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# Misapplied Lessons? 9/11 and the Iraq Debate

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Analyses of nonproliferation have not traditionally focused on the possibility of war. Recent developments, however, have led these two topics to be linked more closely. As I write this in November 2002, a war initiated by the United States to change the regime in Iraq appears all but inevitable. One of the primary reasons given for such a campaign is the need to eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD)—in essence, to move from nonproliferation to a very forceful form of counterproliferation. Pre-emptive action, to use the parlance of the Bush administration, may well have begun by the time this article appears in print. (Because no final decision about whether to go to war has been made public at the time of this writing, this article describes the Iraq debate in the present tense, as if further deliberation might still occur. Although the outbreak of war would affect how the article reads, it should not affect most of the analysis that follows.)

Seen from one perspective, the move toward war is an unexpected development. The U.S. Congress authorized the use of force against Iraq in votes taken in October 2002, barely one year after the terrorist attacks

by al Qaeda on September 11, 2001. The threat posed by al Qaeda led the United States to deploy military personnel to multiple countries, and even in Afghanistan their mission was far from being completed one year later. With so much still to do to disable al Qaeda, it is in one sense surprising that the United States would consider mounting another sizable military operation simultaneously in the absence of an overt act of aggression by Iraq.

From another perspective, however, 9/11 made war against Iraq more rather than less likely. As the quotes in the box below indicate, 9/11 changed the way many Americans view the world, making them more willing to use force against a hostile country without waiting to see whether that country would actually attack the United States. The purpose of this article is to examine the relation of 9/11 to U.S. willingness to use military force to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Baghdad. The article draws heavily on a theoretical approach in the study of foreign policy that emphasizes the role of analogies to important historical events. This “lessons of history” or “analogical reasoning” approach incorporates findings from cognitive and social psychology and highlights the potential for analogies to earlier events to be misleading.

September 11th changed the whole equation. Before then, an argument could be made that deterrence worked.

— Former Congressman Stephen Solarz (D-NY), December 2001

If you take the analogy ... as to what happened with bin Laden, we should have acted much sooner. He was under indictment for killing Americans in Mogadishu, the embassy attacks. Now we have Saddam Hussein thwarting the UN....

— Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), August 25, 2002

Some have asked, "Well, what's changed to warrant the action [against Iraq] now?" Well, what has changed is our experience on September 11th. What's changed is our appreciation of our vulnerability and the risk that the United States faces from terrorist networks and terrorist states armed with weapons of mass destruction. [...] what's different is 3,000 people were killed....

— Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, September 19, 2002

It has often been said that those who do not remember history are condemned to repeat it. Today, by passing this resolution [authorizing use of force against Iraq], we are showing that we have learned the lessons of World War II and September 11....

— Representative James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), October 7, 2002

Let me say ... why I've decided to vote for this resolution. First, September 11 has made all the difference.

— Representative Dick Gephardt (D-MO),  
then House Minority Leader, October 10, 2002<sup>1</sup>

The examination of 9/11's impact that follows has two major elements. First, I show that the apparent role of 9/11 in convincing the United States to embrace the option of a preventive war against Iraq fits quite well with the expectations of the analogical reasoning approach to explaining foreign policy. This article does not purport to provide a full explanation of the U.S. willingness to take military action against Saddam, as this would require consideration of more than just psychological factors. But the analysis here will suggest that adequate explanation does require recognizing the cognitive impact—and also the emotional impact—of a terrorist attack that killed 3,000 people. In particular, I emphasize the need to combine such psychological factors with a broader domestic political analysis: while the impact of 9/11 on administration thinking is hard to ascertain, its impact on the public and Congress is what made the most difference in changing U.S. policy.

Second, I argue that September 11 does not strengthen the case for a preventive attack on Iraq as much as many people seem to think. As suggested by the research

on analogical reasoning, some of the purported lessons that people have drawn from 9/11 are probably misleading when it comes to the case of Iraq. There are especially reasons to question any conclusion that 9/11 proves that Saddam would attack the United States once he improves his WMD capabilities.

Overall, the analysis here does not lead to a final conclusion about whether the United States should or should not go to war with Iraq (or have gone to war, if this is being read after the fact). Determining the best policy requires evaluating all of the arguments, pro and con, for war and weighing these against the pros and cons of other possible policy options. September 11 is only one element in this larger assessment. The analysis here does indicate, however, that 9/11 should not be the overriding consideration in this larger assessment and that "the risks of inaction," to borrow a phrase from U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney, might not be as great as they have been portrayed—in particular, deterrence is not as hopeless a task as many now assume. Because many of the issues in the Iraq debate are likely arise again in other contexts, such

as the effort to deal with the North Korean nuclear program, it is important not to attach more weight to the lessons of 9/11 than they deserve. Although this monstrous terrorist attack cannot and should not be ignored in future policy deliberations, in order to evaluate better the relevant lessons and when they apply, it is important also to keep in mind both other historical cases and the best-supported findings of scholarly research.

### A CONTEXT FOR EVALUATING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF 9/11

Before discussing the possible impact of September 11 on Americans' perceptions of Iraq, a prior question should be addressed: Is it even necessary to consider psychological factors to explain U.S. policy toward Iraq? There are many possible explanations for foreign policy decisions, and consideration of the alternatives might obviate any need to examine the role of 9/11. In particular, any discussion of a decision to use force should consider the possibility, which has long been a staple of the traditional realist school of thought, that an objective threat to security has prompted the decision. There are certainly good reasons to regard Saddam Hussein as a threat, including his past willingness to use force and his likely possession of biological and chemical weapons and well-documented pursuit of nuclear weapons. From this perspective, one could argue that the threat from Saddam is so obvious and imminent that the United States has no choice but to use military force as soon as possible. If this is the case, then there is no need to probe deeper, and the possible influence of 9/11 becomes superfluous.

However, there are good reasons not to regard the threat from Saddam as by itself sufficient to explain U.S. policy. Two observations show that, before Congress voted in mid-October 2002 to authorize use of force, the situation did not appear so clear-cut as to generate consensus that the United States had to act militarily. First, the UN inspection regime in Iraq collapsed in 1998. Yet four years elapsed before the United States began seriously contemplating using force to bring about change inside Iraq. If any efforts by Saddam to reconstitute his WMD capabilities were too dangerous to tolerate, why was it not until 2002 that the United States became willing to mount an invasion to remove this threat? The delay between the end of inspections and the move toward military action suggests the timing of this policy shift might provide clues to the reasons for the policy change.

Second, if realists are the most likely to focus on security threats and consider them grounds for using force,

it is noteworthy that many prominent realists publicly disagreed with the administration's approach to Iraq. For example, Brent Scowcroft, who served as national security advisor to the first President Bush at the time of the 1991 Gulf War, came out against war with Iraq as the debate began to heat up in summer 2002. Most of the leading realists in the academic field of security studies also indicated they opposed war with Iraq, including in a signed advertisement on the *New York Times* op-ed page. These realists argued that the risks that would accompany military action in Iraq outweigh the risks of not acting militarily at this time. They pointed to several possible dangers. War in Iraq might deflect attention and resources away from the fight against al Qaeda. The war might destabilize Arab regimes that have supported the United States or convince more Muslims that the United States opposes Islam, thereby leading more of them to embrace terrorism. And an effort to remove Saddam from power might actually prompt him to use his available WMD.<sup>2</sup>

Future developments might make it appear obvious, in retrospect, which side was correct. But it was not so obvious ahead of time as to generate consensus prior to the start of congressional debate in fall 2002. Considerable uncertainty about the threat posed by Saddam and the consequences of a war meant that reasonable people could and did disagree. Given the extent of uncertainty and disagreement, explaining U.S. policy requires identifying the factors that tilted the debate in favor of support for war in the near term. This is especially so because U.S. culture has historically emphasized using force only in response to aggression by others, so that a policy of pre-emption had to overcome traditional reluctance to thinking in such terms. For example, in response to an even greater threat in the Cuban missile crisis, President John F. Kennedy ruled out a pre-emptive air strike in part because he viewed launching a surprise first strike as inconsistent with U.S. moral values.<sup>3</sup>

When a situation is ambiguous, people's existing beliefs and concerns are likely to shape how they interpret that situation. In the issue under discussion here, an approach emphasizing such cognitive factors could be applied to two relevant sets of actors: the administration and the rest of the country. Cognitive approaches typically focus on top decisionmakers. In this case, this would involve analyzing what convinced President Bush and the majority of his foreign policy advisors to put regime change in Iraq at the top of their agenda.

To give a convincing cognitive account of the administration's decisionmaking would require overcom-

ing two obstacles that are beyond the capabilities of the analysis here. First, there are other potential explanations of the administration's policy, especially to the extent that one believes the objective case for taking military action right away is not completely convincing. Some hypothesized motivations reflect domestic economic or political considerations. To critics on the left, the energy industry ties of President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney suggest the administration is really seeking to secure Iraq's oil for U.S. companies. The timing of the congressional debate, less than a month before midterm elections, also prompted suspicions that the administration was trying to divert voters' attention away from a faltering economy so as to improve Republicans' electoral prospects. (Of course, the timing of the congressional vote could have been cynically chosen without the decision to use force itself being electorally motivated.)

Because the current president's father, George H.W. Bush, was president at the time of the Gulf War and chose not to march on Baghdad at that time, there has also been a natural tendency to speculate that personal motivations might explain the younger Bush's focus on Saddam. The current president has mentioned Saddam's alleged attempt to assassinate his father as a reason to take action.<sup>4</sup> And some have suggested that, whether out of loyalty or a desire to prove himself better than his father, George W. Bush might feel highly motivated to complete a job that, according to hawks, his father left unfinished.

Any attempt to use cognitive factors to explain the administration's decision to give priority to forcing regime change in Baghdad must control for these other possible explanations and weigh these potential domestic and personal motivations against the lessons drawn from 9/11 or other experiences. Dealing with this first difficulty in evaluating the role of cognitive factors in administration policy is not feasible at this time because of a second obstacle. To trace how an event affects the thinking of top officials, ideally one would need to interview those individuals and examine the records of their internal policy deliberations. Without access to decisionmakers and the minutes of their meetings, determining whether analogical reasoning played a role in their policy choices becomes nearly impossible. For these reasons, this article does not attempt to determine the exact mix of factors that shaped administration policy. Below, I note some reasons why "lessons of 9/11" might have played a role in the president's thinking, but I leave the task of further analysis to future historians who have access to the necessary evidence.

## THE NEED TO BRING IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

Although the president is the most influential actor in U.S. foreign policy, nevertheless on most issues the president cannot carry out policy on his own. Whether administration policy is being driven purely by officials' assessment of the Iraqi threat, or has also been influenced by the pursuit of oil or by domestic political or personal considerations, the administration would find it difficult to fight a war if it lacked support elsewhere in the U.S. political system. The U.S. constitution mandates that only Congress can authorize war (except in cases of repelling a sudden attack), and congressional control of the purse strings means that, even if the administration had chosen to use force without congressional authorization, it would still have had to convince Congress to fund the effort. In addition, since Vietnam, the U.S. military has expressed a clear desire to know the country strongly supports a war before the military goes into action. For these reasons, the administration ultimately concluded that it had to obtain a vote from Congress and high levels of support in opinion polls if it wanted to continue confronting Saddam with a possible U.S. attack.

This conclusion suggests it is worth considering the psychological impact of 9/11, not on the administration, but on the rest of the country. In doing so, it is necessary to combine such analysis with some approach that suggests how lessons drawn from an event might factor into domestic political dynamics. I propose using an approach known as the "garbage can model." This model challenges the usual notions of sequence in policymaking. In an ideal rational process, a problem emerges, and then people identify possible solutions and choose the best one. The garbage can model assumes instead that people often have policy proposals to which they are committed, and when new problems arise they promote their proposal as a possible solution. In this view, problems and solutions are like separate streams, and an appropriate window of opportunity has to open up before a given problem and a particular solution get combined and rise to the top of the agenda.<sup>5</sup>

Consideration of garbage-can dynamics is appropriate in this case because some influential figures, of whom Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz is probably the most prominent, actively asserted the need to take action against Saddam Hussein long before 9/11. For hawks on Iraq, September 11 created a window of opportunity to promote their case both to the rest of the administration and to the country at large. Some long-standing propo-

nents of forcefully removing Saddam have openly suggested this is the case. In the House floor debate on the resolution to authorize use of force, Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) declared: "It is long past the time when we should have finished the job. But it wasn't until 9/11 that the American public would support the military commitment necessary...."<sup>6</sup>

But something is also missing in such a garbage-can account. If a terrible disaster or crisis like 9/11 opens a window in which policy change is possible, this still does not explain why a particular solution is the one that becomes linked to the new problem that rises on the agenda. If there is more than one plausible option, an event like 9/11 can do more than open a window for policy change; reactions to that event can also tilt the substantive debate, making some policy proposals seem inherently more or less persuasive than others.

In this case, there was more than one plausible option. The United States could have chosen to pursue a more concerted effort at containment and deterrence, supplemented by revamped sanctions and inspections. Moreover, given the great uncertainties involved in any foray into war, the fact that containment and deterrence were quickly and sweepingly dismissed can fairly be seen as puzzling. The quotes presented in the box above suggest 9/11 is the key to this puzzle. But why would a horrific event like this cast such a shadow over a seemingly unrelated policy decision?

#### **"LEARNING"<sup>7</sup> FROM HISTORY: WHY PEOPLE USE ANALOGIES, WHICH ANALOGIES THEY USE, AND HOW THEY APPLY THEM**

Whenever there is a significant failure or disaster, it is natural to try to learn lessons from that event that could help prevent a repeat of the catastrophe. Those who study the cognitive processes by which people make decisions, including foreign policy decisions, warn that the natural desire to learn lessons in such cases can have unfortunate consequences. The point should not be overstated; It is still important to learn as best we can what practical steps might avoid or minimize disasters. But there are risks involved in efforts to learn that must be kept in mind as well. We are all familiar with Santayana's famous maxim that those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it. As Robert Jervis points out, however, those who do remember may be inclined to make the opposite mistake.<sup>8</sup>

To understand how the memory of a previous incident can be misleading, it helps to understand why certain past experiences strongly influence future decisionmaking. The underlying problem is the gap between the complexity of reality and the capacity of the human brain. Human beings operate under "bounded rationality"; they strive to make rational decisions, but there are limits on people's ability to process all the potentially relevant information. At the same time, many important situations involve uncertainty and value tradeoffs. Uncertainty can exist because some vital information is not available (how close is Saddam to obtaining nuclear weapons?), because available information is ambiguous (to what extent are Baghdad and al Qaeda cooperating with each other?), or because people do not know for sure how to bring about a desired outcome (can deterrence keep Iraq from using WMD?). Most decisions also involve difficult tradeoffs (should the United States act unilaterally even if this weakens the United Nations and international law, or should it support the rule of law even if this lengthens the time it takes to eliminate certain threats?).<sup>9</sup>

When people must decide what to do about a problem and they do not have the time or ability to answer all the uncertainties and fully weigh all the tradeoffs, they tend to rely on certain rules of thumb or "heuristics." In foreign policy, one common heuristic is to make an analogy to an earlier international event and to apply the lessons of that event to the situation at hand.

Individuals do not typically have a large repertoire of possible analogies on which to draw: people either do not know or do not easily recall every event in history that might be relevant. Instead, people generally think in terms of only a handful of past cases, and these will not be a random or representative sample of past events. Candidate analogies usually involve cases that made a deep impression. Most analogies are therefore made to traumatic events that had important consequences for one's own country. Recent events and events that occurred during one's formative years, as well as events in which one played a personal role, are the most likely sources of foreign policy lessons.<sup>10</sup> Some past events that marked an entire generation also continue to exert influence because of teaching and other forms of socialization. This helps explain why references to Hitler, appeasement, and "lessons of the 1930s" have been ubiquitous in the Iraq debate.

Although individuals often have only a few cases firmly implanted in their memories, they still have to decide which one best applies to a case at hand. Some re-

search suggests the choice can be affected by purely superficial similarities between the two cases. For example, lessons taken from the Korean War influenced decisions about Vietnam because both cases involved a non-communist, Asian "South" fighting a communist "North."<sup>11</sup>

There can be some variation in how strongly individuals are affected by an event and in the nature of the lesson they draw from that event. People who did not already have extensive knowledge or well-developed belief systems regarding international affairs are likely to be more strongly influenced by a dramatic new development. In such cases, the lessons learned can create new beliefs or change prior inclinations. In other cases, learning can reinforce existing beliefs;<sup>12</sup> people become more confident in the correctness of an opinion they hold and attach even greater priority than before to acting on that belief. And in all cases, learning tends to be filtered through existing beliefs. Thus, different people can draw different lessons from the same event: for example, hawks and doves inferred different lessons from both the Cuban missile crisis and the Vietnam War.<sup>13</sup>

According to Yuen Foong Khong, reasoning by analogy can influence six tasks associated with policy choice. Analogies can be used to define the nature of the situation or problem; indicate the stakes involved; suggest possible solutions; evaluate the probability of success of different options; assess the morality of a given policy; and warn of the possible risks of a policy choice. Reflecting the recent influence of social constructivist theories in international relations, Christopher Hemmer suggests analogies can sometimes do more than imply what is the best policy choice. In some cases, the lesson of an event can also lead people to re-define what they believe is in the national interest.<sup>14</sup> In other words, besides helping people evaluate which policy will best advance a given interest, a past experience can change what people think is in their interest.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF 9/11

Applying these insights of the cognitive approach, it can be seen why 9/11 was likely to have a powerful influence on subsequent foreign policy debates. At the same time, thinking about why 9/11 had so much impact also reveals a limitation of the cognitive approach: it does not adequately take into account the emotional impact of events.

On the first point, some of the factors that encourage analogical reasoning seem likely to apply to President Bush himself. Before running for president, George W. Bush

had shown little interest in and gained almost no experience in foreign affairs. He also focused mainly on his domestic agenda after entering the White House. Although he clearly had certain underlying instincts about how to handle foreign policy and a few strong commitments, such as to missile defense, the president was still largely a novice in this area, meaning his foreign policy belief system was unlikely to be fully formed. Thus, the Qaeda attack came when the president's beliefs were still at a formative stage, and obviously President Bush played a personal role in formulating the U.S. policy response. This suggests that whatever lessons he learned from 9/11 would play a powerful role in President Bush's thinking about other foreign policy problems.

Any attempt to identify the lessons Bush learned is necessarily speculative, but there are enough clues to enable some plausible suggestions. First, the president clearly began with an instinct to favor hardline stances on foreign policy. Since any interpretation of 9/11 would be filtered through this underlying predisposition, 9/11 was likely to have reinforced the inclination to adopt hawkish postures in dealing with international disputes. Second, President Bush had also previously shown great concern about the dangers posed by the so-called rogue states. Especially in arguing for the importance of missile defenses, Bush and his advisors had frequently said they doubted that deterrence would work against rogue states. Again, September 11 was likely to reinforce these beliefs, strengthening the conviction that deterrence is ineffective against such states and heightening the perception that these states pose an imminent threat. Finally, and perhaps most clearly, 9/11 seems to have altered President Bush's view of the importance of national security issues on his agenda. Many stories have reported that the president had not been highly focused during his first months in office and that the war on terrorism has provided him with a sense of mission.<sup>15</sup>

September 11 is less likely to have had a strong cognitive impact on Bush's top foreign policy advisors because these individuals already had highly developed foreign policy beliefs. As noted, some influential administration officials had long argued for removing Saddam from power. For these Iraq hawks, 9/11 served more as a window of opportunity for making their case to the country. If President Bush had not previously been convinced of the need to take preventive action against Saddam, however, the likely effects of 9/11 described in the previous paragraph would have made him highly disposed to find the hawks' arguments persuasive. More subtly, learn-

ing from 9/11 might also have contributed to what decisionmaking theorists call cognitive closure. In other words, once President Bush made up his mind about Iraq, it was likely to stay made up; should anyone seek to bring up new arguments against going to war, the president would be disinclined to re-open the debate about whether to attack Saddam in part because one lesson he might have drawn from 9/11 is that the country should not allow any doubts to delay the use of force when it appears necessary.

As one moves out from the administration, the cognitive effects of September 11 are likely to have been much greater. In Congress, many members have served only in the post-Cold War period. Those who came to Washington as part of the 1994 Gingrich revolution, in which Republicans gained control of the House, typically had little experience or interest in foreign affairs; in contrast to the internationalist Republicans of the Cold War, they evinced more isolationist attitudes.<sup>16</sup> For some members of Congress, the war on terrorism is probably the first serious international issue they have had to address. It would thus not be surprising if 9/11 became a lens through which they now looked at other foreign policy debates as well.

Finally, for much of the public, the impact was likely to have been profound. Americans can and do pay close attention to foreign policy when they think it important: in the early 1980s, for example, opinion polls found high levels of concern about defense spending, nuclear weapons, and Central America.<sup>17</sup> Thereafter, however, Americans had shown little interest in international issues, especially after the Cold War ended. Foreign and defense issues barely came up in the 1996 and 2000 presidential campaigns, and media coverage in the summer before 9/11 focused almost entirely on a missing congressional intern and a series of shark attacks. Many ordinary Americans probably had little knowledge about Osama bin Laden and no highly integrated belief system concerning terrorism, WMD, or the Middle East. The lessons they drew from 9/11 could thus become a central organizing principle in how they view national security issues in general.

This analysis still does not explain why Iraq specifically would emerge as a focus for newfound concerns about U.S. security. The cognitive literature implies that surface similarities between Iraq and al Qaeda would make Iraq a focus of special concern. Some similarities do exist: Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden are both Arab, both Muslim, and both based in the Middle East. This

has apparently led some Americans to blur Iraq and al Qaeda into a single, undifferentiated enemy. When a weekly paper in my area asked people on the street whether it is necessary for the United States to invade Iraq, one person responded: "Yes it is. [...] Make sure we get 'em. You don't want them to come back and do again what they did in New York."<sup>18</sup> Most Americans, though, presumably know the difference between the two actors. What has made Saddam appear so threatening as of 2002 is most likely a similarity to bin Laden at a more abstract level: as President Bush has repeatedly stated, both are evil. This implies an assumption that all evil individuals will act alike, meaning the analogy creates an expectation that Saddam will act on his hatred for the United States in the same way that bin Laden did.

In this case, though, a purely cognitive account of Americans' changing willingness to attack Iraq is seriously deficient. This makes it sound as though 9/11 is just a lens people use to impose a clear picture on an ambiguous reality. But this overlooks the degree to which people have become highly motivated to identify and act proactively on potential security threats. This motivation derives at least partly from the emotional impact of 9/11. This attack killed thousands and destroyed important symbols of American accomplishment. It was aimed at all Americans. And, unlike Pearl Harbor, it occurred in a media age, so that everybody saw the images of the attack repeatedly. As a result, the attack aroused powerful feelings, such as anger, fear, and grief. This emotional residue, as much if not more than the cognitive effects of 9/11, is what made the putative lessons of 9/11 so salient and effective in mobilizing the public and Congress to support a possible preventive attack on Iraq.

In recent years, some international relations specialists have argued for paying more attention to the role of emotions, and not just cognitions, in foreign policy-making.<sup>19</sup> The obvious emotional impact of 9/11 makes a case for doing this specifically in theories that emphasize the role of lessons of history. Analogies can be important not just because they seem to clarify the uncertainties in a situation, but also because they can have an emotional resonance that gets people to set aside doubts or accept risks that might otherwise dissuade them from acting.

The various cognitive effects emphasized in the existing literature can also be seen at work in this case however. For example, 9/11 seems important to how individuals clarify the moral issues, as Khong has suggested. With the advantage of hindsight, many people now believe a preemptive attack on al Qaeda would have been justified.



This helps them overcome qualms they might once have had about the moral legitimacy of preventive attacks in other situations.

Before assessing whether the lessons of 9/11 really apply to the Iraq case, it is important to note that not all Americans have been persuaded that 9/11 makes the case for a policy of pre-emption. Although, as of fall 2002, polls found a majority of Americans support President Bush on Iraq, the trend—at least before the UN Security Council passed a new resolution that could authorize the use of force—was toward increasing opposition: between August and late October, opposition to use of force rose from about 20 percent to about 33 percent in a Pew poll, while support fell to 55 percent.<sup>20</sup> In Congress, about one-quarter of the legislature also voted against authorizing an invasion. Surveys also found that support drops off if the United States has to act on its own and that many supporters of war still feel unease over its potential consequences.<sup>21</sup> Thus, while there is majority support for war, in many quarters it is far from enthusiastic.

Overall, this suggests that 9/11 helped convince many Americans to let the president try doing things his way, but it did not lead them to give the Bush administration a blank check. In other words, the U.S. public has not achieved cognitive closure on this issue. It seems likely that public attitudes could still be affected by new evidence bearing on either the necessity of war or the effectiveness of the administration's policy. Potentially, if such an analysis has not already been overtaken by events, a further analysis of the implications of 9/11 could also factor into the public's deliberations.

### THE DANGERS OF ANALOGICAL REASONING

Although it is important to learn from past experience, there are inherent risks involved in trying to apply the lessons learned. Decisionmaking theorists have identified three potential pitfalls in reasoning by analogy.<sup>22</sup> First, an individual might draw an incorrect lesson from the original case. If one's analysis of what policies or actions would have worked better in the earlier situation is not valid, then attempting to apply the lessons inferred to a later case is not likely to produce a good result.

Second, a new situation can differ in important ways from an earlier case to which it is being compared. If one overlooks those differences but they are relevant to why a certain policy worked or would have worked in the earlier case, then that policy might not be successful if it is applied to the new case.

A third problem is similar but more insidious. Individuals tend to ignore baseline information when they draw lessons from a case. In other words, there are many potentially relevant cases that could provide evidence about what is likely to happen in a given type of situation. But if people base their predictions about a new case on an analogy to just one past case, that particular case could be atypical. If so, that analogy would provide a misleading estimate of the most probable outcomes.

In the following sections, I take up each of these potential dangers in turn, discussing whether they limit the appropriateness of applying lessons of 9/11 to the Iraq case. After this assessment, I consider other ways in which lessons of 9/11 might bear on the Iraq debate that differ from those emphasized in the cognitive literature.

### Did People Learn the Wrong Lesson?

Answering this question requires ascertaining what lessons people actually learned from 9/11. Although I have found no comprehensive survey data on this question, there is still sufficient evidence to reach some conclusions. Reading through congressional debate, media interviews with members of the public, and letters to the editor in various newspapers, one theme clearly dominates: the United States should have acted sooner. As one Nebraska resident interviewed by the *New York Times* put it, "September 11 showed us we can't sit on our duff"<sup>23</sup>; the quote from Senator Specter in the box above shows that lawmakers drew the same conclusion.

Although people usually do not specify what action they have in mind, it seems clear that they mean to imply the United States should have sent military forces into Afghanistan before 9/11—and in particular, the United States should have used much more force after the 1998 embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. If the goal was to prevent al Qaeda from attacking the U.S. homeland, this seems to be a valid conclusion. Once al Qaeda existed and had targeted the United States, it is hard to see how the United States could have forestalled every possible Qaeda attack without using military force against Qaeda's bases of operations. Thus, as a lesson about what could have prevented an attack like 9/11, it is hard to dispute the conclusion the United States should have acted more vigorously sooner. If there is a problem in applying lessons of 9/11 to the Iraq debate, the problem is not that people have drawn an incorrect lesson from the earlier case.

It is possible to question, however, whether the notion "we should have acted sooner" is the only valid les-

son of 9/11. Rather than focusing only on whether people draw an incorrect conclusion from a past case, studies of analogical reasoning should also consider whether people tend to focus only on one lesson to the exclusion of other relevant lessons. This would be consistent with the premise of bounded rationality: because thinking simultaneously about three or four lessons is hard, individuals may choose just one lesson on which to act. Because learning is filtered through existing beliefs (as well as underlying psychological needs or motivations), the selection of which lesson to emphasize could lead to a one-sided or biased policy. The problem would not be that the lesson is wrong, but rather that acting exclusively on that lesson leads to a policy that ignores other relevant lessons and thereby diminishes the chances of success.

Readers can probably come up with several other plausible lessons of 9/11 besides the advisability of acting sooner, but I will focus on one that seems especially relevant to the Iraq debate. The history of al Qaeda suggests that the ability of terrorists to find shelter and new recruits varies to some extent with developments in the Middle East region. Without getting bogged down in the simplistic and misleading debate over whether the terrorists hate America for what it is or for what it does—why can't both be true?—it is clear that at times the United States has pursued its goals in ways that, even if this is not the intent, nevertheless have a negative impact on some residents of the Middle East. To the extent the United States acts in ways that reinforce its negative image among Arabs and Muslims, it increases their willingness to provide al Qaeda with money, shelter, or recruits. Thus, another potential lesson of 9/11 is that if the United States could defend its interests in ways that do not add to the anger or hatred others feel towards America, this would reduce the likelihood of future terrorism.

This lesson has potentially different implications for the Iraq debate than the lesson that implies the United States should not wait until others attack it. If a U.S. attack on Iraq is perceived in the region as proof the United States really does oppose Islam, or as evidence the United States has ulterior motives such as desire to dominate the Middle East oil supply, then it could increase sympathy for al Qaeda and make it harder to win the war on terrorism. People rely on analogies in part to resolve value tradeoffs, but if an earlier case holds more than one lesson and these lessons point in opposite directions, the tradeoff problem can re-emerge. It is still better to recognize both implications of an earlier case however than to focus only on one lesson to the exclusion of the other. In weighing

these potentially contrasting lessons, the key question is whether the Iraq case is actually similar enough to 9/11 that the first lesson—"we should have acted sooner"—applies equally to the case of Saddam.

### **Does the Lesson Apply to Iraq?**

The warning in the cognitive literature that people might have inferred an incorrect lesson from an earlier case does not seem applicable here. If the Iraqi threat were the same in its essential features as the Qaeda threat, then it would be reasonable to apply the lessons of 9/11. But is Iraq really similar in the relevant considerations?

As noted above, certain similarities do make the analogy seem plausible. The actors in both cases come from the Middle East and have expressed tremendous hostility toward the United States. Both have showed no compunctions about killing large numbers of civilians: as advocates of war against Iraq have frequently noted, Saddam used chemical weapons (CW) not only against Iranian forces in the Iran-Iraq War but also against Kurdish villages within Iraq. In applying lessons learned from 9/11 to Iraq, however, the most prominent characteristic common to both cases is summed up by the single word "evil." Because of the atrocities they have committed, both Saddam and bin Laden must be considered evil men. Thus, people have been confronted with an apparently compelling syllogism: if one evil Middle Eastern fanatic who hates America has attacked the U.S. homeland, then it is likely the Iraqi dictator who shares these characteristics will also strike the United States if he gets the opportunity.

This conclusion is not as convincing as it initially appears. Despite some similarities between the two cases, there are also fundamental differences. Most important, al Qaeda is a terrorist network while Iraq is a state. This means there are differences in both the motivations of Saddam and bin Laden and in the possibility of deterring them. Al Qaeda is not tied to any piece of territory and does not care about defending any territorial borders. If terrorists lose a base of operations, they will try to melt away and re-establish themselves elsewhere or even move to a decentralized, loosely networked mode of operations that does not require controlling any territory. Furthermore, achieving their extremist ideological objectives overrides all other considerations for Qaeda operatives, including their own survival. The 19 hijackers on September 11 chose to commit suicide. When terrorists are willing to welcome death if it makes them a martyr for their cause, they are obviously very hard to deter. Indeed,

not only was al Qaeda not deterred by the possibility of retaliation, its plan seems to have been to provoke such retaliation. Osama bin Laden wanted to goad the United States into military action in an attempt to prove his contentions that America is an enemy of Islam and seeks to dominate the Middle East.

Saddam Hussein's situation is very different. Saddam is the ruler of a state and has influence over others only by virtue of being a state leader. Territory is therefore essential to him. If he ceases to control Iraqi territory, he becomes nothing. Moreover, Saddam's primary goal is to maximize his personal power, with the secondary goal of creating a dynasty he can pass on to his sons. He is a spectacularly brutal dictator, but he is not especially ideological. The threat he poses is an old-fashioned kind: a lust for power so great it leads to an expansionist program for his state. Despite a very real animus toward the United States, he is not so fanatically devoted to any abstract cause that he would sacrifice his grip on power or his own life to advance that cause. Because of these differences between a terrorist leader and a despotic state leader, Saddam is in theory at least still potentially deterrable. He does not want the Iraqi state to lose control of its territory, he does not want to lose his personal power over that state, and he does not want to lose his life, not even in a martyr's death. If he knew he were likely to lose all of these things if he attacked the United States or its allies, by the logic of classical deterrence theory he should be deterred.<sup>24</sup> The only reason to doubt this would be if 9/11 provides empirical evidence that requires us to revise or abandon traditional deterrence postulates. Does it?

### **Does the Lesson Ignore Baseline Evidence?**

It is common to hear that September 11 "changed everything." Specifically with reference to Iraq, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld has said those who question the need for war "are thinking back in the 20th century," while 9/11 shows 21st century threats will be completely different.<sup>25</sup> Cognitive theories of decisionmaking suggest such conclusions may be unwarranted. When individuals reason by analogy, they focus on the implications of just one case, the case to which they are making an analogy. But there are often other relevant historical cases. If one had knowledge of all the analogous cases, one could calculate a statistical baseline estimate of the probability that some given outcome would result in a similar, future case. When people consider just one prior case, they ignore these baseline probabilities.

Rumsfeld's claim that 20th century evidence is irrelevant can be evaluated in part by seeing whether one can identify past cases that are similar in their relevant features to the present-day Iraqi case. In fact, multiple time periods involving four different countries share essential features with the case of Saddam in 2002. The strongest fear expressed in the Iraq debate has been that deterrence might fail to the extent that Saddam would launch a sudden "bolt from the blue" WMD attack on the United States or one of its allies. At various times in the past, similar fears were expressed for quite similar reasons about four countries: the Soviet Union, China, North Korea, and Iraq itself. The outcomes of these past cases provide no basis for believing that deterrence is likely to fail to such a catastrophic extent with Saddam, although they cannot be taken to imply a 100 percent guarantee of success either.

Several periods in U.S.-Soviet relations involved concerns quite similar to those expressed in the 2002 Iraq debate, but did not end in deterrence failures. The late 1940s and early 1950s set the prototype. Although Saddam has often been compared to Hitler, the Soviet dictator of that period, Josef Stalin, is a more apt analogy. Saddam has studied Stalin's career and sought to imitate the Soviet dictator, a fact President Bush emphasized in a speech to the nation on October 7, 2002.<sup>26</sup> Given the widespread concern about Stalin and Soviet intentions after World War II, during the period when the United States had an atomic monopoly (1945-1949), a number of journalists, intellectuals and military officers advocated attacking the Soviet Union before it could develop its own nuclear weapons. Their reasoning, more than 50 years ago, now sounds strikingly contemporary. As Marc Trachtenberg summarized it, in an article that well predates 9/11, "In the late 1940s and well into the early 1950s, the basic idea that the United States should not just sit back and allow a hostile power like the Soviet Union to acquire a massive nuclear arsenal ... was surprisingly widespread."<sup>27</sup> In the end, though, the United States chose not to attempt a preventive attack before the Soviet Union crossed the nuclear threshold.

In the aftermath of the Soviet Union's first atomic weapon test in fall 1949, the U.S. government re-assessed the country's national security situation. In April 1950, the famous document known as NSC-68 summarized the conclusions. NSC-68 estimated that within four years, unless the United States dramatically improved its military capabilities, a Soviet nuclear buildup would lead to a

situation in which the Kremlin might reasonably hope to win a war, and this would create a strong possibility the USSR would launch a surprise atomic attack at that time. Although NSC-68 remained classified, its drafters briefed sympathetic journalists on the main conclusions, leading to public warnings that 1954 would be a year of “maximum danger.”<sup>28</sup>

Stalin died in 1953 without ever launching the “bolt from the blue” attack American officials feared, and 1954 also passed largely without incident. It is hard to know whether this outcome resulted because Soviet leaders never contemplated launching a nuclear Pearl Harbor in the first place or because, implementing the advice contained in NSC-68, the United States initiated a defense buildup that deterred the Soviet Union. Either way, though, the relevant lesson is the same: even a monstrous tyrant like Stalin will not automatically attack the United States with weapons of mass destruction just because he has the ability to do so, at least not when the United States has a credible deterrent posture.

The Khrushchev years represent a similar case. These years involved public scares about an alleged “bomber gap” and later a supposed “missile gap.” Khrushchev’s behavior accentuated these fears. Actions like banging his shoe on a desk at the UN and declaring “we will bury you” gave rise to doubts about Khrushchev’s mental stability and, hence, whether he could be deterred. Khrushchev did bring about an incredibly dangerous crisis by trying to install missiles in Cuba, but there is no evidence the Soviet leader ever came close to ordering an unprovoked surprise nuclear attack on the United States or its allies. And he also backed down when confronted with firm opposition to putting missiles in Cuba.

Dire warnings about what the Soviets might do arose again in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when conservative defense analysts forecast an impending “window of vulnerability.” Once again, there are no indications the Soviets actually contemplated attacking the United States at this time, and, like old generals, talk of a window of vulnerability just faded away. Collectively, these Soviet examples show that, however totalitarian and morally despicable a U.S. adversary might be, it will not necessarily strike the United States with WMD just because it has the ability to do so. Either being evil does not by itself imply a desire to use WMD, or else states led by brutal dictators can still be deterred.

China under Mao fits the same pattern. Mao frequently claimed that nuclear weapons would not be deci-

sive in warfare and that he considered the United States a mere “paper tiger.” Such comments raised doubts about whether Beijing actually understood or feared the consequences of nuclear war. Hence, as the Chinese nuclear program neared fruition, U.S. officials actively debated whether to “strangle the baby in the cradle” by launching a preventive strike. Several years later, the Soviet Politburo also gave serious consideration to a preventive attack against China’s nuclear sites. Ultimately, both countries held back and China successfully entered the nuclear club.<sup>29</sup>

The Cultural Revolution prompted renewed doubts about whether Mao was actually a rational actor who could be deterred. As a result, when Defense Secretary Robert McNamara announced in 1967 that the United States would start building an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system, he portrayed defense against Chinese missile attack as a major goal of the proposed system.<sup>30</sup> But the United States soon abandoned the goal of a nationwide ABM system, a posture it maintained for the next few decades. Despite the absence of effective U.S. missile defenses, Mao and his successors proved quite capable of appreciating the logic of deterrence and the feared Chinese attack never materialized.

When one considers some of the other arguments about why Saddam poses a unique danger, the extent of the parallels between Saddam’s Iraq and the Soviet Union and China becomes even clearer. Supporters of war against Iraq often describe at length, and in stomach-churning detail, the many ways in which Saddam has brutalized his own people.<sup>31</sup> If the other two cases are not comparable, however, it is only because they are even worse: Stalin and Mao were both responsible for the deaths of millions of their fellow countrymen. Another common argument about why Iraq poses a threat is that Saddam has used CW and violated agreements by maintaining covert WMD programs. Similarly, there were many allegations (though never conclusively proven) that the Soviet Union used chemical weapons,<sup>32</sup> and the Soviets definitely violated the Biological Weapons Convention on a massive scale.<sup>33</sup> In addition, advocates of removing Saddam point out that he has previously used force against his neighbors and seemingly still harbors territorial ambitions in Kuwait. Stalin also used force against the Soviet Union’s neighbors, and Communist China in the past swallowed up Tibet and fought a war with Vietnam, and it still openly seeks to regain what it considers the “renegade province” of Taiwan. Despite all their similarities to Saddam’s dicta-

torship, given the likelihood of a forceful U.S. response, neither the USSR nor the PRC, both of which were much more powerful than Iraq, ever directly attacked the United States or sought to enable a proxy to strike the U.S. homeland.

North Korea provides another, more contemporary case that shares important features with the Iraq case. The behaviors of the Stalinist dictators who have ruled North Korea, first Kim Il Sung and now Kim Jong Il, have led outsiders to question their rationality. Because the state and its leaders have been so isolated from the outside world, it has been possible that North Korean leaders would not receive the feedback necessary to correct any misperceptions they might have—and this has also been a source of concern about Saddam. Also like Iraq, North Korea has pursued policies that have imposed great suffering on its people and has a past history of aggression against a neighbor, in this case South Korea. And, as a final parallel, North Korea has violated arms control agreements.

North Korea provoked a serious crisis in 1993 when it rejected requests for inspections to verify its compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and threatened to withdraw from the NPT. The resulting dispute nearly led to war, until a visit to North Korea by former President Jimmy Carter made possible a compromise agreement. Despite the serious possibility of finding itself at war, and notwithstanding some rather chilling threats it issued, North Korea did not launch any attack using its WMD.<sup>34</sup> However, as Pyongyang publicly acknowledged in fall 2002, the country did proceed to build a uranium enrichment plant that at minimum violated the spirit of the 1994 agreement that ended the earlier crisis.<sup>35</sup>

In 1998, North Korea again rattled nerves when it launched a rocket on a trajectory over Japan. After the ensuing outcry, however, North Korea halted further missile flight-testing, at least through late 2002. Finally, Pyongyang's October 2002 admission it had violated the 1994 Agreed Framework produced a new crisis. Although this crisis is still unresolved as of this writing, the Bush administration has so far not made any claims that North Korea is likely in the near future to try to use WMD against U.S. interests—even though it has argued this is a real threat in the similar case of Iraq. North Korea is a genuinely challenging and dangerous problem for the outside world, but neither its history to date nor the U.S. administration's most recent statements provide any basis for concluding that evil and isolated dictatorships, as

soon as they are able to, will use WMD against the United States or its friends.

Finally, Iraq's own past behavior is telling. In the Iraq debate, supporters of war have frequently noted that Saddam actually has used CW in the past. But he has only ever done so against victims who could not launch a damaging strike against Iraq in response. Saddam has never used WMD against any state that could strike back with a nuclear, biological, or chemical attack of its own. Because of their concerns about what Saddam might do in a conflict, shortly before the 1991 Gulf War, both Israel and the United States communicated veiled but pointed warnings that Iraq would suffer terrible consequences if it used CW against coalition forces or the state of Israel. Although Saddam had more extensive chemical, biological, and missile capabilities in 1991 than in 2002—and Iraq was actively at war, not in the condition of cold peace punctuated by occasional bombings that followed the ceasefire—Iraq refrained from using WMD.<sup>36</sup>

The reasons for this restraint remain debated by outside analysts, but all of the plausible explanations lead to a conclusion that Saddam can be deterred if he thinks restraint will not endanger his regime's survival. Most experts believe Saddam was deterred from chemical or biological attacks by the threat of nuclear retaliation: if it worked in 1991, then why would it fail to work later?<sup>37</sup> Others suggest that he was deterred by the expectation that using WMD would lead to a conventional invasion to remove him from power, but if this is correct the key point is still that Saddam proved deterrable.

The cases just summarized comprise all the cases I could think of that share most of the essential features cited as reasons why Saddam might not be deterred from using WMD. They provide the best available baseline, at least prior to 9/11, for estimating the likelihood that Saddam would initiate a surprise WMD attack. These cases provide empirical evidence that past leaders who have been brutal, isolated, and possibly irrational have still been deterrable. Taken as a whole, the historical record suggests there is almost no chance that Iraq would, out of the blue, launch unconventional weapons against the United States or one of its friends or allies. In practice, this probably overstates the reliability of deterrence. There are good reasons to believe that some residual risk of deterrence failure always remains, but the greatest risks involve accidents, hasty responses to false warnings, inadvertent escalation, or other scenarios that involve some loss of control over events. A deliberate WMD attack by a country that is not itself already under attack,

launched purely for reasons of malice or hate, is the least likely scenario for a deterrence failure. In this respect, states—even states led by vicious dictators who have a lot of blood on their hands—are still different from terrorists.

### **An Alternative Scenario: Deterrence Failure Involving Conventional Arms**

There is a more limited but more plausible scenario for deterrence failure. Kenneth Pollack has argued that once Saddam Hussein has nuclear weapons, he might regard them as a shield that would deter the United States from fighting another Gulf War, thus making it safe for him to resume aggression against his neighbors using conventional forces.<sup>38</sup> This is a valid concern, but with respect to the focus of this article it is important to note two points.

First, this argument has nothing to do with the lessons of 9/11. It is not based on the premise that the Qaeda attack shows that those who hate America will not hesitate to strike the U.S. homeland. Pollack's argument flows entirely from an analysis of the Iraqi dictator's own psychology and past behavior. Thus, this argument is entirely consistent with the main point of this article, which is that 9/11 is not as strong an argument for preventive action against Saddam as participants in the Iraq debate have suggested.

Second, if this type of deterrence failure is the real concern, there might still be viable alternatives to immediate invasion. For example, the United States and other countries could tailor a deterrent message to this specific scenario and take additional steps to make it credible. For a start, this would involve telling Saddam clearly and repeatedly that any Iraqi use of force against one of its neighbors, including a conventional assault, will immediately result in pre-emptive strikes against suspected Iraqi WMD sites followed by an invasion to remove him from power. A UN Security Council resolution that pre-authorized such a response would be one way to make this deterrent threat more credible. However, the bottom line is that the Pollack scenario is more plausible than the oft-cited worry that Saddam will initiate another 9/11, only involving WMD, and as such it is appropriate to take it into account in deliberations about how to deal with Iraq.

### **IS THE BASELINE IRRELEVANT?**

Although Secretary Rumsfeld's sweeping dismissal of 20th century experience, quoted above, overstates the case, he

and other supporters of preventive war still have good reason to suggest 9/11 changed some things. In particular, 9/11 demonstrated the potential of global terrorist networks to strike the United States. This draws attention to the possibility that states and terrorists who share an enmity for the United States might choose to work together. And this creates an alternative reason why deterrence might fail. Thus, Secretary Rumsfeld's testimony emphasized a concern that if states "transfer WMD to terrorist groups they could conceal their responsibility for attacks on our people."<sup>39</sup> If a chemical or biological agent were delivered via ballistic missile, it would be possible to determine the sender's return address and that sender would have to anticipate retaliation. But if terrorists smuggle a bomb into the country and then set it off, it might be much harder to determine the original source of that weapon. If a state thinks it could, by using terrorists, execute an attack without revealing where the attack came from, it might believe it could evade triggering a U.S. response and therefore no longer be deterred.

This is a serious argument that cannot entirely be dismissed, but it is not as compelling as it appears at first glance. To assess the possibility that Saddam might launch a WMD attack using al Qaeda as the delivery vehicle, as it were, there are at least three relevant questions. First, is there really no past evidence that bears on this assessment? Second, how likely are Saddam and al Qaeda to work together this closely? And third, how likely is it that Saddam will believe he could get away with such an attack successfully?

On the first point, the 21st century world is not as completely new as the Defense Secretary implies. There have been past state sponsors of terrorism that also possessed WMD. For much of the Cold War, the United States accused the Soviet Union of supporting various terrorist groups around the world. Although the USSR had extensive nuclear, biological, and chemical capabilities and a desire to neutralize or destroy U.S. power, so far as we know it never shared any of its WMD stocks or know-how with terrorists. The United States has similarly long listed North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism, but Pyongyang has never provided any terrorist group with the means to carry out a WMD attack. Another case is Iran, which is the primary supporter of Hizbollah. Despite their close association, Iran has not shared whatever WMD capabilities it possesses with the anti-Israel militants it supports. Finally, Pakistan also provides a relevant example. Although Islamabad gave assistance to Islamic militants in Kashmir during the same years it was achieving atomic weap-

ons capability, the Pakistani government has shown every sign of wanting to be sure its nuclear arms do not fall into the hands of militant groups. There is thus a modest body of relevant evidence, and it does not suggest much inclination on the part of states to share WMD with terrorists, even terrorists a state directly supports in other ways.

The second question is primarily a matter of intelligence assessment and cannot be answered with great confidence here. Based on what has been reported publicly by the U.S. government, it appears likely that there have been contacts between Iraqi officials and al Qaeda, but the evidence does not indicate an extensive working relationship. Indeed, the Defense Department took the unusual step of setting up its own intelligence group to review the data collected on Iraq because it was frustrated that CIA analysis did not support administration contentions about the level of Qaeda-Iraqi cooperation.<sup>40</sup> This suggests the existing evidence falls far short of the proverbial "smoking gun," but the fact that any contacts between Saddam and al Qaeda have been observed is nevertheless a cause for concern.

It is also unclear how interested the two actors would be in an alliance. On the one hand, the old adage that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" provides an obvious motivation for them to consider working together. On the other hand, Iraq's Ba'athist regime has good reason to fear al Qaeda's intentions. Osama bin Laden and his followers seek to rid the Middle East of secular regimes, including Saddam's; their ultimate objective in 9/11 was to set in motion a chain of events that would result in the overthrow of existing Arab governments by Islamist forces. Aware of al Qaeda's intentions and wishing to hold on to power, Saddam might be wary about providing the terrorist network with WMD capabilities that they could employ against his own regime and not just the United States.

Another limitation on the possibility of an alliance is that Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden are in an important respect direct rivals. Each aspires to be seen as the symbolic leader and chief spokesperson for the entire Arab world. Given that there can only be (at most) one pan-Arab leader of this kind, it is unlikely either individual would want to help the other elevate his standing in the eyes of the Arab masses.

Finally, the possibility that the source of an attack might not be discovered is not by itself sufficient to lead to the breakdown of deterrence. Saddam would have to estimate the odds of escaping detection as sufficiently high

that he would be willing to take the risk. The most optimistic deterrence theorists think that even the slightest uncertainty about getting away with an attack will lead to deterrence: a state will not take any action that could conceivably lead to nuclear retaliation against it.<sup>41</sup> This view is overly rosy. Saddam is a risk-acceptant actor who is prone to misperception and miscalculation. Saddam's propensity for risk-taking and miscalculation does not make an open attack on the United States likely, because Saddam still surely understands that this would mean the end of his regime. But it is conceivable that he might be tempted to try to do something sneaky.

Because his driving ambition is to maintain and increase his power, however, Saddam is likely to consider, however roughly, the possible consequences of his actions. To choose to aid a terrorist attack, Saddam would have to estimate the chances of not leaving his fingerprints on the operation as at least moderately good, or else the risk of retaliation would be too great. At the same time, he will obviously be put at or near the top of the suspect list if there is any WMD attack on the United States or a U.S. ally. It is quite possible the United States will not require unambiguous evidence of responsibility before it responds. Thus, even the possibility of leaving ambiguous evidence creates a real risk of putting Saddam's regime in the U.S. crosshairs. Indeed, Saddam could realistically be worried that even if someone else carries out a WMD terrorist attack, he will get the blame and suffer the consequences. He thus has some level of motivation to try to ensure such an attack does not occur.

In addition, the notion that 9/11 shows how the 21st century world is different looks at only one implication of the terrorist attack. Yet 9/11 also held potential lessons for other states and not just the United States. On the one hand, as the U.S. administration has emphasized, 9/11 showed the existence of shadowy global terror networks that could be used by a state to deliver an attack. But the U.S. response also showed other states the risks that they take if they do ally with terrorists. Despite Taliban protestations that the United States had not presented any proof of al Qaeda's responsibility for the attack, the United States responded quickly and decisively in Afghanistan and easily swept away the Taliban regime. The U.S. campaign in Afghanistan showed both the overwhelming superiority of U.S. military capabilities and the country's resolve to hold states responsible if they provide support to terrorists. *Far from proving the irrelevance of deterrence in the 21st century, September 11, by provoking the U.S. response it did, actually strengthened the deterrent*

*message to states that might aid or harbor terrorists.* Because of the U.S. operation in Afghanistan, 9/11 probably made Saddam less willing to work with terrorists rather than more tempted to do so.

Lastly, the argument that Saddam would use a terrorist network to deliver an attack neglects the question of what benefits Saddam would see in such an attack. The Iraqi leader hates America and would undoubtedly take pleasure in anything that inflicted pain on the U.S. people. But it is not obvious that he would accept the private pleasure of knowing he had caused U.S. suffering while somebody else received the blame (or, in his eyes, credit) for doing it. Given Saddam's regional ambitions, his greatest motivation for striking the United States would be to be seen doing it, so he could present himself to the rest of the Arab world as the only leader willing to stand up to the U.S. hegemon. But any attempt to take credit for an attack on the United States—whether openly or through indirect hints—would guarantee a response that ends Saddam's regime. In short, the more likely it is that an attack would bring benefits that Saddam would care about, the more certain it is that that attack would prompt a forceful and determined U.S. response. It is thus still possible to exert some deterrence against the form of cooperation with terrorists that would be most attractive to Saddam. This analysis all assumes, however, that Saddam believes he can stay in power if he does not defy U.S. deterrent warnings. If Saddam believes an invasion is coming no matter what, he may decide he has nothing to lose and so do exactly what the United States has feared.

The United States and the international community are right to worry about the possibility a state might share WMD with terrorists; the possibility cannot be ruled out. But an attempt to reason from 9/11 to determine the likelihood of such an incident is likely to be misleading. The risk, while real, is far from a certainty and not necessarily beyond the reach of deterrence.

### **OTHER EFFECTS OF 9/11 ON HOW PEOPLE THINK: ALTERED PRIORITIES AND HEIGHTENED SENSITIVITY TO LOSS**

The cognitive literature has generally assumed that lessons of the past affect policy choices by influencing how individuals define a situation and the interests at stake and how they evaluate which policies are likely to work and which to fail. This assumes the primary difficulty in responding to a new situation is the ambiguity of that situation: individuals therefore rely on a historical analogy to resolve some of their uncertainty about the issue

before them. In addition to uncertainty, however, decisionmaking also involves tradeoffs. Choosing a course of action requires people to weigh competing values. And if people change the weight they attach to different values, their overall priorities can change as a result. In short, learning from a past event could have a significant impact on how people rank their value priorities as well as on their purely cognitive images of reality. Clearly, this seems to have been the case with 9/11. The greatest impact of September 11 has probably been to change the willingness of many Americans to live with the risk of terrorist attack and the costs they are willing to pay to reduce that risk.

Previous sections have shown that applying the lessons of 9/11 to Iraq under Saddam ignores important differences in the two situations. In particular, the risk that deterrence will fail, leading to a WMD attack on U.S. soil, is still fairly low. But the risk is not zero; some possibility of such an attack exists. And after 9/11, even a very small risk of suffering another attack is no longer acceptable to many Americans.

Government officials are even more risk averse than the public, because they know that they will be blamed if a future attack takes place after they refrained from taking an action that could have prevented it. Senator Larry Craig (R-ID) acknowledged as much during congressional debate on the resolution authorizing use of force against Iraq: "Many senators, and I'm one of them, have asked how September 11 could have been prevented.... Today we much ask ourselves, in the future do we want, once again, to pose the same question that has now haunted us for over a year?"<sup>42</sup> For members of Congress and the administration, the impact of 9/11 on their personal beliefs is reinforced by a calculation that the political risks of any military actions they approve are less than the risks of failing to initiate military action should it later turn out that preventive action was necessary.

This political calculus is a good barometer of how the value priorities of the U.S. public have changed. Before 9/11, it is almost unimaginable that the majority of Americans would have approved a preventive war. They would have sought to avoid the casualties and possible adverse international reaction, unless they were presented with definite proof that an enemy attack was imminent. With a much lower tolerance for risk, many people in the United States are now willing to pay a higher cost to eliminate potential threats.

This change in value priorities is partly a cognitive change: Americans have learned the potential costs of



not acting before a terrorist attack takes place. But this is another area where it is hard to ignore the emotional impact of 9/11. Americans did not just receive new information that led them to update their images about what the world is like. They also felt, as New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani so memorably put it, that the number killed in the attack was “more than any of us can bear.” Desire not to see more Americans killed or again to feel such anguish has provided powerful motivation for individuals to change their value assessments so that they no longer consider preventive attacks to be an unacceptable violation of traditional U.S. values.

When analogies are used for predictive purposes, it is usually possible through examination of empirical evidence to critique the application of a given analogy, exactly as this article did above. Value judgments, in contrast, are more subjective and thus harder to critique on empirical grounds. In a democracy, if citizens want to make eliminating potential terrorist threats a higher priority, it is their right to make this choice, and indeed it would be unwise for the U.S. public not to take this threat seriously. However, it is still possible to note a couple caveats that apply to the 9/11-induced shift in value priorities.

First, because of human psychology, individuals might accept a level of cost and risk to eliminate threats to security that, with the advantage of hindsight, they would not have chosen. There are both emotional and cognitive factors involved. People in the grip of a powerful emotion tend not to reason with as much deliberateness as they otherwise might. Strong feelings, such as those aroused by 9/11, can also bias individuals' perceptions, and in this case not only by heightening sensitivity to the threat of terrorism. The powerful desire to eliminate terrorism could also lead to wishful thinking about the likelihood that a proposed action against terrorism will prove successful—including, for example, how easy it will be to win a military campaign.<sup>43</sup>

In addition, a body of psychological research known as prospect theory shows that people are often willing to accept risky gambles or pay excessive costs to avoid a possibility of suffering losses. Prospect theory finds that people generally do not view equivalent gains and losses the same way: they attach more weight to avoiding a loss of a given amount than to achieving a gain of the same amount. Because of this loss aversion, people tend to be cautious as long as they are assured of a gain, but risk-acceptant when they are in the domain of losses. If they expect to lose something no matter what, they will often accept a small chance of losing much more if they see a possibility

to thereby avoid losses altogether. Whether a situation is framed in terms of gains or losses can therefore profoundly affect what policy option people choose in response.<sup>44</sup>

In the 1990s, Americans basked in the glow of the end of the Cold War and a long economic boom. This placed them in the domain of gains and left the U.S. public with little desire to take risks on behalf of an activist foreign policy agenda. September 11 clearly shifted the framing of foreign policy debates into the domain of losses.<sup>45</sup> The United States lost many innocent lives in the Qaeda attack, so the question afterward naturally became how to avoid further losses.

This focus on loss aversion has made the U.S. public more willing to risk war. If the Bush administration had to make the case for military action to change the Iraqi regime purely in terms of possible gains for the United States, the arguments would be much less persuasive. Some U.S. elites have seen possible advantages in war against Iraq, arguing it would provide greater access to Middle East oil or could initiate a spread of democracy across the Arab world. If these were the only arguments for war, public opposition would be much greater than it is. The possible gains for the United States are not nearly as strong a motivation for war as the aversion to potentially suffering further losses from a chemical or biological 9/11.

As a corollary of loss aversion, prospect theory finds that people tend to attach much more value to eliminating a low-probability threat than a standard, rational calculation of expected utility would lead one to expect. For example, in a hypothetical game of Russian roulette, people would pay far more to reduce the number of bullets from 1 to 0 than from 4 to 3, even though both changes equally reduce the probability of being shot by one-sixth.<sup>46</sup> The impetus to eliminate entirely a given source of threat, such as Iraqi WMD, might lead people to accept a much higher level of negative consequences than they would otherwise, perhaps to the extent that the likely costs would outweigh the likely benefits. In sum, by shifting the emphasis in foreign policy debates to possible future losses, 9/11 made Americans more willing to accept even significant risks that might accompany military action.

Possible psychological dynamics aside, there is a second, more obvious caveat to note in relation to the post-9/11 shift in priorities. No matter how much value Americans now attach to preventing future terrorist attacks, it is still prudent in any given case to analyze as realistically as possible the level of threat, the possible alternatives for dealing with that threat, and the relative

costs and benefits of all the alternatives. Although one might feel that the country should be willing to “pay any price, bear any burden,” as President Kennedy once stated, if the threat is less than absolute then there are in principle prices that would be too great to pay. If people focus solely on the urgency of eliminating Iraqi WMD, they might fail to evaluate the possible costs and risks that would accompany a preventive war or whether there is any alternative course that could lower the overall threat of WMD terrorism with fewer potential downsides.

## CONCLUSIONS

This article has examined the influence of September 11 on the shift to a U.S. policy of threatening to invade Iraq if Saddam Hussein did not eliminate his nuclear, biological, and chemical arms programs. The article has examined the impact of 9/11 from the perspective of political psychology, comparing this case to well-established hypotheses about how people reason by analogy to certain past cases and their putative lessons. The first part of this conclusion summarizes the findings with respect to the fit between theory and evidence, while the second part discusses policy implications.

### Empirical Findings and Their Implications for Theory

In a way, it seems too soon to describe 9/11 as “history” and a potential source of lessons. But there is also abundant evidence that, soon after the attack, many issues began to be filtered through the new picture of reality created by 9/11. While the impact of 9/11 is unusually powerful, it is not a unique phenomenon. In fact, the role of 9/11 in shaping the Iraq debate conforms quite closely to the pattern one would expect based on past research into analogical reasoning.

The literature on how foreign policymakers use lessons of history suggests individuals will make analogies to recent events that strongly affected their own country and that they may apply these analogies to other situations based in part on superficial similarities. The Iraq debate fits these predictions. It is precisely the fact that 9/11 happened such a short time before and affected the United States so profoundly that made it the obvious case to rely on in deciding what to do about other foreign policy problems like Iraq. Moreover, the inference that the lessons of 9/11 apply to Saddam reflects certain similarities that do not alone provide a sufficient basis for predicting Iraqi behavior. Because Osama bin Laden was evil and hated

the United States, many Americans have concluded that Saddam is equally likely to attack the United States, since he too is evil and hates America.

In other respects, however, the existing model of analogical reasoning proves inadequate to capture fully the impact of 9/11. The literature usually focuses on how top Executive branch officials use lessons of history, and it assumes analogies are primarily a cognitive device to deal with uncertainty. All of these assumptions need to be broadened to account for the impact of September 11. First, many administration officials and advisors already believed, prior to the Qaeda attack, that the United States needed to use military force to remove Saddam from power. The shift in U.S. policy after 9/11 thus derives more from the attack’s impact on the thinking of Congress and the public.

This conclusion shows that analysis of the role of psychological factors needs to be connected to an understanding of the dynamics of domestic politics. This connection can be made by combining analogical reasoning with a garbage can model of agenda setting. This approach recognizes that some important officials were already committed to the proposal to use force against Saddam, but they needed a favorable window of opportunity to convince a majority of the rest of the country. At the same time, incorporating psychological factors also strengthens a garbage-can analysis. That model assumes there are many competing policy entrepreneurs looking to place their proposal at the top of the policy agenda, but it does not predict whose proposed solution will actually be adopted when a window of opportunity opens up. An appreciation of the psychological impact of 9/11 makes it clear, however, why a proposed preventive attack on Iraq would have significant innate advantages in the policy debate compared to other policy suggestions. It is the only proposal that promises to eliminate the menace that is most familiar to the country; all other proposals might involve waiting to act militarily until it is too late.

This article also shows that the analogical reasoning approach must consider more than just how individuals use analogies cognitively to reduce uncertainty. September 11 did more than change people’s images of contemporary reality; it also aroused very strong feelings. The emotional impact of past events must be included in the analysis of how people use history in making decisions. A past case that arouses strong emotions is likely to be a much more influential analogy than a case whose lessons

affect individuals' thinking in a purely abstract, cognitive way.

The mixture of cognitive and emotional effects of 9/11 has influenced more than just the definition of the situation and preferred policy response; the lessons of 9/11 are not just a matter of reducing uncertainty about the 21st century world. September 11 has also profoundly altered the value priorities and tolerance for risk of many Americans. Even if it could be proven objectively that the risk of an attack originating from Saddam's Iraq were low, a great many Americans are no longer willing to live with such a risk. The analogical reasoning approach thus needs to include awareness of how a lesson of the past can influence value tradeoffs and the costs people are willing to pay to reduce risk. This can be done in part by synthesizing analogical reasoning with prospect theory, which should not be difficult since both focus on cognitive processes. Prospect theory suggests that the impact of a past event on people's value priorities is in part a function of whether an analogy to that event leads people to frame a new situation in terms of possible gains or possible losses.

Even though this article shows certain ways in which it would be useful to broaden the analogical reasoning model, the most basic finding is that this model fits the facts of the Iraq debate quite well. An understanding of how people use lessons of the past still provides a useful tool for explaining foreign policy, even when the "past" in question is barely one year old.

### **Policy Implications**

While it is important to learn from traumatic events and policy failures, attempts to apply the lessons learned carry their own perils. Reasoning by analogy to a previous case can lead to unwise policy choices if the lesson derived from the past case is incorrect, if the present situation differs in important ways from the earlier case, or if reliance on a particular analogy leads one to ignore other relevant past experience. The application of lessons of 9/11 to Iraq reflects to some extent these various pitfalls. The most dangerous consequence has been an unwarranted dismissal of deterrence.

The first potential misuse of an analogy does not directly apply in this case. The proposition that the United States should have done more earlier to disable al Qaeda is correct, provided that the action taken would not have somehow led to an even worse result than 9/11.

There is a potential danger, however, if people focus on only a single lesson of the past case they are using as

an analogy. There are other plausible lessons of 9/11, and some have rather different implications than the first lesson when it comes to the case of Iraq. For example, the United States has sometimes pursued its interests in the Middle East in ways that have created widespread anger in the Arab world, and 9/11 showed what can happen when terrorists can persuade other Arabs that the United States is an enemy of Islam. If an invasion of Iraq unfolds in such a way that it could lend credence to al Qaeda's propaganda, it could ease the terrorists' efforts to find support and new recruits. To the extent an event like 9/11 teaches more than one lesson and these lessons have contradictory policy implications, relying on just one lesson, however correct, while neglecting the others could have undesirable consequences.

The second and third risks in analogical reasoning apply more clearly in the Iraq case however. There are significant differences between Iraq and al Qaeda, and evidence from cases that are actually more similar to the Iraq of 2002 suggests Saddam is not as likely to initiate a sudden attack as the 9/11 analogy has led people to believe. Saddam is the ruler of a state, not the leader of a terrorist network; he is motivated by the desire for power, not by a fanatical ideology; and, unlike al Qaeda, he is tied to a piece of territory, so he cannot slip away and set up a new base elsewhere if he provokes an attack on his existing base of operations. Arguments about Iraq in 2002 are remarkably similar to recurring warnings of a possible Soviet surprise attack during the Cold War, to statements of alarm about what a supposedly crazy Mao might do with nuclear weapons, to predictions that North Korea would prove too irrational to be deterred, and to fears expressed about what Saddam himself might do during the Gulf War. Yet in none of these prior situations did a dictatorial and unpredictable leader ever attack the United States. Finally, 9/11 holds lessons for other states, not just America. By demonstrating the U.S. resolve and ability to remove regimes that harbor or sponsor terrorism, 9/11 should have strengthened the deterrent message to governments that would contemplate aiding terrorists.

The case for preventive war seemingly boils down to the argument that Saddam is a threat because he is evil. But being evil is not in and of itself diagnostic. Saddam has used CW and mandated many acts of brutality to keep his own population terrorized. These facts should arouse our moral outrage, but they do not justify a prediction that Saddam will initiate a WMD attack on the United States or a U.S. ally. Saddam only uses weapons and tactics of terror against those who are too weak to defeat him, and he uses them, not out of pure sadism, but instrumentally

to maintain or expand his power. Iraqi WMD use is much less likely against a strong state that could respond by eliminating Saddam's regime.

In sum, those who seek to write the epitaphs for deterrence and containment do so prematurely. Analysis of the relevant logic and evidence shows that rogue states are not necessarily beyond the reach of deterrence, even in a world where they might be tempted to use terrorist networks to conduct a sneak attack. Those who sweepingly dismiss deterrence and containment as relics of the 20th century thus do a disservice to U.S. national security. They make it less likely that the United States would consider using these tools when they might be effective, even though these tools might help the country avoid some of the costs and risks associated with war.

None of this guarantees that deterrence will work. Deterrence can always fail, and the heightened awareness of the risks after 9/11 makes it likely that the option of preventive military action will also get serious consideration for some time to come. But however much the world has changed, the requirements for making sound policy decisions have not. Inferences drawn from a single past event cannot substitute for proper policy analysis—no matter how recent and traumatic the event, and no matter how compelling the lessons of that event feel in its aftermath. The lessons of 9/11 must surely be taken into consideration. Other past cases are also relevant to understanding the situation today, however, and they too should be kept in mind. Furthermore, regardless of how urgent the case for action appears, it is still important to estimate as realistically as possible the likely costs and risks of taking action as well as those of failing to act. Finally, before embarking on a preventive war, it is also still necessary to identify the possible alternatives and weigh their pros and cons against those of war. Especially with respect to efforts to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction, the United States should not neglect the traditional tools of nonproliferation, as these can still play a useful role.

Some pre-emptive attacks might nevertheless be necessary, but if they are truly necessary then they are likely to emerge as the best option even after a sober and thorough analysis. Unless the American people and their leaders keep in mind how human psychology works, and recognize that the lessons of a traumatic event like 9/11 will feel compelling even in cases where they do not fit the facts, the United States is likely to take some military

actions that are not necessary and possibly even counter-productive.

<sup>1</sup> Solarz quoted in Seymour M. Hersh, "The Iraq Hawks," *The New Yorker*, December 24 and 31, 2001, p. 61; Specter on CBS TV, Face The Nation, August 25, 2002, <[www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/08/26/ftn/main519799.shtml](http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/08/26/ftn/main519799.shtml)>; U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, "Testimony of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld," 107th Congress, 2nd Session, September 19, 2002, <[www.dod.gov/speeches/2002/s20020919-secdef2.html](http://www.dod.gov/speeches/2002/s20020919-secdef2.html)>; Sensenbrenner floor speech, *Congressional Record* (House), October 8, 2002, p. H7215; excerpts of Gephardt floor speech, *New York Times*, October 11, 2002, p. A12.

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas Lemann, "The War on What?" *The New Yorker*, September 16, 2002; Advertisement, *New York Times*, op-ed page, September 26, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Graham T. Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *American Political Science Review* 63 (September 1969), pp. 697, 705, 715.

<sup>4</sup> Mike Allen, "Bush's Words Can Go to the Blunt Edge of Trouble," *Washington Post*, September 29, 2002, p. A22.

<sup>5</sup> Michael J. Cohen, James G. March, and Johan F. Olsen, "A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17 (March 1972); John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984).

<sup>6</sup> Excerpts of Rohrabacher floor speech, *New York Times*, October 9, 2002, p. A14. Kenneth Pollack, a former Clinton administration official who became a leading advocate of war against Saddam, also sees it this way. In an interview on National Public Radio, he said some Clinton officials had become convinced by 1998 of the need to use military force in Iraq, but war advocates could not have persuaded the public and Congress before September 11 (National Public Radio, All Things Considered, November 10, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> The term "learning" can be used in both a normatively approving and a neutrally descriptive way. The first implies a positive assessment that people have correctly learned what they should have learned. The second simply refers to whatever lesson or inference people have in fact drawn from an event, whether rightly or wrongly. In this article, I employ learning in the second sense, as a purely empirical description of the lessons people themselves take from an event. With this understood, hereafter I will not place quotation marks around the term. Elsewhere, I have argued that a normative concept of learning, which retains the positive connotations of the term, is also important to the analysis of international relations and can feasibly be studied; see Jeffrey W. Knopf, "The Importance of International Learning," *Review of International Studies*, forthcoming, April 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Jervis, "Hypotheses on Misperception," in G. John Ikenberry, ed., *American Foreign Policy: Theoretical Essays* (New York: HarperCollins, 1989), p. 472.

<sup>9</sup> The concept of bounded rationality was developed by Herbert Simon; for a good overview, see his "Human Nature in Politics," *American Political Science Review* 79 (June 1985). The introduction to the cognitive approach being presented here draws especially on Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1980), chaps. 2-3.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), ch. 6; Christopher Hemmer, *Which Lessons Matter?* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

<sup>12</sup> Jack S. Levy, "Learning and Foreign Policy," *International Organization* 48 (Spring 1994).

<sup>13</sup> William W. Jarosz with Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "The Shadow of the Past: Learning from History in National Security Decision Making," in Philip E. Tetlock et al., eds., *Behavior, Society, and International Conflict*, vol. 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>14</sup> Khong, *Analogies at War*, pp. 20-21; Hemmer, *Which Lessons Matter?*

<sup>15</sup> Andrew Sullivan, "Victory is an Article of Faith for Bush," *The Sunday Times of London*, October 28, 2001, <[www.andrewsullivan.com/faith.php?artnum=20011028](http://www.andrewsullivan.com/faith.php?artnum=20011028)>.

<sup>16</sup> Robert S. Greenberger, "Dateline Capitol Hill: The New Majority's Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy* 101 (Winter 1995-96).

<sup>17</sup> John H. Aldrich, John L. Sullivan, and Eugene Borgida, "Foreign Affairs and Issue Voting," *American Political Science Review* 83 (March 1989).

<sup>18</sup> "Local Talk," *Good Times* (Santa Cruz County), November 14-20, 2002, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> See Neta C. Crawford, "The Passion of World Politics: Propositions on Emotion

and Emotional Relationships," *International Security* 24 (Spring 2000).

<sup>20</sup> All Things Considered, National Public Radio, October 31, 2002.

<sup>21</sup> Adam Clymer and Janet Elder, "Poll Finds Unease on Terror Fight and Concerns About War on Iraq," *New York Times*, September 8, 2002.

<sup>22</sup> The following paragraphs draw on multiple sources, including Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*; George, *Presidential Decisionmaking*; and Khong, *Analogies at War*.

<sup>23</sup> Blaine Harden and Peter Kilborn, "Nation's Memory of 9/11 Colors the Debate on Iraq," *New York Times*, October 6, 2002, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Independent of any lessons of 9/11, some have made a second argument for why deterrence might fail with Saddam. This line of analysis claims Saddam is unusually prone to misperception and miscalculation, to the extent he might discount even the most credible deterrent warnings. I discuss this line of analysis and possible policy responses in a separate sub-section below.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Senate, "Testimony of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld."

<sup>26</sup> Transcript of President Bush's speech, *New York Times*, October 8, 2002, p. A12.

<sup>27</sup> Marc Trachtenberg, "A 'Wasting Asset': American Strategy and the Shifting Nuclear Balance, 1949-1954," in Sean M. Lynn-Jones et al., eds., *Nuclear Diplomacy and Crisis Management* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), p. 69.

<sup>28</sup> See Ernest R. May's "Introduction," p. 14, and the text of NSC-68, esp. p. 55, in *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1993).

<sup>29</sup> William Burr and Jeffrey T. Richelson, "Whether to 'Strangle the Baby in the Cradle': The United States and the Chinese Nuclear Program, 1960-1964," *International Security* 25 (Winter 2000/01); Scott D. Sagan, "More Will Be Worse," in Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), p. 65.

<sup>30</sup> Ernest J. Yanarella, *The Missile Defense Controversy* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1977), ch. 7.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Douglas Porch, "The Threatening Story," *Washington Post*, September 29, 2002, p. BWO3, quoted in James Russell and James Wirtz, "Preventive War Against Iraq," *Strategic Insights*, Center for Contemporary Conflict Web site, <[www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/rsepResources/si/nov02/middleEast.asp](http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/rsepResources/si/nov02/middleEast.asp)>.

<sup>32</sup> See Jonathan B. Tucker, "The 'Yellow Rain' Controversy," *Nonproliferation Review* 8 (Spring 2001) for a discussion of the evidence.

<sup>33</sup> For a brief discussion of the Soviet biological weapons program, see Jonathan B. Tucker and Raymond A. Zilinskas, "Introduction," in Tucker and Zilinskas, eds., *The 1971 Smallpox Epidemic in Aralsk, Kazakhstan, and the Soviet Biological Weapons Program*, Occasional Paper No. 9 (Monterey, CA: Monterey Institute of International Studies, 2002), pp. 4-11.

<sup>34</sup> Mitchell Reiss, *Bridled Ambition: Why Countries Constrain Their Nuclear Capabilities* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995), p. 266; John Burton, "N. Korea's 'Sea of Fire' Shakes Seoul," *Financial Times*, March 22, 1994, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Peter Slevin and Karen DeYoung, "N. Korea Admits Having Secret Nuclear Arms," *Washington Post*, October 17, 2002, p. A1.

<sup>36</sup> For a discussion of the Israeli deterrent effort, see Gerald M. Steinberg, "Parameters of Stable Deterrence in a Proliferated Middle East," *Nonproliferation Review* 7 (Fall-Winter 2000). For a discussion and skeptical evaluation of the U.S. deterrent effort, see Scott D. Sagan "The Commitment Trap: Why the United States Should Not Use Nuclear Threats to Deter Biological and Chemical Weapons Attacks," *International Security* 24 (Spring 2000).

<sup>37</sup> Whether or not Saddam can be deterred from conventional attacks against his neighbors is less clear. I address this concern in the following sub-section.

<sup>38</sup> Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* (New York: Random House, 2002).

<sup>39</sup> U.S. Senate, "Testimony of Donald Rumsfeld," September 19, 2002.

<sup>40</sup> Eric Schmitt and Thom Shankar, "Threats and Responses: A CIA Rival; Pentagon Sets Up Intelligence Unit," *New York Times*, October 24, 2002.

<sup>41</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz has been a leading advocate of this position. See, e.g., his chapters in Waltz and Sagan, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons*.

<sup>42</sup> Exerpts of Craig's floor speech, *New York Times*, October 9, 2002, p. A12.

<sup>43</sup> Richard Ned Lebow, *Between Peace and War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1981), ch. 5, describes how strong desires can create "motivated biases," including wishful thinking.

<sup>44</sup> Jack S. Levy, "Loss Aversion, Framing, and Bargaining: The Implications of Prospect Theory for International Conflict," *International Political Science Review* 17 (1996).

<sup>45</sup> I thank Scott Parrish for pointing out to me how 9/11 would have led to framing U.S. foreign policy in terms of loss avoidance.

<sup>46</sup> Levy, "Loss Aversion, Framing, and Bargaining," p. 185.