipcc Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C Approved by Governments," The United Nations, https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/session48/pr_181008_P48_spm_en.pdf.

not destructive of the future of possibility of life on earth.”¹⁴⁰ And reforming itself to be a more cooperative player in the international arena, one that values the unvoiced as much as the powerful majority, actively provides care, and takes into consideration a broad definition of what security means in different places and times, is a good step towards establishing itself as an example that it can be done despite the difficulties, and that the high initial costs are potentially far outweighed by the realized gains of a more cosmopolitan and cooperative world.

¹⁴⁰ Jonas Hans, *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984). 11.: Iris Marion Young, *Responsibility for Justice* (NYC, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011).

7. LIKLIEHOOD OF IMPLEMENTATION

While there are strong arguments for the implementation of such an ambitious, deliberate reworking of American society and perceptions, one of the most important questions is, could it actually be implemented? In short, that likelihood seems to be so close to zero as to be indistinguishable from zero, an assessment that is based on two factors. First, the practical and ideological obstacles inherent in changing an entire society's perception of relative power relations, and second on the fact that the majority of major political changes in human history have been catalyzed by tragedy.

The first factor, specifically in relation to current cultural conditions in the U.S., lies in two interwoven parts. A change in curriculum, at any level of education, would require buy in from legislators, a strong constitutional argument that could survive judicial challenge, a willingness to fund the program, and a concerted effort to build and implement a curriculum with measurable, quantifiable outcomes – and how does one measure 'wise reasoning,' capacity to care, or ability to employ dialogue? New standards, new methods of evaluation, new modes of thought would have to be implemented before the project could even begin to reach its intended recipients. Even at the higher levels of academia, researchers would have to abandon much of their orthodoxy and consider their research in terms of how they are furthering human survival. None of the above seems likely, especially in a world where nationalism is on the rise, ideological positions have hardened, legislative compromise is rapidly disappearing, and we seem to be retreating farther into Hobbesian realism on the international stage.

The second factor, catastrophe or tragedy, is a relatively straight forward statement,

- The current states system grew out of the Peace of Westphalia [1648], which in turn was a result of over 100 years of bloody war that devastated the European continent and caused ~10 million deaths.
- In the U.S., slavery was not outlawed until the U.S. had fought the bloodiest war of its history with an estimated 1 million [~3% of the population] killed.
- The societal transformations that came from the New Deal did not occur until the Great Depression devastated the world economy with a 24.9% peak unemployment and a loss of ~50% of GDP in the U.S. alone.
- The European Union grew out of the devastation of the Second World War, a war that has estimates of the dead reaching as high as 100 million [~4% of the pre-war world population].

Smaller successes have been found in the U.S. in terms of legislation such as the Civil Rights Act(s) of the 1960's, however even those found their catalyst in the violence and disenfranchisement of the Jim Crow era and violence on the streets of Birmingham, Selma, and Atlanta. Even something as simple as child labor laws in the U.S. were born out of the violence and tragedy of the Industrial Revolution. History seems to indicate that violence begets change, but the problems we are now facing are so large and multi-faceted that the violent act that starts the change may very well be one that the human race finds insurmountable.

This work has largely been one of idealism, that by reducing the U.S.' propensity for interventionism through changing the perceptions of security and relative power a new cooperative spirit could potentially be used as a blueprint for other states and help steer the international community away from the brink of a precipice while still securing sovereignty for the U.S and protections for its populace. There is however, a particularly strong vein of pessimism interwoven throughout the work, a pessimism that nears fatalism, in that looking at the difficulties in changing perceptions and identities, combined with the history of significant change being a product of horrendous violence, the likelihood of implementation moves farther and farther away.

There is one small bright point of optimism to be found though in Booth and Wheeler's proposal of implementing a through education of the security dilemma into higher education curriculum. The security dilemma, while not a major focus of most politics centered courses, is at least covered, making an expansion on the subject much more viable than an overhauling of the entire U.S. public education system. And, while such a curriculum may not engender a societal wide change in identity, if a student comes out of higher education with a better understanding of uncertainty and its role in conflict and uses that understanding to prevent even one unnecessary military conflict, then such a program could reasonably be considered a success.

8. CONCLUSION

It is difficult to overestimate the damage that U.S. interventionism has caused since its rise to superpower status following WWII – from lives lost, treasure spent, entire regions destabilized, food shortages, to the embedding of fear and unabashed recommitment to a Hobbesian reality on the international stage – the costs have been almost unbelievably high. Furthermore, we cannot reasonably expect this state of affairs to last forever, the world population is facing an existential crisis in the form of climate change, resurgence of nuclear weaponry, and increasing strain on resources as both developing and mature states increase their demands. Yet, under the current arrangement the U.S. is forgoing any responsibility to not endanger the continued existence of the human race, and is instead actively acting to worsen conditions, few examples can stand more clearly of this than the October 20, 2018 statement by Donald Trump indicating that the U.S. will be withdrawing from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, not only damaging trust with any state that wishes to build agreements with the U.S., but laying the groundwork for a new Cold War-style arms race.¹⁴¹

Which raises the question of, with such limited successes, and at such an exorbitant price, how might critical constructivist scholarship facilitate a change in the minds of policymakers in such a way that the interventionist policies are replaced with more noninterventionist policies that nonetheless are effective in ensuring regional and international security? The argument that has been presented is, U.S. interventionism appears to be dependent on a society trapped in a neorealist paradigm that assumes a very narrow definition of security and promotes that the most effective means to ensure U.S.

¹⁴¹ Jonathan Marcus, "Trump INF: Back to a Nuclear Arms Race?," British Broadcasting Corporation, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-45942439>.

security is to pursue interventionist policies – this is despite evidence that seems to indicate that these policies have weakened U.S security, rather than strengthen it.

Relying heavily on the work of John Herz and Karin Fierke, a potential path has been laid out that would not only advance the cause of survival research, but utilize the public education sector to shift the identity of the U.S. population to enable it to incorporate a broader definition of security, approach conflicts from a position of cooperation rather than competition, change perceptions of the necessity of relative power gains, and help inoculate it against the fear generated from the use of ideological fundamentalism. In effect, using the concept of ‘wise reasoning’ to provide the necessary tools to utilize dialogue and engender a capacity for care, that the U.S., as a whole, is currently lacking – all in the interest of creating a new calculus for when the U.S. chooses to exercise its considerable military might.

This idea of shaping a more cosmopolitan identity is predicated on substantial buy in, not just from the populace, but also from the elites of the U.S. – and with the continuing polarization in U.S. politics with both parties moving from the center to their own corners – the likelihood of such an expansive education overall, without a terrible tragedy such as the one Europe experienced in WWII is near zero. Nonetheless, a retooling of U.S. identity is a necessity, the current path the U.S. is on is unsustainable as the costs of ‘business as usual’ continue to mount.

And while this idea of leveraging the public sector education system to change U.S. identity is idealistic, arguably in the extreme, it is not utopian; there is an understanding that competition between states will not disappear, that threats to U.S. interests will continue, that such a program is multi-generational, and even the sins of the

past will take generations to fade, but reducing U.S. interventionism provides a multi-fold benefit. One, perceptions abroad of the U.S. will improve, limiting the ability of state and non-state actors to act against the U.S., two, redirect money and lives from the endlessly voracious military machine to more progressive domestic and international programs, three, the U.S. can stand as an example of cooperative behavior and use that to help refocus other states on the necessity of ensuring human survival over more parochial concerns of power. The suggestions made in this paper are practical, but not likely, simple in concept, but complex in execution, idealistic, but not utopian, and last, perhaps most importantly, a necessary component for ensuring human survival in the coming difficult times.

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