Prevention, Pre-emption and the Nuclear Option: An Examination of the Bush Doctrine

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Declaration

I certify that:

a) except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the candidate alone;

b) the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award;

c) the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program;

d) any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged;

e) ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Aiden James Warren
April 2010
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Abstract

The Bush Doctrine was constructed over a period of approximately eight months in response to the events of 9/11. Beginning with the 2002 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush laid the foundation for a “newly” proactive strategy of counter-proliferation. In one of his first hints of prevention, Bush stated that he would “not stand as peril draws closer and closer... and permit the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world’s most destructive weapons.” Six months later, in a commencement speech to the US Military Academy at West Point, Bush elaborated upon the burgeoning national security doctrine, emphasising the need for a more forward-thinking strategy that would not wait for “threats to fully materialize.” The West Point speech expressed Bush’s new world concerns in which the spread of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology, enabled “weak states and small groups” to attain a catastrophic power to strike “great nations.” Finally, in September 2002, the White House released the National Security Strategy of the United States of America – the most comprehensive articulation of the Bush Doctrine, officially adopting preventive self-defense as a key element of the United States’ security strategy. Here, Bush justified the use of preventive war and argued that the greatest threat that the US faced were entities at “the crossroads of radicalism and technology.” He emphasised that the US must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they were able to threaten or use WMD against the US and its allies. As arguably the most defining words of his doctrine, Bush argued that “where uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack – to forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the US, if necessary, will act pre-emptively.”

This thesis will argue that despite its portrayal as a bold departure, the Bush Doctrine was not the “new” or “revolutionary” policy instrument that many at the time portended. Firstly, the National Security Strategy of 2002 and its pursuit of strategic counter-proliferation policies as a means to thwart potential and real adversaries, has been a core pillar encompassed in each National Security Strategy release since its inception in 1986/87. Secondly, the most controversial aspect of the National Security Strategy pertaining to its official adoption of “pre-emption” or preventive war, has long pervaded the strategic thought of policy-makers, officials, and military planners at the highest levels of the US government. Indeed, the historical record of the last half century is replete with examples of high level US decision-
makers who seriously considered the undertaking of major unilateral preventive military actions as a means to thwart the proliferation of nuclear weapons by rogue states. Since the dawning of the nuclear era in 1945, at least three other US Presidents have faced the potential threat of nuclear technology in the hands of states hostile to their respective Administrations and each dealt with the same decision problem faced by President Bush in 2003: whether or not to use preventive military force as a means to counter the proliferation of such nuclear weapons technology. It is evident that prior to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the US had considered waging preventive war against no less than three additional rogue proliferators, only to be inhibited in most instances by practical factors. While it was clear that the Bush Doctrine certainly qualified as a preventive war policy, it is apparent that the adoption of this strategy did not mark a total break with American tradition or earlier Administrations.

However, while this thesis attempts to dispel arguments pertaining to the supposed “revolutionary,” “new,” or “radical” nature of the Bush Doctrine – based on comparisons with previous National Security Strategies and previous Administrations’ penchant for prevention – it is apparent that what was “new” and “bold” about the Bush Administration’s National Security Strategy of 2002, was its willingness to embrace “innovation within the armed forces... experimentation with new approaches to warfare... exploiting US intelligence advantages, and taking full advantage of science and technology,” to the extent, of reinvigorating a nuclear option that could ultimately be used in the context of preventive war. In its punctuating and reaffirming policy instruments (released over the course of Bush’s tenure), the doctrine revitalised the role of nuclear weapons in US security strategy and signified the broader quest of the Bush Administration to upgrade US offensive forces, deploy missile defenses, reconfigure communications and satellite systems, and overall, revitalise the nuclear complex. As the second argument of this thesis asserts, the nuclear policy releases and documental arteries espoused by National Security Strategy cultivated and defined such resurgence, providing the platform for the “quiet revolution” undertaken by the Administration during the period of 2002-2008. While it had taken the Clinton Administration ten years to dismantle more than 11,000 warheads in the 1990s, it would take more than fifteen years to dismantle less than half that number under Bush’s plan. In fact, the Bush Administration dismantled the smallest number of nuclear weapons of any US administration since 1957. Its rationale was straightforward: the focus was never on disarmament but rather on extending the life of the remaining stock of nuclear weaponry. Indeed, it was this deeper policy within the Bush Doctrine that foreshadowed a new nuclear
era in which the Administration pursued a path of retaining and upgrading its enormous strategic arsenal as a means to defeat any adversary. It was an option that placed nuclear weapons back to the fore; “a strategy” that endorsed “repeated regime change... a large, steadily modernizing nuclear arsenal” and “a determination to retain nuclear weapons forever.”
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Abbreviations/Acronyms

Introduction

Chapter 1 – Literature Review

Chapter 2 – The Bush Doctrine: Implicit in Previous National Security Strategy Doctrines

National Security Strategy of 1987 (NSS1987) 52
National Security Strategy of 1990 (NSS1990) 54
National Security Strategy of 1994 (NSS1994) 60
National Security Strategy of 2002 (NSS2002) 75

Chapter 3 – The Bush Doctrine: Definitions and Interpretations of Prevention and Pre-emption

Pre-emption or Preventive War? 90
The Decision to Undertake Preventive War 95
Shifting National Security Strategy and Discourse 98
International Law 103
Real World Preventive Considerations 110

Chapter 4 – The Bush Doctrine: Preventive War in Iraq

The Choice of Iraq 119
Early Indications of Prevention 130
Clarifying the Preventive Strategy 135
Linking the Preventive Strategy to Iraq 136
Planning for Preventive War 140
The Lead Up 145
Bush Announces War with Iraq 147

Chapter 5 – The Bush Doctrine and Prevention: Evident in 20th Century US Foreign Policy – Case Studies 155
Abbreviations/Acronyms

ADW – Agent-Defeat Weapons
ALERTORD – Global Strike Alert Order
APL – Anti-Personnel Landmine (APL) Treaty
AWACS – Airborne Warning and Control System
BUR – Bottom-Up Review
BW – Biological Weapon
CBW – Chemical and Biological Weapons
CDG – Chemical Destruction Group
CENTCOM – Central Command
CFE – Conventional Forces Europe Treaty
ChiCom – Communist China
CIA – Central Intelligence Agency
CONPLAN – Concept Plan 8022 Global Strike
CORM – Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces
CPI – Counter-Proliferation Implementation
CTBT – Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
CTR – Cooperative Threat Reduction
CW – Chemical Weapon
CWC – Chemical Weapons Convention
DCI – Director of Central Intelligence
DIA – Defense Intelligence Agency
DOD – Department of Defense
DOJ – Department of Justice
DOS – Department of State
DOT – Department of Treasury
DOE – Department of Energy
DPRK – Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
DMZ – Demilitarized Zone
EO – Executive Order
ETRI – Expanded Threat Reduction Initiative
EUCOM – European Command
EU – European Union
EW – Electronic Warfare
FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization
FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation
FMTC – Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty
FSU – Former Soviet Union
FY – Financial Year
G8 – Group of Eight
GPS – Global Positioning System
GWAPS – US Gulf War Air Power Survey
HDBTs – Hardened and Deeply-Buried Targets
HE – High Explosive
HEU – Highly Enriched Uranium
HUMINT – Human Intelligence
IAEA – International Atomic Energy Agency
IAEC – Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission
IAF – Iraqi Armed Forces
ICBMs – Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles
IMF – International Monetary Fund
INP – Iraqi Nuclear Program
INR – Department of State’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research
INS – Inertial Navigation System
ISG – Iraq Survey Group
JCS – Joint Chiefs of Staff
KEDO – Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization
LEP – Life Extension Program
LEU – Low Enriched Uranium
LTBT – Limited Test Ban Treaty
MIRVed – Multiple Independently Targeted Re-entry Vehicles
MOD – Ministry of Defense
MOU – Memorandum of Understanding.
MTCR – Missile Technology Control Regime
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NBC – Nuclear, Biological, Chemical
NDP – National Defense Panel
NIE – National Intelligence Estimate
NNSA – National Nuclear Security Administration
NPR – Nuclear Posture Review
NPT – Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSC – National Security Council
NSC-68 – National Security Council Paper 68
NSCWMD – National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction
NSG – Nuclear Suppliers Group
NSPD – National Security Presidential Directive
NSS – National Security Strategy
NUWEP – Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy
ODF – Operation Desert Fox
ODS – Operation Desert Storm
OFF – Oil for Food program
OIF – Operation Iraqi Freedom
OPEC – Organization of Petroleum Exporting Counties
OSD – Office of the Secretary of Defense
PDD – Presidential Decision Directive
PLYWD – Precision Low-Yield Weapons Development
QDR – Quadrennial Defense Review
R&D – Research and Development
RDT&E – Research, Development, Test and Evaluation
RRW – Reliable Replacement Warhead
SAM – Surface-to-Air Missile
SDI – Strategic Defense Initiative
SF – Special Forces
SLBM – Submarine-launched Ballistic Missile
SRBM – Short-range Ballistic Missile
SSM – Surface-to-Surface Missile
SSO – Special Security Organization

START I – Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

START II – Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

START III – Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

STRATCOM – US Strategic Command

UAV – Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

UN – United Nations

UNCC – United Nations Compensation Commission

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

UNGA – United Nations General Assembly

UNICEF – United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

UNMOVIC – United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

UNSCOM – United Nations Special Commission

UNSCR – United Nations Security Council Resolution

UNSYG – United Nations Secretary General

WFP – World Food Program

WHO – World Health Organization

WMD – Weapons of Mass Destruction
Introduction
To President George W. Bush, September 11, 2001 represented “the Pearl Harbor of the 21st century;”¹ the first salvo in a new era of asymmetrical warfare against an enemy bent on the abolition of Western culture and a willingness to go to extremes as a means to attain that objective. Moreover, it signified an epic struggle between darkness and light. “We are here in the middle hour of our grief,” Bush acknowledged at a national prayer service held on September 14. “But our responsibility to history is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil.”² Six days later, speaking to a joint session of Congress, he expanded on this theme, declaring, “What is at stake is not just America’s freedom. This is the world’s fight. This is civilization’s fight... Great harm has been done to us. We have suffered great loss. And in our grief and anger we have found our mission and our moment. Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom – the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time – now depends on us. Our nation – this generation – will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail... The course of this conflict is not known, yet its outcome is certain. Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them.”³ The grand work awaiting America in a dawning age of “new and uncertain challenges” demanded bold action⁴ – this was to come in the form of the National Security Strategy of 2002.⁵

⁵ The National Security Strategy is a document issued at various intervals by the Executive branch of the government of the United States for Congress. It illustrates and defines the major national security priorities of the United States of America and how the Administration of the day will undertake and execute such priorities in accordance to what it deems to be its national interest objectives. The legal structure for the National Security Strategy is defined in the Goldwater-Nichols Act. The document is intentionally broad in content and depends on elaborating the guidance provided in supporting documents. In specific relation to this thesis: The National Security Strategy of the United States of America of 2002 was a 36-page policy document (including cover and introduction) released by the White House. The nine-chapter document began with a different quote taken from a series of post-September 11 speeches given at West Point; the National Cathedral in Washington DC; Berlin, Germany; Monterrey, Mexico; the Inter-American Development Bank, Washington DC; and a Joint Session of Congress, Washington. The National Security Strategy began with an “Overview of America’s International Security Strategy” (Chapter 1) and from there moved into the following: Chapter 2: “Champion Aspirations for Human Dignity;” Chapter 3: “Strengthen Alliances to Defeat Global Terrorism and Work to Prevent Attacks Against Us and Our Friends;” Chapter 4: “Work with Others to Defuse Regional Conflicts;” Chapter 5: “Prevent our Enemies from Threatening us, our allies, and our friends, with Weapons of Mass Destruction;” Chapter 6: “Ignite a New Era of Global Economic Growth through Free Markets and Free Trade;” Chapter 7: “Expand the Circle of Development by Opening Societies and Building the Infrastructure of Democracy;” Chapter 8: “Develop Agendas for Cooperative Action with Other Main Centers of Global Power;” and Chapter 9: “Transform America’s National Security Institutions to Meet the Challenges and Opportunities of the Twenty-First Century.”
The release of the National Security Strategy on September 20, 2002, was perceived by many as marking an end of an era in US security strategy and policy. In response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the previous structures of US security strategy were replaced with an explicit strike policy that advocated both the identification and destruction of terrorist threats “before” they were able to “reach” the United States’ “borders”; even if this entailed acting alone and using what was referred to as “pre-emptive” force. Indeed, the increasing possibility that chemical, nuclear and biological weapons could fall into the hands of stateless terrorists, coupled with the al Qaeda attack in the United States, signalled the breakdown of the strategy that had served the United States military throughout the Cold War and first phase (1991-2001) of the post-Cold War period. Having witnessed firsthand the terrible destruction wrought by a comparatively small and unsophisticated attack upon New York, Washington DC and rural Pennsylvania, the Bush Administration unanimously proclaimed that keeping the “world’s worst weapons out of the hands of the world’s worst people” would henceforth become Washington’s highest national security priority for the foreseeable future. True to its word, President George W. Bush and his Administration formalised and put into action a grand strategy designed to compensate for America’s new-found perception of vulnerability and more importantly, prevent a “nuclear 9/11.”

The National Security Strategy of the United States of America declared that: “WMD – nuclear, biological, and chemical – in the possession of hostile states and terrorists represents one of the greatest security challenges facing the US” and “Our enemies have openly declared that they are seeking WMD... the US will not allow these efforts to succeed... as a matter of common sense and self defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.” These two assertions – that the most defining threat to the national security of the US was the synthesis of “radicalism and technology” and that the US would view these developments as unacceptable and act to destroy them “before they are fully formed” – provided the basis for what would become known as the “Bush Doctrine.” Not without its critics, the so-called Bush Doctrine came to dominate American political discourse from 2002-04 as political leaders, academic scholars and the general public debated

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7 Brian M. Jenkins, “A Nuclear 9/11?” This commentary appeared on CNN.com on September 11, 2008 and was republished on the RAND Corporation website: <http://www.rand.org/commentary/2008/09/11/CNN.html>.
the implications of this broad and contentious initiative. Whereas its proponents contended that an urgent and unprecedented threat revolution was well under way that required new and proactive approaches to using force, critics of the Bush Doctrine viewed its espousal of preventive war to combat the proliferation of WMD as further testimony to American unilateralism, and perhaps most importantly, a fundamentally unnecessary departure from the traditional, time-tested strategies of deterrence and containment that figured so prominently in defeating the Soviet Union during the Cold War.\(^\text{10}\) Their political inclinations notwithstanding, both sides agreed that the Bush Doctrine was something entirely “new,” “candid,” “bold” and “revolutionary,” a radical doctrine the likes of which the world had never seen and “perhaps the most sweeping reformulation of US strategic thinking in more than half a century.”\(^\text{11}\)

However, as this thesis will argue, despite the frequent portrayal of being radically “new” or “revolutionary,” the Bush Doctrine in terms of counter-proliferation and preventive war advocacy was not the era-defining departure that many at the time portended. In fact, it will become evident during the course of this thesis that such concepts have been very much implicit in previous US Administrations; in the context of both their National Security Strategy releases and preventive war considerations extending back to the end of World War II. However, if notions of assertive counter-proliferation and preventive war considerations were neither new nor groundbreaking, then what was defining about the Bush Doctrine? In simple terms, and as the second assertion of this thesis will attest, the “doctrine” attempted to place the nuclear option back to the fore; a defining policy that punctuated, updated, refined and reaffirmed its core nuclear endorsement through the unclassified and classified documents it spawned. These nuclear arteries may be viewed as formal policy that established a willingness to use nuclear weapons on states deemed to be adversarial. Indeed, the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review, the 2002 National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction, the 2005 Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, the 2006 Strategic Operations Joint Operating Concept Version 2.0 and, in recent times, the Reliable Replacement Warhead program, clearly illustrate that the Bush Doctrine cannot be defined as a doctrine of preventive intervention alone, but rather as one that advocated nuclear weapons reactivation. It is these documents that signified the Bush Administration’s push to modernise US offensive forces, deploy missile defences, upgrade

communication and satellite systems, and overall, reinvigorate the nuclear military complex. Behind the Administration’s rhetoric of post-Cold War restraint were expansive plans to revitalise US nuclear forces and all the elements that supported them within a so-called “New Triad” of capabilities, combining nuclear and conventional offensive strikes with missile defences and nuclear weapons infrastructure.\textsuperscript{12} Not since the escalation of the Cold War in Ronald Reagan’s first term was there such an emphasis on nuclear weapons in US defence strategy. Indeed, the deeper policy within the Bush Doctrine, carried forward in abovementioned policy documents, foreshadowed a new nuclear era in which the once-termed “weapon of last resort” returned as a distinctly usable, and “necessary” tool, or, what Russell and Wirtz described as a “quiet revolution” in which the spectre of nuclear reactivation was pursued both arrogantly and assertively.\textsuperscript{13}

**Research Questions**

It was the controversy surrounding the National Security Strategy of 2002, as well as the subsequent War in Iraq shortly after, that sparked this researcher’s initial interest in this area of study and research. After the first six months of research, however, it became apparent that the Bush Doctrine was not necessarily the radical departure that many in the academic, policy and commentary areas had subscribed to. As a result, this led to the following question framework in which the research component of the thesis was to be undertaken.

*Main Question No. 1:*

To what degree have the core elements of the National Security Strategy of 2002 (“Bush Doctrine”) been implicit in US foreign policy since 1945?

As a means to address the above question, the researcher refined this approach by addressing the following sub-questions:

- To what extent have the core elements of the National Security Strategy of 2002 (“Bush Doctrine”) been implicit in US foreign policy in comparison to previous National Security Strategies since their inception in 1986 under the Goldwater Nicholls Act?


- To what degree has the Administration’s advocacy of pre-emption – the most defining assertion of the National Security of 2002 – been evident, considered or even implicit in previous post-war Administrations?
- Was the Bush Doctrine actually advocating pre-emption in the true definition of the word?
- If the Bush doctrine was indeed an instrument/policy/security strategy that was not overly new, then how did it distinguish itself, if at all?
- In simpler terms, if it was apparent that the Bush Doctrine was not overly “new” in comparison to previous National Security Strategies or its advocacy in acting preventively, then what was the defining or significant aspect of the “doctrine?”

It became apparent during the research process that the Bush Administration was not just advocating prevention in its National Security Strategy of 2002, but was also attempting to align the nuclear option within this proactive and assertive framework. This led to the second main question.

**Main Question No. 2:**
To what extent did the Bush Doctrine attempt to reinvigorate the nuclear option?

This was also articulated and refined into smaller sub-questions:

- How was the Bush Administration different to that of the Clinton Administration in terms of maintaining the significance of nuclear weapons in the US security strategy framework?
- What documental evidence suggests that the assertive posture of the National Security Strategy engendered further nuclear development?
- To what extent can the nuclear option be deemed as the “radical” aspect of the Bush Doctrine?
Research Approach

The purpose of this thesis is to address the above questions and provide an examination of the National Security Strategy of 2002. It has involved an approach encompassing qualitative research, document analysis, content analysis and historical research. In recognising the words of Norman A. Graebner, “the significant milieu” of such an analysis seeks to delineate the constellation of ideas, beliefs and assumptions (both spoken and unspoken) that inform foreign policy, and in the case of this thesis, the National Security Strategy of 2002. It seeks to provide an insight into the major US policy instruments that have been the bases of historical and contemporary interpretation during the past ten years specifically, but will also engage those dating back to the beginning of the Cold War period. Such documents, not unlike the pamphlets examined by the Harvard historian Bernard Bailyn in *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* forty years ago, reveal an exceptional “explanatory” quality, “not merely positions taken but the reasons why positions were taken,” the very motives, intentions and values that informed America’s world view. These documents, as the following chapters attest, indicate – in the words of Bailyn about an earlier time of troubles – “that there were real fears, real anxieties, a sense of real danger behind those phrases and not merely a desire to influence by rhetoric and propaganda the inert minds of an otherwise passive populace.”

Indeed, the events of 9/11 reflected such “fears,” but more importantly, “accelerated the use of force” paradigm, at least in the minds of the Administration and, most importantly, the President. The Bush Administration’s presentation of the September 11 tragedies did not merely define the airliner attacks as criminal activities; rather, these actions were presented as acts of terror intended to precipitate a global war effort. Bush’s identification of the terrorist attacks as an act of war framed the “question of culpability” and the “propriety of war” for public acceptance. By defining the attacks on 9/11 as acts of war, Bush expanded the frame for interpreting these symbolic actions and challenged the adequacy of existing laws and policies constraining an appropriate government response. The declaration of war was necessitated by what Bitzer detailed as the constraints of the rhetorical situation – the

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complex web of people, events, objects, relations and actions that bear upon rhetorical action.\textsuperscript{17} With the perpetrators’ remains missing among the debris from the four airplanes, the Bush Administration sought a rhetorical means to quell public concerns about the imminent risk of future attacks. By directing “the full resources for our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and bring them to justice,” Bush told the American public his strategy to “make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them.”\textsuperscript{18} The act of naming the war that the Bush Administration would fight enabled the President to avert a legal strategy in pursuit of a military response, and thereby attempted to control the political agenda toward public acceptance of the commitment to warfare. The language of modern warfare enabled the President to inculcate a sense of urgency among the public that stood by its Commander-in-Chief. Historically, such war rhetoric is distinctive because it functions to prepare the public for a total commitment, and for sacrifice in support of broader Presidential initiatives.\textsuperscript{19} As argued by Condit and Greer:

War constitutes the ultimate measure of the value of a community to its members because each war asks whether the survival of the community in its particular form is worth the sacrifice of all that each individual person owns, is, or can be. With its emphasis on tragedy and its request for sacrifice, war rhetoric also functions to define a problem and to select a screen for public interpretation of an event.\textsuperscript{20}

The pervasive symbols of insecurity in public discourse after 9/11 helped the President request appropriations from the Congress to respond to the new security crisis, and forge a new consensus in concordance with the nation’s domestic needs. Political scientist Arnold Wolfers argued that the symbol of security “suggests protection through power and therefore

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figures more frequently in the speech of those who believe in reliance on national power than of those who place their confidence in model behavior, international cooperation, or the United Nations to carry their country safely through the tempests of international conflict.”

Wolfers also contended that security works as an ambiguous symbol, and may function “as a cloak for other more enticing demands,” where ambitious politicians may consider “no price” for security to be “too high.” He maintained that “this is one of the reasons why very high security aspirations tend to make a nation suspect of hiding more aggressive aims.” In evaluating the nature of security policies, Wolfers argued that attention should be paid to the “specific character and the particular circumstances” of the ways in which security is established to subvert, reaffirm and protect national values. By analysing and exploring the documental policy instruments posited in the aftermath of these “particular circumstances,” an understanding of the Bush Administration’s preventive aspirations, and ultimately, pursuit of the nuclear option, can be obtained. As Balz and Woodward observed, “the President and his advisers started America on the road to war that night [i.e., 11 September 2001] without a map. They had only a vague sense of how to respond [to the 9/11 attacks], based largely on the visceral reactions of the President. But nine nights later, when Bush addressed a joint session of Congress, many of the important questions had been answered.” Through a series of incremental and ad hoc decisions and measures taken in the aftermath of this terrorist outrage, the Administration gradually laid out an international paradigm on the right to use military force in the global war on terror.

While the National Security Strategy was the main articulation of this approach, other policy statements also contributed to the Bush Doctrine: the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (2002); the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (2003); and supplementing these were Presidential remarks and other Administration officials’ comments, such as President Bush’s address to the Joint Session of Congress (September 20, 2001); his State of the Union Address (January 29, 2002); and his Graduation Speech at West Point (June 1, 2002). This thesis will begin with these “unspoken and spoken” instruments and move into the other documental and policy instruments that the Bush Doctrine both engendered and resuscitated. In simple terms, it will examine: the development and

22 Ibid., p. 488.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Balz and Woodward, “America’s Chaotic Road to War.”
implementation of the policies for countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (as reflected in each National Security Strategy since its inception in 1986/7); the historical and contemporary debates pertaining to the definitions associated with prevention and pre-emption; the extent to which prevention has been seriously considered an option by previous Administrations as reflected in the declassified documents, speeches, memoirs, and interviews posited over the course of three Presidential Administrations; and the extent to which the National Security Strategy of 2002 itself has been a driving catalyst in placing the nuclear option back to the fore, as reflected in various official strategy and departmental documents; internal and external policy reviews; oversight hearings\(^\text{26}\) and assessments; as well as speeches, reports and testimonies by government officials, policy experts, Congress members and others in the national security policy community. These are reviewed as a means to “delineate” the myriad of policy “ideas, beliefs and assumption” and actions, contributing to and deriving from, the Bush Doctrine.

This thesis uses a content and document analysis / qualitative methodology to develop a deeper understanding of the Bush Administration’s National Security Strategy of 2002, the extent to which the arteries of this policy instrument have been evident in the past, and the extent to which the “doctrine” has reinvigorated the nuclear option. In terms of attaining both applicable and relevant primary sources, the following structure has been employed as a means to collect and define the research process. Moreover, it has enabled a streamlined approach for the analysis of the policy instruments that have impacted and derived from the centrepiece of the thesis itself – that being, the National Security Strategy of 2002.

Firstly, this researcher investigated Presidential and Secretary of Defense documents/statements of national security policy and strategy regarding counter-proliferation, nuclear weapon initiative(s), and the broader preservation of US security. Official documents, such as the President’s National Security Strategies, the Annual Reports of the Secretary of Defense to the President and the Congress, Presidential Decision Directives, as well as pertinent speeches on security/nuclear/counter-proliferation policy – have been considered and utilised extensively throughout this thesis. Secondly, various National

\(^{26}\) See Richard C. Sachs, *Hearings in the US Senate: A Guide for Preparation and Procedure*, Government and Finance Division, CRS Report for Congress, August 19, 2003. He defines oversight hearings as a review or study a law, issue, or an activity, often focusing on the quality of federal programs and the performance of government officials. Hearings also help ensure that the execution of laws by the executive branch complies with legislative intent, and that administrative policies reflect the public interest. Oversight hearings often seek to improve the efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of government operations. A significant part of a committee’s hearings workload is dedicated to oversight.
Security Council, Department of Defense and Defense supporting agencies’ official documents have also been researched, particularly those relating to the Administration’s counter-proliferation policies, programs and initiatives. In addition, official reports and speeches, along with the writings of agency chiefs involved in US foreign policy security issues/strategies and nuclear policymaking have also been evaluated and added to the body of research. Thirdly, key Congress members and their varying releases have been referred to in this thesis. These have come in the form of the congressional oversight process hearings, as well as speeches, papers, articles and interviews with key congressional national security experts and staff who have also provided important insights and critiques of security policy developments. Fourthly, evidence in unofficial policy research analyses and documents; including academic analyses, interest group position papers and academic and policy journals that address US security concerns, as well as those focussed on nuclear/counter-proliferation developments have also been extensively considered and employed. The foreign and defense policy institutes, known as think tanks, or sometimes referred to as the defense intellectual community who have been deeply engaged in the debates regarding US foreign policy, US security policy, US nuclear weapons policy and counter-proliferation policy have also been considered in the context of this thesis. Lastly, historical archives such as Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC – as well as research conducted at Georgetown University, Columbia University, John Hopkins University, UC Berkeley, San Francisco State University, University of Oregon and Portland State University – have proven to be of great significance in enabling the attainment of unique documents and publications. Additionally, formal and informal dialogue with American academics at these institutions has also been important to the thesis process – particularly in terms of obtaining an American perspective in what can be deemed as a significant juncture in US security policy.

Study Value

Why is such an analysis of the Bush Doctrine important? With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the US stands as the sole superpower on the global stage. Aside from its economic, political, technological and cultural dimensions, the US is also unmatched in terms of the military power it has at its disposal. Hence, how it chooses to use this power – under what circumstances and to what degree – will critically affect the evolution of international rules governing the use of force. This analysis attempts to fill an existing gap in the international literature concerning the use of force in a preventive context
as well as the alignment of preventive force to one that encompasses a nuclear option – as reflected in the varying documental instruments engendered by the “doctrine.” While scholars have written extensively on the various aspects of the Bush Doctrine, primarily exploring the legality and legitimacy of the Administration’s policies and practices in the global War on Terror, these have often been distinctly limited in their scope – particularly in terms of making the nuclear connection and the (limited) timeframe of these analyses. It is evident that the Bush Doctrine came to dominate American political discourse from 2002-04 as political leaders, academic scholars, and the general public debated the implications of what appeared to be a radical initiative. Proponents argued that this was a necessary transformation in which new and proactive approaches to using force would be imperative in the post 9/11 world. As stated by Mark Mantho, for “a vocal and increasingly influential cadre of conservative foreign policy analysts, containment was at best pusillanimous accommodation of the enemy, at worst treasonous abjuration of America’s self-evident obligation to lead the free world.”

Critics, however, argued that the Bush Doctrine’s espousal of preventive war to combat the proliferation of WMD was further testimony to American unilateralism and perhaps most importantly, a shift away from the strategies of deterrence and containment. However, as alluded to in the above, many writers, academics, commentators and policy-makers (both former and current) who have written about the Bush Doctrine have often been limited to the period of 2002-2004 – and often in the context of the lead up and immediate period after the invasion of Iraq in March, 2003. Additionally, and like the Bush Doctrine itself, many have often fallen short in their attempts to define pre-emption and prevention, while others, also like Bush, have interchanged the terms [often] based on their own varying political agendas. Furthermore, and again pursuing another apparent gap, it appears that the Bush Doctrine has been more implicit in history than what many realise – in the context of previous Administrations’ National Security Strategy releases, as well as the broader US security context extending back to World War II. While many have made fleeting and isolated connections to the historical milieu pertaining to preventive considerations, this research attempts to fill what is perceived as a distinct gap in comprehensiveness, depth and more importantly, linkages across the several Administrations who have seriously considered a preventive course of action.

Moreover, this analysis attempts to fill an existing gap pertaining to the nuclear option posited within the framework of the National Security Strategy of 2002 – refined and expanded on in the subsequent documental instruments it sponsored in the period thereafter. Indeed, while many commentators have focussed on the Administration’s endorsement of “pre-emptive” intervention, it was in the latter stages of Chapter Five, and more significantly, the conclusive chapter [Nine] that revealed an underlying doctrinal revision and its reference to nuclear applications. As Chapter Five of the National Security Strategy of 2002 admonished, proactive counter-proliferation efforts would be pursued in which the United States would deter and defend against a threat before it was unleashed. It would now work to ensure that its key capabilities – detection, active and passive defenses, and counterforce capabilities – were integrated into its defense transformation and homeland security systems. Assertive counter-proliferation would be integrated into the doctrine, training and equipping of its forces, utilising its technological advantage and nuclear uniqueness as a means to ensure that it would prevail in any conflict with WMD-armed adversaries.28 In Chapter Nine, Bush argued that the US military’s highest priority was to defend the United States and as a means to do so effectively, the military needed to be transformed so as to focus more on how an adversary may fight, rather than where and when a war might occur. Innovation and a new assertion within the armed forces would encompass experimentation with new approaches to warfare, strengthening joint operations, exploiting US intelligence advantages, and taking full advantage of science, technology and its nuclear dominance.29 Most literature missed or chose to overlook the correlation between the National Security Strategy’s Chapter Nine – articulated in greater detail in the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWM) released a month later – and the Administration’s willingness to not only undertake preventive war, but to align that approach with a reinvigorated nuclear option. Indeed, as will be extensively expanded on within the body of this thesis, the Bush Administration consistently released updates of this nuclear strategy, and in doing so, illustrated how the National Security Strategy of 2002 can be perceived as the guiding force that refined its core sentiments through the unclassified and classified documents it spawned during the period of 2002-2008.

29 Ibid., p. 29.
The discussion of this thesis will proceed as follows:

Chapter Structure
While the major component of this thesis has drawn extensively on primary sources in the form of government publications – not to mention the obvious fact that it is centred on a government publication – secondary sources have remained significant in the contextualisation of both the historical climate and contemporary debates associated with the National Security Strategy of 2002. Chapter One provides an overview and evaluation of the pertinent literature surrounding the issues deriving from the release of the National Security Strategy of 2002. Such issues and debates pertained to the interpretations and meanings associated with pre-emption and prevention, the adaptation of “imminent” by the Administration and the legal implications associated with the doctrine – particularly its endorsement of regime change via the undertaking of preventive/“pre-emptive” war against sovereign states. This chapter will also point to the literature surrounding the historical context of these two terms in relation to the security challenges Administrations have experienced when facing adversarial threats. The chapter will argue that while there exists writers and commentators who have acknowledged the Bush Administration’s nuclear aspirations and subsequent actions, most have not made the correlation emanating from Chapters Five and Nine of the National Security Strategy, nor the more detailed National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWM) released a month later. In simple terms, this chapter posits the notion that while there is reasonable literature arguing the merits of Bush’s penchant for prevention/“pre-emption” and the historical context of these terms, albeit fragmented, sufficient linkages to the nuclear option that the National Security Strategy of 2002 advocated and punctuated during the period of 2002-2008, have been neither consistent nor thorough.

Chapter Two will trace the Presidential vision and rhetoric regarding several Administrations’ counter-proliferation policy goals, objectives and initiatives as conveyed in their own respective National Security Strategy release/s. Under the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, US Presidents have been required to transmit to Congress a comprehensive report setting forth the national security strategy of the United States, including a comprehensive description and discussion of its goals and objectives. This chapter will look at the National Security Strategies released by all Administrations since its formal inception under Ronald Reagan in 1987. It will argue that while there is no doubt that the National Security Strategy
of 2002 advocated preventive attacks, the notion of denying, containing and curtailing an enemies’ efforts to acquire dangerous technologies\textsuperscript{30} has been clearly evident in each National Security Strategy release since 1987. Indeed, when taken in comparison to the National Security Strategies that have preceded it, it appears that the Bush release of 2002 has merely continued the US foreign policy desire to counter proliferators and those adversarial states and non-state actors that could potentially undermine the United States’ national interest objectives and broader hegemonic aspirations.

However, as argued in \textit{Chapter Three}, the second and most controversial assertion of the Bush Doctrine was its official adoption of preventive “self-defense” as a key component of the US security strategy – in which the United States was prepared to “act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.”\textsuperscript{31} This chapter will seek to establish, clarify and perhaps even resolve the debates associated with the meanings and definitions pertaining to pre-emption and prevention. The task of confirming the core meanings and disparities between these two “strategic concepts” is an imperative requirement that will allow coherent and greater exposition (particularly in Chapter Five of this thesis) in evaluating the extent to which preventive war has been an implicit consideration in US security strategy. Additionally, this chapter will convey the degree in which such concepts and accompanying interpretations have challenged and transcended the many facets of international relations and US security policy – within the context of history, doctrine, international law and use within a Presidential rhetorical framework.

\textit{Chapter Four} will investigate the question that, if preventive war was considered a viable option by the Bush Administration, then why was Iraq the state of “choice?” It is evident that from 2001-2003, Iraq, Iran and North Korea were all considered rogue proliferators and defined by the Administration as “grave and gathering threats.” Assuming that the US was determined to act preventively against at least one of them, one would expect to find evidence that the Bush Administration sought and/or planned to attack all three. However, as this chapter will argue, it appears from the outset that the Administration’s preferred target was Iraq. The chapter will evaluate the extent to which the cultivation of the preventive war doctrine (rhetorically and formally in the context of the National Security Strategy of 2002) was aligned to the sovereign state of Iraq and will include an analysis into the process

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Ibid.}, Introduction.
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 13-15.
involved in the orchestration and lead up to the preventive war action undertaken on March, 20, 2003. It will assert that despite its appearance of being a radically new approach, at its core, the Bush Doctrine’s push for preventive war (acted on in Iraq) long pervaded the strategic thought of policy-makers, officials, and military planners at the highest levels of the US government.

As Chapter Five will argue, since the commencement of the nuclear era in 1945, at least three other US Presidents (Dwight D. Eisenhower, Lyndon B. Johnson and William J. Clinton) have faced the potential threat of nuclear technology in the possession of states hostile to their respective Administrations and each wrestled with the same decision faced by President Bush in 2003: whether to use preventive military force as a means to counter the proliferation of such nuclear weapon development. The above Administrations had to evaluate the costs of preventively striking a state perceived to be developing nuclear weapons against the costs of abstaining from employing such preventive actions. Indeed, as this chapter will posit, the historical record of the last half century is replete with examples of high level US decision-makers who considered the undertaking of major unilateral preventive military actions as a means to impede the proliferation of nuclear weapons by rogue states. Prior to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the US had considered waging preventive war against no less than three additional rogue proliferators – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Union) from 1945-54; the People’s Republic of China (China) from 1960-1964; and the Democratic People’s Republic of North Korea (North Korea) from 1993-94. This chapter will investigate the above case studies as a means to evaluate the extent to which the US seriously considered undertaking preventive war against these states, and in the final analysis, will assess as to whether Bush’s preventive advocacy can be considered a “new,” “radical” and “revolutionary” strategy.

Indeed, while the early chapters appraise the extent to which the Bush Doctrine can be perceived as being implicit in US security policy – based on comparisons with previous National Security Strategies and previous Administrations’ preventive considerations – the next “section” will evaluate the degree in which the National Security Strategy of 2002 engendered the reinvigorated nuclear option with the potential to be used in a preventive context. This chapter will argue that while the motivation and consideration of preventive war has been an integral part of US policy-makers strategic thought since 1945, and while it can be argued that the preventive actions of the Bush Doctrine stalled in Iraq, the nuclear
dimension encompassed in the Doctrine can be viewed as the aspect that is truly the “bold” and “radical” assertion. As revealed, Bush’s policy instruments signified a renewed role for nuclear weapons and the quest of his Administration to upgrade US offensive forces, deploy missile defenses, reconfigure communications and satellite systems, and overall, revitalise the nuclear complex. However, to look at this development as purely a Bush Administration initiative would be historically inaccurate. Thereby, Chapter Six will explain how the Clinton Administration retained much of the existing US nuclear weapons policy and force posture in the decade after the demise of the Soviet Union and affirmed the role of nuclear weapons in US security strategy. Furthermore, the Clinton Administration investigated the merit of employing targeting options for the use of nuclear weapons in response to chemical or biological attack from states other than Russia, and, in its own documental instruments, did not put out of consideration the first use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances. It was here that military planners and policy-makers – through the Defense Counter-Proliferation Initiative (CPI) 1993, Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) 1994, Doctrines for Joint Operations (Joint Pub 3-12) 1993/1995, Doctrine for Joint Theater Nuclear Operations 1996, Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) 1997 and Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 60 1997 – maintained the significance of nuclear weapons throughout the 1990s.

However, as Chapter Seven posits, despite the “base” provided and maintained by Clinton, it was the Bush Doctrine and its accompanying guidance documents that expanded the role that nuclear weapons would play in US security strategy. This chapter will evaluate the nuclear arteries that the National Security Strategy engendered, in particular, the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), the 2002 National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWMD), the 2005 Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, the 2006 Strategic Operations Joint Operating Concept Version 2.0, and in recent times, the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program. Based on this document analysis and policy evaluation it will be argued that the Bush Doctrine should not be simply dismissed or defined as a doctrine of preventive war advocacy alone, but as one that endorsed and invigorated – during the period of 2002-2008 – the nuclear option as a necessary war-fighting device. For the Bush Administration, it was a “new” and necessary “approach to warfare... exploiting US intelligence advantages, taking full advantage of science and technology”32 and in doing so, instituting a “quiet revolution.”

32 Ibid., p. 29.
Chapter 1
Literature Review
The National Security Strategy of the United States of America released in September 2002 defined the Bush Administration’s strategic response to the events of September 11, 2001. The most controversial assertion of the Bush Doctrine was the official adoption of preventive “self-defense” as a key element of the US security strategy in which the United States was prepared to “act against... emerging threats before they” were “fully formed.” Many argued that the Bush Doctrine symbolised a total break with American tradition in which the United States had undertaken a more cautious and defensive policy; a policy that was defined by the mainstay arteries of containment and deterrence; a policy that advocated respect for legal norms and for the sovereign rights of other states. Moreover, that the United States had a history of refraining from the use of force until it or one of its allies had been attacked and that the Bush Administration had dispelled this tradition; and was now undertaking a far more assertive policy. As the Administration articulated its National Security Strategy to both domestic and international audiences, the cessation of debate over United Nations action and Congressional approval for intervention in Iraq presented legitimating issues for these national and international institutions struggling to address security issues in an era of globalisation. In the United States, an anti-terrorist narrative dominated post-9/11 security discourse and shifted the presumption against the acceptance of the Cold War analytical structures that had dominated foreign policy. Citizens and states opposed to US military action against Iraq invariably articulated their opposition through a narrative warning of the perils of US global hegemony. Conversely, advocates of Bush’s policy in the US alluded to the inevitability of future security threats if the United States and a “willing coalition” failed to take preventive action against the state of Iraq. The Bush Administration, as well as its international counterparts, all faced the common predicament of how to construct and reposition their arguments amid a global media environment, while fulfilling the challenging demands of creating a foreign policy rhetoric that addressed the dispositions of their national audiences. While the major component of this thesis has drawn extensively on primary sources in the form of government publications – not to mention the obvious fact that it is centred on a government publication itself – secondary sources have remained important in cultivating an understanding of the varying debates associated with the National Security Strategy of 2002. This Chapter will evaluate the literature surrounding such debates; particularly those pertaining to the terminology of pre-emption and prevention and the extent to which the literature has considered the historical context of these terms. Moreover, the

chapter will reveal that while there is a reasonable amount of “discussion” and analysis in the context of these two terms – albeit at times fragmented, inconsistent and extensively politicised – it is apparent that there is a distinct short falling of analysis pertaining to the nuclear dimension of the Bush Doctrine. Again, while many writers and commentators have indeed acknowledged that the Bush Administration upped the nuclear weapon ante, many failed to make the correlation emanating from Chapters Five and Nine of the National Security Strategy, nor the more detailed National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWM) released a month later. Indeed, while the National Security Strategy of 2002 was a document advocating prevention, it was the subsequent policy instruments it spawned during the period between 2002-2008 that foreshadowed a new nuclear era in which the once termed “weapon of last resort” became a usable and, according to the Bush Administration, necessary war-fighting device.

One of the most defining assertions of the Bush Doctrine was that the United States would act against emerging threats before they had fully developed, clearly implying that it would enact a type of proactive response or “anticipatory self-defense.” Anticipatory self-defense is often aligned to notions of either “pre-emption” or “prevention” and while they have been periodically used interchangeably, the terms are actually two distinct strategic concepts. It was during the period of 2002-04 that many writers, commentators, academics and politicians debated the definition of these concepts in the context of the version conveyed in the National Security Strategy. It was clear very early in the research process that the meanings associated with such concepts had to be affirmed and established if the thesis was to attain and maintain a level of consistency and coherency. In essence, the main difference between pre-emption and prevention pertains to the relative timing of their application and the immediacy of the perceived threat. However, it was Jack Levy’s 1987 article entitled, “Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War,” that was able to convey what appeared to be the most straightforward definition of pre-emption. He argued that pre-emption was the initiation of military action when it was apparent that an adversary’s attack was imminent, and that there were advantages in striking first or at least in preventing the adversary from doing so. Simply put, he articulated, it was a tactical response to an immediate threat, executed as a means to forestall the mobilisation and deployment of the adversary’s existing military forces.35 Moreover, as by Arend in “International Law and the Pre-emptive Use of Force,”

pre-emption was employed “downstream” in response to a more specific, direct and immediate threat where the necessity of self-defense became so instant and overwhelming that it left no choice of means for the state and no moment for deliberation.\footnote{36 Anthony C. Arend, “International Law and the Pre-emptive Use of Force,” \textit{The Washington Quarterly}, 2003, 26: p. 91.}

Other bodies of literature were also able to clarify the term. In Russell and Wirtz’s “US Policy on Preventive War and Pre-emption,” pre-emption was defined as a state scenario where upon detecting evidence that an adversary was about to attack – traditionally the aesthetic mobilisation of armies, navies and air forces preparing to attack – the threatened state beat the opponent to the punch and attacked first as a means to thwart the impending strike.\footnote{37 James Wirtz and James Russell, “US Policy on Preventive War and Pre-emption,” \textit{The Non-proliferation Review}, 2003, Spring: p.116.} Delving into history, Russell and Wirtz recounted the 1837 British pre-emptive assault on the USS Caroline in which Secretary of State Daniel Webster classified the circumstances under which pre-emptive strikes were justified: when the attack is proportional to the threat, and when “the necessity of that self-defense is instant, overwhelming, and leaving no choice of means and no moment for deliberation.”\footnote{38 \textit{Ibid.}, p. 117.} Prior to World War II, international law permitted the use of force in self-defense. Afterward, the United Nations sought to circumscribe legal justification for application of military force, enshrining the standard of “sovereign equality” to secure the political independence and territorial integrity of member countries against the threat or use of arms. States in breach of this edict were subject to the collective response of their UN peers.\footnote{39 \textit{Ibid.}.} Russell and Wirtz cited a recent study by the Congressional Research Service, the public policy research apparatus of the US Congress, which came to the conclusion that the United States had never initiated a pre-emptive attack on another state, and, aside from the Spanish-American War, never did so without first suffering attack. Opponents of American policy, however, dismissed the report’s depiction of pre-emptive action – “to prevent or mitigate the threat or use of force by another country against the US”\footnote{40 Richard, F. Grimmet, “US Use of Pre-emptive Military Forces,” Congressional Research Service, Document RS21311, September 18, 2002, pp. 1-2; quoted in Wirtz and Russell, “US Policy on Preventive War and Pre-emption,” p. 117.} – as too narrow an interpretation, and plausibly referenced assorted “pursuits” in Central and South America and US involvement in Vietnam as a means to support their objections. As argued by Russell and Wirtz, Richard Nixon’s secret bombing of a technically neutral Cambodia, as well as incursions into Laos during the Vietnam period, also posed serious challenges to such interpretations. Moreover, one also wonders which
category the “muscular interventions” in Grenada, Panama and Haiti – that occurred between 1983 and 1994 – fall into. What was clear, they argued, was that the American people have always thought of unilateral and “pre-emptive” acts of aggression as being the province of rogue states and belligerent dictators, something morally abhorrent and rightfully beyond the ethical strictures of a “great” and “good” state.\(^{41}\)

Nonetheless, many commentators recognised that despite “the carefully selected term of art chosen by Administration officials to describe it, the Bush Doctrine goes well beyond the use of pre-emptive military force in a single, discrete instance, crossing a threshold into the exponentially more controversial realm of preventive war.”\(^{42}\) Again citing Levy’s “Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War,” prevention pertained to undertaking a winnable war now in order to avoid the risk of war later under less favourable circumstances. It was a response to a threat that would generally take several years to develop and aimed to impede the creation of new military assets. The consequence of non-action was the gradual deterioration of a states’ relative military power and the risk of a more costly war from a position of inferiority. As argued by Levy, “the theoretical significance of preventive war derives from the importance of the phenomenon of changing power differentials between states arising from uneven rates of growth.”\(^{43}\) In essence, preventive military force was the proposition that the dominant power initiates preventive action in order to impede an ascending adversary while the latter is still too weak to pose a serious threat.\(^{44}\) As the clearest explanation of both terms, Levy further argued that the preventive motivation for battle may arise from the perception that one’s military power and potential were declining relative to that of a rising adversary and from the fear of the consequences of that decline. The power shift may be the result of an advance in military technology or the acquisition of nuclear technology in the weaker state. Thereby, as contended by Lebow in, “Windows of Opportunity: Do States Jump Through Them?” preventive war should be undertaken during a period in which a state possessed a distinct military advantage over an adversary before there may be a transferral of power to one of vulnerability; a window of opportunity from the perspective of the disadvantaged side appeared likely to open.\(^{45}\) In Gray’s *The Implications of Pre-emptive and Preventive War Doctrines: A Reconsideration*, preventive war was simply war, distinguished only by its timing and where the “preventor” began with the advantage of

\(^{43}\) Levy, “Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War,” p. 82.
\(^{44}\) Ibid., p. 84.
the initiative, however, if success was not achieved swiftly and decisively, that advantage would rapidly diminish as the enemy recovered and counterattacked. In researching, citing and ultimately using these bodies of literature, it was clear that despite Bush’s use of “pre-emption,” what he was advocating in his National Security Strategy of 2002 was indeed the use of preventive war against those actors deemed to be rogue proliferators. By adhering to such traditional definitions in the context of traditional forms of imminence, the thesis process in which the preventive war meaning was integral, was able to be undertaken with a degree of efficiency and coherency.

Indeed, this apparent prevarication between preventive and pre-emptive war was a rhetorical device used by the Bush Administration with clear intention. For Josef Kunz it attempted to convey its strategic option as pre-emption. It drew the conceptual link to pre-emption through its emphasis on an expanded notion of imminence; a key element in the condition of necessity as it related to pre-emption. The Bush Doctrine embellished the concept of imminence beyond the semantic breaking point, pushing it back to the early research and development stage of the nuclear threat cycle in which the time to construct an operational nuclear weapons capability was measured not in days, weeks or even months but, rather, in years. Simply put, nuclear activities at the stage of the threat cycle referred to in the National Security Strategy of 2002 do not pose an imminent threat in the true meaning of the word.

Of course, the very introduction of a policy legitimising a preventive or pre-emptive attack on a sovereign state for the purpose of self-defense engendered contentious debate, as well as associated political and diplomatic implications. In very clear terms, many bodies of literature at the time of its release argued that what the National Security Strategy of 2002 proposed was the initiation of violence as a means to prevent it. As John Steinbruner conveyed in “Confusing Ends and Means: The Doctrine of Coercive Pre-emption,” the Bush Doctrine appeared to neglect and disdain international legal restraint and therefore, could be

47 Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary provides a useful distinction between the terms imminent, impending and threatening: imminent is the strongest; it denotes that something is ready to fall or happen on the instant — as, in imminent danger of one’s life. Impending denotes that something hangs suspended over us, and may remain so indefinitely — as, the impending evils of war. Threatening supposes some danger in prospect, but more remote — as, threatening indications for the future. See, Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary, 1913, available at <http://dict. die. net/imminent>. The preventive counter-proliferation strategy in the Bush Doctrine is based on assessments of threatening WMD capabilities, not imminent WMD attacks, as these terms are defined here.
viewed as a formula more likely to generate violence than to contain it. Additionally, as illustrated by Michael O’Hanlon, Susan E. Rice and James B. Sterling in “The New National Security Strategy and Pre-emption,” if today’s international system is defined and characterised by a relative infrequency of interstate war, then developing doctrines that lower the threshold for pre-emptive and/or preventive action could put that accomplishment at risk and intensify regional crises already on the brink of open conflict. For Neta Crawford, a strategy of preventive war assumed a sound knowledge of an adversary’s ill intentions when such presumptions may in fact be premature, exaggerated or false. While preventive-war doctrines assumed that today’s potential rival will become tomorrow’s adversary, she argued, diplomacy or some other strategy could work as a means to change the relationship from antagonism to accommodation. Moreover, according to Kegley and Raymond, preventive war was based on the notion that it is possible to predict with certainty what is to come. However, the capacity to foretell another states’ future behaviour was difficult as leadership intentions are hard to discern or detect.

Of course, there were many proponents during the period of 2002-04 who argued that rather than being a device for further proliferation, the National Security Strategy of 2002 was in essence a direct outgrowth of an existing post-proliferated and terror-prone security environment. As Jason Ellis and Geoffrey Kiefer argued in their article, “Combating Proliferation: Strategic Intelligence and Security Policy,” the Bush Doctrine was both the logical culmination of more than a decade’s worth of experience with recalcitrant proliferants in key regions, and a solid base on which to formulate US national security planning in the years ahead. They countered the argument that a reactive, diplomatic-oriented, multilateral approach would deter the possibility of a rogue state or non-state actor attacking the United States any more than a proactive, military-operational, unilateral approach would. Other proponents of the Bush approach, such as Lieber and Lieber, argued that the National Security Strategy sustained US primacy which they asserted was “good” for global peace and stability, as well as far preferable to the “alternatives.” Their 2002 article entitled, “The Bush...
National Security Strategy,” appropriated the notion that the Bush Doctrine was not just about power and security in any narrow sense; it signified the United States’ ongoing cause to spread democracy worldwide and promote the development of “free and open societies on every continent.”

Indeed, for Lieber and Lieber there were compelling reasons as to why US primacy was, in fact, “good” for global stability. Perhaps the best evidence in support of this claim, they argued, was the fact that a US military presence was “welcomed” in a great number of areas around the globe. Regional state motivations may have ranged from free-riding under the American security umbrella, to the pacifying or stabilising impact of an American presence, but the basic effect was the same. Despite obvious and expected political tensions inherent in stationing US forces abroad, many states saw US military primacy as necessary for stability and preferable to what they ambiguously refer to as “alternatives, especially in Europe, East Asia, and the Persian Gulf.” Of course, prior to the flailing US experience in Iraq from 2004 onwards, conservative literature as reflected by the likes of Ellis, Lieber et al., attained extensive momentum and support. Despite the easy defeat of Hussein in 2003 and the comfortable win in the 2004 US Presidential election, the Bush Administration and its proponents’ advocacy of prevention was to come under serious question in Iraq as WMDs were not found and the US military’s inability to cope with an asymmetrical force became very apparent – a threat that the Administration did not plan for.

In less ideologically driven fashion, Mead and Record contend that the National Security Strategy extended beyond notions of prevention and pre-emption and could be deemed as an assertive policy to preserve US hegemony and power. As conveyed by Mead in *Power, Terror, Peace and War*, there was an apparent shift in American thinking in which the need for overwhelming military superiority was perceived to be the surest foundation for national security. As the literature argued, this was partly attributed for the obvious reasons of greater security, but also correlated to the notion that supremacy could work as an important deterrent in that if the US attained a degree of military supremacy in which challenges appeared futile, then adversarial actors may “give up trying...” Additionally, as testified by...

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56 “End Game,” television documentary, *Frontline*, PBS, 2007. As the United States began a final effort to secure victory by increasing troops, *Frontline* investigated how strategic and tactical mistakes brought Iraq to virtual civil war. The film recounted how the early mandate to create the conditions for a quick exit of the American military lead to failure and sectarian strife. Producer Michael Kirk traced why the president chose what military planners warned could be the worst way to fight in Iraq.
Record in “Nuclear Deterrence, Preventive War and Counter-proliferation,” the possession of nuclear weapons by rogue actors can be seen as a threat, not so much to the US itself, but rather to the US freedom of military action necessary to sustain US global military supremacy. As a result, the literature conveyed, the US thereby declared a use of force doctrine that included preventive war as a means to sustain its perpetual global military primacy and prevent actors from deterring the US. The apparent quest by the Bush Administration to maintain US supremacy was further articulated by Mann in *Rise of the Vulcans: The History of Bush’s War Cabinet*. In his analysis, Mann argued that the post-Cold War world would entail a US approach encompassing the prevention of any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power and thwart any hostile power from dominating a region critical to its interests. America would not sit back and wait for threats or rivals to emerge, but would attempt to maintain the United States’ lone superpower status – not just today or ten years from now, but permanently – even to the extent of developing a newly invigorated nuclear option.

Aside from notions of hegemonic preservation, accounts of Presidential war rhetoric have been instructive in providing an understanding into Bush’s attempts to define the scene of the United States’ “War on Terrorism.” Historically, during wartime and crises Presidential Administrations have constrained open deliberation for political advantage. The recent Republican administrations of Reagan and Bush Snr were able to manage public discourse not only as a means to gain wider public support for policy, but also to diminish the public expectation for open, reasoned political deliberations in the US democracy. A careful understanding of Presidential discourse management during wartime offers insights into the Bush national security rhetoric, where the President (and his Administration) appeared to be similarly armed to wage a public relations campaign designed to foreclose the opportunity for public argument and deliberation over public policy. According to Kenneth Burke’s analysis of rhetorical form, strategies in political discourse are fleshed out by representative arguments that are topically consistent and satisfy the public’s need for an appropriate

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communicative response. The US public is accustomed to the rhetorical form of Presidential address during foreign crisis and wartime. The recurring features of the rhetorical form invite audience participation by awakening individuals to the possibilities of the narrative ending. As Burke suggested, “many purely formal patterns can awaken an attitude of collaborative expectancy in us.” In the case of war rhetoric, recurrent forms of Presidential address invite the public to participate in the process of acceding to the President and his administration the authority to wage military aggression. Historically, such Presidential rhetoric crafted during crisis acknowledges the legal and historical precedents that Presidents have used to make executive decisions and enact unilateral policies.

Legal doctrine and previous Presidential history can be used as resources in Presidential foreign policy rhetoric to help arouse and satisfy public expectations for what ought to occur. For example, Presidents historically have relied on mandates of the War Powers Resolution as grounds for executive command of war, and even international legal doctrine to justify intervention abroad. Campbell and Jamieson argue war messages have “legitimation” as their “central persuasive purpose.” The act of defining the war is “intimately related to an ongoing struggle between the President and Congress.” Throughout US Presidential history Campbell and Jamieson find that war rhetoric has five recurring characteristics:

(1) every element in it proclaims that the momentous decision to resort to force is deliberate, the product of thoughtful consideration; (2) forceful intervention is justified through a chronicle or narrative from which argumentative claims are


67 Ibid.
drawn; (3) the audience is exhorted to unanimity of purpose and total commitment; (4) the rhetoric not only justifies the use of force but also seeks to legitimate Presidential assumption of the extraordinary powers of the commander in chief, and, as a function of these other characteristics; (5) strategic misrepresentations play an unusually significant role in its appeals. 68

Reliance on such topoi, or commonplaces, is important during times of domestic ambiguity and uncertainty, as they work to provide legitimacy for politicians attempting to define a new political framework appropriate to the time. Windt maintained that crisis-creating rhetoric serves both deliberative and epideictic purposes for Presidents. Windt’s position is consistent with that of Cherwitz and Zagacki, who found that:

...while both consummatory and justificatory rhetoric may be kinds of epideictic oratory... sharp differences emerge. Consummatory discourse also accords with the principles of forensic rhetoric, considerable and concerted efforts are made to present a prima facie case for guilt to the American public and world; perpetrators stand mock trial for specific charges, and evidence is marshaled on behalf of the case for conviction. 69

Consistent with these goals, the War on Terror once again called for the President to conceptualise a problem, define an enemy and gather public support to legitimate new public policies. Thus, Presidential speeches responding to such calamitous events also contained what Dow identified as “epideictic strategies that function to allow the audience to reach a communal understanding of the events which have just occurred.” 70

In recent history, Presidents have declared war on inflation (Ford), on poverty (Johnson), and on drugs (Nixon, Reagan, Bush Snr) to promote a specific problem definition and attitude adoption by the public. 71 The language of war conveys “the image of a threatening other” or a clear “enemy” which threatens American ideals. 72 Presidents, in addition to acting in the name of national interests, advance war rhetoric to hold an enemy accountable for the problems that confront the nation. 73 After 9/11, the news media treated the four plane crashes

68 Ibid., p. 105.
as incidents of high drama, generating considerable domestic turmoil. In declaring the attacks an act of war, the President was, in effect, reacting to the demands of the situation. Dow elaborated further by arguing that there were important differences between crisis rhetoric addressing “situations in which the President responds to events already seen as serious... as well as those in which the President attempts to create a crisis to gain support for policy.” She argued that there was a greater need to explore the situational constraints on crisis rhetoric when the public perceives “events as having great significance even before the President addressed them.” Such was the case after 9/11 when the nation confronted an aggressive attack on United States soil that reconstituted questions of national security both domestically and abroad. The President’s political and rhetorical actions, particularly those espoused in the National Security Strategy of 2002, responded to the situational demand to legitimate sweeping changes to “US homeland security policy” and apparent changes to its broader international security strategy.

Indeed, in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the previous foundations of US strategy – deterrence and containment – were replaced with a strike policy that advocated the identification and destruction of a terrorist threat before it was able to reach US borders, even if that exercise necessitated acting alone and using preventive force. The Bush Administration pointed to those “rogue” nations seeking to acquire nuclear weapons in conjunction with “their terrorist clients” as requiring the elevation of preventive military intervention, from a last resort option to one of centrality within the US security framework. Formalised in September 2002, the National Security Strategy of the United States of America put forth a doctrine of “pre-emptive” military action, which it acknowledged was based on the existence of an imminent threat. Despite the attempts by some writers and commentators to readjust and redefine the application of prevention and pre-emption in their interpretations and definitions, the National Security Strategy’s argument of adapting the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of “today’s adversaries” clearly described prevention – attacking when there is no threat of imminent attack – and certainly not pre-emption. Indeed, having established its intent, the National Security Strategy of 2002 moved quickly towards a preventive war strategy in the state of Iraq in March 2003. But, as

75 Ibid., p. 295.
discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis, if preventive war was to be undertaken against any one of the “axis of evil” states, why was Iraq the state of “choice” for the Administration?

According to Gaddis, perhaps the real reason the Bush Administration “chose” to undertake preventive war against Iraq, rather than Iran and North Korea, was because it was perceived to be the weakest, least costly of the three threats – and was “the most feasible place where the US could strike the next blow.” For Bob Woodward, the goal of the new war plan was to undertake military operations to remove Saddam from power, eliminate the threat of any possible weapons of mass destruction and impede his suspected support of terrorism.

Indeed, from 2001-2003, as conveyed in many bodies of literature, when faced with the prospect of having to wage preventive war against one of three rogue proliferators – Iraq, Iran and North Korea – the Bush Administration chose to preventively attack Iraq, a decidedly weaker state. This appeared to support Richard Ned Lebow’s claim that a major consideration militating against war can be its expected costs. As an influential body of literature to this chapter of the thesis process, Lebow argued that in some instances the costs may be high enough to dissuade policy-makers from using force regardless of the magnitude of the expected gains. The absolute cost of war was probably an important restraining factor for American policy-makers in the context of Iran and North Korea – that is, as the absolute cost of war increased, the importance of relative gains diminished and ultimately became irrelevant to the decision for war or peace.

In terms of the “choice” of Iraq – the cultivation of the preventive war doctrine (rhetorically and formally in the context of the National Security Strategy of 2002), the alignment of the preventive war option to Iraq, as well as the orchestration and lead up to the preventive war itself – it appeared that the Bush Doctrine could be deemed as overzealous, extreme and unprecedented. However, despite such appearances of a radically new approach, at its core the Bush Doctrine’s push for preventive war in Iraq in 2003 has long pervaded the strategic thought of policy-makers, officials, and military planners at the highest levels of the US government. Since the end of World War II, each time a rogue state has attempted to acquire nuclear weapons, the US seriously considered taking unilateral preventive action as a means to obstruct them – even in the dubious case of Iraq where action was undertaken.

Indeed, the historical record of the last half century is sated with examples of significant US decision-makers contemplating the execution of major unilateral preventive military actions in order to preclude the proliferation of nuclear weapons by rogue states. A significant body of literature that expressed this idea both clearly and convincingly was that of Marc Tratchenberg. In his article entitled, “A Wasting Asset: American Strategy and the Shifting Nuclear Balance,” Tratchenberg evaluated the extent to which preventive war thinking played a much greater role in shaping US policy and was by no means limited to what he described as the “lunatic fringe.” Indeed, as argued, if the Soviets were allowed to develop nuclear forces of their own, wouldn’t they someday try to destroy the one power that prevented them from achieving their goals by launching a nuclear attack on the US?\(^{79}\) According to Ricks and Loeb in their article entitled, “Bush Developing Military Policy of Striking First,” during this period the “surprisingly widespread” espousal of Bush Doctrine-like preventive war thinking was very evident. However, it was also apparent that several powerful US government officials and military planners, including some preventive war advocates, believed that the very concept of preventive war was “out of step” with America’s political traditions and strategic culture. That is, preventive war was both “aggressive” and “dishonorable,” “the kind of thing inflicted on the American people, not initiated by them.”\(^{80}\) Nonetheless, despite these inhibitions it was clear that in the context of the Soviet threat during the period of 1945-1954, preventive war thinking was not just limited to those in the US military, but attained a substantial following among some of the most renowned government officials, journalists and political scientists in the western world.

In the context of China, according to Nacht’s “The Future Unlike the Past: Nuclear Proliferation and American Security Policy,” many US policy-makers saw the Communist state as a powerful threat to American security interests. The decade of the 1950s included the Sino-American armed conflict in Korea and several major crises over Taiwan and the neighbouring offshore islands. The Sino-American relationship, prior to Chinese nuclear weapons acquisition, was wholly adversarial, and those Americans who thought it should be otherwise either had no influence or were summarily discredited if they voiced their views decisively.\(^{81}\) Extending beyond the case studies explored in this thesis, John Gaddis’s


Surprise Security and the America Experience has argued that throughout the course of US history, the concepts of “pre-emption/prevention,” “unilateralism” and “hegemony” have been very much evident “and that their efficacy and morality usually depended on the particular historical situation in which they occurred.”

Based on a series of lectures conducted at the New York Public Library in 2002, Gaddis argued that it was the Monroe Administration that set in motion this “active” template as a means to guarantee US hegemony in the Western hemisphere, while the likes of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry Truman chose to expand American influence through working with allies – but ensuring that American goals were always paramount, if subtly disguised as a choice between US primacy or “a worse alternative.”

Gaddis posited further examples, including the Andrew Jackson invasion of Spanish Florida as a means to stop raids across the border and the annexation of Texas and California on the principle that such frail, embryonic republics were not viable and were thus likely to fall into the hands of other – and most likely hostile – powers, which would inevitably end up threatening American security.

For Gaddis, periods of perceived or real vulnerability have been a key factor in defining US strategy pertaining to “pre-emption/prevention,” “unilateralism” and “hegemony.” He referred to the 1814 burning of Washington DC by British forces, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and al Qaeda’s attacks on September 11 as examples that all demanded that the US re-examine their place in the world and, in each case, expanded their security frontiers and embraced a more ambitious foreign policy to deal with newly perceived threats.

Moreover, he argued, most landmark American initiatives that followed – from Washington’s Farewell Address and the Monroe Doctrine, through to John Hay’s “Open Door Policy” in China and America’s “associated” role in World War I – were indicative of the 20th Century course in which the United States was prepared to undertake “a go it alone stance.”

In his lecture series, Gaddis illustrated the unique set of influences that cultivated American foreign policy and argued that contrary to the opinion of many, the foreign policy posited by the Bush Administration after 9/11 had its origins deep in the traditional American approach to international relations. While he has not been intricately drawn upon during the course of this thesis, it was Gaddis’s main argument and broader philosophy – pertaining to the

84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
intrinsic pervasiveness of the United States’ preventive assertions in US history – which this researcher subscribed to, and more significantly, expanded on through the case studies pertaining to the Soviet Union, China and North Korea.

Indeed, in the context of North Korea, the actual notion of using preventive military force to preclude North Korea from obtaining a nuclear arsenal became very much a possibility during the period of 1993-1994. Not wanting to take any chances with what was perceived as a hostile regime, many in the US advocated “seizing the initiative” and striking first via preventive war. It can be argued that due to its unprecedented media coverage, preventive war thinking during the 1994 North Korean nuclear crisis commanded a wide range of support throughout the US government as well as the general population. For the likes of Larry DiRita of the conservative Heritage Foundation, rather than looking to appease one of the last remaining “Stalinist dictatorships” in the world, [the Clinton Administration] should have set a deadline for North Korea to allow international inspectors, or else imposed sanctions and considered destroying their military headquarters, ballistic missile launch sites, or command and control facilities. Moreover, National Security Adviser, Anthony Lake, was prepared to run the risk of a violent North Korean reaction to sanctions and even undertake preventive air strikes if it meant stopping Pyongyang from obtaining a nuclear arsenal. For Lake, North Korea’s effort to develop a nuclear capability was especially dangerous because of their ballistic missile program and the high likelihood that Pyongyang would export both technologies to other rogue states.

According to William Perry’s “Remarks by Secretary of Defense William Perry to the Asia Society,” Lake believed that North Korea had become one of the foremost merchants of [ballistic missiles] weapons, had sold Scud missiles to Syria and Iran, was actively marketing its next generation of ballistic missiles, and in short, if it developed nuclear weapons, the United States would face an extremely volatile situation. However, as expressed by Richard Cronin in “Practical Constraints on US Policy,” while the preventive option was a consideration, the inhibitions pertaining to the very high probability that North Korea would retaliate against the US

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became a distinct concern. 89 Robert Litwak further articulated the potential risk of a preventive war in “The New Calculus of Pre-emption,” arguing that the North Koreans did not distinguish between a narrow US counter-proliferation option on the North’s nuclear facilities and general war. On the American side, the fear of inadvertent escalation and catalytic war in which the possibility that a counter-proliferation strike on the North’s nuclear infrastructure would provoke an all-out war on the Korean Peninsula, was a key policy determinant. 90

While it is impossible to fully comprehend the specific reason as to why each respective Administration chose not to employ the preventive war option – analytically it was difficult, if not unworkable, to separate normative concerns from strategic calculations. Again, drawing from Lebow’s “Windows of Opportunity: Do States Jump Through Them?” – the former were “intangible considerations that do not lend themselves to ready assessment let alone to quasi-quantification,” and based on the available information, it was fair to assume that the key US decision-makers in all of the cases reviewed in the above were more heavily influenced by the practical costs of said action. 91 None of these Administrations were completely unaware or unmoved by the immorality and illegality associated with preventive war, however, it was clear that each one – from Truman and Eisenhower to Kennedy and Clinton – was ultimately willing (if not always able) under the “right” conditions, to embark upon a preventive path of action irrespective of the moral costs. As confirmed by Trachtenberg, “the reason that a preventive war strategy was never adopted as policy… was that it did not make any strategic sense.” 92 Moreover, drawing on a more recent body of literature entitled, “Preventive War and US Foreign Policy,” Trachtenberg argued that the “preventive” war term was one that endorsed the notion of force being used even if a country has not been attacked, “but we also mean a policy rooted in concerns about the future, about what might happen tomorrow if nothing is done today.” By this definition it was evident that the Bush policy certainly qualified as a preventive war policy, however, did the “adoption of that strategy of ‘prevention’ mark a total break with American tradition, or did earlier Administrations, to one extent or another, also think in ‘preventive’ terms?” 93 As further

93 Trachtenberg, “Preventive War and US Foreign Policy,” p. 29.
affirmed by Trachtenberg, “it turns out that the sort of thinking one finds in the Bush policy documents is not to be viewed as anomalous. Under Roosevelt and Truman, under Eisenhower and Kennedy, and even under Clinton in the 1990s, this kind of thinking came into play in a major way.”

Or as eloquently stated by Lavoy, and utilised in this thesis, the Bush Administration’s “new” national security strategy read much like “old wine in a new bottle” and hardly represented the significant policy shift that many believed.

The literature researched, considered, analysed and evaluated in this thesis illustrates the many instances in which preventive war has been seriously considered by previous Administrations – and in the context of Bush’s National Security Strategy of 2002, cannot be deemed as “new,” “candid,” “bold” and “revolutionary.” In saying this, however, the Bush Doctrine should not be simply dismissed or defined as a doctrine of prevention alone, but also as one that advocated a nuclear weapon reassertion. Indeed, the Bush Doctrine engendered a period (2002-2008) in which it released guidance documents pertaining to the resurgent role of nuclear weapons and the Bush Administration’s overall quest to modernise US offensive forces and revitalise the nuclear military complex. Nonetheless, it would be both remiss and incorrect to see this assertion as purely the result of the Bush Administration’s policies.

It was apparent that the Clinton Administration ignored its historic opportunity to reverse decades of dangerous and provocative nuclear weapons planning and can be considered as maintaining and contributing to the very base in which Bush was able to undertake his nuclear assault. Amy Woolf, a specialist in National Defense, Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade Division, maintained a comprehensive and regularly updated body of literature on the nuclear weapons development, including a sound insight into the Clinton era. Entitled “US Nuclear Weapons: Changes in Policy and Force Structure,” Woolf argued that during the Cold War, the United States maintained nuclear forces that were sized and structured to deter any attack by the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies, and if deterrence failed, to defeat the Soviet Union. In the period after the 1989 collapse of the Berlin wall and 1991 demise of the Soviet Union, officials in the US government and analysts outside government pursued numerous reviews and studies of US nuclear weapons policy and force structure. While these

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94 Ibid.
studies varied in scope, most attempted to define a new role for US nuclear weapons, including the appropriate size and structure of the US nuclear arsenal in the post-Cold War era. Woolf argued that these attempted to not only end the hostile US-Soviet global rivalry, but to adapt to the emergence of new threats and regional challenges to US security – and contributed to the Clinton Administration’s response to changes in the international security environment. 97

Aside from the end of the Cold War, it was also the coinciding Gulf War of 1990-1991 that defined and ensured the continued role of nuclear weapons within US security strategy. As explained by Jason Ellis in his Washington Quarterly article entitled, “The Best Defense: Counter-proliferation and US National Security,” while Iraq did not ultimately use chemical or biological weapons in the conflict, post-war intelligence into the nature of Iraqi WMD developments “shocked” those within the national security community; startling even well informed observers and highlighted the potential susceptibility of US regional security strategy. 98 In greater detail, Harald Müller, David Fisher and Wolfgang Kotter referred to the US Gulf War Air Power Survey (GWAPS) in which the Iraqi nuclear program was deemed to be “massive” and closer to fielding a weapon than what people during the conflict realised. The “target list” on January 16, 1991 contained two nuclear targets, but after the war, inspectors operating under the United Nations Special Commission eventually uncovered more than twenty sites involved in the Iraqi nuclear weapons program; sixteen of which were described as “main facilities.” 99 As further articulated by Keaney and Eliot in the Gulf War Air Power Survey: Summary Report itself, it was concluded that “the air campaign no more than inconvenienced Iraqi plans to field atomic weapons.” 100 The GWAPS study stated that, “we now know that the Iraqis’ program to amass enough enriched uranium to begin producing atomic bombs was more extensive... further along, and considerably less vulnerable to air attack than was realized at the outset of Desert Storm.” 101 These above
bodies of literature were important in that they helped establish the historical context of the Clinton era and illustrated that despite the easy defeat of Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War, the post conflict “findings” contributed to the reason as to why Clinton maintained the nuclear platform.

As again stated by Ellis, while containment remained the United States’ main focus, the Defense Department had undertaken a new strategy: developing military capabilities as a means to address WMD-armed regional adversaries – reflected in the release of Clinton’s Counter-Proliferation Initiative of 1993.\footnote{Ellis, “The Best Defense: Counter-proliferation and US National Security,” p. 17.} While there was a reasonable amount of formal government literature on this area (evaluated in Chapter Six of this thesis) there existed very few articles, journals or commentaries. One of the most insightful, however, was Barry Schneider’s McNAir Paper entitled “Radical Responses to Radical Regimes: Evaluating Pre-emptive Counter-Proliferation.” Schneider defined the Counter-Proliferation Initiative (CPI) as “providing the funding to prepare for combating foes with nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) and missile weapons on future battlefields,” improving monitoring for locating rival NBC/missile programs, improving theater defenses, and overall, vying to develop weapons capable of penetrating and destroying underground facilities.\footnote{Barry R. Schneider, “Radical Responses to Radical Regimes: Evaluating Pre-emptive Counter-Proliferation,” \textit{McNAir Paper 41}, Institute for Strategic National Studies, National Defense University, Washington DC, May 1995, pp. 1-3.} The CPI anticipated a “troubled world” in which more states would acquire WMD; with some of those states governed by dangerous and hostile radical regimes. As Schneider stated, “hopefully, leaders of such states can be deterred from WMD use, however, it was for those states that were willing to accept risks, who were very dissatisfied with the status quo, and who may not be deterred by threats to their people or their nation’s economy that the CPI was designed.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 3.}

Schneider presented the Clinton approach in maintaining a sound strike force within US security strategy as a necessary requirement. However, for Angus McColl, the Clinton approach appeared to pursue “both paths” and was almost a conflict of interest. As argued, many proponents of traditional diplomatic non-proliferation efforts feared that the coercive element of counter proliferation, especially the threat to use military force, would undermine the international cooperation and consensus upon which non-proliferation depended on for its success. He also criticised counter-proliferation as a short-term solution to the WMD proliferation. Indeed, McColl’s depiction presented a view extensively held by many at the
time who argued that for all of Clinton’s internationalist rhetoric, the maintenance of US hegemony and power was paramount to his Administration’s security policy framework.

This was clearly evident with the release of the Doctrine for Joint Theater Nuclear Operations (Joint Pub 3-12.1), the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and the Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 60. According to Kristensen, in his paper entitled, “Nuclear Futures: Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and US Nuclear Strategy,” Joint Pub 3-12.1 translated the overall joint nuclear doctrine in which nuclear weapons could be used in regional scenarios in which short, medium, and intermediate-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear, biological, or chemical warheads, were the primary target. In his article entitled, “Backwards Into the Future: How the Quadrennial Defense Review Prepares America for the Wrong Century,” Carl Conetta extended on Kristensen’s presentation, arguing that the QDR advocated the continuum of nuclear superiority and the role accorded to military power as a means of influence in the attainment of national goals. According to Jeffrey Smith in “Clinton Directive Changes Strategy On Nuclear Arms,” the Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 60 released during the same year, expanded on the position of the QDR and how it “would permit” US nuclear strikes after enemy attacks had used chemical or biological weapons. Foreshadowing the period that would be extensively acted upon by the Bush Administration, Smith informed his readers that rogue states, “a terminology commonly used by the Pentagon for countries such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea and Syria,” were specifically listed as possible targets in the event of regional conflicts or crises. While these bodies of literature did not necessarily delve into the intricacies of Clinton’s nuclear guidance documents, they nonetheless illustrated the extent to which Clinton himself retained and cultivated the United States’ nuclear posture.

However, while maintaining the nuclear role as affirmed under Clinton, the Bush Administration upon attaining power in November 2000 provided a different description of what this role would entail. Indeed, Bush assumed that nuclear weapons would be a part of US security strategy for at least the next 50 years. Given this timeframe, the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) of 2002 recommended that the United States should undertake a development

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process of its weapons systems that would enter the force in the years between 2020 and 2040. It was clear that the Bush Administration did not assume that the current systems in the US nuclear arsenal would be the last, and that to have an efficient nuclear option would involve redevelopment of such systems – even with the potential of creating a new nuclear weapon. As an extension of the broader National Security Strategy posited two months earlier in September 2002, the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWMD) illustrated that Bush’s policy was a deviation in direction that endorsed and advocated an assertive nuclear weapon policy. While the Clinton Administration reaffirmed earlier US pledges not to use nuclear weapons to attack non-nuclear weapon states-parties to the nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), at the same time, it kept open the option to use nuclear weapons, even in nuclear weapon free zones. In essence, according to Mendelsohn in his article entitled, “The Muddle of US Nuclear Weapons Strategy,” both Administrations found new reasons as to why nuclear weapons would remain vital to US security while they sought to keep the rest of the world denuclearized.108 Clinton retained much of the existing nuclear weapons policy and force posture in the 1990s in US security strategy through his own guidance documents/instruments – the Defense Counter-Proliferation Initiative (CPI) 1993, Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) 1994, Doctrines for Joint Nuclear Operations (Joint Pub 3-12) 1993/1995, Doctrine for Joint Theater Nuclear Operations 1996, Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) 1997 and Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 60 1997. Nonetheless, and as a defining argument of this thesis, the Bush Administration’s expansion on this Clinton “platform” through the amplification of the role of nuclear weapons – to the extent that they could be considered and used as a distinct option against potential nuclear, biological, and chemical threats from other states and non-state actors – was, in essence, the true “radical,” “new” and “bold” assertion of his National Security Strategy of 2002.

One of the very few bodies of literature at the time that was able to highlight the linkage between the National Security Strategy of 2002 and the nuclear option was George Perkovich’s Foreign Affair article entitled, “Bush’s Nuclear Revolution: A Regime Change in Non-proliferation.” The writer evaluated the extent to which the Bush Administration’s National Security Strategy of 2002 and National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWMD) of December 2002 engendered a nuclear revitalisation, deeming it as the dangerously radical aspect of the document and a strategy in which international

cooperation in enforcing non-proliferation commitments would be reduced. He argued that while America’s willingness to use force against emergent WMD threats, as in Iraq, could “stir the limbs of the international body politic to action,” an effective approach in reducing nuclear dangers over the long-term should encompass a broader, multilateral approach.

Perkovich asserted that Administration conservatives at the time of the NSCWMDS release – Robert Joseph (the National Security Council’s Senior Counter-proliferation Official), Douglas Feith (Undersecretary of Defense), John Bolton (Undersecretary of State), and Stephen Cambone (Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense) – did not view nuclear weapons as the issue, but those non-state and state based actors they categorised as “bad guys.” For Perkovich, the “doctrine” and the above officials sought not to create a balanced global order that actively devalued nuclear weapons and conditions for their eventual demise, but rather, sought to eradicate those actors it defined as being “evil,” while leaving the “good guys” free of nuclear constraints. While Perkovich did indeed refer extensively to the nuclear option posited in the National Security Strategy of 2002, the sheer fact that his article was published in 2003 placed distinct limitations on its value. Nonetheless, his identification and focus on the nuclear aspect of the “doctrine” rather than preventive/pre-emptive concerns, provided an invaluable insight to this researcher and leverage to investigate the future nuclear policy instruments that the Bush Doctrine engendered.

In what can be defined as another influential paper on the Bush nuclear assertion, Russell and Wirtz’s “A Quiet Revolution: The New Nuclear Triad in Strategic Insights,” argued that while the Bush Administration advocated the reduction of operationally-deployed nuclear forces to 1,700-2,200 warheads by 2012, it ambiguously vied for a “flexible” and “responsive nuclear force” that could be “uploaded within days.” As further stated, the Bush new triad encompassed a wider range of options available in which the United States would have what it deemed to be “an appropriate way to respond to aggression, thereby bolstering deterrence.” The most concerning aspect of the new triad was the greater flexibility it gave to the Administration. As Russell and Wirtz posited, it enabled the avoidance of bureaucratic

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110 Ibid., p. 2.
111 Ibid.
impediments in changing what constituted one of the most respected elements of the nuclear creed that shaped the US nuclear doctrine, “the sanctity of the old (Cold War) triad of forces and the focus on guaranteeing a massive nuclear response under any circumstances.” Like Perkovich, Russel and Wirtz’s article was an influential starting point as to what this researcher perceived to be an obvious gap. That is, having written their article in 2002, it was clear that there was an extensive period thereafter in which this “quiet revolution” was expanded on through other guidance documents that the National Security Strategy indirectly and directly spawned over the next six-seven years. The Bush nuclear reassertion was also conveyed in Therese Hitchens’ article entitled, “Slipping Down the Nuclear Slope: Bush Administration Nuclear Policy Lowers Bar Against Usage.” For Hitchens, the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) could essentially be defined as an integrated release that provided a more detailed insight into a key artery of the “doctrine” itself, namely, the concept of assertive counter-proliferation. While both documents (NSS and NPR) called explicitly for pre-emptive or preventive nuclear strikes, taken together they represented an alteration in US “declaratory policy regarding nuclear weapons use.” Furthermore, in Norris and Kristensen’s “Nuclear Insecurity: A Critique of the Bush Administration’s Nuclear Weapons Policies,” it was argued that the NPR reversed notions of post-Cold War progress by expanding the range of potential conflicts in which nuclear weapons could be employed; advocating the design and building of a new generation of warheads to meet these perceived needs; and putting in place a planning and command structure that would make it easier to plan and launch nuclear attacks.

In many ways Hans Kristensen can be regarded as a lone exponent in documenting the guidance instruments employed by the Bush Administration during the period of 2002-2008 and has been important to the research of this thesis. Indeed, the National Security Strategy of 2002 and subsequent documents and policy instruments pertaining to the reinvigorated nuclear option it engendered (including the Global Strike mission) signified much more than a hypothetical “what if?” For Kristensen, they illustrated real change in US planning and assumptions about the use of nuclear weapons. This was no better described than in his paper on Bush’s CONPLAN 8022 entitled, “US National Security Strategy and Pre-emption,”

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114 Ibid.
which he defined as an offensive war plan created specifically to support and substantiate the Administration’s willingness to strike first.\footnote{Hans M. Kristensen, “US National Security Strategy and Pre-emption,” in Defense Nationale and Securite Collective, July 2006.} It was evident that the nuclear option in CONPLAN 8022 was not about influencing adversaries but about destroying targets that could not be destroyed by other means. According to Kristensen, the underlying premise was that deterrence was ultimately flawed and limited, and as such, when it did fail, nuclear weapons would be available and used accordingly. In his \textit{Washington Post} article, “Not Just a Last Resort?” – William M. Arkin argued that CONPLAN 8022 anticipated two different scenarios. The first was a response to a specific and imminent nuclear threat – a quick-reaction, highly choreographed strike that would combine pinpoint bombing with electronic warfare and cyberattacks to disable a rogue proliferators’ response. The second scenario involved a more generic attack on an adversary’s WMD infrastructure, entailing multidimensional bombing (kinetic) and cyber warfare (non-kinetic) attacks that would seek to destroy the rogue actor’s program. As the first public articulation of CONPLAN 8022, Arkin was able to clearly convey the significant development in Bush’s nuclear war fighting plans in which a specially configured earth-penetrating bomb to destroy deeply buried facilities was “particularly disconcerting.” As further argued, the global strike plan held the nuclear option in reserve if intelligence suggested an “imminent” launch of an enemy nuclear strike on the United States, or, if there was a need to destroy hard-to-reach targets.\footnote{William M. Arkin, “Not Just a Last Resort? A Global Strike Plan, with a Nuclear Option,” \textit{The Washington Post}, May 15, 2005.}

The “quiet revolution” alluded to in 2002 by Russell and Wirtz and expanded on during the course of this thesis was reflected in the analysis given to Bush’s “Complex 2030” and the encompassing Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program. Under the US Department of Energy’s (DOE) Complex 2030, it was envisaged that the entire US nuclear weapons complex would be upgraded which would include the design and production of a series of new nuclear warheads.\footnote{Robert Nelson, “Complex 2030: DOE’s Misguided Plan to Rebuild the US Nuclear Weapons Complex,” \textit{Nuclear Weapons & Global Security}, December 2006.} As expected, the RRW program evoked varying levels of opinion. In his article entitled, “New Reasons to Reject New Warheads,” Daryl Kimball argued that “the plutonium research results obliterated the chief rationale for NNSA’s emerging strategy” of RRW,\footnote{Daryl G. Kimball, “New Reasons to Reject New Warheads,” \textit{Arms Control Today}, January/February, 2007.} while an Editorial in the \textit{New York Times}, entitled “Busywork for Nuclear Scientists,” stated that RRW was “a public-relations disaster in the making; a make-work
program championed by the weapons laboratories and belatedly by the Pentagon.”

Indeed, while Complex 2030 and the RRW it encompassed were depicted by the NNSA as developing a smaller and efficient nuclear weapons complex, designed for the 21st century with safety and security in mind, others were more wary. Of course, the proposition of actually developing a new nuclear weapon engendered varying levels of debate; however, this was surprisingly limited, often taking a back seat to the flailing situations in Iraq and Afghanistan. In what can be defined as a comprehensive body of literature, updated right up until the demise of the Reliable Replacement Warhead program itself, John Medalia documented such debates in his Congressional Research Service report entitled, *The Reliable Replacement Warhead Program: Background and Current Developments.* In very simple prose, Medalia argued that the opponents of the RRW anticipated that reliable replacement weapons (RRWs), like any other product, would have “birth defects” and believed that such defects could require a larger stockpile. Conversely, those who were for a reinvigorated nuclear option lamented that if nothing was done, confidence in the stockpile would decline, and with it, according to Medalia, the ability of the US to assure allies that its deterrent capacity was sound and able “to dissuade competitors from beginning nuclear programs, to deter adversaries, and if necessary to defeat enemies, as called for in the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review and National Security Strategy of 2002.”

While the literature surrounding and deriving from the release of the National Security Strategy of 2002 has been evident and relatively easy to attain, the presentation and analyses have often been limited based on fragmentation, inconsistency and timeframe. To some extent it appears that the re-election of Bush in the 2004 election, combined with the flailing campaign in Iraq, ended or even discounted many permeating debates that were very much present during the period of 2002-2004. Aside from bridging the apparent gap in coherency and timeframe – particularly in terms of defining and evaluating pre-emption and prevention in both a contemporary and historical context – many writers and commentators have failed to acknowledge the true “radical” aspect of “the doctrine.” That being, the reassertion of the nuclear option posited in Chapters Five and Nine in the National Security Strategy and cultivated over the remaining six years of Bush’s presidency. While most scholars and commentators focussed on the invocation of “pre-emptive” military action to counter enemies

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seeking “the world’s most destructive technologies,” the Bush Administration in the process relinquished most notions of non-proliferation and pursued an approach where counter-proliferation and nuclear weapon development took precedent. It is here that the Bush Doctrine can be viewed as the initiator and catalyst of the subsequent nuclear weapon policy – in particular, the 2002 National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction, the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review, CONPLAN (Concept Plan) 8022 (Global Strike), the abandoned 2005 Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, the 2006 Strategic Operations Joint Operating Concept Version 2.0, and the recent Reliable Replacement Warhead program. Indeed, only a few writers made the connection that while the National Security of 2002 was a document advocating prevention, it was the subsequent policy instruments it spawned during the period between 2002-2008 that foreshadowed a new nuclear era in which the once termed “weapon of last resort” became a usable and, according to the Bush Administration, necessary war-fighting option.

123 Perkovich, “Bush’s Nuclear Revolution.”
Chapter 2
The Bush Doctrine: Implicit in Previous National Security Strategy Doctrines
Although only “formally” introduced to the American public in 2002, the theoretical logic underlying the Bush Doctrine, including perceptions of threat and counter-proliferation,\(^{124}\) has long pervaded the strategic thought of policy-makers, officials, and military planners at the highest levels of the US government. Despite its frequent portrayal as a radically new or revolutionary National Security Strategy, the Bush Doctrine was, in fact, neither new nor revolutionary. As this chapter will argue, the National Security Strategy of 2002 and its advocacy of strategic counter-proliferation policies as a means to impede potential and real adversaries, has been a driving force behind each National Security Strategy release since its inception in 1987. These official strategy documents were initiated as a result of the Goldwater-Nichols Act defense reforms\(^{125}\) and as this chapter will illustrate, have provided an overview of the US Administration’s perceptions of the international security environment, including WMD threats and arms control opportunities. This chapter will also trace the presidential vision and rhetoric regarding several Administrations’ counter-proliferation policy goals, objectives and initiatives. While there is no doubt that the National Security Strategy of 2002 considered the inclusion of preventive attacks into the equation (detailed in Chapter Three), the notion of countering and documenting such perceived threats into formal doctrine, has been clearly evident in each National Security Strategy release since 1987. The National Security Strategy of 2002 and its premise to counter and thwart the perceived threat of the day merely continued the National Security Strategy trend.

The National Security Strategy process began in 1986 when the Goldwater-Nichols legislative stipulated that each Administration would be required to release a report, specifying their national security strategy, goals and vision:

> The President shall transmit to Congress each year a comprehensive report on the national security strategy of the United States... Each national security strategy report shall set forth the national security strategy of the United States

\(^{124}\) Counter-proliferation pertains to the activities the US government has undertaken as a means to combat the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons or those external forces that may undermine US security and national interest objectives. It has encompassed the application of military power to protect US forces and interests, the collection and analysis of intelligence, and in theory, has attempted to coexist with diplomatic, arms control and export control efforts. It has entailed the consideration of new US weapons to destroy weapons of mass destruction, intelligence efforts in detecting weapons of mass destruction, and has emphasised that international cooperation in curtailing the threat of such weapons should be undertaken. In more simple terms, and for the purposes of this chapter, it has been the process to which the US has worked to stop, prevent, contain, reverse, stem or thwart the development of nuclear weapons and related technologies. As articulated in Department of Defense, *Counter-proliferation (CP) Implementation*, July 9 1996, ASD (ISP).

and shall include a comprehensive description and discussion of the following:

1. The worldwide interests, goals, and objectives of the United States that are vital to the national security of the United States.
2. The foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and national defense capabilities of the United States necessary to deter aggression and to implement the national security strategy of the United States.
3. The proposed short-term and long-term uses of the political, economic, military, and other elements of national power of the United States to protect or promote the interests and achieve the goals and objectives referred to in paragraph (1).
4. The adequacy of the capabilities of the United States to carry out the national security strategy of the United States, including an evaluation of the balance among the capabilities of all elements of national power of the United States to support the implementation of the national security strategy.
5. Such other measures as may be helpful to inform Congress on matters relating to the national security strategy of the United States.

Through the above language – a small component of a much larger reform package known as the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 – the Congress amended the National Security Act of 1947, stipulating that the President was required to annually submit a written version of his security strategy. It was an attempt by Congress to legislate “a solution” to what it, and many observers, deemed to be a legitimate and significant issue of the US governmental processes. That being, an inability within the executive branch to formulate – in a coherent and integrated fashion, judiciously using resources drawn from all elements of national power – the mid and long-term strategy necessary to defend and further those interests vital to the nation’s security. At the time very few in Congress doubted that a grand strategy existed. The nation had been following “containment” in one form or another for over 40 years. What they doubted, or disagreed with, was its focus in terms of values, interests and objectives; its unity in terms of relating means to ends; its integration in terms of the elements of power; and its time horizon. As stated by Don Snider, “in theory, at least to the reformers, a clearly written strategy would serve to clarify and inform the Congress better on the needs for resources to execute the strategy, thus facilitating the annual authorization and appropriation processes, particularly for the Department of Defense.”

In practice, since the Goldwater-Nichols Act, Administrations have submitted national security strategies regularly, although not always precisely on schedule. The Reagan

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128 Ibid.
Administration submitted two (1987, 1988); the first Bush Administration submitted three (1990, 1991, and 1993); and the Clinton Administration submitted seven (this chapter will focus on 1994, 1995, 1998 and 2000). The second Bush Administration twice submitted a document entitled National Security Strategy of the United States of America, in September 2002 and March 2006. The 2002 Strategy described the global strategic context, named broad goals (“political and economic freedom, peaceful relations with other states, and respect for human dignity”), and described eight broad areas of effort designed to meet those goals. For each area, the Strategy listed subset initiatives but did not describe how they would be achieved and did not assign responsibility for achieving them to specific agencies. Neither the eight major areas, nor the subsets within any area, were prioritised. The 2006 Strategy maintained the same basic format, though it added an additional area of effort (“challenges and opportunities of globalisation”) for a total of nine, and included, in each area, a discussion of “successes” since 2002.

Before discussing the individual reports that have preceded the National Security Strategy of 2002, it is important to understand the broader context in which these reports have been produced. First, it should be noted that the requirement for the report did not originate exclusively from within the Congress. In fact, the Congress was, at the time of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation, much more interested in reforming the Department of Defense. As stated, “what was reformed – east of the Potomac was of much less interest.” Like most bodies of legislation, the notion of a Presidential statement of grand strategy had been developing for several years in many locations – think tanks, public-minded citizens, former government officials, professional associations, academics and specific interest groups. In what could be regarded as an open and pluralistic process, each proponent had its own motivation for advocating such a statement and, as a result, had differing expectations.

130 To illustrate the Strategy’s broad level of discourse, one area of effort, “work with others to defuse regional conflicts,” included as a subset, the statement, “Coordination with European allies and international institutions is essential for constructive conflict mediation and successful peace operations.” The document did not specify which US government agencies should lead or participate in the coordination; on what matters they ought to coordinate; or how important coordination with partners was, compared with unilateral initiatives to “defuse regional conflicts.” See Bush, The National Security Strategy of the United States America.
132 Even though much of the reform literature, such as the 1985 Report of the Senate Armed Services Committee, “Organization of the Department of Defense - The Need for Change,” discusses needed reforms in both the executive and congressional branches, Congress chose only to pursue reform within DOD. Since Congress was not reforming itself, it was not in a position to lean directly on the Executive Office of the President for reforms.
of what the structure, content and use of the final report would be. As again articulated by Snider, “in retrospect, it is clear that inclusion of the requirement for such a report in the final Goldwater-Nichols bill followed one of the better known maxims of the policy community – ‘if we can agree on what we want, let’s not try to agree on why we want it.”’

Another important aspect related to the question of language. That is, what was national security strategy, as opposed to grand strategy, or defense strategy or even national military strategy? What were the distinguishable elements of power of the United States and the boundaries between them? How could national security strategy subsume foreign policy as the Act seemed to imply by its language? Obviously, there was no defined consensus on this language in either academia, “where the public servants in Washington earlier took their training,” or in Washington “where they practice their arts.”

Within the interagency arena, where responsibilities for the preparation for this particular report were perceived as direct access to the President’s overall agenda, and hence highly desirable – there initially existed little consensus as to the components of a national security strategy and what represented coherence. Nonetheless, what has been apparent in each National Security Strategy, regardless of the nuances of language and rhetoric, has been the government of the day and their preoccupation with the ways and means to counter and thwart those adversarial forces that may undermine the United States’ well-being, national interest and security.

Indeed, as the main focus of this thesis, the National Security Strategy of 2002, or Bush Doctrine, was created and defined incrementally over a span of eight months in 2002, beginning with the State of the Union address. It was here that Bush emphasised the need for an assertive form of counter-proliferation. As stated:

States like these [Iraq, Iran, and North Korea], and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger...All nations should know: America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation’s security. We will be deliberate, yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world’s most destructive weapons.  

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134 Ibid.
135 Ibid.
Six months later, in a Commencement Speech to the US Military Academy at West Point, Bush elaborated upon the burgeoning national security doctrine, emphasising the need for a more forward thinking strategy:

…If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge…our security will require…preventive action when necessary – to defend our liberty and to defend our lives. In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action. And this nation will act.  

Of course, in the actual National Security Strategy of 2002 itself, the above sentiments were further articulated:

Proactive counter-proliferation efforts in which the United States must deter and defend against the threat before it is unleashed… it will ensure that key capabilities – detection, active and passive defenses, and counterforce capabilities – are integrated into our defense transformation and homeland security systems. Counter-proliferation must also be integrated into the doctrine, training, and equipping of our forces and those of our allies to ensure that we can prevail in any conflict with WMD-armed adversaries.

It was clear that the Bush Administration was determined to “prevent any hostile power from dominating regions whose resources would allow it to attain great power status (like Iraq or Iran in the oil-rich Middle East); discourage attempts by any other nation to challenge US leadership or upset the established political and economic order and should prevent the emergence of any potential ‘competitors.’” As Walter Mead articulated, “Over time there has been a distinct shift in American thinking toward the need for overwhelming military superiority as the surest foundation for national security. This is partly for the obvious reasons of greater security, but it is partly also because supremacy can have an important deterrent effect. If [the US] achieves such a degree of military supremacy in which challenges seem hopeless, other states might give up trying… establishing an overwhelming military supremacy might… deter potential enemies from military attack.” Additionally, as asserted by Jeffrey Record, “rogue states’ possession of nuclear weapons is seen as a threat not so much to the US itself but rather to the US freedom of military action necessary to

140 Mead, Power, Terror, Peace and War, p. 29.
sustain US global military supremacy... the US has declared a use of force doctrine that includes preventive war...that serves the state goal of perpetual global military primacy... the underlying objective... may well be to prevent rogue states from deterring the US.”

Finally, as James Mann articulated:

In the post-Cold War world the goal of American policy will be to ‘prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power’... ‘preclude any hostile power from dominating a region critical to our interests.’ The US will become so militarily strong, so overwhelming that no country would dream of ever becoming a rival. America will build up its military lead to such an extent that other countries would be dissuaded from even starting to compete with the US. It would actively work to maintain its pre-eminence... America would not sit back and wait for threats or rivals to emerge... Thus ensuring that the US would be the world’s lone superpower not just today or ten years from now but permanently.  

Accordingly, the National Security Strategy of 2002 expressed the view that the US enjoyed “unparalleled military strength and economic and political influence” and would work to “keep [the] military’s strengths beyond challenge,” maintain forces “strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from trying to equal or surpass the power of the US,” and “build a balance of power that favors” what the US deemed to be its broader national interest objectives pertaining to the international arena. While proponents of the Bush Doctrine contended that an urgent and unprecedented threat revolution was well under way that required new and proactive approaches, critics of the Bush Doctrine viewed its espousal of preventive war in its counter-proliferation repertoire as further testimony to American unilateralism and arrogance; “a reckless setting of a dangerous precedent that other states will exploit to mask aggression” and perhaps most importantly, a fundamentally unnecessary departure from the traditional, time-tested strategies of deterrence and containment that figured so importantly in defeating the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Many have argued that the Bush Doctrine was something entirely “new,” “candid,” “bold” and “revolutionary,” a radical doctrine the likes of which the world had never seen and “perhaps the most sweeping reformulation of US strategic thinking in more than half a century.”

In terms of its endorsement of preventive attacks, this may be the case. But as the next three

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chapters will argue, the notion of prevention has long been a consideration and option of the United States. However, as the remainder of this chapter will illustrate, the National Security Strategy of 2002 when taken in comparison to the National Security Strategies that have preceded it, has merely continued the US foreign policy desire to counter proliferators and those adversarial states and non-state actors that could undermine the United States’ national interest objectives and broader hegemonic aspirations.

**National Security Strategy (NSS1987)**

Released in 1987, the first National Security Strategy (NSS1987) emphasised an approach that all Administrations have since continued to pursue in each NSS release; that being, the preservation of US power and strategies to counter those states or actors deemed as having the potential to impede such power. The Administration’s authors of the NSS1987 emphasised that while the document was only a guide, it was extensively rooted in broad US national interests and objectives, integrating all aspects of national power as a means to achieve these objectives. As NSS1987 posited, the overarching national interests were: (1) US survival; (2) the US economy; (3) democratic growth and free trade; (4) world stability and security; and (5) US alliances. Of course, the number one objective was to deter hostile attacks on the US homeland. Objective 3 cited adapting efficiently with threats including international terrorism, while Objective 4 specified preventing and countering the spread of nuclear weapons. Reflecting the Cold War context, the NSS1987 defined the USSR as the core threat to US interests and argued that the USSR’s intent was still focussed on altering the international system and promoting Soviet global hegemony. However, the NSS1987 was also concerned with the proliferation of nuclear weapons amongst smaller states, as well as broader international terrorism – depicted as worldwide, frequent, indiscriminate and state supported.\(^{146}\) It singled out terrorism as a prominent feature of the international landscape for the remainder of the century and identified that effective counterterrorism was now to be a major US national security objective. The document’s section on foreign and regional policies emphasised the need to thwart state-sponsored terrorism, specifically in Libya, Syria, and Iran.\(^{147}\)

The defense policy section argued that it was now necessary for US forces to defend against aggression across the entire spectrum of potential conflict, “forward deploy” to defend US

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interests “as far from North America as possible,” and to seek security though “America’s national genius for technological innovation.” US defense policy was to be furthered by advancing US strengths against Soviet weakness, driven by (1) US technology; (2) a competitive strategies approach; (3) alliances; and (4) strong individuals (highlighted as a characteristic of people in Western societies). The remaining section of the NSS1987 focussed on arms control, stipulating that ongoing negotiations with the USSR were not efficient in addressing the emerging threats from other potential proliferators. NSS1987 highlighted the core objectives articulated in David Packard’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management, in which improving the quality of strategic planning – promoting a tighter linkage among strategy, military requirements, and acquisition programs; and maximising the military benefits for each defense dollar spent – was emphasised. The Packard Commission also recommended organisational changes, including unified (four star) joint commands for transportation and special operations that encompassed new DOD staff positions for special operations and coordinating boards at the National Security Council level. Additional organisational reforms included an Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition in order to reorganise DOD procurement functions. Finally, the Commission called for a two-year budget cycle to enhance stability. The final components of the NSS1987 argued for a sounder integration of national security capabilities via the National Security Council’s interagency working groups and its production of national security decision directives, while also improving Administration and Congressional collaboration.

As the first formal National Security Strategy, the 1987 document established the tone that has since become implicit in each formal “doctrine;” that being, the presidential vision, policy goals, objectives and initiatives that the United States would undertake as a means to counter those states and non-state actors deemed as having the potential to impinge upon its national security interests.


As a continuum of the NSS1987 and the last Cold War NSS, the National Security Strategy of 1988 (NSS1988) emphasised the core concerns of the previous year, noting that “the

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148 Ibid., p. 19.

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fundamentals of our strategy change little from year to year; our interests and objectives are derived from enduring values.” NSS1988 continued a realist framework based on US values and interests, along with an apparent willingness to undertake a form of dialogue with adversaries. However, the NSS1988 did emphasise a major objective: “To prevent the spread of nuclear weapons” and counter the threat from “state-sponsored terrorism.” In the year prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the official strategy noted that while the USSR was still the primary threat, other emerging threats with the potential for nuclear proliferation, as well as from “radical politico-religious movements,” including Iranian sponsored terrorism in the Persian Gulf and Lebanon were now to be a focus of US counter efforts. Indeed, as the document contended, the use of terror against US personnel and facilities in the Middle East and the spread of nuclear weapons in exacerbating regional conflict were all now perceived as significant security concerns. NSS1988 also addressed the importance of intelligence in controlling and reducing the threats of terrorism. It described Iran as the driver behind the continuity and escalation in the Iran-Iraq War, and interestingly, acknowledged the Administration’s leaning towards Iraq. In executing US strategy, the NSS expressed themes of gaining an innovation-technological edge through a revolution in military technology and the leveraging of US economic power and technology in the third world during what it viewed to be a period of international security transition.

**National Security Strategy of 1990 (NSS1990)**

Published immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the National Security Strategy of 1990 (NSS1990) referred to the sweeping changes that were taking place in the international arena at that time. Nonetheless, the formal document remained consistent with previous NSS documents in its emphasis on adapting efficiently with threats short of war that included international terrorism and the transfer of critical military technologies – particularly the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Reaffirming previous themes, NSS1990 reasserted a commitment to impeding the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction, the means to produce them and the associated long-range delivery systems.

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Regarding arms control, the document emphasised a “comprehensive approach” featuring stringent controls and multilateral cooperation – particularly the strengthening of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). The arms control section argued for the need to use diplomatic, economic and security assistance instruments as a means to address the underlying causes of tension and insecurity, including the causes for states that seek advanced weaponry. With the fall of the Soviet Union apparent, NSS1990 called for a new approach and direction in the post-Cold War era. As stated:

We will not let that opportunity pass, nor will we shrink from the challenges created by new conditions. Our response will require strategic vision – a clear perception of our goals, our interests, and the means available to achieve and protect them. The essence of strategy is determining priorities. We will make the hard choices. This Report outlines the direction we will take to protect the legacy of the post-war era while enabling the United States to help shape a new era, one that moves beyond containment and that will take us into the next century.


Indeed, the National Security Strategy of 1991 (NSS1991) preface included a reference to establishing and creating a “New World Order” and that the Gulf War would serve as a “crucible” to its implementation. While there was a clear focus on the USSR and its six thousand strategic nuclear weapons and three million soldiers, the earlier pages continued to emphasise the significance in countering the threat of international terrorism. New in the document was the demand that Iraq comply with United Nations Security Council Resolution 687, in which Iraqi WMD, including biological weapons and related facilities had to be destroyed. NSS1991 also discussed the potential for improving relations with Iran, based on the condition that they did not support terrorism. Additionally, the Administration stated that it would monitor Libya and their alleged terror and WMD proliferation programs. The final state identified by NSS1991 was Pakistan and how the influence of the Presler Amendment

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161 For information on the IAEA see [http://www.iaea.or.at/].
162 For information on the NPT see [http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/npt/].
163 For information on the MTCR see [http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/mtcr/].
168 Ibid., p. 3.
was preventing the resumption of full political and economic relations without an Administration certification of the termination of the Pakistani nuclear program.\textsuperscript{169} Additionally, George H.W. Bush Administration’s NSS1991 included a new section entitled, “Stemming Proliferation.”\textsuperscript{170} The section stated that of all arms control objectives none was more urgent than thwarting the global proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and the missiles to deliver them. The NSS posited three major Persian Gulf War lessons regarding WMD proliferation and arms control. Firstly, it argued that an international agreement may enable compliance, but was not enough to ensure it. The Administration cited evidence that Iraq had signed the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty, yet they had used chemical weapons and continued to exhibit nuclear aspirations. As the second point, NSS1991 stipulated the need for stronger export controls; while thirdly, it argued that a successful non-proliferation strategy must be refined as a means to address underlying security concerns. The Administration’s prescription was to call for advanced weapons and the development of contingency plans to deal with proliferators should prevention fail.

To address the above Gulf War lessons, the Administration proposed a three tiered non-proliferation strategy. Tier one included the strengthening of existing non-proliferation arrangements, while Tier two included the expansion of membership in the multilateral regimes directed against proliferation. The third tier advocated the pursuit of new objectives, including revising guidelines for responsible conventional weapons transfers; the freezing of WMD weapons production and testing, including supersonic missiles; the expansion of the Non-proliferation Treaty and Chemical Weapons Convention; and strengthening the application of arms control and counter-proliferation agreements. Other areas for program development pertained to technology transfer and trade issues, which included the tightening up of export controls and export licenses. NSS1991 also proposed new standards for exporting super computers and increasing penalties to those states deemed to be contributing to proliferation. More assertive rhetoric was included when highlighting the need to impede the export of chemical and biological weapons related material and technology, with stringent international controls and multilateral measures emphasised as a means to counter technology

\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., p. 10. Also, for information on the Pakistan proliferation issue and executive-legislative roles, including the Presler and Brown Amendments, see Rebecca K. C. Hersman, \textit{Friends and Foes}. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000, Chapter Five: “Pakistan, Proliferation, and the Brown Amendment.” The Presler Amendment included sanctions on Pakistan for its nuclear weapons development efforts.

transfers. One example of a program attaining successful outcomes was the twenty-nine nation Australian Group of major chemical suppliers – which had established common lists of chemical weapons precursors and equipments for chemical weapons manufacturing. A second international agreement cited was the 1990 Missile Technology Control Regime, which the NSS argued should include new members to form an international consensus. This was further articulated in the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the International Atomic Energy Agency’s institutional role in technical assistance for civilian use nuclear energy (and safeguards of material for developing nuclear weapons), which were highlighted as being significant to global security.

NSS1991 also provided a progress report on the George H.W. Bush Administration’s counter-proliferation and arms control policies. The report stated that the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 687 and the UN Special Commission’s efforts to dismantle all nuclear weapons and related activities in Iraq had been undertaken with relative success. It also positively endorsed Argentina and Brazil’s acceptance of IAEA safeguards on their nuclear facilities and the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which declared Latin America a nuclear weapons-free zone. The NSS endorsed India and Pakistan’s agreement on banning the attack or destruction of each others’ nuclear facilities. The Administration also claimed intelligence successes in locating threats from narco-traffickers, terrorists and advanced weapons proliferators. In relation to its “defense agenda” for the 1990s, Section V highlighted the four fundamental demands, including: strategic deterrence; forward presence; crisis response; and the capacity for reconstitution. This section included the need for civil defense programs as a means to address the consequences of a nuclear attack and the improvement of capabilities for responding to natural and human-engendered disasters. The Administration also called for improving the safety, testing, and modernisation of nuclear weapons and production facilities. NSS1991’s concluding section stated that “The 20th century has taught us that security is indivisible.” It emphasised how the threat of proliferation of weapons of destruction have “begun to draw the communities of nations together in common concern;” emphasising the principle of working with others in the global community to resolve regional disputes and thwart weapons proliferation.

171 Ibid., p. 15.
172 Ibid., p. 16.
174 Ibid., p. 31.
175 Ibid., p. 33.
The last of the three National Security Strategy reports of the Bush Administration was published in January 1993, just before the inauguration of President-elect Bill Clinton. A draft had been prepared in early 1992, but several summits and the press of the 1992 campaign precluded its completion. Another contributing factor was the content of that campaign, which focussed almost exclusively on the domestic economy, obviating the political usefulness of a new statement of security strategy. Unlike the previous reports in both the Reagan and Bush Administrations, NSS1993 was intended to document the accomplishments of the past rather than point to the way ahead. The Republicans were leaving the White House after twelve years of control of the nation’s foreign and defense policies, including what they thought was a remarkably successful conclusion to, and transition out of, the Cold War. As the titles of two of the report’s sections attested – “Security through Strength: Legacy and Mandate” and “The World as It Can Be, If We Lead and Attempt to Shape It as Only America Can” – they wanted to document their accomplishments in strategic terms, as well as to put down markers by which the Clinton Administration’s foreign policy could be judged. In terms of strategic content, however, there was little change between this report and the 1991 version. Both emphasised a steady, deliberate transition from a grand strategy of containment to one of “collective engagement” on a regional basis. Militarily, both embodied the same defense strategy of four pillars as developed earlier by the Cheney-Powell team. What differences there were, were found in the 1993 report’s heavy emphasis on a broad goal of “democratic peace” and the absolute necessity of American leadership in a world of increasing interdependencies. NSS1993 noted that “there is a peace dividend” and an interdependence of international opportunities to promote US interests and domestic imperatives.

Nonetheless, despite these apparent opportunities, threats were again identified and were consistent with previous strategy documents, listing: the proliferation of advanced conventional arms, ballistic missiles, weapons of mass destruction; terrorism; and the international drug trade as the most glaring aspects relating to US security. NSS1993

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178 For a case study on the development of security strategy within the Bush Administration, see Snider, “The National Security Strategy,” 1995. For an example of the benefits to the new Bush Administration as the political appointees executed a strategic review, see Don M. Snider, Strategy, Forces, and Budgets: Dominant Influences in Executive Decision-making, Post-Cold War, 1989-1991. Strategic Studies Institute, USAWC, 1993, pp. 18-20.
proposed an extensive list of programs designed to reinforce non-proliferation policy, citing the spread of WMD and delivery means as a significant and threatening national security challenge.\textsuperscript{180} The NSS stipulated four principle US proliferation policies. The first was to build, strengthen and broaden existing norms against proliferation. The second was to make specific efforts to counter what it deemed to be the acute proliferation dangers in the Middle East, South and Southwest Asia and Korea. The third was to expand multilateral support while maintaining a capability for unilateral action. The fourth and most ambitious, was to address the underlying security concerns motivating the acquisition of WMD, including a range of political, diplomatic, economic, intelligence, military, security assistance and other foreign and defense instruments. NSS1993 highlighted the links between terrorism and proliferation and that the post-Cold War era required the continual restructure of the Department of Defense as a means to adapt to this newer threat.\textsuperscript{181}

In a regional context, the document emphasised the Middle East and South Asia as focus areas in which work to deter terrorism would be ongoing. The Administration broadly stressed continuing world-wide efforts, encompassed within a four goal framework. The first was to constrain the proliferation of WMD; the second was to reduce the spread of militarily useful technologies for WMD and ballistic missiles; the third was to implement international agreements; and the fourth was to develop a system of international accounting of dangerous materials and equipment, as well as methods for protecting them from theft and diversions. Overall, the 21 page document posited an ambitious agenda and an optimistic vision of national security in working towards an “age of democratic peace” in the 21st Century.\textsuperscript{182} It also made it clear that notions and considerations pertaining to counter-proliferation, non-proliferation and nuclear weapons as a whole were an ongoing focus of the National Security Strategy formal doctrine. While these “areas” were a defining focus of the Bush Doctrine, it is evident when looking at the Reagan and Bush Snr National Security Strategies that both policy and considerations pertaining to dangerous weapons and proliferators were deeply ingrained in all of these formal releases. Indeed, while the National Security Strategy of 2002 amplified this focus (as will be discussed extensively in the latter chapters of this thesis), it is evident that such considerations pertaining to “curtailing” proliferators was a

\textsuperscript{181} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 19-20
\textsuperscript{182} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 15.
distinct and ongoing emphasis in each National Security Strategy since its inception in 1986/87.


President Bill Clinton’s first National Security Strategy was published in July 1994, well after the “usual” January release. NSS1994 began with traditional statements about the executive’s foremost constitutional duty and role in protecting the nation’s security, including the American people, territory and way of life. The Preface specified the rise of ethnic conflict and rogue states in which “the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction represents a major challenge to our security.” Section I of the Introduction emphasised the expansion of WMD as creating new transnational and cross border threats, and the potential for WMD armed terrorists. The document shifted into promoting the “tangible results” of the first 17 months of the Clinton Administration, including: a bureaucratic assessment of defense forces and systems for the new security environment; the January 1994 NATO Summit and the Partnership for Peace initiative; and President Clinton’s launch of “a comprehensive policy to combat the proliferation of WMD and the missiles that deliver them.” Two more specific initiatives included the opening of formal negotiations on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the “landmark” commitment to eliminate all nuclear weapons in the Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. NSS1994 also called for the development of integrated approaches for dealing with post-Cold War threats, such as, the coordination of WMD counter-proliferation, arms control and intelligence activities. In specifying tasks for military forces the document posited the following: (1) major regional contingencies; (2) overseas presence; (3) counter-WMD and “stemming the proliferation of WMD” and delivery means; (4) multilateral peacekeeping; and (5) the support of counter-terrorism efforts [with general purpose and special operations forces]. In addition, the NSS also specified that hostile regional powers, including North Korea, Iran and Iraq, were the focus for major regional contingencies. NSS1994 was the first to explicitly correlate terrorism with WMD threats, a theme that was to become a major staple in both future National Security Strategy doctrine and broader US security policy.

186 Formerly referred to as major theater wars in post-Cold War, 1990s national and military security strategy documents.
The document explicitly articulated counterterrorism measures that called on special units to strike terrorists, terrorist structures and bases abroad. Indeed, the section emphasised a policy that encompassed: no concessions; the pressuring of state sponsors; exploiting legal means to punish international terrorism; and helping other governments’ counterterrorism efforts. The 1994 document also pointed to organisational efforts required for “close day-to-day coordination among Executive Branch agencies” including the State, Defense and Justice Departments, as well as those of the FBI and CIA. The Administration noted that “Terrorism involving WMD represents a particularly dangerous potential threat that must be countered.”

The Clinton Administration also highlighted the “concerted efforts” it had been pursuing in its counterterrorism activities, including the June 26, 1993 cruise missile attacks on Iraqi intelligence headquarters in response to the alleged assassination plot against former President George H.W. Bush. The document also mentioned the March 4, 1994 conviction of four World Trade Center bombers and the UN’s sanctions imposed on Libya for the Pan Am 103 disaster. Additionally, two counterterrorism treaties, including protocols for the suppression of unlawful acts of violence at airports serving international aviation and for acts against the safety of maritime navigation, were also posited.

In the evolving process of shaping and formulating the counter-proliferation policy, NSS1994 included a new section entitled: “Combating the Spread and Use of WMD and Missiles.” It was here that the Administration emphasised WMD as a major threat and that a key component of US security strategy to “stem” the proliferation of such weapons would entail the development of an “effective capability.” This requirement was articulated in the subsection entitled “Non-proliferation and Counter-proliferation,” emphasising counter-proliferation as a “critical priority.” Some of the goals posited pertained to extending the Non-proliferation Treaty beginning in 1995, achieving the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and ending the unsafeguarded production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons purposes. Additional goals included strengthening the Nuclear Suppliers Group, IAEA and MTCR, combating missile weapons proliferation, supporting the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions and improving export controls. In terms of international affairs, the NSS divided its approach into two areas: regional and bilateral relationships. The first region of

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189 Ibid., p. 8.
190 Ibid., p. 9.
191 Ibid., p.11.
192 Ibid.
concern was Northeast Asia and the Administration’s desire to have North Korea adhere to non-proliferation initiatives, including the NPT, IAEA, and North-South Korean Denuclearization Accord. The second point called for an end to Iran’s advanced WMD program, the third identified the need for an Iraq reconstitution prevention programs, while the fourth point pertained to capping, reducing and eliminating India and Pakistan’s nuclear and missile capabilities. The fifth and last point emphasised the need for a Middle East regional arms control agreement.  

In terms of the bilateral component, working on relations with Russia and the Ukraine and encouraging their participation in the MTCR was emphasised, as well as discouraging any missile technology transfers to India. Other arms control measures included gaining South African acceptance of the NPT, entering Argentina and Brazil into MTCR guidelines, and the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The next area of focus related to encouraging the dismantling of intercontinental missiles in the Ukraine and Kazakhstan, as well as pressing China to join the MTCR. The final emphasis, called for a trilateral accord among the US, Russia and the Ukraine for eliminating Ukrainian nuclear weapons. Additionally, the Administration signified that it would continue to improve defensive capabilities while placing a high priority on locating, identifying and disabling WMD arsenals, production, storage and delivery systems. While the document did not acknowledge homeland defense, it did nonetheless highlight the significance of intelligence capabilities as being critical in detecting terrorism and WMD counter-proliferation. It was here that the NSS1994 called for the improvement in technical capabilities as a means to identify and deter “the efforts of foreign nations to develop WMD.”

Perhaps the most defining assertion by the Administration was the statement that, “the US will retain the capability to retaliate against those who might contemplate the use of weapons of mass destruction...”


The National Security Strategy of 1995 (NSS1995) reaffirmed previous national security sentiments as well as highlighting a list of recent successes. The preface specified the accession of the former Soviet Republics of the Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus into the

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193 Ibid., pp. 11-14  
194 Ibid., p. 12.  
196 Ibid., p. 11.  
Non-proliferation Treaty, while also agreeing to eliminate nuclear weapons from their territorial domains. NSS1995 highlighted how the assertive diplomacy undertaken with North Korea – through economic incentives and the threat of economic sanctions – was a viable means and pathway in attaining US objectives. The preface reemphasised the US’s special responsibilities as a great power with global interests and historical ideals. As a continuum of previous National Security Strategies, Section I (the Introduction) once again espoused the continued spread of WMD as a serious security threat that must be countered, as well as what was defined as world-wide militant nationalism, ethnic and religious conflict and terrorism.  

NSS1995 pointed to numerous counter-proliferation results in what it deemed to be its “comprehensive policies in combating the proliferation of WMD and missiles.” Firstly, it posited the success of the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction efforts and the transferral of 600 kilograms of vulnerable nuclear material from Kazakhstan to the US under a joint Defense and Energy Department mission. Secondly, it highlighted the Russian conversion of highly enriched uranium into commercial reactor fuel along with the enhanced control and accounting of Russian nuclear materials. Thirdly, international efforts including the NPT, CTBT, NSG, and IAEA as well as the call to the UN to increase efforts in seeking a global ban on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons was also posited. Fourthly, the NSS identified regimes to combat missile proliferation, including the MTCR, CWC and BWC as well as a fifth component that listed a range of regional approaches to countering the WMDs. Such regional efforts included the North Korean Agreed Framework along with counter-proliferation efforts gauged towards Iran, Iraq, India and Pakistan. The NSS also mentioned a Middle East arms control initiative, while pursuing bilateral agreements with Russia, the Ukraine and South Africa on the MTCR. Other bilateral partners were also identified as a means to expand the Australia Group, including the likes of Hungary, the Czech and Slovak Republics and Poland. Once again the Administration highlighted the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the South American nuclear free zone, as well as dismantling intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) in the Ukraine and Kazakhstan. In European proliferation efforts the NSS emphasised the January 1994 NATO Summit calling for a political framework to counter, prevent and defend against the use of NBC weapons and proliferation threats. The section on intelligence reiterated calls for coordinating a global

\[98\] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 1.

\[99\] \textit{Ibid.}, p. 3.
capability for detecting, identifying and deterring efforts of states likely to develop WMD capabilities,\textsuperscript{200} while in the section on integrated regional approaches, the Middle East, Southwest and Southeast Asia were combined in to a singular region in which Iraq, Iran, and the India-Pakistan conflict were identified as WMD threats.\textsuperscript{201} Foreshadowing the post-9/11 National Security Strategy of 2002, the 1995 document noted the significance of the US in retaining the capacity in its counter-proliferation policy to retaliate against threats that “contemplated” using WMD.\textsuperscript{202} As stated:

The United States will retain the capacity to retaliate against those who might contemplate the use of weapons of mass destruction, so that the costs of such use will be seen as outweighing the gains. However, to minimize the impact of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction on our interests, we will need the capability not only to deter their use against either ourselves or our allies and friends, but also, where necessary and feasible, to prevent it.


Indeed, the Bush Doctrine’s US foreign policy quest to counter-proliferators and those adversarial states and non-state actors that may undermine the United States’ national interest objectives and broader hegemonic aspirations, was clearly evident in the Clinton National Security Strategy of 1998. The document acknowledged the 1997 Department of Defense report (the Quadrennial Defense Review – QDR) and that the NSS would work to meet the military and security challenges addressed in the QDR. The preface highlighted threats from adversarial states, terrorist groups, criminal organisations, as well as those who may be tempted to use WMD against US citizens. NSS1998 also articulated how the evolving interconnectedness of globalisation presented new threats to US security. That is, “globalization enables other states, terrorist, criminals, drug traffickers and others to challenge the safety of our citizens and the security of our borders in new ways.”\textsuperscript{203} In essence, the core thrust of the NSS goals pertained to “protecting the lives and safety of Americans” and “preventing” the spread of NBC weapons and materials for producing them, while also attempting to control “destabilising technologies,” such as long range missiles.\textsuperscript{204} Once again, and clearly a pre-Bush consideration, was the notion of developing an effective

\textsuperscript{200} Ibid., p. 18.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid., pp. 30-31.
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid., p. 14.
\textsuperscript{204} Ibid., p. 5.
means to counter and respond to terrorism, encompassed in a section listing five threats to US national interests.205

The ongoing focus on nuclear weapons (or what began to be commonly referred to as WMDs under Clinton) was clearly articulated in three of the “five threats.” First, regional state-centred threats including NBC weapons and long range delivery systems were highlighted and aligned to the states of Iraq, Iran and North Korea. The second threat described as a “special concern” pertained to that of a transnational nature – such as terrorism and the prospect of terrorism encompassing WMD. Placed third on the threat list was the spread of dangerous technologies, or WMD related technologies that were seen as a great potential threat to global stability and security. Also cited was the threat of the proliferation of advanced weapons and technologies in the hands of rogue states, terrorists, and criminal organisations. The fourth perceived threat related to foreign intelligence collection, while the fifth, pertained to the increasing spectre of failed states. Using a phrase from the Quadrennial Defense Review, NSS1998’s section on integrated approaches included increasing intelligence, law enforcement cooperation and the denial of enemy safe havens. The document identified WMD threats and how the potential for terrorist groups to attack “US territory and the American people in unconventional ways”206 was increasing, including threats to disrupt critical infrastructure and the potential use of WMD against civilians in cities. Again foreshadowing the National Security Strategy of 2002, the Clinton NSS1998 noted that the US needed to counter such threats by striking terrorist bases and states supporting terrorist acts. As stated:

Potential enemies, whether nations, terrorist groups or criminal organizations, are increasingly likely to attack US territory and the American people in unconventional ways. Adversaries will be tempted to disrupt our critical infrastructures, impede continuity of government operations, use weapons of mass destruction against civilians in our cities, attack us when we gather at special events and prey on our citizens overseas. The United States must act to deter or prevent such attacks and, if attacks occur despite those efforts, must be prepared to limit the damage they cause and respond decisively against the perpetrators.207

205 Ibid., p. 6.
206 Ibid., p. 7.
207 Ibid., p. 8.
Indeed, concerns about terrorism led to the creation of the May 1998 Presidential Decision Directive 62. NSS1998 reviewed the key points of PDD 62; designed to reinforce agency missions and roles in the US defense against terrorism, while implementing counter-terrorism programs and activities. As stated:

To meet the growing challenge of terrorism, President Clinton signed Presidential Decision Directive 62 in May 1998. This Directive creates a new and more systematic approach to fighting the terrorist threat of the next century. It reinforces the mission of the many US agencies charged with roles in defeating terrorism; it also codifies and clarifies their activities in the wide range of US counter-terrorism programs, including apprehension and prosecution of terrorists, increasing transportation security, and enhancing incident response capabilities. The Directive will help achieve the President’s goal of ensuring that we meet the threat of terrorism in the 21st century.  

NSS1998 again clarified principles for countering international terrorism including: (1) granting no concessions; (2) increasing pressures on state sponsors of terrorism; (3) exploiting all legal mechanisms; and (4) helping other governments. More specific goals pertained to: uncovering and eliminating foreign terrorists and networks in the US; eliminating terrorist sanctuaries; countering those states that supported terrorism and subverting moderate regimes through a comprehensive program of diplomatic, law enforcement, economic, military, and intelligence instruments. Furthermore, the Administration emphasised its role in providing better security for the US transportation system and would work to impede terrorist fundraising activities. To enable this, the NSS emphasised the importance of interagency (DOS, DOJ, DOD, DOT, DOE) integration on intelligence and transportation, as well as the need for congressional support.

The continuum of counter-proliferation and counterterrorism in Clinton’s NSS1998 was further evident in its emphasis on the January 1998 International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombing; and how this was significant to its endorsement of a national self defense that encompassed the right to strike terrorist bases. The 1993 attack on Iraqi intelligence headquarters in response to the alleged George H.W. Bush assassination plot was cited, as well as the August 1998 missile strikes on Afghanistan and Sudan in response to the Kenya and Tanzanian embassy bombings that killed 12 Americans and 300

208 Ibid., p. 15.
209 Ibid.
210 Ibid., p. 16.
Osama bin Laden was mentioned by name as the leader of the “preeminent organization and financier of international terrorism” and affiliated with the African embassy bombings.\textsuperscript{211} NSS1998 characterised the strikes against terrorist facilities and infrastructure as “necessary and proper responses” against imminent threats and warned that there were no safe havens for terrorists. The document also pointed out that terrorism was at the “top of the agenda” at the June 1997 Denver Summit of the Group of Eight (G8), including Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the US. The Group agreed that by 2000 they would join an international terrorist convention first touted in a 1996 UN resolution on measures to promote counterterrorism. They also agreed to exchange information on technologies as a means to deter the use of WMD in terrorist attacks.\textsuperscript{212} NSS1998 made special mention of WMD threats in the Middle East and Southwest Asia, emphasising the states of Iraq and Iran as security challenges.\textsuperscript{213} In Bush-like rhetoric, the Clinton Administration clearly articulated their concerns:

Iraq must also move from its posture of deny, delay and obscure to a posture of cooperation and compliance with the UN Security Council resolutions designed to rid Iraq of WMD and their delivery systems. Iraq must also comply with the memorandum of understanding reached with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in February 1998. Our policy is directed not against the people of Iraq but against the aggressive behavior of the government. Until that behavior changes, our goal is containing the threat Saddam Hussein poses to Iraq’s neighbors, the free flow of Gulf oil and broader US interests in the Middle East... Our policy toward Iran is aimed at changing the behavior of the Iranian government in several key areas, including its efforts to obtain weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles, its support for terrorism and groups that violently oppose the peace process, its attempts to undermine friendly governments in the region, and its development of offensive military capabilities that threaten our GCC partners and the flow of oil.\textsuperscript{214}


The National Security Strategy of 2000 was the Clinton Administration’s longest strategy document. It was the final strategy statement of his two-term presidency and served as a summary record of the Administration’s national security policy. The Preface directly addressed the new challenges of technology and open borders, and the “contemporary threats” of the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, along with terror

\textsuperscript{211} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{212} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{213} Ibid., p. 53.
\textsuperscript{214} Ibid., p. 52.
and international crime.\textsuperscript{215} The early component of NSS2000 also reemphasised the Administration’s support for arms control agreements by calling for the extension of the Non-proliferation Treaty, while encouraging initiatives to contain those nations seeking to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction. Other international initiatives included efforts to increase “antiterrorism cooperation” as well as “stepped up efforts” to combat international crime, cyber-terrorism, global warming and infectious diseases, especially HIV/AIDS.\textsuperscript{216} The Preface’s points of emphasis were developed in more detail in the document’s subsequent chapters. The fundamental elements of the strategy included positive assessments of the US role in “shaping the international environment.”\textsuperscript{217} In bold print the document proclaimed the engagement strategy’s efforts to “fashion a new international system” including “adapting alliances and encouraging the reorientation of other states.”\textsuperscript{218} For “preventing conflict” the focus was not on threats, but on using the diplomatic, economic, and military instruments of statecraft “as tools for promoting peace.”\textsuperscript{219} In the section on threat and crisis response there was discussion on “countering potential regional aggressors” on “the Korean peninsula,” however, in the Persian Gulf individual states were not mentioned. Vague enemies were also inferred in the document’s language on “confronting new threats.” As a NSS staple, “potential use and continued proliferation of weapons for mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery” was emphasised as a threat to US national security,\textsuperscript{220} and again, countering such threats would be a major component of the NSS where, “prevention remains our first line of defense to lessen the availability of weapons of mass destruction being sought by such aggressor nations.”\textsuperscript{221} NSS2000 also noted the vigorous pursuit of arms control regimes. These included the “strengthening of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions, the Missile Technology Control Regime, and entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.”\textsuperscript{222} The Administration claimed credit for having “made great strides in restructuring its national security apparatus to address new threats with diplomatic, economic and military tools.”\textsuperscript{223} The document also emphasised the US

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid., p. iv.
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid., p. 1.
\textsuperscript{218} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{219} Ibid., p. 2.
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{221} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{222} Ibid., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{223} Ibid.
leadership role in the post-Cold War era, in which “US leadership in steering international peace and stability operations” was evident in both Bosnia and Kosovo.\(^{224}\) It also proclaimed its intent in extending the process of transformation beyond the Defense Department to its diplomatic, intelligence, law enforcement and economic efforts – all as a means to meet threats, adapt to technological change and deal with “potential contingencies.” In terms of prevention, the document again used the context of preventive diplomacy to “contain or resolve problems before they erupt into crises.”\(^{225}\) New terminology regarding “asymmetrical threats” was included in a section on the “Efficacy of Engagement” subsection on “Enhancing Our Security at Home and Abroad.”\(^{226}\) The Administration emphasised non-proliferation programs such as the Expanded Threat Reduction Initiative which within the START I framework would lead to deactivating numerous nuclear weapons.\(^{227}\)

The last Clinton NSS also posited what it deemed to be instruments for shaping the international environment, including: diplomacy, public diplomacy, international assistance, arms control and non-proliferation, military activities, international law enforcement cooperation and environmental and health initiatives.\(^{228}\) The document described a “panoply of arms control agreements”\(^{229}\) in its five page section on Arms Control and Non-proliferation.\(^{230}\) The early part highlighted an emerging partnership between the US and Russia in strategic arms control through the strategic arms reductions talks (START I, II and III). Further non-proliferation measures focussed primarily on space launches and ballistic missiles and highlighted several diplomatic agreements, such as the June 4, 2000 Joint Statement on Principles on Strategic Stability; the September 6, 2000 Joint Statement on the Strategic Stability Cooperation Initiative and Implementation Plan; and the December 16, 2000 Bilateral Pre-Launch Notification Agreement.\(^{231}\) Most of the Administration’s formal agreements and programs were focused on friendly nations and long-standing multilateral security organisations. Outside of specific new agreements with Russia, former Soviet republics and Newly Independent States, NSS2000 specified existing arms control regimes. These included the relatively long-standing Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Non-

\(^{224}\) Ibid.
\(^{225}\) Ibid.
\(^{226}\) Ibid., p. 5
\(^{227}\) The Administration claimed reductions of more than 5,000 nuclear warheads, 600 missile launchers, 540 intercontinental missiles, 64 heavy bombers and 15 missile submarines, Clinton, A National Security Strategy for a Global Age, p. 6.
\(^{228}\) Ibid., p. 16.
\(^{229}\) Ibid., pp. 11-16.
\(^{230}\) Ibid., p. 12.
proliferation Treaty. The document also addressed initiatives under the United Nation’s International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that sought transparency, control, and the reprocessing or destruction of nuclear weapons and fissile materials. Working initiatives included: the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material; Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty and the Geneva Conference on Disarmament; and Material Protection, Control and Accounting Program. In essence, all were created as a means to secure former Soviet nuclear materials. Additional programs targeted former Soviet materials under the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program, while other programs addressed former Soviet weapons and materials proliferation, including the Non-proliferation and Disarmament Fund that stipulated three priority requirements: to halt the spread of WMD; to limit the spread of advanced conventional weapons and technologies; and to eliminate existing weapons. A second Administration program, entitled the 1999 Expanded Threat Reduction Initiative (ETRI), sought to expand CTR successes to enhance the security of fissile materials. Also mentioned in NSS2000 was the June 2000 Clinton-Putin Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement. Although the Soviet Union was no longer a direct threat to the United States, the NSS’s ongoing determination in countering and securing nuclear capacities and materials, evident in the above developments, merely continued the National Security Strategy trend.

Such determination was further emphasised as NSS2000 shifted its focus on multilateral cooperation measures. It was here that US interagency efforts (through training, equipment, advice and services to law and border security enforcement agencies) were highlighted as a means to assist foreign governments develop export controls and capabilities – enabling them to prevent, deter, or detect proliferation. The US agencies involved in this process included the Departments of Defense, Energy and Commerce, the US Customs Service and the FBI. Other internally directed US government initiatives included those of the executive branch that encompassed Congress in arms control efforts as a means to embolden the Biological Weapons and Chemical Weapons Conventions. NSS2000 noted Congress’s October 1998 implementation of legislation for the BWC and CWC, while other executive branch efforts included the 1999 Executive Order (EO 13128) and Presidential Decision Directive 70.

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232 Ibid., p. 13.
235 Ibid., p. 15.
236 For an in depth study of executive orders see Phillip J. Cooper, By Order of the President: The Use and Abuse of Executive Direct Action. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002.
The document also highlighted counter-proliferation initiatives with European partners gauged towards conventional arms, dual use technologies and existing international regimes. Originally adopted at NATO’s 50th Anniversary Summit, the new initiatives included establishing a NATO WMD Center that would “promote invigorated discussions of non-proliferation issues in the NATO Senior Political Military and Defense Groups on Proliferation.” Of course, as per previous National Security Strategies, emphasis on regional actors or what would later be referred to as “rogue states” was also made. NSS2000 clearly emphasised “three critical proliferation zones: the Korean Peninsula, Southwest Asia and South Asia.” It was argued that these areas did not reflect the agreements, organisational or institutional efforts and initiatives discussed in the previous sections on Russia and Europe, and would thereby require stern counter-proliferation efforts.

The clearest sentence of the Clinton’s NSS2000 stated that “the primary mission of our Armed Forces is to deter and, if necessary, to fight and win conflicts in which our vital interests are threatened.” The document shifted into what it deemed to be the significance of counter-proliferation, including one paragraph of eight lines covering the Defense Department’s counter-proliferation programs. One such program, the Counter-proliferation Initiative (CPI), was defined as “another example of how US military capabilities are used effectively to deter aggression and coercion against US interests.” The wording noted that the CPI prepared US forces to work with allies “to ensure that we can prevail on the battlefield despite the threatened or actual use of NBC weapons by adversaries.” Chapter III of NSS2000 on “Integrated Regional Approaches” documented the Administration’s claimed successes with the EU and NATO and especially in the Balkans. It restated the NATO WMD initiative and efforts with NATO’s senior groups on proliferation. The section on East Asia and the Pacific was more of a discussion of WMD, highlighting the

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237 Presidential Decision Directive 70 has not been made public according to the Federation of American Scientists’ (FAS) Intelligence Resource Program. The FAS noted that there was nothing unusual about PDD’s used for interagency coordination and executive branch policy guidance, but kept classified for security reasons.

238 The international arms control regimes include: the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies, the Australia Group for chemical and biological weapons, the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and the Zangger Committee.

239 A complete listing of NATO 50th Anniversary activities can be found at <http://www.nato.int/nato@50/calende.htm>. The Summit was held in Washington DC in April 1999.


241 Ibid., p. 15.

242 Ibid., p. 16.

243 Ibid., p. 18.

244 Ibid.

245 Ibid., p. 39.

246 Ibid., p. 41.
significance of the US-Japan security alliance that “anchors the US presence in the Asia-Pacific region.” Also of note were the bilateral treaty alliances with the Republic of Korea, Australia, Thailand and the Philippines. Multilateral organisations that were mentioned included the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and supporting regional dialogues under the ASEAN Regional Forum. The WMD issue was addressed directly in the section on regional approaches in which NSS2000 called for working with Japan on regional peace and stability and seeking adherence to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. This section also mentioned the Japanese investment of $1 billion in the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) as part of the US-Korean Agreed Framework. Following Japan, the Asia section listed the Korean Peninsula and specifically the “tensions” there as the “leading threat to peace and stability in East Asia.” The pursuit of a peaceful resolution of the Korean conflict was addressed in which the document stipulated that a “democratic, non-nuclear, reunified peninsula... is clearly in our strategic interest.” The section on enhancing security highlighted the diplomatic goal of normal relations and pointed to the success of Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright’s “historic meeting with the North Korean leader Kim Jong Il in late October 2000.” NSS2000 did specify several conditions for normal relations and was “firm that North Korea must maintain the freeze on production and reprocessing of fissile material, dismantle its graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities, and fully comply with its NPT obligations under the Agreed Framework.” The NSS extended on the Agreed Framework and called for North Korea’s elimination of its missile program and weapons of mass destruction. NSS2000 also called for the continuation of North-South summitry as well as Four Party Talks among the US, North and South Korea, and China.

The China section highlighted the small developments in improving US-China relations pertaining to WMD proliferation in East Asia. As NSS2000 stated, “we have advanced our dialogue on non-proliferation and arms control through exchanges at the Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, and sub-cabinet level in 1999 and 2000.” Significantly, the dialogues led to agreements in which states agreed to not target strategic nuclear weapons at

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247 Ibid., p. 48.
248 Ibid., p. 49.
249 Ibid.
250 Ibid.
251 Ibid., p. 50.
252 Ibid., p. 51.
one another and confirmed a common goal of “halting the spread of WMD.” The Administration applauded China’s support for international arms control, including the CTBT, the MTCR, the CWC and BWC, as well as controlling WMD and missile related technologies. The NSS highlighted China’s work with the US in support of the June 2000 North-South Summit, working together to “convince North Korea to freeze its dangerous nuclear program,” as well as the importance of diplomacy as a tool in establishing peace and security in Northeast Asia. In what George W. Bush would later refer to as a “strategic competitor,” the NSS2000 view of China was still nonetheless reflective of the National Security Strategy trend since its inception in 1987 – that being, the broader quest to counter, thwart, or in this case, monitor via relationship building, those states or non-state actors deemed to be capable of encroaching upon or undermining the United States’ national security and national interest objectives.

Of course, NSS2000’s emphasis on countering such perceived threats to the United States’ national security objectives was once again clearly defined in its treatment of Southwest Asia (in Iraq and Iran) and in South Asia (in India and Pakistan). In relation to Iraq, policy included three elements: (1) contain Saddam Hussein; (2) provide relief for the Iraqi people through the UN oil-for-food program; and (3) support Iraqi efforts to replace Saddam’s regime. Containment was the foundation of the US’s Iraqi policy as addressed in the December 1999 UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1284. In addition to measures regarding containment and humanitarian relief operations the Administration stated that, “it provides for a robust new inspection and monitoring regime that would finish the work begun by UNSCOM.” Additionally, NSS2000 admonished that it “would allow for a suspension of the economic sanctions in return for full Iraqi cooperation with UN arms inspectors and Iraqi fulfilment of key disarmament tasks.” In relation to countering Iran, the Administration stated that its policy was “aimed at changing the practices of the Iranian government in several key areas, including its efforts to obtain WMD and long-range missiles, its support for terrorism and groups that violently opposed the Middle East peace process, and its human rights practices.” Specifically, the Administration voiced its

253 Ibid., p. 51.
254 Ibid., p. 51.
255 Ibid., p. 59.
256 Ibid.
concerns over Iranian WMD acquisition efforts and missile programs, evident in its testing of a 1,300 kilometre-range Shahab-3 missile in July 1998, July 2000 and September 2000. The Administration also referred to multilateral efforts with “Arab allies threatened by WMD to develop a defense through efforts such as the Cooperative Defense Initiative.”

NSS2000 also posited the need for multilateral efforts as a means of countering WMD proliferation in South Asia, arguing that it did “not believe that nuclear weapons have made India or Pakistan more secure.” As stated, “we hope they will abandon their nuclear weapons programs and join the NPT as non-nuclear weapons states.” Proposed multilateral initiatives pertaining to India and Pakistan included working with the UN and G8 Nations as a means to bring both states into the international non-proliferation mainstream, and included the signing and ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the multilateral moratorium on the production of fissile material “pending the conclusion of a Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty (FMTC).”

In essence, the Administration’s policy with respect to India and Pakistan sought to cut off fissile material production, strengthen export controls, thwart a potential arms race and engage in a direct dialogue as a means to reduce tensions. The final South Asia security section pertained to Afghanistan directly. NSS2000 pointed to the Taliban’s support of terrorism as a serious threat to US interests in which “Afghanistan remains a primary safe-haven for terrorists threatening the United States, including Usama bin Ladin.” The document called for the enforcement of UN and US sanctions on the Taliban regime for harbouring bin Ladin and emphasised that the Administration would “continue to pressure the Taliban until it complies with international requests to bring bin Ladin to justice.”

NSS2000 also noted concerns with Pakistan’s support of the Taliban, including the harbouring of radicals. For countering the bin Ladin and Taliban threat the Administration stated that it was “engaged in energetic diplomatic efforts, including through

259 Ibid. Also, the Cooperative Defense Initiative was a DOD program launched by Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen in March 1999. The Initiative’s main focus was on raising awareness and reducing the WMD threat in the Middle East. The program included “five pillars: active defense, passive defense shared early warning, consequence management and medical countermeasures.” Proposed partner nations included Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Egypt and Jordan. Note: the fact that the NSS only mentions was likely a reflection of its early stage of development and perhaps a sign of its limited success with US regional allies of the Gulf Cooperation Council. See Jim Garamone, “Cooperative Defense Initiative Seeks to Save Lives,” American Forces Information Service News Articles, Washington, DC: Defense Link News, April 10, 2000, available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/cgibin/dlprint.cgi?http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Apr2000/n04102000_20004104.html>.
260 Ibid., p. 60.
261 Ibid.
262 Ibid.
263 Ibid.
the United Nations and with Russian and other concerned countries, to address these concerns on an urgent basis.”

The Clinton Administration’s apparent sense of urgency in countering the new threats of terrorism, as well as WMD proliferation, were all reaffirmed, and in most instances, amplified after the events of September 11, 2001. Nonetheless, as this detailed narrative and analysis has conveyed, notions of counter-proliferation and thwarting perceived threats have been a core thrust encompassed in each National Security Strategy formal release since 1987. Perhaps the most telling words in illustrating the linkage between the Administrations are encompassed in the following words from Clinton’s last National Security Strategy:

Those who threaten the United States or its allies with WMD should have no doubt that any such attack would meet an overwhelming and devastating response. Our military planning for the possible employment of US strategic nuclear weapons is focused on deterring a nuclear war and it emphasizes the survivability of our nuclear systems, infrastructure, and command, control, and communications systems necessary to endure a pre-emptive attack yet still deliver an overwhelming response.

**National Security Strategy of the United States of America (NSS2002)**

As both a continuum and extension of previous National Security Strategies, the National Security Strategy of 2002 served two important functions: it readily identified the most vital contemporary threat to the US – the marriage of rogue states and WMD; and posited that the development of these threats would be unacceptable and would have to be dealt with preventively. As stated, “[in terms of] common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.”

However, before proceeding, clarity needs to be provided in relation to the important concepts, assumptions, and methodology regarding these two points, especially the terms “rogue” and “proliferator.”

For a state to pose a vital threat to the security of the US, it must be both willing and able to do serious harm. Indeed, the US perception of threat as encompassed in each National Security Strategy has emanated from the perception of what a state or non-state actor has in terms of capabilities and real intentions. The Bush Doctrine made clear that it was not enough for a state to just have a will (rogue) to harm the US, but must also have the capacity (WMD/nuclear weapons/related technologies). That is, a state must lie “at the crossroads of

264 Ibid.
265 Ibid., p. 28.
radicalism and technology” and must be both “rogue” and “proliferating.” However, the cases in which the US would actively engage in counter-proliferation that encompassed the use of anticipatory self-defense involved a relatively select sub-set of adversarial states that had hostile intentions and were pursuing the acquisition of WMD capabilities. These states constitute “rogue proliferators.” But what do the terms “rogue” and “proliferator” mean exactly? Let us first consider the concept of “rogue.”

While the term “rogue” is often associated with the Bush Administration, the meaning and threat perception evoked by the term has been implicit in each National Security Strategy. In general, a rogue state is one that neither abides by international law nor acts in accordance with conventional international norms governing inter-state relations and behaviour. More specifically, rogue states are characteristically aggressive, assertive, ambiguous and are often prone to serious miscalculation, as well as reckless and irrational behaviour. As contended by Kenneth Pollack, rogue states are often “unintentionally suicidal” in the sense that they frequently misconstrue their odds of success and ignore the likelihood of catastrophic failure; they are risk-takers that play dangerous games without realising how dangerous they truly are. As further articulated by Barry Rubin, “rogue states put a high priority on subverting other states and sponsoring non-conventional types of violence against them,” and “do not often react predictably to deterrence or other tools of diplomacy and statecraft.” Rogue states are thus said to be “undeterrable” in that they are not dissuaded by credible threats of retaliation. Consequently, because they do not play by the same rules, rogue states must be dealt with by alternative means. As concluded by Rubin, “…such state[s] require special treatment and high levels of international pressure in order to prevent [them] from wrecking public order, setting off wars, and subverting whole areas of the world.” For the likes of Joseph Nye, rogues states encompass the following criteria:

(1) Well documented evidence of the possession of WMD; (2) evidence of the hostile nature of the suspect regime; (3) regime used WMD in the past; (4) failure by the regime to implement Security Council resolutions; (5) a history of aggression; (6) state sponsorship of terrorism; (7) absence of a pluralistic political system of constraints on the government; (8) refusal to accept multilaterally approved verification systems like the IAEA Additional Safeguards Protocol; (9) refusal to accept additional inspections or to destroy

270 Ibid.
WMD stockpiles once identified; and (10) threats to use WMD, or preparation for launch delivery systems for WMD.\textsuperscript{271}

The countering and thwarting of rogue states was evident in all of Clinton’s National Security Strategies, to the extent that he too posited a detailed definition of what constituted a “rogue state.”

[Rogue states]... are recalcitrant and outlaw states that not only choose to remain outside the family [of democracies] but also assault its basic values...These backlash states have some common characteristics. Ruled by cliques that control power through coercion, they suppress human rights and promote radical ideologies. While their political systems vary, their leaders share a common antipathy toward popular participation that might undermine the existing regimes. These nations exhibit a chronic inability to engage constructively with the outside world...They are often on the defensive, increasingly criticized and targeted with sanctions in international forums. Finally, they share a siege mentality. Accordingly, they are embarked on ambitious and costly military programs – especially in WMD and missile delivery systems – in a misguided quest for a great equalizer to protect their regimes or advance their purposes abroad.\textsuperscript{272}

Finally, according to the National Security Strategy of 2002, rogue states exhibited specific quantifiable attributes:

They brutalise their own people, display no regard for international law, threaten their neighbors, and callously violate international treaties to which they are part; they are determined to acquire WMD to be used as threats or to achieve the aggressive designs of these regimes; they sponsor terrorism around the globe, reject basic human values, and hate the US and everything for which it stands.\textsuperscript{273}

While these depictions are relatively accurate, they are also remarkably vague and indiscriminate. As Robert Litwak observed, “because the term ‘rogue state’ has no standing in international law and is quintessentially political, its application [can be] selective and contradictory.”\textsuperscript{274} Indeed, while many states exert some of these characteristics, not all should be deemed as “rogue.” For example, Pakistan, one of America’s most significant allies in the “War on Terror,” although accused of undermining basic human rights, instigating conflicts over the disputed territory of Kashmir, undertaking ambiguous relations

\textsuperscript{274} Litwak, “The New Calculus of Pre-emption,” p. 56.
with the Taliban in the “Af/Pak” region, and even sponsoring and harbouring terrorists, is not considered a rogue state. Thereby, in order to impart some much needed clarification to the term it can be stated that a rogue state is perceived as an enemy; a particularly hostile or dangerous strategic adversary that “aggressively threatens” the US and/or its allies. By “aggressively threatens,” the state or non-state actor has repeatedly made attempts to intimidate or attack the US and/or its allies either directly or indirectly through violent means (i.e. terrorism, brinkmanship, direct military confrontation). This refined definition of “rogue” gets closer to a core threat perception identified in the Bush Doctrine, as well as those frequently referred to in prior US Administrations’ National Security Strategies. While the term “rogue” has not been extensively utilised in National Security Strategies prior to the Bush Doctrine, external forces or threats that could potentially challenge, intimidate, coerce, subvert or undermine US national security have been the core thrust of policy-makers, officials, and military planners at the highest levels of the US government.

Having defined “rogue,” it is also important to refine the concept of “proliferator.” As observed by Litwak, there are two types of proliferation, “vertical” and “horizontal.” Vertical proliferation pertains to an increase or qualitative improvement in the unconventional arsenal of a state that has already acquired WMD; whereas horizontal proliferation refers to the development of these capabilities by states that previously did not have them. Today, Russia would be an example of the former – a nuclear “have” – whereas Iran would be an example of the latter – a nuclear “have not.” Furthermore, although the term WMD generally applies to nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, this definition in some instances is too broad. As explained by Sidney D. Drell and James E. Goodby:

> Biological agents may ultimately come to rival nuclear weapons as a threat to the whole population but for now they should be feared primarily for creating havoc and terror. Chemical weapons already can kill on a large scale, but ‘mass destruction’ is not the term that accurately describes their lethality. Civil defense and advanced medical techniques could potentially become very effective in mitigating the potential consequences of chemical and biological agents. Nuclear weapons, on the other hand, are so destructive that there is no practical way to make the consequences of their use more bearable for civilian

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populations. These weapons are unique in their terrifying potential for massive
destruction on an unprecedented and unimaginable scale.\textsuperscript{277}

It should be noted that a simple desire to develop a nuclear capacity by itself is not enough to
constitute proliferation. That is, to be considered a true horizontal proliferator, a state must
exhibit an assertive and active determination to acquire nuclear weapons via relatively
advanced and functional nuclear weapons programs. Such “robust” programs would
encompass the capacity in which that state could either weaponise a nuclear weapon or
produce fissile material, highly enriched uranium and/or plutonium indigenously.

If the National Security Strategy is the formal articulation of the US Administration’s
perceptions of the international security environment – including WMD threats and arms
control opportunities, as well as those of a “rogue” and “proliferating” nature – it is evident
that the Bush Doctrine merely continued the doctrinal path. In other words, the National
Security Strategy of 2002 and its advocacy of strategic counter-proliferation policies as a
means to impede potential and real adversarial “developments” has been implicit in each
National Security Strategy release since 1987. As this chapter has conveyed, each
Administration has been concerned with the proliferation, access and control of nuclear
weapons. As expressed by Steve Fetter, nuclear weapons and the proliferation of such
weapons both consume and complicate US foreign policy: “…crisis instabilities are likely to
be more severe; the probability of inadvertent or accidental use is likely to be greater;
transfers to terrorist or sub-national groups are more likely; at least some of the future
possessor nations are likely to be politically unstable, aggressive, and difficult to deter.”\textsuperscript{278}

Although the emergence of a few small rogue proliferators would hardly challenge the global
hegemony of the US, their latent nuclear capacity would represent a considerable shift in the
existing regional strategic balance and may deter the US from exercising its political,
economic or military strength in some of the most critically important regions around the
world. More explicitly, the attainment of nuclear weapons by rogue states would have the
effect of significantly eroding the ability of the US to freely engage in coercive diplomacy
vis-à-vis rogue proliferators without the fear of a “potent retaliatory strike against its troops

\textsuperscript{277} Sidney D. Drell & James E. Goodby, \textit{The Gravest Danger: Nuclear Weapon}. Stanford: The Hoover Institution Press,

\textsuperscript{278} Steve Fetter, “Ballistic Missiles and Weapons of Mass Destruction: What is the Threat? What Should be Done?”
or allies.”279 As espoused in each National Security Strategy, such developments would severely dilute the credibility of US diplomatic threats and, more importantly, inhibit the application of US military force, the surest foundations of American hegemony. Indeed if rogue states were able to procure nuclear weapons, they would become virtually “untouchable.” Facing such a powerful nuclear deterrent, the US would find it both extremely difficult and dangerous to intervene in the realm of rogue proliferants – even if it was necessary.

The attainment of such “immunity” from US power and influence may have the unintended consequence of encouraging rogue proliferators to embark upon even more aggressive, expansionist foreign “policies.” As posited in the National Security Strategy of 2002, “…today, our enemies see WMD as weapons of choice. For rogue states these weapons are tools of intimidation and military aggression against their neighbours. These weapons may also allow these states to attempt to blackmail the US and our allies to prevent us from deterring or repelling the aggressive behaviour of rogue states. Such states also see these weapons as their best means of overcoming the conventional superiority of the US.”280 Implicit is the concern that once rogue proliferators have securely attained nuclear weapons, they may use them and the associated deterrent capability as a means to forcefully challenge the US and overthrow the existing status quo. As O’Hanlon et al. contended, “the strongest argument for making sure that [rogue states] never acquire nuclear weapons is that, if they possessed them, [they] would be less constrained and would therefore become much more dangerous in the region.”281 Moreover, as further explained by Fetter, “some authoritarian states are ruled by aggressive dictators, such as Libya’s Muammar Qaddafi or Iraq’s Saddam Hussein, who have little regard for international norms of behaviour. Many of the new [nuclear] missile states are not happy with the status quo, and may look upon their newly acquired capabilities for mass destruction as instruments of intimidation and change.”282


US from interfering with their efforts to defeat or blackmail neighbouring states, dominate their respective regions, and destroy and punish their enemies.\textsuperscript{283} For example, a nuclear Iraq may believe that its new military advantage would allow it to re-invade Kuwait and then successfully deter the US from ousting its army as it did in the first Gulf War.\textsuperscript{284}

In short, if states (deemed as rogue or volatile) were permitted to attain nuclear weapons, not only would the US become more deterred, but rogue proliferators would become less deterred. The emergence of proliferators could threaten the security of the US and its allies, bolster bargaining positions on both sides in any future political negotiations, increase militancy and entrench hard-liners, destabilise the regional balance, and finally, encourage other states to follow suit. For the United States, this scenario was completely unacceptable and was to be avoided, countered, thwarted and impeded at every intersection. While there is no doubt that the Bush Doctrine amplified notions of counter-proliferation – even to the extent of waging a preventive war against rogue states on the verge of allegedly acquiring nuclear weapons – it merely continued the path established in the first National Security Strategy: to preserve an imbalance of power favourable to the US and to preclude any potential aggression by emboldened nuclear adversaries.

This is no more apparent than in Chapter 5 of the National Security Strategy of 2002, entitled, “Prevent Our Enemies from Threatening Us, Our Allies, and Our Friends with Weapons of Mass Destruction.” As in previous NSS2002 chapters it began with a quote from a recent speech, in this case, the defining speech given to the West Point graduating class of that year:

\begin{quote}
The gravest danger to freedom lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. When the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology – when that occurs, even weak states and small groups could attain a catastrophic power to strike great nations. Our enemies have declared this very intention, and have been caught seeking these terrible weapons. They want the capability to blackmail us, or to harm us, or to harm our friends – and we will oppose them with all our power.\textsuperscript{285}
\end{quote}

As with previous National Security Strategies, Bush began by identifying those threats deemed to be undermining US national security. He argued that “deadly challenges” have emerged from “rogue states” and terrorists, and while none of these contemporary threats

\textsuperscript{283} Pollack, “Why Iraq Can’t Be Deterred.”
\textsuperscript{285} Bush, Graduation Speech at West Point.
rivalled the destructive power that was evident during the Cold War, the nature and motivations of these “new adversaries;” their determination to obtain “destructive powers hitherto” available only to the world’s strongest states; and the greater likelihood that they will use weapons of mass destruction against the United States, made the security environment more complex and dangerous.\textsuperscript{286} Bush referred to the 1990s and the emergence of a small number of “rogue states,” that while distinctly different, embodied a number of similar characteristics. Aside from this, he pointed to the Gulf War and how the United States attained what he termed to be “irrefutable proof” that Iraq’s structures were not limited to the chemical weapons it had used against Iran and its own people, but also extended to the acquisition of “nuclear weapons and biological agents.”\textsuperscript{287} Chapter 5 proceeded to move in the direction of North East Asia and how North Korea had become the world’s “principal purveyor of ballistic missiles;” a state that has frequently tested capable missiles while developing its own WMD arsenal. Bush alluded to other “rogue states” that sought nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons as well, but did not state them. Such states in their pursuit of, and global trade in such weapons, had become a “looming threat to all nations.”\textsuperscript{288} The National Security Strategy theme of countering and thwarting threats to US security was evident in Bush’s assertive call for “free” nations to impede “rogue states” and their terrorist “clients” before they were able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and its allies and “friends.” As emphasised, the United States must take full advantage of strengthened alliances; the implementation of new partnerships with former foes; ingenuity in the use of military forces; modern technologies, including the development of an effective missile defense system; and “increased emphasis on intelligence collection and analysis.”\textsuperscript{289} Bush articulated in specific detail what the United States would do as a means to impede and counter WMD developments and clearly alluded to its controversial assertion of “pre-emption.” Firstly, he posited what he referred to as “proactive counter-proliferation efforts” – in which the United States must deter and defend against the threat before it is unleashed. That is, it needed to ensure that key capabilities – detection, active and passive defenses and counterforce capabilities – were integrated into the US defense transformation and homeland security systems. Counter-proliferation must also be further integrated into the doctrine,\textsuperscript{286} Bush, The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, 2002, p. 13.\textsuperscript{287} Ibid., p. 15.\textsuperscript{288} Ibid., p. 13.\textsuperscript{289} Ibid., p. 14.
training, and equipping US forces and those of our allies as means of ensuring they prevail in any conflict with WMD-armed adversaries. Secondly, “strengthened non-proliferation efforts to prevent rogue states and terrorists from acquiring the materials, technologies, and expertise necessary for weapons of mass destruction” were also emphasised – in which the United States would attempt to enhance diplomacy, arms control, multilateral export controls and threat reduction assistance that prevent states and terrorists seeking WMD, and when necessary, interdict enabling technologies and materials. Furthermore, the United States would continue to endorse coalitions that supported these initiatives, encouraging the increased political and financial support for non-proliferation and threat reduction programs. Finally, “effective consequence management to respond to the effects of WMD use, whether by terrorists or hostile states” would be implemented. This would work to minimise the effects of WMD use against US citizens, and would help deter those who possess such weapons and dissuade those who sought to acquire them by persuading enemies that they could not attain their desired ends. The United States would also be prepared to respond to the effects of WMD use against its forces abroad, and to help “friends” and allies if they were attacked.290

Bush emphasised that such policy development had taken almost a decade to implement under previous National Security Strategies, based on the fact that it had taken the United States that long to “comprehend the true nature of this new threat.” He alluded to notions of pre-emption when he talked again of the goals of “rogue states” and terrorists, and how the United States could no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as they had done in the past. Indeed, as argued, the inability to prevent a potential attacker, particularly when considering the immediacy of “today’s threats,” and the magnitude of potential harm that could be caused by our adversaries’ choice of weapons, did not permit a reactionary option any longer. Thereby, the United States “cannot let our enemies strike first.”291 Bush differentiated between the two eras (pre 9/11; post 9/11) in which he posited that weapons of mass destruction were once perceived to be weapons of a last resort whose use risked the destruction of those who used them. He argued that there were those states that saw weapons of mass destruction as viable options, or as stated earlier, “weapons of choice.” As argued, “rogue states” viewed such weapons as devices of intimidation, “vehicles for military aggression against their neighbors” and their best means of overcoming the conventional

291 Ibid., p. 15.
superiority of the United States via asymmetrical avenues. Echoing previous National Security Strategies, Bush stated that the purpose of the United States’ would always be to “eliminate a specific threat to the United States or our allies and friends. The reasons for our actions will be clear, the force measured.”

This is not to say that traditional diplomatic and economic measures – such as sanctions, export controls, international arms control, and technology denial regimes, as well as their non-proliferation counterparts, such as cooperative threat reduction – would not be retained in the National Security Strategy of 2002. But as has been evident throughout the course of this chapter, counter-proliferation, defined as the “full range of military preparations and activities to reduce, and protect against, the threat posed by nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and their associated delivery means” has been of central importance to the National Security Strategy doctrine since 1987. Counter-proliferation was not the Bush Administration’s creation. Traces of it were evident under the Reagan Administration, evident during the Bush Senior Administration and officially articulated under the Clinton Administration’s Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin. Indeed, in the view of Gilles Andréani, “one finds convincing signs of a gradual shift” toward counter-proliferation through the 1990s. Relevant counter-proliferation capabilities, plans, and programs clearly were developed in Clinton’s Department of Defense, but coexisted with a national strategy predicated on encompassing traditional and more non-proliferation measures.

As each of the National Security Strategies released since the Gulf War have illustrated, counter-proliferation programs – as well as broader efforts to prevent, contain, reverse, stem or thwart the development of nuclear weapons – have attempted to come to terms with many vexing challenges. For several years, the Defense Department has undertaken research and development activities to develop strike capabilities that could achieve operational objectives,

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292 Ibid.
293 Ibid., p. 16.
including the destruction of an adversary’s assets located in hardened and/or buried targets with attention to minimising collateral effects. The development of non-nuclear capabilities that rapidly allowed US forces to identify, target, and destroy both fixed and mobile targets was critical to effective counter-proliferation planning; some suggested that development of low-yield nuclear weapons may have further enhanced US capabilities to hold at risk hardened or deeply buried targets. As the US ability to credibly target such facilities improved, some of the leverage adversaries may have gained by possessing WMDs could be eroded. Although the 1990s witnessed evident progress on this technical front, policy concerns over the potential for collateral effects remained critical seven years after the Gulf War, when the risk of inadvertently releasing chemical or biological materials led the United States and the United Kingdom to proscribe certain targets during Operation Desert Fox.298

In future military engagements against WMD-armed regional adversaries, policy officials may again have to weigh the prospect of collateral release against the imperative to ensure adversarial non-use of such weapons.299

The National Security Strategy of 2002’s call for proactive counter-proliferation stemmed directly from its premise that the security landscape had undergone a profound transformation. In this new era, key regional states and terror organisations “are determined to acquire weapons of mass destruction, along with other advanced military technology, to be used as threats or offensively to achieve the aggressive designs of these regimes.” As a result, there is a “greater likelihood” that rogue states and terrorists may “use weapons of mass destruction against us.”300 The Bush Snr and Clinton Administrations clearly recognised US vulnerabilities to WMD and other asymmetric attack modes in their respective National Security Strategies, and sought to develop and implement particular defensive measures and operational capabilities. However, it took the hijacked commercial airliners of September 11 to effect more sweeping adjustments. As indicated above, at the time of the Gulf War, WMDs were generally perceived as a last resort to be used principally in overseas theaters and in wartime. In the post 9/11 world, the possibility of their employment in peacetime, against population centres or on the US homeland, could not be discounted.

The underlying logic and core sentiments of the National Security Strategy of 2002 pertaining to perceptions of threat and counter-proliferation, have long been a significant strategic focus of US policy-makers, officials and military planners. While it is often depicted as being a distinct and radical departure, the Bush Doctrine in its advocacy of strategic counter-proliferation policies – together with broader concepts to prevent, contain, reverse, stem or thwart the development of nuclear weapons from those state or non-state actors deemed as adversarial – has been a driving force behind each National Security Strategy release since its inception in 1987. Providing an overview of the US Administration’s perceptions of the international security environment including WMD threats and arms control opportunities, these official strategy documents were initiated as a result of the Goldwater-Nichols Act defense reforms. While it is apparent that the Bush Administration’s National Security Strategy of 2002 asserted the notion of preventive attacks into the counter-proliferation equation (discussed in the following chapters), the US government’s fixation with external threats and those actors developing nuclear weapons and accompanying capabilities, has been an implicit concern and consideration in every National Security Strategy since the Reagan era. The Bush Doctrine and its premise to counter the perceived threat of the day, merely continued this process.
Chapter 3
The Bush Doctrine:
Definitions and Interpretations of
Prevention and Pre-emption
Released in 2002, the National Security Strategy of the United States of America and its lesser known counterpart, the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction, defined the Bush Administration’s strategic response to the events of September 11, 2001. In essence, the controversial documental instruments made two important declarations: “WMD – nuclear, biological, and chemical – in the possession of hostile states and terrorists represents one of the greatest security challenges facing the US” and “Our enemies have openly declared that they are seeking WMDs... the US will not allow these efforts to succeed... as a matter of common sense and self defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.”\(^{301}\) Taken together, these two assertions – that the most vital threat to the national security of the US was the linkage of “radicalism and technology” and that the US would view such developments as intolerable and act to destroy them “before they are fully formed” – created the basis for what became known as the “Bush Doctrine.” Not without its critics the so-called Bush Doctrine came to dominate American political discourse from 2002-04 as political leaders, academic scholars, and the general public debated the ramifications of this broad and contentious initiative. While its advocates argued that an urgent and unprecedented threat was well under way which required new and proactive approaches in the use of force, critics of the Bush Doctrine viewed its espousal of preventive war to combat the proliferation of WMD as further testimony to American unilateralism and arrogance; “a reckless setting of a dangerous precedent that other states will exploit to mask aggression” and perhaps most importantly, a fundamentally unnecessary departure from the traditional, time-tested strategies of deterrence and containment that figured so prominently in defeating the Soviet Union during the Cold War.\(^{302}\) While the Bush Doctrine’s assertiveness may have been “candid” and “bold,” it was not necessarily the radical departure in US security policy that many portended. As a means to placate some of these debates, this Chapter will seek to clarify and establish the meanings and definitions associated with pre-emption and prevention, the legal dimension associated with these meanings and the extent to which preventive war was framed and considered a viable option for the Administration. By establishing the meanings pertaining to these two “strategic concepts,” a significant platform will be established and will enable latter analysis; that being, the extent to which preventive war has long been a deep and implicit consideration in US security strategy.


In terms of formal Presidential doctrine encompassed in the National Security Strategy, it has been evident that each Administration has articulated what it deemed to be the threat or security challenge of the day; as well as the means in which the United States would counter, adapt to, coerce or thwart such a “perceived” threat. As articulated in the previous chapter, counter-proliferation methods have been implicit in the formal documents of the National Security Strategy since 1987. However, as indicated above, the second and most controversial assertion of the Bush Doctrine was the official adoption of “anticipatory self-defense,” in which the United States was prepared to “act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.” As stated by George W. Bush:

The grave threat our nation faced lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology... We must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use WMD against the US and our allies and friends... Given the goals of rogue states and terrorists, the US can no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past. The US has long maintained the option of pre-emption actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national security. The greater the threat, the greater the risk of inaction and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack, to forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the US... if necessary, will act pre-emptively.303

Through these words of the National Security Strategy of 2002, Bush formally endorsed the use of pre-emptive measures, or, what will be discussed during the course of this chapter, preventive war. He referred to how international law recognised that nations need not suffer an attack before they could lawfully take action to defend themselves against forces that presented an imminent danger of attack. Bush highlighted how legal scholars and international jurists often conditioned the legitimacy of pre-emption on the existence of an imminent threat – most often a “visible mobilisation of armies, navies, and air forces preparing to attack.”304 For the Administration, he continued, the United States must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today’s adversaries. As stated, “rogue states” and terrorists did not seek to attack the United States using conventional means as they “know such attacks would fail.” Instead, they “employ acts of terror” and, potentially, the use of weapons of mass destruction; “weapons that can be easily concealed, delivered covertly, and used without warning.”305

304 Ibid., p. 15.
305 Ibid.
In emotive fashion, Bush’s National Security Strategy of 2002 referred to the events of September 11, 2001 as a means to illustrate and punctuate his “pre-emptive” assertions. He argued that the targets of these attacks were the United States’ military forces and civilian population and that this was a direct violation of one of the principal norms of the law of warfare. He pointed to the mass civilian casualties as being the specific objective of the terrorists and that these losses could be exponentially more severe if “terrorists acquired and used weapons of mass destruction.”\(^\text{306}\) It was this emotional reference that provided Bush with the ultimate platform on which to launch his vision of pre-emption or preventive war. Indeed, as further posited, the United States has “long maintained the option of pre-emptive actions” to impede or “counter a threat to their national security... the greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction” and the more compelling the case for taking “anticipatory action” to defend the United States, even if, he argued, “uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack.” The conclusion of this endorsement came with one of the most defining statements of his “doctrine,” that being, “to forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act pre-emptively.”\(^\text{307}\)

As a means to qualify the above statement, Bush signified that the United States would not use force in all cases to pre-empt emerging threats, nor should nations use pre-emption as a “pretext for aggression.” However, as emphasised, “in an age where the enemies of civilization openly and actively seek the world’s most destructive technologies,” the United States cannot stand still while perils gather momentum.\(^\text{308}\) As a means to support a pre-emptive option Bush, clearly described what he deemed to be necessary for the future of US national security. That being, the building of better, more integrated intelligence capabilities to provide timely, accurate information on threats, wherever they may emerge; the close coordination with allies to form a common assessment of the most dangerous threats; and “the transformation of our military forces to ensure our ability to conduct rapid and precise operations to achieve decisive results.”\(^\text{309}\)

**Pre-emption or Preventive War?**

At the time of its release, many scholars and commentators argued that the most defining assertion of the Bush Doctrine was encompassed in the statement that US would now “act

\(^{306}\) Ibid.

\(^{307}\) Ibid.

\(^{308}\) Ibid., p. 16.

\(^{309}\) Ibid.
against such emerging threats before they are fully formed,”\textsuperscript{310} clearly implying that the US would enact a type of proactive response, or, “anticipatory self-defense.” Anticipatory self-defense has often be aligned to notions either of “pre-emption” or “prevention” and while they have been periodically used interchangeably, the terms are actually two distinct strategic concepts. Indeed, the defining dichotomy between the two is based in the relative timing of their application and the immediacy of the perceived threat. Because the latter is a core component of this chapter (as well as Chapters Four and Five), it is important to understand the disparity. Pre-emption, in the most basic sense, is nothing more than a quick draw. Upon detecting evidence that an adversary is about to attack – traditionally a visible mobilisation of armies, navies and air forces preparing to attack – a threatened state beats the opponent to the punch and attacks first as a means to thwart the impending strike.\textsuperscript{311} It is employed “downstream,” in response to a more specific, direct, and immediate threat where “the necessity of self-defense becomes so instant and overwhelming that it leaves no choice of means and no moment for deliberation.”\textsuperscript{312} As stated by Jack S. Levy, “pre-emption involves the initiation of military action because it is perceived that an adversary’s attack is imminent and that there are advantages to striking first or at least in preventing the adversary from doing so... it is a tactical response to an immediate threat... designed to forestall the mobilization and deployment of the adversary’s existing military forces.”\textsuperscript{313} For example, the 1967 Six-Day War in which Israel launched an “unprovoked” attack upon the Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian armies massing on its borders was, in the purest sense, a pre-emptive war.

In contrast, prevention pertains to the military strategy undertaken by states as a means to address long-term tensions emanating from hostile and/or powerful rivals. Like preventive medicine, preventive war is employed “upstream” as a means to confront factors that are likely to contribute to the development of a threat before they have a chance to become specific, direct or immediate. The preventive motivation of conflict or war is structured on the premise that military conflict, while not necessarily imminent, is probably inevitable, and that it is better to undertake the conflict now while the costs and/or risks are low(er) than later when the costs are high(er). In most instances, a preventive war is fought in order to preclude the diminishing level of an individual state’s power in relation to an ascending adversary.

\textsuperscript{310} Ibid., p. 3.
\textsuperscript{312} Arend, “International Law and the Pre-emptive Use of Force,” p. 91.
The dominant state strives to take advantage of a window of opportunity – “a period during which a state possesses a significant military advantage over an adversary” – before a window of vulnerability – “a window of opportunity from the perspective of the disadvantaged side” – appears likely to open.\(^{314}\) As Levy stipulated, “prevention involves fighting a winnable war now in order to avoid the risk of war later under less favourable circumstances... [it] is a response to a threat that will generally take several years to develop... [and] aims to forestall the creation of new military assets. The consequence of non-action... is the gradual deterioration of... relative military power and the risk of a more costly war from a position of inferiority.”\(^{315}\) The classic example of preventive war is the Peloponnesian War, which, according to Thucydides, was made inevitable by the “growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta.”\(^{316}\) More recently, the 1981 Israeli attack against the Iraqi Osirak nuclear reactor was indiscriminately portrayed as a preventive operation which was designed to keep Iraq’s nuclear weapons capability from “happening or existing a number of years down the road.”\(^{317}\) Although pre-emption and prevention signify two very different paths to conflict, they both derive from a crucial assessment that inaction is not viable and “that the future will be bleak unless [some anticipatory action] is undertaken or at least a belief that this world will be worse than the likely one produced by the war.”\(^{318}\) As Victor Cha articulated, “in a pre-emptive situation doing nothing means being the victim of imminent aggression. In a preventive situation, doing nothing means growing inferiority.”\(^{319}\)

In both instances, the expected costs of peace are higher than the potential costs of conflict, and thereby, necessitate a state to act proactively and assertively. Nonetheless, regardless of their similarities, differences and the Bush Administration’s seeming attempts to confound the two concepts, it is apparent that what was really being pursued in the Bush Doctrine was a strategy of preventive war.

For Colin Gray, preventive war was not a concept akin to deterrence and containment, despite the sentiments to the contrary made by Bush. Preventive action was an option that very occasionally was necessary, however, it did not have the character of a reasonably reliable

\(^{315}\) Levy, “Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War,” p. 91.
default strategy, like deterrence and containment. To attain an improved “theoretical understanding of preventive war,” Gray posited the following “principal observations and suggestions:”

1. Preventive war is simply war, distinguished only by its timing.
2. Since preventive war is simply war, it is already explained adequately by Clausewitz.
3. Preventive war, in common with all war, is a gamble.
4. The “preventor” begins with the advantage of the initiative, but if success is not achieved swiftly and decisively, that advantage will rapidly diminish as the enemy recovers and counterattacks.
5. The assessment of a preventive war option has to be on the basis of cost-benefit analysis (or guesswork).
6. The anticipation of high costs to prevention action need not be a showstopper. It depends upon the value of the stakes.

As Gray further conveyed, the main dichotomy between pre-emption and prevention was that the former option was exercised in or for a war that was certain, the timing of which has not been chosen by the pre-emptor. In every instance, by definition, the option of preventive war, or of a preventive strike, must encompass speculation that war, or at least a major negative power shift, was probable in the future. The preventor had a choice. It could choose to absorb and tolerate the predicted adverse power shift. Alternatively, it could “function grand strategically, and endeavor by, say, diplomatic, economic, subversive, as well as military competitive means, to lessen the growing peril.”

Obviously, temporally the more distant the danger, the greater has to be the uncertainty. In the early 1990s, Americans were assailed by a fashionable theory that tomorrow’s great enemy would be superpower Japan. Less than a decade later, the status of the super threat of the future was shared between violent Islamic fundamentalism and China.

As will be discussed more extensively in the next chapter, the attack on Iraq was the manifestation of the Bush Doctrine’s form of “pre-emption” – or in reality, preventive war – formalised in the National Security Strategy of 2002. The Bush Administration identified rogue states seeking to attain nuclear weapons – in conjunction with “their terrorist clients” – to justify the elevation of preventive military intervention from a last resort option to one that

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320 Gray, The Implications of Pre-emptive and Preventive War Doctrines: A Reconsideration, pp. vii, xi.
321 Ibid.
322 Ibid., p. 13.
many critics argued was the new centre of US security policy. Indeed, while many admonished that the Bush Doctrine was a defining shift, in reality, the United States has long maintained the option of “pre-emptive” actions to counter adversaries deemed as threats to US national security. The National Security Strategy of 2002 put forth a doctrine of “pre-emptive” military action which it acknowledged was based on “the existence of an imminent threat.” However, in its formulation the strategy argued that, “we must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today’s adversaries... We cannot let our enemies strike first.” In essence, this described the notion of prevention – attacking when there was little to no threat of an imminent attack.

The introduction of a policy legitimising preventive attack on sovereign states for the purposes of self-defense engendered contentious debate, as well as associated political and diplomatic implications. Critics argued that attacking potential enemies before a threat had actually materialised potentially increased the spectre and likelihood of unintended consequences, and made it vital that the US national security system act with an extremely high degree of accuracy in any first move. Critics also contended that the US risked establishing a precedent of defensible inter-state preventive attacks in which the actual use of preventive force would motivate other international actors to also incorporate “preventive approaches” into their security planning. Preventive military intervention was aligned to notions of vigilante justice in that the act of a state preventively attacking another violated both the UN Charter and the NATO Charter. Furthermore, an assertive policy raised the capacity to engender nuclear proliferation amongst weaker states instead of deterring them. Finally, critics argued that in simple terms, the National Security Strategy of 2002 proposed the initiation of violence as a means to prevent it. As stated by John Steinbruner:

[I]t appears to neglect and indeed to disdain international legal restraint. In the judgment of much of the world, that formula is more likely to generate violence than to contain it.

Preventive military intervention has always been an option for states but its inclusion in the National Security Strategy of 2002, combined with the US preventive intervention in Iraq,

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327 Steinbruner, “Confusing Ends and Means.”
elevated its legitimacy (in the eyes of the Bush Administration) as a viable, defensible tool that states could undertake in the pursuit of their foreign policy goals. This scenario would not necessarily translate to a realm of security and order as expressed by some in the Administration, but an environment in which states themselves could consider prevention a potential option. A policy brief from The Brookings Institution contended:

Today’s international system is characterized by a relative infrequency of interstate war. Developing doctrines that lower the threshold for pre-emptive action could put that accomplishment at risk, and exacerbate regional crises already on the brink of open conflict.

Conversely, however, Ellis and Kiefer argued that it was unclear as to whether a non-proliferation regime alone “would ultimately be capable of preventing the further proliferation of WMD or weapon-related technologies or expertise, let alone be capable of rolling back existing capabilities in key states of proliferation concern.” They challenged the notion that a reactive, diplomatic-oriented, multilateral approach would deter the possibility of a rogue state or non-state actor attacking the United States any more than a proactive, military-operational, unilateral approach would. As stated:

Rather than a recipe for further proliferation, the Bush National Security Strategy of 2002 is a direct outgrowth of an existing post-proliferated and terror-prone security environment. It is both the logical culmination of more than a decade’s worth of experience with recalcitrant proliferants in key regions and a sound premise on which to base US national-security planning in the years ahead.

The Decision to Undertake Preventive War
The use of force is one of the most extraordinary decisions a leader can make. Even more extraordinary is the decision to use force preventively – to attack another state when there is no imminent threat – because international law makes no provision for preventive war as it does for those of a pre-emptive nature. In a modern context, preventive intervention is often associated with the deployment of military personnel and/or the execution of air strikes against targets across recognised borders for the purpose of precluding the target state from obtaining and utilising nuclear technology. In simple terms, military intervention is

329 Ibid., p. 7.
330 Ellis & Kiefer, Combating Proliferation, p. 203.
331 Ibid.
preventive if it is authorised when there is no threat of an imminent attack from the target state. As discussed earlier, the definitions of the concepts of both prevention and pre-emption are based on “better now than later” logic, which explains as to why they can engender ambiguity in their usage. Referring again to Levy, the term prevention encompasses notions of fighting a winnable battle or simply employing military action now in order to avoid the risk of battle later under less favourable conditions. Conversely, pre-emption involves the initiation of military action because it is perceived that an adversary’s attack is imminent. As argued by Levy, “the theoretical significance of preventive war derives from the importance of the phenomenon of changing power differentials between states arising from uneven rates of growth.” In essence, preventive military force is the proposition that the dominant power initiates preventive action in order to impede an ascending adversary while the latter is still too weak to pose a serious threat. The preventive motivation for battle arises from the perception that one’s military power and potential are declining relative to that of a rising adversary and from the fear of the consequences of that decline. Importantly, apprehension at the decline in power stems from the potential decline; not only of one’s military power but also of one’s bargaining position in international affairs and the corresponding decline in political, economic and cultural benefits one receives from the status quo. The power shift may be the result of an advance in military technology or the acquisition of nuclear technology in the weaker state.

As a means to define the preventive motivation, Levy suggested several reasons why a state may prefer to initiate war now rather than war later. First, leaders may be prepared to precipitate a conflict as a means to maintain credibility if they have been challenged. This assumes the preventer is militarily stronger than its adversarial target, which Levy argued is most often the situation. Levy also signified that decision makers may initiate a preventive attack because they perceive that a victorious war may increase their domestic political support. That is, winning a “conflict” may “satisfy specific interest group pressures, exploit more generalized jingoistic sentiment, or distract the public’s attention from internal social or economic problems through the creation of an external scapegoat.” Finally, decision makers may elect to utilise preventive force if they perceive critical national interests to be

332 This definition follows the work of Jack Levy who has written extensively about the preventive motivation in Levy, “Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War,” pp. 90-92.
333 Levy, “Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War,” p. 82.
334 Ibid., p. 84.
335 Ibid., p. 93.
336 Ibid., p. 94.
directly under threat. It is here that the preventive motivation is an intervening variable between a state’s relative decline in military power and the decision for war.\textsuperscript{337}

Additionally, the prevention consideration is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for war, but it can contribute to it in combination with other variables.\textsuperscript{338} For instance, variables related to domestic governance can also have an impact in a leader’s decision to utilise preventive force. Randall Schweller aligned domestic structure and preventive force, arguing that preventive force was an unrealistic policy for declining democratic leaders, as the strength of public opinion in democratic states often generated a complex set of factors which lessened the motivation to enter into a preventive war.\textsuperscript{339} Furthermore, he argued, such declining democratic leaders have attempted to counterbalance rising authoritarian challengers through the formation of defensive alliances rather than through the use of preventive force. Richard Ned Lebow also made the connection between domestic political factors and a leader’s decision making process in relation to the usage of force. Like Schweller, he argued that public opinion and other domestic political forces could sway the decision making of leaders, even if they perceived that the national interest required military action. In referring to World War II, he stated, “Pacific or divided public opinion forestalled American intervention in the two world wars until either enough American ships had been sunk or the country itself had been attacked.”\textsuperscript{340} Moreover, it is clear that the shock of the September 11 events evoked a crisis vortex that may have reduced public scepticism about both “diagnoses of threats and proposed solutions,”\textsuperscript{341} and may have invigorated an upsurge in public willingness to embrace an “unusually high cost (economic and human) for international military engagement.”\textsuperscript{342} Indeed, as Levy noted, regardless of the motivations, variables or stimuli, “a decision to initiate war for preventive purposes involves enormous risks and uncertainties, and the risk propensities of decision makers can have a significant impact.”\textsuperscript{343}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}[\textsuperscript{337}]
\item Ibid., pp. 94-95.
\item Ibid., pp. 105-106.
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Shifting National Security Strategy and Discourse

On September 11, 2001, the United States suddenly found itself in what appeared to be a new and perplexing world in which the old structures no longer seemed adequate. President George W. Bush and his advisors in their new national security policy defined the main lines of that policy which were by no means kept secret. US policy, the Bush Administration declared openly, would no longer be based on the principle of deterrence “while dangers gather.” It had to identify the threat and impede such threats before they reached “our borders;” taking “whatever action [was] necessary.” It had to be prepared to act “pre-emptively” and, indeed, alone if necessary against “rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies and friends.” It had to be proactive and “take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge.” In this “new world,” Bush declared that “the only path to peace and security is the path of action.”

The increasing possibility that chemical, nuclear, and biological weapons could be attained by stateless terrorists, coupled with the recent al Qaeda attack in the United States, signified the breakdown of the deterrence and containment strategy that served the United States military throughout the Cold War and first stage of the post-Cold War era (1991-2001). Political uncertainty erupted over how US institutions would act to the situation as such strategies (in light of 9/11) now appeared unable to deter multiple threats from national and sub-national sources. In response, the Bush Administration identified two significant changes to its security strategy. First, the Administration detailed the significance of homeland security in the context of the broader global environment and articulated what it perceived to be significant threats to the United States. Second, the Administration detailed its security strategy in which the deterrence and containment posture would be replaced by a policy advocating “pre-emptive” offensive actions as a means to counter the ambitions of rogue states and terrorists.

Controversy over the Bush Administration’s national security strategy arose at the doctrinal level, as narratives of historical comparisons and competing visions of the future became the focus of domestic and international deliberative discourse. One European commentator

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stated that Bush had in fact “stunned the international community” by declaring that such “pre-emptive military action was an acceptable option for coping with the new threat environment characterised by transnational terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.” Many argued that the new policy signified a total break with American tradition where the United States had pursued a more cautious and defensive policy; a policy that was framed by the core pillars of containment and deterrence; a policy that advocated respect for legal norms and for the sovereign rights of other states. It was argued that the United States had traditionally refrained from the use of force until it, or one of its allies, had been attacked. The Bush Administration, it was argued, had broken with this tradition and was now pursuing a far more assertive policy. As the Administration articulated its national security strategy to both domestic and international audiences, the cessation of debate over United Nations action and Congressional approval for intervention in Iraq presented legitimation issues for these national and international institutions struggling to address security issues in an era of globalisation. In the United States, an anti-terrorist narrative dominated post-9/11 security discourse and shifted the presumption against the acceptance of the Cold War analytical structures that had dominated foreign policy. Citizens and nations opposed to US military action against Iraq invariably explained their opposition through a narrative warning of the perils of US global hegemony. Whereas proponents of Bush’s policy in the US warned of the inevitability of future security threats and risks if the United States and a “willing coalition” failed to take “pre-emptive” action against the state of Iraq. The Bush Administration, as well as international counterparts, all faced the common predicament of how to sustain and reposition their arguments amid a global media environment, while fulfilling the challenging demands of creating a foreign policy rhetoric that addressed the dispositions of their national audiences.

The Bush Administration’s arguments for reshaping the United States’ global security strategy relied on the shared premise that 9/11 engendered a new security environment. The National Security Strategy of 2002 prominently featured rhetoric that worked to reinforce the threats presented by terrorism. The document defined the War on Terror, the nature of the enemy, and in detail, how “the United States of America” was “fighting a war against terrorists of a global reach... The enemy (was) terrorism – premeditated, politically motivated

347 Trachtenberg, “Preventive War and US Foreign Policy,” p. 2.
violence perpetrated against innocents."\textsuperscript{348} The Bush Doctrine articulated the “new war” that the US was undertaking and dramatised a global security struggle that would be different from previous national struggles. During the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century, it argued, nations struggled over divergent ideas between “destructive totalitarian visions” and “freedom and equality.” Today, despite the events of 9/11, “that great struggle is over”\textsuperscript{349} as the United States would champion aspirations for human dignity and “oppose those who resist it.”\textsuperscript{350}

Indeed, the Bush Doctrine identified the ascendancy of democratically secured liberties in an era of globalisation and asserted that a clear moral vision would guide American foreign policy. This public discussion of the need to secure liberties was significant as it highlighted the Bush Administrations intention to “also wage a war of ideas to win the battle against international terrorism.”\textsuperscript{351} While the strategy document maintained that terrorism was not “a single political regime or person or religion or ideology,”\textsuperscript{352} the battle against terrorist motivations signalled a willingness by the United States to engage in a battle over ideological differences. The National Security Strategy of 2002 also acknowledged the ways in which the threat of the enemy had changed. As stated, “America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones. We are menaced less by fleets and armies than by catastrophic technologies in the hands of the embittered few. We must defeat these threats to our Nation, allies, and friends.”\textsuperscript{353} Hence, the new policy justified a “pre-emptive” military posture as a means to counter the ambitions of rogue states and terrorists. The strategy report maintained that:

\begin{quote}
Given the goals of rogue states and terrorists, the United States can no longer rely solely on a reactive posture as we have in the past... Traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents; whose so called soldiers seek martyrdom in death and whose most potent protection is statelessness. The overlap between states that sponsor terror and those that pursue WMD compels us to action.\textsuperscript{354}
\end{quote}

The apparent shift to pre-emptive action was grounded in \textit{a fortiori} argumentation. That is, Aristotle defined \textit{a fortiori} as a rhetorical technique in which the arguer attempted to prove

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\item \textsuperscript{350} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{351} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 6.
\item \textsuperscript{352} \textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{353} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{354} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 15.
\end{itemize}
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that the opponent acted cruelly in the past – and thereby, the notion of future cruel actions reoccurring was a distinct possibility, if not, most probable. In the Iraq context, the arguments were constructed as a means to project the possibilities of future threats and to justify current resolve. Inherent in Bush’s National Security Strategy of 2002 was a reconfiguration of the United States’ position in defining its legitimate use of assertive force and conflict.

In the post-Cold War era, the challenge for the United States was how to adapt to the spectre of multiple security threats, including sub-national terrorism, together with heterogeneous ideologies engendering competition and conflict. Amidst this environment, the Bush Administration refashioned its military doctrine. The inability of the nation’s security umbrella to impede the September 11 tragedies heightened expectations that the Administration must construct a security strategy commensurate with the new era. The rhetoric of “pre-emptive” war was prominently featured in Presidential addresses. Bush’s 2002 State of the Union speech emphasised that the United States would be a virtuous leader by waging preventive war against international terrorists and the “axis of evil” nations that gave comfort to them. In his speech, Bush declared US intentions to act against terrorism, stating that “some governments will be timid in the face of terror. Make no mistake about it: If they do not act, America will.” The arguments for US action to prevent future acts of destruction were further pronounced in subsequent Bush addresses. In the June 1, 2002 “Address to the Cadets at West Point,” he argued:

Deterrence – the promise of massive retaliation against nations – means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nations or citizens to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies... If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long... the only path to safety is the path to action.

The linkage between the “War on Terror” at home and abroad was very much evident in these speeches; compounded with the notion that the threat of weapons of mass destruction had now created a new security environment in which “the battlefield has now shifted to

357 Bush, Graduation Speech at West Point.
America.‖ One year and one day after the 9/11 attacks, Bush was scheduled to appear before the UN to discuss security issues. Although many UN members had envisaged a heated discussion in relation to international terrorism in the opening session of the UN General Assembly, Bush Administration officials indicated in early August that the President would use this forum to address the threat that Saddam Hussein posed to the world community. President Bush’s September 12th speech to the United Nations detailed the history of international efforts to impede the development of weapons of mass destruction by containing Iraq. Bush described Iraq’s history of non-compliance with UN resolutions and conveyed the possibility of actions the regime could undertake as a means to undermine global security at an international level. As stated:

The first time we may be completely certain that a terrorist state has nuclear weapons is when, God forbid, they use one. And we owe it to our citizens to do everything in our power to prevent that day from coming.359

When he addressed the nation on September 14th, Bush repeated his identification of Saddam Hussein’s regime as “a grave and gathering danger” to the global community, and stated, “…to suggest otherwise is to hope against the evidence. To assume this regime’s good faith is to bet the lives of millions and the peace of the world in a reckless gamble.”360

To many, such speeches signalled the shift from a security strategy embracing deterrence and containment to one emphasising preventive action. Initially, many states expressed concern that the Administration was forgoing diplomatic options of threat reduction. As stated by German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, Bush’s speech presented a “very severe and clear challenge to the Security Council to contain Iraq.”361 A new UN draft resolution proposed by the United States to disarm Iraq initially faced opposition from Russia, France and China, who demanded that the United Nations give full consideration to the ways in which any precedent authorising the use of force in the Iraqi context would legitimate conflict in future scenarios. Members of the UN Security Council also expressed concern that the United States was willing to act against a state that did not convey a preparedness to attack the

361 “Germany ‘very concerned’ after Bush’s Iraq speech,” Deutsche Presse-Agentur, September 13, 2002.
United States. Moreover, the legitimacy of the Bush Administration itself was challenged in relation to the fact that it initiated its policy goals first, and then sought United Nations (as well as Congressional) approval to pursue such policy objectives.

**International Law**

Reading the Bush Doctrine in the context of International Law, the intention to act “pre-emptively” as a means to stymie the emergence of terrorist networks, also became the subject of controversy in international public arenas. Part of the international legitimation controversy the Administration encountered in justifying the change in American foreign policy was its inconsistency with previous instantiations of American military doctrine. Many argued that for decades, the United States’ war doctrine was justified based on international law, agreements and norms. Robert Tucker’s examination of American doctrine in *The Just War* posed questions concerning the proper limits of defensive war, the grounds in which a pre-emptive war had been condemned, as well as the ramifications incurred in maintaining a Cold War nuclear deterrence strategy. In depicting the “just war” he articulated the overarching legal and moral limitations on military engagement. As stated:

> The American doctrine is distinguished by the assumption that the use of force is clearly governed by universally valid moral and legal standards; it is distinguished further by the insistence with which these standards are interpreted as making the justice or injustice of war primarily dependent upon the circumstances immediately attending the initiation of force. In substance, the just war is the war fought either in self-defense or in collective defense against an armed attack. Conversely, the unjust and, of course, the unlawful-war is the war initiated in circumstances other than those of self or collective defense against armed aggression.362

The United States has had a long history of insisting that “whatever its grievances, a state cannot justify initiating war, [and] that whatever its interests, a state should not resort to war to preserve or protect those interests.”363 Its adherence to the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the various security arrangements it entered after World War II, were used by Tucker as confirmatory evidence of the orthogonal nature of the United States’ moral standards to those of international law. For decades after World War II, the US military engaged in pre-emptive action to address imminent threats to the nation’s interests. With the

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363 Ibid., p. 12. Also, Tucker describes this history stretching from the 1932 Sino-Japanese crises to the United States action in 1956 to condemning the force exerted by Great Britain, France, and Israel against Egypt.
exception of the Kosovo campaign, the Clinton Administration acted in concert with the United Nations when engaging in military conflict. As stated by Harries:

There were clear UN resolutions to use force to expel Iraq from Kuwait; to preserve the no-fly zones in Bosnia; for the United States to act under Article 51, the right of self defense, in Afghanistan; to intervene in Sierra Leone and, more ambiguously, in Kosovo.\(^{364}\)

While the legitimacy of the Kosovo campaign was contested, the US acted with a commitment to internationalist purposes in accord with a “coalition of willing nations” to impede ethnic conflict in the Balkans. In contrast to these Clinton Administration conflicts, as well as former President George H.W. Bush’s campaign against Iraq’s incursions into Kuwait, Iraq’s military threat presented no immediate danger to another state. Hence, the United States’ validation for confronting Iraq’s failure to disarm in 2002/03 was perceived to be steeped with national interest. Furthermore, although the United States vied for an international commitment to justify its intervention efforts, the rationale for military intervention presented a prima-facie case contravening international law against pre-emptive war. The Bush Administration justified the Iraq intervention within a security strategy structure that would enable “pre-emptive” action to be undertaken in the absence of an imminent threat. It redefined national security strategy to encompass “pre-emptive” actions taken as a means to prevent rogue states and terrorists from exacting mass civilian casualties upon the United States. In so doing, however, they attempted to create the moral equivalence between historical actions taken by the United States to pre-empt an enemy attack, and the current ambiguous security actions needed to “prevent” terrorist acts. In essence, the Bush Administration argued that the level of proof for executing a “pre-emptive” strike should be lowered as a means to adapt to “non-traditional” objectives of terrorist states and networks. Furthermore, the Administration questioned the legitimacy of international law in the post-September 11 security environment. As already indicated in the above, the new security strategy created an ambiguous new meaning for justified pre-emptive action in the sense that the new meaning would encompass understandings of traditional war fighting conducted as “preventive” war. As the National Security Strategy of 2002 posited:

For centuries, international law recognized that nations need not suffer an attack before they can lawfully take action to defend themselves against forces that present an imminent danger of attack. Legal scholars and international jurists often conditioned the legitimacy of pre-emption on existence of an imminent threat – most often a visible mobilization of armies, navies, and air forces preparing to attack. We must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today’s adversaries. Rogue states and terrorists do not seek to attack us using traditional means... Instead, they rely on acts of terror and, potentially, the use of weapons of mass destruction – weapons that can be easily concealed, delivered covertly, and used without warning... As was demonstrated by the losses on September 11, 2001, mass civilian casualties is the specific objective of terrorists and these losses would be exponentially more severe if terrorists acquired and used weapons of mass destruction.365

The subsequent prevarication between preventive and pre-emptive war was a rhetorical device used with clear intention. As defined earlier, a legitimate pre-emptive strike under international law required that states demonstrate that aggressive states have both the capacity and intention of executing extreme harm. In contrast, preventive war was without such requirements, but rather engendered mutual fear of a surprise attack. The result may increase global instabilities as motives for arming can be misconstrued. As argued by Crawford:

Some states may defensively arm because they fear the “pre-emptive/preventive” state; others may arm offensively because they resent the preventive-war aggressor who may have killed many innocents in a quest for total security. A pre-emptive doctrine which has – because of great fear and a desire to control the international environment – become a preventive war doctrine is likely to create more fearful states and more aggressor states.366

Furthermore, such an equivocation between preventive and pre-emptive war actions undermined United Nations legal doctrine and diplomatic means of communicating security concerns. While Article 51 of the UN charter illustrated that acts in self-defense are only legitimate in the face of attack, the doctrine of preventive war as posited in the National Security Strategy of 2002, risked making this article irrelevant.

The National Security Strategy of 2002, nonetheless, maintained that the right of pre-emption had been recognised under international law “for centuries,” although not in the expanded sense of the concept that the Bush Administration had framed it. Reference to the writings of various classical international jurists lent support to this argument. Gentili, for example,

argued in favour of pre-empting impending threats while also preventing the development of potential future threats. He maintained that “[a] defence is just which anticipates dangers that are already meditated and prepared [i.e., pre-emption], and also those which are not meditated, but are probable and possible [i.e., prevention].”\textsuperscript{367} He emphasised, however, that there must be a clearly defined basis for apprehending the threat in which “a just cause for fear is demanded; and suspicion is not enough.”\textsuperscript{368} Nor is hostile intent alone sufficient justification for anticipatory action. As Gentili stated, “one ought not to be punished merely because of his desire to do harm... [but for] an impulse which was accompanied with action, as is made clear elsewhere.”\textsuperscript{369}

Like Gentili, Grotius acknowledged that pre-emptive action may be taken to forestall or thwart an imminent attack. He also argued that mere suspicion or speculation was not enough to justify such action:

\begin{quote}
War in defence of life is permissible only when the danger is immediate and certain, not when it is merely assumed. The danger, again, must be immediate and imminent in point of time. I admit, to be sure, that if the assailant seizes weapons in such a way that his intent to kill is manifest the crime can be forestalled... But those who accept fear of any sort as justifying anticipatory slaying are themselves greatly deceived, and deceive others.\textsuperscript{370}
\end{quote}

Pre-emptive action was a measure of last resort, to be taken up only when all other remedies have been exhausted:

\begin{quote}
Further, if a man is not planning an immediate attack, but it has been ascertained that he has formed a plot, or is preparing an ambuscade, or that he is putting poison in our way, or that he is making ready a false accusation and false evidence, and is corrupting the judicial procedure, I maintain that he cannot lawfully be killed, either if the danger can in any other way be avoided, or if it is not altogether certain that the danger cannot be otherwise avoided. Generally, in fact, the delay that will intervene affords opportunity to apply many remedies, to take advantage of many accidental occurrences; as the proverb runs, ‘There’s many a slip ’twixt cup and lip.’\textsuperscript{371}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{368} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 62.
\textsuperscript{369} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 66.
\textsuperscript{371} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 174-175.
De Vattel maintained that the greater the likelihood and destructiveness of an impending attack, the greater the justification for taking pre-emptive actions:

One is justified in forestalling a danger in direct ratio to the degree of probability attending it, and to the seriousness of the evil with which one is threatened. If the evil in question be endurable, if the loss be of small account, prompt action need not be taken; there is no great danger in delaying measures of self-protection until we are certain that there is actual danger of the evil. But suppose the safety of the State endangered?... Are we to delay averting our destruction until it has become inevitable?372

In such circumstances, a state need not wait until the danger is apparent, but may act on the basis of a “reasonable presumption” of threat:

But presumption becomes almost equal to certitude if the Prince who is about to acquire enormous power has already given evidence of an unbridled pride and ambition.373

The cornerstone of the Charter *jus ad bellum* regime is the general prohibition on the use of force found in Article 2 (4), coupled with the self-defence exception found in Article 51. Is the preventive or pre-emptive use of military force lawful under the regime anchored on these two provisions?

First, it is clear from other provisions of the Charter that the Security Council can resort to the preventive or pre-emptive use of force under its Chapter VII powers.374 As per Article 39, the Council may pursue forcible measures in response to “any threat to the peace [emphasis added], breach of the peace, or act of aggression.”375 The reference to “threat to the peace” suggested that the Security Council may act (or authorise members to act) before a breach of the peace or an act of aggression had actually taken place. This is confirmed in rhetoric used elsewhere in Chapter VII, Article 50, for example, that referred specifically to “preventive or enforcement measures against any state... taken by the Security Council.”376 The question, however, was as to whether States are permitted to unilaterally (i.e., without prior and explicit

373 Ibid.
Security Council authorisation) act in a preventive or pre-emptive military capacity as a measure of self-defence. The answer to this of course depended upon the interpretation of Article 51, and specifically, as to whether the article permitted the anticipatory use of force in self-defence.

The debate over the legitimacy of anticipatory self-defence, that is, unilateral measures of military force taken by a state to prevent an expected armed attack, has been one of the most controversial and extensive disputes connected with the Charter *jus ad bellum* regime. On a general level, there have been two competing interpretations of Art. 51. The restrictive or narrow interpretation posited that a state may exercise its right of self-defence *only in response* to an actual armed attack. The non-restrictive or broad interpretation, conversely, emphasised that a state may also undertake this strategy in *anticipation of* an impending armed attack. Both sides of the equation have articulated and conveyed powerful arguments in support of their respective positions. But while there may be a substantial and admittedly controversial basis for pre-emptive counter-proliferation strategies in international law; there is much less so for preventive strategies. It seems reasonable to recognise the legitimacy of anticipatory self-defence in the face of a clearly defined imminent threat. As has often been said, international law in general – and the UN Charter regime, in particular – is not a suicide pact. No state can be expected to sit passively to absorb an aggressor’s impending attack. At the same time, however, active defence does not necessarily imply that pre-emptive action should be taken in all circumstances against all threats.

Nevertheless, there is a place for pre-emption both in a state’s national security policy and, more to the point of this section, in international law. This does not extend, however, to the brand of prevention/pre-emption set out in the Bush Doctrine, in so far as it does not meet the conditions of necessity and proportionality that regulate the anticipatory use of defensive force under the current interpretation of the Charter *jus ad bellum* regime. The reason is, quite simply, that the strategic option enshrined in the Doctrine – as argued extensively throughout the above – is not pre-emption but, rather, prevention cloaked in the rhetoric of pre-emption. This is more than just semantics. As also demonstrated in the above, the international community had serious reservations concerning preventive military action. Such action, based often on ambiguous evidence of potential long-term threats has engendered greater scope for abuse. That is, for the pursuit of aggressive ends under the guise of anticipatory self-defence, as well as for major informational mistakes in which
thousands die as a result. In order to make its preventive strategy more palatable to the international community – and hence, lessen its instinctive opposition to the strategy – the Bush Administration attempted to convey this strategic option as pre-emption. It drew the conceptual link to pre-emption through its emphasis on an expanded notion of imminence; a key element in the condition of necessity as it related to pre-emption. Here again, the Bush Doctrine embellished the concept of imminence beyond the semantic breaking point. The Doctrine pushed imminence back to the early research and development stage of the nuclear threat cycle, where the time to develop an operational nuclear weapons capability was measured not in days, weeks or even months but, rather, in years. Nuclear activities at this stage of the threat cycle do not pose an imminent threat in the true meaning of the word. This is not to argue for complacency in the face of such a potential long-term threat, and it may call for determined non-military action in order to prevent its realisation. But it is not an imminent threat in the sense of a clear and impending attack, the basis for truly pre-emptive action.\textsuperscript{377}

This leads to the second component of the necessity condition on which the Bush Doctrine’s brand of pre-emption faltered. Traditionally, necessity requires that force be used as a last resort after all reasonable non-military alternatives have been exhausted. It is difficult to credibly make the argument that there is no alternative to the use of force when dealing with a WMD capability whose emergence to the point where it actually poses an existential threat to the target state is measured in years. In such circumstances, the target state certainly has time for “a hundred visions and revisions” of its counter-proliferation efforts. The Bush Doctrine attempted to bypass the issue of time by portraying conflict with the adversary as inevitable. It assumed that the irrational hostility of the leaders of rogue proliferators was such that, once they acquired nuclear weapons, they would – not might – use them against the US and its friends either directly or through their terrorist proxies. That being the case, it was better to “impede now” when there was a better chance of success at relatively low cost, than later when the threat was more fully developed.\textsuperscript{378}

The last point where the Bush Doctrine’s version of pre-emption faced limitations pertained to the second condition of regulating the defensive use of force on proportionality. The target


\textsuperscript{378} Akehurst, \textit{A Modern Introduction to International Law}, p. 261.
state should not, for example, incinerate an aggressor’s city in response to a rifle shot at a border post. For pre-emption of a perceived nuclear threat, in particular, the severity of the response turns critically on the characterisation of that threat. In its public pronouncements, the Bush Administration focussed on the worst-case scenario imaginable – a nuclear holocaust unleashed on American cities at the cost of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of lives – to underpin its preventive/pre-emptive strategy. Can this scenario be completely ruled out? Obviously not. It was not only the consequences of a catastrophic event but the likelihood of that event that must be assessed in order to place a particular threat scenario in its proper perspective among the panoply of other possible threats to the nation’s security. This was particularly important when the threat response under consideration was preventive military action, with all the intended – and unintended – consequences that can flow from such action. The target state must have the ability to gather and assess accurate, reliable and timely intelligence on the capabilities and intentions of the adversary. As several American committees studying the 9/11 and Iraqi WMD intelligence failures have revealed, the US intelligence system did not demonstrate that it had this capacity, certainly to the degree necessary to underpin a strategy of prevention. In the absence of such a capacity, falling back on worst-case scenario planning to “cover the bases” had the associated consequence of rendering the concept of proportionality irrelevant. The hypothesised demise of millions of innocents effectively served to justify any level of preventive military action. It is here that while there may have been grounds, at least in principle under the UN Charter jus ad bellum regime for a counter-proliferation strategy of pre-emption that satisfied the conditions of necessity and proportionality, the Bush Doctrine’s brand of pre-emption – prevention by any other name – was extensively limited in this context of international law.379

Real World Preventive Considerations

The National Security Strategy of 2002 deemed the proliferation of nuclear weapons as being unacceptable for a number of compelling reasons. In simple terms, proliferation adds vast complexities to US foreign policy: crisis instabilities are likely to be more extreme; the likelihood of inadvertent or accidental use is likely to be greater; transfers to non-state groups are more likely; and at least some of the future possessor states are likely to be politically

volatile, aggressive, and are hard to deter.\textsuperscript{380} Important as these were, however, it appears that the real reason the US considered waging preventive war against Iraq, Iran, and North Korea was to ensure the maintenance of its overwhelming superiority in the Persian Gulf, East Asia, and the world.\textsuperscript{381} Indeed, it was evident that the Bush Administration was determined to “prevent any hostile power from dominating regions whose resources would allow it to attain great power status (like Iraq or Iran in the oil-rich Middle East); discourage attempts by any other nation to challenge US leadership or upset the established political and economic order and should prevent the emergence of any potential competitors.”\textsuperscript{382}

Accordingly, the National Security Strategy of 2002 reasserted such sentiments in its depiction of the US – a state that: “enjoyed unparalleled military strength and economic and political influence;” would maintain its effort to “keep military strengths beyond challenge;” sustain forces “strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from trying to equal or surpass the power of the US;” and “build a balance of power that favors freedom.”\textsuperscript{383} Therefore, if rogue actors were permitted to attain nuclear weapons, not only would the US become more deterred; rogue proliferators would become less deterred. The emergence of rogue proliferators would threaten the security of the US and its allies, strengthen bargaining positions on both sides in any future political negotiations, increase militancy, entrench hardliners, destabilise the regional balance, and finally, encourage other states or non-state actors to follow suit. For the Bush Administration this situation was completely unacceptable and had to be avoided. As a result, the National Security Strategy of 2002 emphasised that the US would undertake preventive war against rogue states that were deemed to be close in acquiring nuclear weapons as a means to preserve an imbalance of power favourable to the US, and to preclude any potential aggression by emboldened nuclear adversaries. Despite such concerns, many commentators questioned the perceived necessity and efficaciousness of using preventive war to address the issue of rogue proliferation. More specifically, many analysts challenged the notion as to why the US “needed” to wage preventive war against Iraq, Iran, or North Korea in the first place, even if they did pose a threat to US pre-eminence.

Some critics argued that a strategy of preventive war was not necessary because many of the threats to the US were over-exaggerated and could be challenged with assertive, but less

\textsuperscript{381} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{382} Ryan, “Inventing the ‘Axis of Evil,’” p. 61.
militarised policies, such as deterrence and containment. Indeed, there is a substantial body of evidence which suggested that not all rogue proliferators were inherently unhinged and undeterrollable. As Record contended, because rogue states, like other states, have “return addresses” in the form of attackable assets such as territory, population, armed forces, governmental and economic infrastructure, and most importantly, leaders who value their lives, they can be held hostage by credible threats of US retaliation. Michael O’Hanlon, Susan E. Rice, and James B. Steinberg similarly posited that “deterrence tends to work against even brutal autocrats, who tend to value highly their hold on power and their lives – as National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice herself wrote, ‘...these [rogue] regimes are living on borrowed time, so there need be no sense of panic about them. Rather the first line of defense should be a clear and classical statement of deterrence – if they do acquire WMD, their weapons will be unusable because any attempt to use them will bring national obliteration.’” Finally, Lawrence Korb elaborated: “history has demonstrated that even the most ruthless tyrants understand and respect the logic of robust containment and active deterrence... even if a rogue country ruled by a terrorist and tyrant such as Saddam Hussein acquired [nuclear weapons], its weapons would cause little tangible harm because any attempt to use them would bring national obliteration. When dictators have undertaken acts of aggression, it has been as a direct result of the United States’ failure to communicate credibly its intent to retaliate. On those occasions, deterrence did not fail us; it was just poorly implemented.” For example, Saddam Hussein reportedly decided to wage war against Kuwait in July 1990, but before sending in his troops, he approached the US to find out how it would react. In a now infamous interview with the Iraqi leader, US ambassador April Glaspie told Hussein, “we have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait.” Furthermore, in a previous communication, the US State Department had told Hussein that Washington had “no special defense or security commitments to Kuwait.” The US may not have intended to give Iraq a green light, but in essence, that is what it did. This suggests that deterrence worked in 1991, and furthermore, that the despots atop even the most offensive, seemingly reckless rogue regimes were still fundamentally rational calculators that sought some degree of political survival above all else, and understood the logic of deterrence. In other words, “rogue state behaviour so far

385 Record, “Nuclear Deterrence, Preventive War and Counter-proliferation,” p. 20.
provides no convincing evidence of immunity to deterrence via the credible threat of unacceptable retaliation." If this is correct, then a strategy of preventive war may not be the most efficacious or cost-effective way to thwart the emergence of rogue proliferators.

Moreover, other scholars and commentators have posited the notion that even if a state was perceived to be both rogue and proliferating, there was still no guarantee that it sought to initiate hostilities, upset the status quo or extend its sphere of influence. After all, “blackmail and aggression are not the only reasons rogue states seek [nuclear weapons]; they may also see in such weapons a means of, deterring or at least raising the price of, US military action against themselves.” As posited in the above, the US perception of threat has often derived from the interaction of capabilities with intentions; and while a states’ capability to do harm might not be in dispute, there is always the potential for its motives and intentions to be misinterpreted or change, sometimes in unexpected and even positive ways. As Neta Crawford articulated, “a strategy of preventive war assumes... perfect knowledge of an adversary’s ill intentions when such presumptions may be premature or false... while preventive war doctrines assume that today’s potential rival will become tomorrow’s adversary, diplomacy or some other factor could work to change the relationship from antagonism to accommodation…” Charles W. Kegley and Gregory A. Raymond further explained:

Preventive war is based on the proposition that it is possible to foretell with certainty what is to come. But predicting another state’s future behavior is difficult because leadership intentions are hard to discern. Information on an adversary’s long-range goals may be obscured by its attempts to shroud policy planning in secrecy. Evidence on the options being considered for attaining those goals may be misinterpreted due to a carefully crafted deception campaign. Finally, signals of impending moves may be distorted by background noise. Acknowledging these difficulties, [US Administrations] often try to predict an adversary’s future behavior by evaluating its military capabilities. However, capability estimates can be misleading, especially when being made over a long time horizon without reliable data on possible changes... Another drawback is divining whether projected capability enhancements are earmarked for offensive or defensive purposes.

389 Record, “Threat Confusions and its Penalties,” p. 60.
390 Ibid.
391 Crawford, “The Best Defense.”
Sharing this analysis, numerous states-people over the years have warned against undertaking wars predicated upon assumptions and speculation about adversaries or the future. As Randall L. Schweller argued, “above all, preventive wars are ‘wars of anticipation,’ and therefore their justification, if any is given, can rest only upon the inherently unprovable assumptions of human foresight. As Abbe Galiani posited: ‘the misfortunes of mankind derive from foresight... the actual cause of wars. Because one foresees the House of Hapsburg will increase, because the French, a hundred years from now, will do such a thing, we begin to cut one another’s throats right now.”

Even the consummate statesman Otto von Bismarck had difficulty assessing the immediate costs of war against alternative futures, stating that: “The idea of undertaking a war because it might be inevitable later on and might then have to be fought under less favorable conditions has always remained foreign too me, and I have always fought against it... For I cannot look into Providence’s cards in such a manner that I would know things beforehand” and “I would... never advise Your Majesty to declare war forthwith, simply because it appeared that our opponent would begin hostilities in the near future. One can never anticipate the ways of divine providence securely enough for that.” For this reason, promulgating a strategy of preventive war is said to be both imprudent and “defeatist,” for “who knows what hopes the passage of time may bring to realization?”

Conversely, proponents of the Bush Doctrine and preventive war have argued that it was imperative for the US to “do something big” after September 11 as a means to restore its damaged deterrent capability. While the Afghanistan campaign was a sufficiently strong response to the September 11 acts themselves, it was not expected to be assertive enough to effectively signify US resolve in preventing the acquisition of nuclear weapons by rogue states. To be an effective treatment for proliferation, preventive war must not only remove the direct threat, it must also dissuade would-be proliferators. According to Galia Press-Barnathan: “The US has demonstrated its willingness to use force since the end of the Cold War, but most of its activities were limited to air war and to relatively small-scale missions. It was, therefore, not at all clear that a US Administration would be willing and able to engage in a serious ground war that was not preceded by an attack on the US itself... In light of this problem, waging a preventive war as to serve the goal of re-establishing the credibility

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of the US deterrent capability, which was undermined after September 11, and, in turn, to
give credibility to the new preventive doctrine..."396 Indeed, rogue states such as Iraq, Iran,
and North Korea it was argued, needed to be shown that significant challenges to US
supremacy, especially the proliferation of nuclear weapons, would not go unnoticed and
would be countered by a prompt and devastating response. As stated by Mead, “...the enemy
had to learn who was the strongest and, if it came to that, the most ruthless. From this
standpoint the invasion of Iraq was in the nature of a warning shot: a warning that future
attacks on the pre-eminence of the US will be followed by even more overwhelming
responses.”397 Unfortunately, the main avenue for the US to effectively communicate this
new and powerful determination would be to actually engage in a preventive war. As
asserted by Robert J. Pauly and Tom Lansford, “for any strategy to be deemed credible,
decisive action to back rhetorical promises is essential. That is why the Bush
Administration’s release of the National Security Strategy coincided with the President’s
issuance of an ultimatum to Saddam to disarm and desist from sponsoring terrorist
organizations... and that is why the Bush Administration ultimately decided to use force to
remove Saddam from power.”398 Indeed, even former US Secretary of the Treasury Paul
O’Neill, an ardent opponent of undertaking preventive war against Iraq, conceded that taking
such action could “act as a ‘demonstration model’ of what other countries that were
considering actions hostile to the US might face... [preventive war] would persuade other
countries to change what they’ve been doing by harboring or supporting terrorists [and
developing nuclear weapons].”399 In essence, after the September 11 attacks, the US needed
to make a “big, fast, bold, simple move that would send a signal at home and abroad, a signal
that said ‘don’t mess with Texas. Or America,’” and according to its proponents, waging
preventive war was quite simply the only way in which this could be achieved.400

Finally, John Lewis Gaddis and others have posited that the US had to engage in a preventive
war relatively soon after its operations in Afghanistan if it was to sustain the already waning
momentum of the Bush Doctrine and its expected “domino effect” upon other rogue
proliferators. According to Gaddis, “the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq were meant to

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397 Mead, Power, Terror, Peace and War, p. 117.
398 Robert J. Pauly & Tom Lansford, Strategic Pre-emption: US Foreign Policy and the Second Iraq War. Burlington:
399 Ron Suskind, Price of Loyalty: George W. Bush, the White House and the Education of Paul O’Neill. New York: Simon
topple selected dominos with a view of destabilizing others. The purpose was as much psychological as military: to eliminate individuals, gangs, and regimes who commit to support terrorism and acquire nuclear weapons, but also to intimidate so... prevention, by this logic, could produce a deterrent effect... in order for this new domino theory to work, however, the pace had to be kept up; there couldn’t be too much time between topplings.”\textsuperscript{401} Similarly, Vice President Dick Cheney exclaimed: “Afghanistan was only the beginning of a lengthy campaign. Were we to stop now, any sense of security we might have would be false and temporary...”\textsuperscript{402} Indeed, whereas fighting a preventive war against one rogue proliferator may convince others to relinquish their arrant hostility and nuclear desires, without a “swift, sure, and clear” preliminary action there could be no subsequent reaction. In this view, for the US to attain any long-term deterrent benefits vis-à-vis other existing or potential rogue proliferators, it would be necessary to quickly and successfully set an example by executing a preventive war against at least one rogue proliferator, if not more.

Ultimately defined in this chapter in the context of preventive war, the National Security Strategy of 2002 should be considered an “active” Doctrine. During the 1950s, Paul Nitze argued that the term “doctrine” could be used in two related but different senses, the “action sense” and the “declaratory sense.” The action sense referred to the broader guidelines that policy-makers believed should and would in fact govern the movement of the US in various contingencies. The declaratory aspect pertained to policy statements that were gauged in their principal towards political and/or psychological effects.\textsuperscript{403} Although the Bush Doctrine, like most doctrines, may have, at various intervals, served both active and declaratory functions, throughout this paper it will be assumed that its principal aim was to guide and inform the definitive actions of US foreign policy. Regardless of the apparent misuse of the terms pre-emption and prevention, and the interchanging of these terms in Bush’s rhetoric via speeches and documentary instruments, this chapter in essence has subscribed to the belief that what Bush was advocating all during the period after 9/11 (2001), the release of the National Security Strategy (September 2002), through to the Iraq War (March 2003), was the consideration, endorsement and ultimately, use of preventive war against those actors deemed as a major threat to the United States’ security and well-being. Indeed, the definitions and interpretations of both pre-emption and prevention during this period challenged and

transcended every facet of international relations and US security policy in the context of
history, doctrine, international law and their use within a Presidential rhetorical framework.
Having defined these concepts (pre-emption and prevention), the next chapter will focus on
the perceived threats or “rogue proliferators” that were apparent at the time of the National
Security Strategy of 2002, and why the US deemed it both appropriate and necessary that
preventive war be both seriously considered (in the context of the “axis of evil”) and actually
undertaken (in state of Iraq).
Chapter 4
The Bush Doctrine:
Preventive War in Iraq
Having established the meanings and definitions associated with pre-emption and prevention; and the extent to which preventive war was considered a viable option by his Administration, the next task for Bush was to “choose” a state in which to undertake the preventive war strategy. It was clear that from 2001-2003, Iraq, Iran, and North Korea were all perceived to be “grave and gathering threats” – and were all considered rogue proliferators. Assuming that the US was determined to act preventively against at least one of them, one would expect to find evidence that the Bush Administration sought and/or planned to attack all three. From the beginning, however, it appeared that the Administration’s preferred target was Iraq. As indicated by Clarke, the US “planned early on to eliminate Saddam Hussein.”

That is, on November 21, 2001, only two months after the September 11 terrorist attacks, Bush reportedly asked Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, “what kind of a war plan do you have for Iraq? How do you feel about the war plan for Iraq?” Furthermore, within days of the publication of the National Security Strategy, the Bush Administration announced that a senior State Department official would travel to Pyongyang in October to reengage the North Koreans on security issues, while others were quietly working to secure Iranian neutrality in the case of a war with Iraq. Why was this the case? If the Iranian and North Korean regimes were just as despicable and dangerous as Iraq, why did the Bush Administration seek conciliation with the former and war with the latter? Or, as Senator Richard Durbin inquired in a September 10th 2002 speech to Congress, “If all three are threats and enemies to the US, why is it that the Administration has focused on Iraq.” Indeed, if preventive war was to be undertaken, why was Iraq the state of “choice” for the Administration? These questions, together with those pertaining to the events surrounding the justification and lead up to the actual declaration of war, are addressed in this chapter, and thereby, will enable latter analysis (Chapter 5) on the extent to which the National Security Strategy (in its preventive endorsement and aspirations) has been evident and perhaps even implicit in US security strategy since the end of WWII.

The Choice of Iraq

From 2001-03, Iraq was widely perceived to be a rogue proliferator, having previously defied no less than seventeen different UN Security Council Resolutions. Moreover, it had:

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404 Clarke, Against All Enemies, p. 264.
allegedly developed an extensive arsenal of WMD; impeded and deceived international weapons inspectors over the span of twelve years; used WMD against its own Kurdish population; invaded two neighbouring states (Iran and Kuwait); and supported and harboured well-known terrorist organisations. At varying intervals, Iraq had challenged the security of the US and its allies and participated in military confrontation during the first Gulf War. As stated by Gordon Indyk and O’Hanlon:

Certainly the US has good reasons to want to get rid of Saddam Hussein. Saddam is a menace who has ordered the invasion of several of his neighbors, killed thousands of Kurds and Iranians with poison gas, turned his own country into a brutal police state and demonstrated an insatiable appetite for WMD. He is currently funding Palestinian terrorists who attack Israeli civilians as well as trying to disrupt world oil supplies. He is also, almost surely, still trying to build nuclear weapons. And he is powerfully motivated to seek revenge against his personal and political nemeses, as demonstrated most vividly in his... attempted assassination of former President George Bush in 1993. That is why there is a general consensus in the US that overthrowing Saddam would be a good thing.  

In addition, it appeared that Iraq may have served as a haven, transit point and operational base for groups and actors who directed terrorism and violence against the US, Israel and other Western states. According to the US Department of State: “Baghdad overtly assisted two categories of Iraq based terrorist organizations – Iranian dissidents [Mujahedin-e-Khalq] devoted to toppling the Iranian government and a variety of Palestinian rejectionist groups opposed to peace with Israel. Baghdad provided material assistance to other Palestinian terrorist groups that were at the forefront of the Intifada. The Popular Front for the liberation of Palestine – General Command Hamas and the Palestine Islamic Jihad were the most important groups to whom Baghdad had extended outreach and support efforts... Several expatriate terrorist groups continued to maintain offices in Baghdad including the Arab Liberation Front, the inactive 15 May Organization, the Palestinian Liberation Front and the Abu Nidal organization.” Moreover, the 9/11 Commission reported that, “[Osama] Bin Laden was also willing to explore possibilities for cooperating with Iraq... Bin Laden himself met with a senior Iraqi intelligence officer in Khartoum in late 1994 or early 1995. Bin Laden is said to have asked for space to establish training camps, as well as assistance in procuring weapons... In March 1998, after Bin Laden’s public fatwa against the US, two al

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Qaeda members reportedly went to Iraq to meet with Iraqi intelligence. In July, an Iraqi delegation travelled to Afghanistan to meet first with the Taliban and then with Bin Laden... Iraqi officials offered Bin Laden a safe haven in Iraq.\textsuperscript{410}

Aside from the alleged “connections” to al Qaeda, many in the Bush Administration believed that Iraq had demonstrated an ability to construct a large, clandestine nuclear weapons program.\textsuperscript{411} In the decade before the first Gulf War, Iraq had invested more resources into nuclear programs than any other developing state in the world and came very close to becoming the first Arab state to actually produce and deploy such weapons. As stated in the Nuclear Threat Initiative:

In the early 1970s, Baghdad initiated a bomb program under direct orders from then Vice-President Saddam Hussein. The plan called for developing a civilian fuel cycle and related expertise first; the weapons program was to parallel and build off of these efforts. Accordingly, Baghdad acquired a French nuclear reactor in 1975. After Israel destroyed the [Osiraq nuclear] reactor in June 1981 air strike, Iraq explored a number of clandestine uranium enrichment methods. By the time of Desert Storm in 1991, Iraq had a robust covert nuclear weapons program, with a completed – though untested – nuclear weapon design. Baghdad was perhaps one to three years away from building a nuclear weapon at the onset of the war.\textsuperscript{412}

While it was difficult to ascertain the extent to which Saddam Hussein was able to rebuild his nuclear weapons program after the first Gulf War, the view of the CIA and US Department of Defense was that Iraq’s nuclear aspirations and accumulated technical expertise had remained intact, and coinciding with this, the capacity to reignite a proliferation program quickly and covertly. As the Rumsfeld Commission reported: “Iraq has maintained the skills and industrial capabilities needed to reconstitute its long range ballistic missile program... Prior to the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Iraq could have had nuclear weapons in the 1993-1995 time frame... Iraq has the capability to reconstitute its nuclear weapon program; the speed at which it can do so depends on the availability of fissile material.”\textsuperscript{413} Indeed, it was believed that Iraq had a workable design for the weaponisation of a nuclear weapon in 2002, to the extent that the only significant impediment to producing such a weapon was its ability to attain


\textsuperscript{411} Clarke, Against All Enemies, p. 265.


fissile material. As indicated by the CIA Unclassified Report to Congress: “Iraq has engaged in extensive concealment effort and has probably used the period since it refused inspections to attempt to reconstitute prohibited programs... A sufficient source of fissile material remains Iraq’s most significant obstacle to being able to produce a nuclear weapon. The intelligence community is concerned that Baghdad is attempting to acquire materials that could aid in reconstituting its nuclear weapons program.”[414] If Iraq were able to obtain the said material from another state, it was perceived that it could have constructed a nuclear device within months.[415]

Aside from Iraq’s potential to develop nuclear weapons, considerations pertaining to varying aspects of international law and precedents dating as far back to the first Gulf War were posited as potential justification for preventive war. According to William Taft and Todd Buchwald, given Iraq’s repeated breaches of UN Security Council Resolutions, any military action taken by the US against Iraq would be wholly justifiable:

[United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 678] was the authorization to use force for the Gulf War in 1991. In April of that year, the Council imposed a series of conditions on Iraq, including most importantly extensive disarmament obligations, as a condition of the ceasefire declared under UNSCR 687. Iraq has ‘materially breached’ these disarmament obligations, and force may again be used under UNSCR 678 to compel Iraqi compliance... Just last November, in resolution 1441, the Council unanimously decided that Iraq has been and remains in material breach of its obligations. 1441 then gave Iraq a ‘final opportunity’ to comply, but stated specifically that violations of the obligations, including the obligation to cooperate fully, under 1441 would constitute a further material breach. Iraq has clearly demonstrated such violations and, accordingly, the authority to use force to address Iraq’s material breaches is clear.[416]

According to those in the Administration, as well as proponents of the “Iraq choice,” previous UN Security Council resolutions had provided the US with sufficient authority needed to legally justify attacking Iraq. The US would be acting on the basis of implied authority from Resolution 578, which automatically authorised individual member states to use “all necessary means,” including force, to enforce Iraqi compliance with any of the conditions

stipulated in previous resolutions – especially resolutions 687 and 1441. As stated by Press-Barnathan, “Iraq had a previous ‘criminal record’ that gave at least some legitimacy to the allegations that it had sinned again and would allow for military action against it.” This may have been true, however, it was unlikely that the Bush Administration would have defined its decision to go to war strictly on legal terms. After all, there was very little historical evidence to signify that US decisions to use force abroad had been cultivated on notions of efficacy and permissiveness of the relevant legal arguments. On the contrary, the traditional view of international law and the use of force has been that “it is a sham, something that international lawyers talk and write about but to which statesmen pay no attention, except perhaps when they want to justify something that they have made up their minds to do in any case.” This may be relatively extreme – the presence of a robust legal argument was certainly important and probably enabled to make the case for war in Iraq – but it was doubtful that any US Administration would focus a decision to wage war strictly on the legality of such actions. Moreover, there was reason to believe that the US would be able to construct equally viable legal arguments based on emerging norms of “conditional” or “contractual” sovereignty and/or existing UN resolutions to facilitate the justification of military action in both Iran and North Korea. As explained by Lawrence Korb:

This country has long respected the principle of non intervention established by the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia...Yet, in recent times, international law has evolved to recognize a countervailing principle that qualifies the norm of non intervention: regimes may surrender the right to rule over their people if they systematically deviate from established international human rights standards and consistently pose a threat to regional and global peace and stability. A state that condones or practices terrorism, or seeks to use WMD as weapons of choice or retains its hold on power by violating virtually every norm of morality and law known to mankind forfeits its claim to sovereignty.

Indeed, the emerging legal doctrine, also known as the “Responsibility to Protect” required that states had a responsibility to protect the “lives, liberty, and basic human rights of their citizens, and that if they to fail or are unable to carry it out, the international community has a responsibility to step in.” This international “duty” also applied to states where the population was experiencing serious harm as a result of internal conflict, insurgency,

repression or state failure, as well as those forces that undermined global stability and security via state sponsored terrorism and/or acquisition of WMD. Furthermore, the US could also plausibly argue that it was within its legal rights to take military action against Iran based on UN Resolution 1373, which in essence, imposed “binding obligations upon states to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts, to refrain from providing any support to terrorists, to deny safe haven to terrorists, to develop effective border controls, and to bring to justice those who commit terrorist acts, among other requirements.” As articulated by Richard N. Gardner:

...in Resolution 1373, the Security Council imposed a legal requirement on all UN members [including Iran] to suppress al Qaeda and other transnational terrorist groups. Read in the context of the long-recognized principle of international law that states must not permit their territory to be used for the purpose of launching attacks on other states, I believe the decisions of NATO and the UN provide a sufficient legal basis for military actions the US needs to take to destroy terrorist groups operating in countries that do not carry out their legal obligations to suppress them.

In relation to the state of North Korea, a solid legal case could be made for military action based on its abrupt withdrawal and dismissal from the legally binding Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and/or the regime’s egregious human rights abuses. Certainly, Pyongyang’s contravention of nuclear safeguards during 1994 could provide a relatively sound legal basis for US military actions. Hence, in the unlikely event that the Bush Administration based its decision exclusively on legal parameters, it would have had no better reason to attack Iraq over either Iran or North Korea

The next point of consideration pertaining to the US’s determination in waging war against Iraq, was based on Iraq’s alleged complicity in the September 11 terrorist attacks and links to the al Qaeda terrorist organisation. This viewpoint did not seem plausible, however, even prior to the war the Administration struggled to produce any compelling evidence associating Saddam Hussein to al Qaeda; and very few commentators believed that this was the “real” reason as to why the US went to war with Iraq. As Wirtz and Russell reported, “many observers [found] the connection between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda to be farfetched; they believe that it is unlikely that Iraq’s secular regime would support religious

fundamentalists, or that Saddam, who has plenty of personal and political enemies, would give ‘outsiders’ control of chemical, biological, or radiological weapons.”

Indeed, prior to the war most believed that “the evidence adduced for the Security Council was, at best, unconvincing and in part misrepresented and falsified... very few nations accepted that credible evidence could be shown of an operational link between al Qaeda and the regime in Baghdad.”

Lastly, as Brent Scowcroft acknowledged: “The only thing that Osama [Bin Laden] and Saddam Hussein have in common is they hate the US. There is scant evidence to tie Saddam to terrorist organizations, and even less to the 11 September attacks.”

Therefore, it did not appear that the Bush Administration would have chosen to undertake war against Iraq based primarily upon its supposed ties or connection to al Qaeda. In fact, as Chaim Kaufman alerted, “Hussein provided far less practical support to terrorism than did Syria, Iran, Yemen, or sources in some friendly countries such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.”

If any of the three rogue proliferators were to have links to the September 11 attacks or al Qaeda, it would most likely have been the state of Iran. As Clarke exhorted:

When the Bush Administration talked about Iraq as a nation that supported terrorism, including al Qaeda, and was developing WMD, those comments perfectly suited Iran, not Iraq. It was Tehran that had funded and directed Hezbollah since its inception. It was Hezbollah that had killed hundreds of Americans in Lebanon. Hezbollah, with Iranian support has also killed hundreds of Israelis. While the ‘ties’ and ‘links’ between Saddam and al Qaeda were minimal, al Qaeda regularly used Iranian territory for transit and sanctuary prior to September 11. Al Qaeda’s Egyptian branch, Egyptian Islamic Jihad operated openly in Tehran. It is no coincidence that many of the al Qaeda management team... moved across the border into Iran after US forces finally invaded Afghanistan.

Another possible reason as to why the Bush Administration may have “chosen” to wage war against Iraq (rather than Iran and North Korea) was centred upon Baghdad’s endemic and deplorable record of human rights abuses. As the US Department of State reported:

Iraq’s human rights record [in 2002] remained extremely poor, and it continued to commit numerous, serious human rights abuses. Citizens did not have the right to change the regime. The regime continued summarily to execute alleged political opponents and leaders of the Shi’a religious community. Reports

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423 Wirtz and Russell, “US Policy on Preventive War and Pre-emption,” p. 120.
425 Quoted in Woodward, Plan of Attack, p. 159.
427 Clarke, Against All Enemies, p. 284.
suggested that persons were executed merely because of their association with an opposition group. The regime continued to be responsible for disappearances and to kill and torture persons suspected of or related to persons suspected of oppositionist politics, economic crimes, military desertion, and a variety of other activities... The UN... issued a report... detailing ongoing, grievous violations of human rights by the regime.\textsuperscript{428}

There is no doubt that Iraq’s human rights record was appalling, however, so too was Iran and North Korea’s. According to the same report, Iran’s human rights record in 2002 was “poor, and deteriorated substantially during the year, despite continuing efforts within society to make the Government accountable for its human rights policies.”\textsuperscript{429} Additionally, the State Department highlighted how the Iranian government had “denied citizens the right to change their government” while also undertaking “systematic abuses” including “summary executions; disappearances; widespread use of torture and other degrading treatment, reportedly including rape; severe punishments such as stoning and flogging; harsh prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention; and prolonged and incommunicado detention.”\textsuperscript{430}

The situation in North Korea pertaining to humanitarian conditions was reported to be even worse. The State Department in 2002 also rated North Korea’s human rights record as “poor” and indicated that the North Korean government had continued to commit serious human rights abuses. As stated, “Citizens did not have the right to peacefully change their government, and the leadership viewed most international human rights norms, particularly individual rights, as illegitimate, alien, and subversive to the goals of the State and the Party.”\textsuperscript{431} Moreover, the North Korean situation was complicated by the fact that the government was unable to feed its population; the country relied on international aid and trade to supplement domestic production, which has been hobbled by disastrous agricultural policies. From 1995 to 1997, famine caused internal dislocation, widespread malnutrition, and an estimated 1 to 2 million persons – or possibly as much as 10 percent of the population – died from starvation and related diseases.\textsuperscript{432} In simple terms, all three states had deplorable human rights records and thus, could not sufficiently account for the Administration’s decision to undertake war against Iraq over the states of Iran and North Korea.

\textsuperscript{429} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{430} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{431} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{432} \textit{Ibid}.
Various commentators and scholars have argued that the reason the Bush Administration may have “chosen” to undertake preventive war with Iraq rather than Iran and North Korea, was because it was “Iraq obsessed” and saw the terrorist attacks as an “opportunity to mobilize support for forcible regime change in Iraq even absent of evidence of Iraqi complicity in 11 September.” Indeed, it was apparent that the sensational events of September 11 engendered a “crisis atmosphere that may have reduced public scepticism about both diagnoses of threats and proposed solutions” and may have “spurred an upsurge in public willingness to accept an unusually high cost (economic and human) for international military engagement.” Nonetheless, even if the Bush Administration was able to exploit a state of emergency to mobilise public support for a more assertive foreign policy, it did not necessarily lead to a choice of force against Iraq. Indeed, given their respective histories, it would appear that both Iran and North Korea had also been persistent irritants to the US as indicated by the US Department of Defense in December 2001: “North Korea, Iraq, and Iran... are among the countries that could be involved in immediate, potential, or unexpected contingencies. All have longstanding hostility toward the United States and its security partners; North Korea and Iraq in particular have been chronic military concerns. All sponsor or harbor terrorists and all have active WMD and missile programs.” Furthermore, the nine independent Commissioners of the Rumsfeld Commission were adamant in their sentiments and concluded that, “concerted efforts by a number of overtly or potentially hostile nations to acquire ballistic missiles with biological or nuclear payloads pose a growing threat to the US, its deployed forces and its friends and allies. These newer, developing threats in North Korea, Iran and Iraq are in addition to those still posed by the existing ballistic missile arsenals of Russia and China... The extraordinary level of resources North Korea and Iran are now devoting to developing their own ballistic missile capabilities poses a substantial and immediate danger to the US, its vital interests and its allies.” As Mann articulated, “the Rumsfeld Commission report... was a prominent manifestation of the way these three countries were being increasingly bracketed by the Washington’s foreign policy and intelligence communities, well before George W. Bush arrived in the White House.” Finally, Iran and North Korea were also highlighted by the Bush Administration

433 Record, “Nuclear Deterrence, Preventive War and Counter-proliferation,” p. 56.
436 US Congress, Report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the US.
as being members of the now infamous “axis of evil.” Such evidence strongly suggests that the US may have also been “obsessed” with Iran and North Korea.

In the lead up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, many commentators throughout the US came to believe that the decision to wage preventive war was predicated primarily upon Washington’s burgeoning need and desire to gain unimpeded access to Iraq’s oil reserves. Given the Bush Administration’s links to the oil sector and the rising costs of gasoline, many considered the “oil rationale” to be the most compelling of all. Indeed, it was argued that a combination of US direct influence over Iraq’s share of oil reserves – the world’s third largest – and a long-term military presence in Iraq, would enable the US to have much greater leverage and control over world oil supplies and policies, and thereby, provide American and British companies (ExxonMobil, Chevron-Texaco, Shell, and British Petroleum) a potential windfall of hundreds of billions of dollars. Simultaneously, a successful war could weaken the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Counties (OPEC) oil cartel, limit the influence of other major oil suppliers such as Russia, Mexico, and Venezuela and finally, reduce the dependency upon oil from Saudi Arabia – the world’s single largest supplier of oil.438 However influential this alleged yearning for oil may have been, it too cannot adequately explain why the US chose to wage preventive war against Iraq; if the US was determined to wage war against a threatening state on account of oil, why did it not attack Iran, the world’s second largest holder of proven oil reserves?439

In addition to the explanations and variables provided above, the Bush Administration’s decision to “choose” Iraq may have been based on other considerations. That is, one of the residual objectives of the Bush Doctrine and the operation in Iraq was to provide the platform for the transformation of the Middle East into a liberal, democratic and economically viable region. In a speech on the future of Iraq, Bush declared that, “a liberated Iraq can show the power of freedom to transform that vital region, by bringing hope and progress into the lives of millions.”440 It was perceived that removing the Iraqi threat and replacing it with a democratic polity could demonstrate the merits of integration and engagement to neighbouring Muslim states, and thereby, facilitate the desire for democratisation and

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438 Clarke, Against All Enemies, p. 265.
political liberalisation in the Persian Gulf. As further articulated by Mann, “some of the [Bush Administration] hoped that in overthrowing Saddam Hussein, the US could turn Iraq into a model for democracy that would transform Arab political culture and the politics of the entire Middle East.” Indeed, “as far as the Bush Administration was concerned, a democratic Iraq at the heart of the Arab world could become a liberal beacon in the region, promoting demands for openness and real reform inside neighboring states.”

In contrast to the above explanations, it is plausible that the Bush Administration’s decision to undertake preventive war against Iraq rather than Iran and North Korea was viewed as a strategic choice based primarily upon practical considerations. This included notions pertaining to the relative military capacities and capabilities of the targeted states, which represented the most quantifiable measure of a states’ ability to defend/retaliate against an armed attack. As explained by Richard Ned Lebow: “Relative military capability has the further appeal in that it appears to lend itself to quantification more readily than do other possible measures of deterrence. Relative military strength is frequently described in terms of the respective makeup and size of adversarial forces and the performance characteristics of their most important weapons systems.” Certainly no relatively composed US Administration would consider waging war without first taking into account the war-fighting capabilities of the designated state. In assessing the use of force against rogue proliferators, a primary concern must be the capability of the target state to retaliate. Indeed, there are obvious ramifications involved in undertaking a preventive war and these costs vary directly with the military capabilities of the state in question. Holding all aspects to be more or less equal, if we find that Iraq was considerably weaker than both Iran and North Korea from 2001-03 then, presumably, these large asymmetries had a significant impact on the Bush Administration’s risk calculus and ultimate decision to attack Iraq first. In essence, perhaps the real reason the Bush Administration “chose” to undertake preventive war against Iraq, rather than Iran and North Korea, was because it was perceived to be the weakest, least costly of the three threats – and was “the most feasible place where the US could strike the next blow.” Although many arguments have been proposed to account for the US decision to attack Iraq rather than Iran or North Korea – given the varying similarities between them – it

441 Mann, Rise of the Vulcans, p. 346.
appears that one of the major palatable differences between the three threatening states at the
time was their relative military strength and relative military capabilities. However, even
though Iraq may have been deemed as the weakest of the three states in the eyes of the Bush
Administration, it was still perceived as being a dangerous “rogue proliferator.” Regardless
of some of the varying considerations posited above – it was clear – Bush and his
Administration chose Iraq because it argued that it allegedly had WMDs, had supposed links
to al Qaeda and posed an extensive threat to the United States’ security. While these
arguments were highly debatable and contentious, they nonetheless remained the core thrust
of the Administration’s platform and justification in the lead up to its preventive war with
Iraq in March 2003.

**Early Indications of Prevention**

Hints that the Bush Administration was considering a counter-proliferation strategy of
preventive war were foreshadowed in statements made well before the publication of the
National Security Strategy of 2002. Speaking at the Citadel on September 23, 1999, then-
Presidential candidate Bush hinted that the US under his presidency would take preventive/“pre-emptive” action to thwart challenges to America’s security: “When direct
threats to America [emanating from the “troubled frontiers of technology and terror”] are
discovered, I know that the best defense can be a strong and swift offense – including the use
of Special Operations Forces and long-range strike capabilities.”

Of course, the 9/11 attacks brought the option of “pre-emption” to the fore. The Administration’s first explicit
mention of pre-emption came in the statement of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in
the Quadrennial Defense Review Report issued nineteen days after 9/11. The Report
stated that “defense of the US homeland is the highest priority for the US military... The US
must deter, prevent and defend against aggression targeted at US territory sovereignty,
domestic population, and critical infrastructure.” Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld
followed up on this theme in a speech on the transformation of the US armed forces delivered
in January 2002. He noted that the defence of the United States:

...requires prevention, self-defense and sometimes pre-emption. It is not
possible to defend against every conceivable kind of attack in every conceivable

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<http://www.citadel.edu/pao/addresses/pres_bush.html>.


location at every minute of the day or night. Defending against terrorism and other emerging 21st century threats may well require that we take the war to the enemy. The best, and in some cases, the only defense is a good offense.\textsuperscript{448}

President Bush’s post-9/11 statements continually moved toward advocating the explicit adoption of prevention as a key weapon in America’s global war on terror. In a teleconference broadcast to the Warsaw Conference on Combating Terrorism on November 6, 2001, he indicated that the US would act proactively to prevent terrorist groups from acquiring WMD. He told the assembled audience that, “we will not wait for the authors of mass murder to gain the weapons of mass destruction.”\textsuperscript{449} Bush extended this determination to act proactively to prevent the spread of WMD to include rogue states in his State of the Union address on January 29, 2002. He listed the second objective in the global war on terror as preventing state sponsors of terror – specifically, the “axis of evil” states of North Korea, Iran and Iraq – from acquiring WMD with which could threaten the US and its allies.\textsuperscript{450} He warned the nation and the world at large that, “by seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States.”\textsuperscript{451} He vowed that the US would not permit the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten the US with the world’s most destructive weapons.\textsuperscript{452}

The President explicitly raised the prospect of prevention in the global war on terror in his speech to the West Point graduating class on June 1, 2002. He asserted that the US must “confront the worst threats before they emerge”\textsuperscript{453} and warned that “if we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long.”\textsuperscript{454} Further, President Bush again stipulated the need for robust options encompassing those of a military pre-emptive nature as a means to – should it be necessary – prevent attacks from either states or terrorist groups using weapons of mass destruction. Amplifying this theme, Administration officials emphasised that conventional military technologies were being developed as part of a Joint Stealth Task Force that could launch “no warning” pre-emptive raids on suspected nuclear, biological and

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\item \textsuperscript{450} Bush, State of the Union Address.
\item \textsuperscript{451} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{452} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{453} Bush, Graduation Speech at West Point.
\item \textsuperscript{454} Ibid.
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chemical weapons facilities. In addition, officials also spoke of using nuclear weapons, especially against biological weapons where the extreme heat of a nuclear blast could vaporize toxic biological agents.\textsuperscript{455} The Administration’s interest also extended to the development of a new, low-yield nuclear weapon (including in the sub-kiloton range) that could be used with earth-penetrating missiles to destroy underground command and control bunkers and hidden facilities used for developing or storing weapons of mass destruction. These various strands in elevating pre-emption (or in reality, preventive war) to a more prominent role in American defense strategy became further crystallised in the President’s National Security Strategy report that was made public on September 20, 2002. The relevant section of the report regarding pre-emption was encompassed in Chapter V, entitled “Prevent Our Enemies from Threatening Us, Our Allies, and Our Friends with Weapons of Mass Destruction.” The very title of the chapter was clear in its emphasis on preventive war; that the United States would act to prevent potential foes, whether states or terrorist groups, from even threatening to use, much less, actually using weapons of mass destruction. As Chapter V emphasised, the strategy rested on three fundamental components: proactive counter-proliferation efforts (including counterforce capabilities); strengthened non-proliferation efforts; and effective responses to the effects of WMD use.


At its core, the National Security Strategy of 2002 provided the official articulation of a strategy of preventive war against hostile states and terrorist groups developing weapons of mass destruction. The document stated that the United States would destroy terrorist organisations and state actors through direct and continuous action using all the “elements of national and international power.”\textsuperscript{456} Its focus would be those terrorist organisations of global reach and any terrorist or state sponsor of terrorism which attempted to gain or use WMD or their precursors. Bush argued that defending the United States, the American people, and US interests at home and abroad – by identifying and destroying the threat before it reaches its borders – was paramount. In linking the Bush Doctrine to Iraq and the need to impede what has been referred to throughout this thesis as a “rogue proliferator,” Bush emphasised how the US at the time of the Gulf War attained “irrefutable proof” that Iraq’s designs were not limited to the chemical weapons it had used against Iran and its own people,

\textsuperscript{455} See Ricks & Loeb, “Bush Developing Military Policy of Striking First.”

but also extended to the acquisition of nuclear weapons and biological agents.\textsuperscript{457} Therefore, he argued, the United States was prepared to thwart such rogue states and their terrorist clients before they were able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and its friends. Alluding to the Administration’s willingness to undertake preventive war, Bush pointed to the notion of that “minimizing the effects of WMD” use against “our people” would require a need to respond to the effects of WMD use against US forces abroad.\textsuperscript{458} That is, given the goals of rogue states and terrorists, the United States could no longer solely rely on a “reactive posture” as it had done in the past. For Bush, the inability to deter a potential attacker, combined the apparent immediacy of “today’s” threats, as well as the magnitude of potential harm that could be executed by adversaries, dispelled future notions of US reaction and pragmatism. As stated, “...we cannot let our enemies strike first.”\textsuperscript{459}

Bush contrasted the Cold War period of deterrence to what he argued was the necessity of today. In the Cold War, especially following the Cuban missile crisis, the United States was generally faced with a “status quo, risk-averse adversary.”\textsuperscript{460} During this period, deterrence was an effective defense, however, in the post-Cold War era as the threat of retaliation was “far less likely to work against leaders of rogue states more willing to take risks, gambling with the lives of their people, and the wealth of their nations.”\textsuperscript{461} As further explained by Bush, during the Cold War, weapons of mass destruction were considered weapons of last resort whose use risked the destruction of those who used them:

Today, our enemies see weapons of mass destruction as weapons of choice. For rogue states these weapons are tools of intimidation and military aggression against their neighbors. These weapons may also allow these states to attempt to blackmail the United States and our allies to prevent us from deterring or repelling the aggressive behavior of rogue states. Such states also see these weapons as their best means of overcoming the conventional superiority of the United States.\textsuperscript{462}

\textsuperscript{457} Ibid., p. 14.
\textsuperscript{458} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{459} Ibid., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{460} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{461} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{462} Ibid.
For Bush, the threat confronting the US in the 21st century was based in the nexus of transnational terrorism and WMD proliferation. Again emphasising the significance of “today’s threats,” he stated:

[N]ew deadly challenges have emerged from rogue states and terrorists... [T]he nature and motivations of these new adversaries, their determination to obtain destructive powers hitherto available only to the world’s strongest states, and the greater likelihood that they will use weapons of mass destruction against us, make today’s security environment more complex and dangerous.\footnote{Ibid., p. 13.}

As a result, the Administration believed that notions of employing traditional concepts of deterrence would not be effective against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics were “wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents; whose so-called soldiers seek martyrdom in death and whose most potent protection is statelessness.”\footnote{Ibid., p. 15.} Again, implying a link with Iraq, the Bush Doctrine argued that states that sponsored terror and those that pursued WMD would compel the United States into preventive action. Interchanging the term preventive with the more “acceptable” term of pre-emption, Bush made it clear that, “the United States has long maintained the option of pre-emptive actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national security.”\footnote{Ibid.} Or in other words, the US has long reserved the right to take pre-emptive action in the face of an imminent security threat. However, it was necessary, the document continued, to adapt the concept of imminent threat to a new era of security circumstances i.e. to the determination of rogue states and terrorists to use weapons of mass destruction in attacks aimed at US civilian and military targets. This extended understanding of imminent threat connected logically to a consideration of pre-emption (or preventive war) as a strategic option in confronting that threat. As stated, “the greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction – and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack.”\footnote{Ibid.}

The Bush Doctrine hastened to add that pre-emption would not necessarily be the first or the only option considered when confronting these threats. Nor, it warned, should other states use this option as a pretext for aggression. But henceforth, it insisted, the US retained the option of acting pre-emptively when the cause was just – in other words, pre-emption if
necessary, but not necessarily pre-emption. As articulated, to forestall or impede such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States would be prepared to “act pre-emptively (preventively)... To support pre-emptive actions (preventive war), it will...continue to transform its military forces.”

**Clarifying the Preventive Strategy**

As indicated in previous chapters, the preventive option set out in the National Security Strategy of 2002 produced extensive controversy within both domestic and international circles. In response, senior Administration officials followed up the release of the document with statements intended to elaborate on, reinforce, and, to some extent, qualify the basic tenets of this option. First, Administration spokespersons emphasised that the US had not completely forsaken previous strategic doctrines in favour of prevention/“pre-emption,” nor had it enshrined this strategy as the cardinal element in its overall national security policy. In a speech before the Manhattan Institute in New York in October 2002, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, maintained that prevention/“pre-emption” was only one of a range of strategic options open to the US in the global war on terror:

The National Security Strategy does not overturn five decades of doctrine and jettison either containment or deterrence. These strategic concepts can and will continue to be employed where appropriate. But some threats are so potentially catastrophic – and can arrive with so little warning, by means that are untraceable – that they cannot be contained. Extremists who seem to view suicide as a sacrament are unlikely to ever be deterred. And new technology requires new thinking about when a threat actually becomes “imminent.” So as a matter of common sense, the United States must be prepared to take action, when necessary, before threats have fully materialized.

Secretary of State Colin Powell echoed Rice’s argument in an article written for *Foreign Affairs*:

As to pre-emption’s scope, it applies only to the undeterrible threats that come from non-state actors such as terrorist groups. It was never meant to displace deterrence, only to supplement it. As to its being central, it isn’t. The discussion of pre-emption in the NSS takes up just two sentences in one of the document’s eight sections.

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467 *Ibid.* Also, “transform its military forces” is a reference to what is extensively discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 of this thesis - that being, the reassertion of the “nuclear option.”


469 Colin L. Powell, “A Strategy of Partnerships,” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2004, 83(1): pp. 22, 24. Powell’s contention that pre-emption applied only to non-state actors such as terrorist groups was disingenuous, to say the least. The
Rice also emphasised in her October 2002 speech that pre-emption (preventive war) was an option of last resort, to be taken only when the threat is grave and all other means of confronting it have been exhausted:

[T]his approach must be treated with great caution. The number of cases in which it might be justified will always be small. It does not give a green light – to the United States or any other nation – to act first without exhausting other means, including diplomacy. Pre-emptive action does not come at the beginning of a long chain of effort. The threat must be very grave. And the risks of waiting must far outweigh the risks of action.470

State Department Legal Adviser William H. Taft IV emphasised the two-pronged requirement of necessity for preventive/“pre-emptive” action – i.e., a credible imminent threat and the exhaustion of peaceful remedies – implicit in Rice’s remarks. In a memorandum presented to the Council on Foreign Relations, he maintained that, “after the exhaustion of peaceful remedies and a careful, deliberate consideration of the consequences, in the face of overwhelming evidence of an imminent threat [in the Administration’s expanded understanding of that term], a nation may take pre-emptive action to defend its nationals from unimaginable harm.”471 These qualifying statements from senior Administration officials sought to dispel what they maintained was the misconception that the Bush Doctrine signalled the adoption of a use-of-force doctrine in which preventive/“pre-emptive” military action was the method-of-choice in the Administration’s fight against the twin evils of international terrorism and WMD proliferation.472

Linking the Preventive Strategy to Iraq

The lead up to the National Security Strategy, the formalisation and release of the document itself, and the justification and reemphasis of prevention (conveyed above and referred to as “pre-emption”) from Bush Administration officials, were key components of the

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472 As Secretary of State Powell commented in his Foreign Affairs article:

“Some at home have distorted the NSS for partisan reasons, attempting to make the Bush Administration look bad by turning fear of pre-emption into an early twenty-first-century equivalent of the Cold War era’s ‘rocket rattle.’ Some abroad, meanwhile, have distorted US intentions through an apparent exercise in mirror imaging. Using their own mottled political histories as a reference point, they have asked what they would do with the power that the United States possesses and have mistakenly projected their own Hobbesian intentions onto our rather more Lockean sensibilities. But however it has happened, the distortion of US foreign policy strategy requires repair. This distortion does a disservice to honest observers trying to understand US Policy, and it contributes to irrational partisanship.”
Administration’s post 9/11 security agenda. But also coinciding with such developments was a drive to link such notions of preventive war to the state of Iraq – deemed as the “rogue proliferator” of choice. It was the likes of Vice-President Cheney who stipulated what appeared to be the defining reason as to why the United States should undertake preventive war against Iraq. In late August 2002, in the most aggressive speech given to date by an Administration official on Iraq, Cheney argued that Saddam Hussein’s possession of a nuclear arsenal posed a serious threat to the US because Iraq possessed 10% of the world’s oil reserves. According to Cheney, Saddam Hussein could be expected to:

... seek domination of the entire Middle East, take control of a great portion of the world’s energy supplies, directly threaten America’s friends throughout the region, and subject the United States or any other nation to nuclear blackmail. Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us.473

Cheney’s assertive tone on Iraq was embraced by many in the Bush Administration – including the President himself. In his weekly radio address in September 2002, Bush noted that Saddam Hussein “has broken every pledge he made to the United Nations and the world since his invasion of Kuwait was rolled back in 1991,” and emphasised how close Iraq was to attaining nuclear weapons. As stated, “should his regime acquire fissile material, it would be able to build a nuclear weapon within a year.”474 In the same address, Bush described Iraq as a gathering danger:

By supporting terrorist groups, repressing its own people and pursuing weapons of mass destruction in defiance of a decade of UN resolutions, Saddam Hussein’s regime has proven itself a grave and gathering danger. To suggest otherwise is to hope against evidence. To assume this regime’s good faith is to bet the lives of millions and the peace of the world in a reckless gamble.475

Bush also warned that Iraq would use its association with Osama bin Laden to attack the US. As stated to a group of reporters on September 25, 2002:

475 Ibid.
...al Qaeda hides. Saddam doesn’t, but the danger is, is that they work in concert. The danger is, is that al Qaeda becomes an extension of Saddam’s madness and his hatred and his capacity to extend weapons of mass destruction around the world… [Y]ou can’t distinguish between al Qaeda and Saddam when you talk about the war on terror.\textsuperscript{476}

In the fall of 2002, the Bush Administration’s rhetoric on the threat Iraq posed to US security, escalated. Public speeches by Bush’s foreign policy team became rather shrill, often making the assertion that the only way to disarm Iraq was to oust Saddam Hussein through military intervention. Cheney went on NBC’s Meet the Press and argued that Iraq was aggressively developing nuclear weapons in which “the United States may well become the target of those activities.”\textsuperscript{477} Rice told CNN’s Wolf Blitzer that “there will always be some uncertainty to obtaining a nuclear weapon,” but, “…we don’t want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud.”\textsuperscript{478} On Fox News Sunday, Colin Powell added to these preventive war sentiments, stating that the Bush Administration believed that the best way to disarm Iraq “is with a regime change.”\textsuperscript{479}

Once the preventive doctrine had been made public in the National Security Strategy of 2002, Bush was both forthright and consistent in his quest to convince the American public of the threat that Saddam Hussein posed and of the possible ramifications should he acquire nuclear weapons – an attack similar to, but potentially more devastating than the events of 9/11. It was apparent that Bush was laying the platform for war and his rhetoric suggested that this was clearly on the Administration’s agenda. As stated in a speech in early October 2002 in Cincinnati:

If the Iraqi regime is able to produce, buy, or steal an amount of highly enriched uranium a little larger than a softball, it could have a nuclear weapon in less than a year... The Iraqi dictator must not be permitted to threaten America and the world with horrible poisons and diseases and gases and atomic weapons. America must not ignore the threat gathering against us. Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof of the smoking gun that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.

In the same address, the President again linked Saddam Hussein to al Qaeda:

\textsuperscript{478} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{479} Ibid.
We know that Iraq and al Qaeda have had high-level contacts that go back a decade. Some al Qaeda leaders who fled Afghanistan went to Iraq... We’ve learned that Iraq has trained al Qaeda members in bomb-making and poisons and deadly gases. And we know that after September the 11th, Saddam Hussein’s regime gleefully celebrated the terrorist attacks on America.  

Aside from the American public, Bush also had to convince Congress that the use of force in disarming Iraq was both necessary and imperative. Reminding key Senate and House members that they had voted for a policy of regime change in 1998, Bush told the assembled policy-makers that, “doing nothing is not an option.” Congress responded by requesting more information on Iraq’s WMD program from the CIA. The October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) concluded in its key judgments that, “Iraq has continued its weapons of mass destruction programs in defiance of UN resolutions and restrictions... if left unchecked, it probably will have a nuclear weapon during this decade.” Moreover, “since inspections ended in 1998, most analysts assess Iraq as reconstituting its nuclear weapons program.” The intelligence community concluded, “...if Baghdad acquires sufficient weapons-grade fissile material from abroad, it could make a nuclear weapon within a year... Without such material from abroad, Iraq probably would not be able to make a weapon until the last half of the decade.” Notably, the Department of State’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) held a dissenting opinion on the rest of this assertion, which was clearly referenced in this first key judgment:

The activities we have detected do not, however, add up to a compelling case that Iraq is currently pursuing what INR would consider to be an integrated and comprehensive approach to acquire nuclear weapons. Iraq may be doing so, but INR considers the available evidence inadequate to support such a judgment.

Three days prior to the Congressional vote (October 7, 2001), DCI George Tenet provided the following information on ties between Iraq and al Qaeda and permitted their use in unclassified discussions. In a letter to the Senate on Baghdad’s intentions, he stated:

- We have solid reporting of senior level contacts between Iraq and al Qa’ida going back a decade.

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481 Woodward, Plan of Attack, p. 69.
483 Ibid.
• Credible information indicates that Iraq and al Qai’da have discussed safe
haven and reciprocal nonaggression.
• Since Operation Enduring Freedom, we have solid evidence of the presence
in Iraq of al Qai’da members, including some that have been in Baghdad.
• We have credible reporting that al Qai’da leaders sought contacts in Iraq
who could help them acquire WMD capabilities. The reporting also indicates
that Iraq has provided training to al Qai’da members in the areas of poisons
and gases and making conventional bombs.\textsuperscript{484}

Notably, Tenet did not identify the threat from Iraq as immediate and posited that Saddam
Hussein would restrain himself from undertaking terrorist attacks against the US as long as
the US did not attack Iraq. As again stated:

Baghdad for now appears to be drawing a line short of conducting terrorist
attacks with conventional or CBW chemical, biological weapons against the
United States. Should Saddam conclude that a US-led attack could no longer be
deterred, he probably would become much less constrained in adopting terrorist
actions.\textsuperscript{485}

In other words, if the US didn’t attack Saddam, he was unlikely to attack the US, signifying
the CIA’s view that Saddam Hussein’s Iraq was not an immediate or even intermediate threat
to the US... unless it was attacked. Nevertheless, on October 10\textsuperscript{th} and 11\textsuperscript{th} both houses of
Congress authorised President Bush to “use the armed forces of the United States as he
determines to be necessary and appropriate... against the continuing threat posed by Iraq.”\textsuperscript{486}

**Planning for Preventive War**

When Bush asked Rumsfeld to define and construct a war plan for Iraq in November 2001,
he had two major options to choose from in deciding how to disarm Iraq. The first pertained
to the notion of improving the pre-9/11 policy of containment; including the development of
a new sanctions package. The second option was of course, the disarmament of Iraq through
the use of military force and/or covert action as a means to attain regime change. In the late
winter and spring of 2002, Bush commenced a review of the options for Iraq involving a
review group that comprised of second and third ranked people from the foreign policy
agencies. This included: Deputy Secretary of Defense, Paul Wolfowitz; Undersecretary for
Defense Policy, Douglas Feith; Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage; Deputy

\textsuperscript{484} George J. Tenet, “CIA Letter to Senate on Baghdad’s Intentions,” Globalsecurity.org, October 7, 2002, available at

\textsuperscript{485} Ibid.

National Security Adviser, Stephen Hadley; the regional specialist on Iraq from the National Security Council (NSC), Zalmay Khalilzad; Deputy Director of the CIA, John Mclaughlin; and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Peter Pace.\(^{487}\) This group came to the conclusion that dealing with Iraq using a strategy of containment was no longer viable and that the most appropriate means to impede the threat from Saddam Hussein was to remove him from power – or topple his regime. According to biographer James Mann, Khalilzad said “the belief was that as long as you had Saddam [in power], he could change his mind [about weapons of mass destruction].”\(^{488}\) The rationale was clear – Iraq could not be disarmed while Saddam Hussein ruled the country and if he was removed, the dissolution of Iraq’s WMD program would follow suit. This change in policy objective – in practice and not just theory – significantly altered the nature of the available alternatives to execute it. To achieve disarmament through regime change, Bush’s advisers laid out five options from which to choose: tough new UN inspections designed to cause the regime to implode; a coup d’état engineered by the CIA; the Enclave Strategy; Iraqi opposition forces; and finally, a full-scale, preventive invasion of Iraq.\(^{489}\)

The eventual and preferred option pertained to a full-scale preventive invasion and occupation of Iraq as a means to remove Saddam Hussein’s regime and ultimately destroy his nuclear arsenal. This option comprised of two components: first, fighting the war to overthrow Saddam Hussein; and second, occupying and rebuilding post-Saddam Iraq. When Rumsfeld began working on a plan for regime change in Iraq, the initial war plan called for a force of 500,000 and envisaged a similar scenario to the Gulf War of 1990/1991 – that being, provocative action by Saddam Hussein that would necessitate a large military response, while also allowing ample time (at least seven months) for a force build-up prior to military action.\(^{490}\) This strategy “draft,” however, shifted as Rumsfeld and General Tommy Franks’ Central Command (Centcom) planning staff vied for a faster and smaller solution. Both men had spent 18 months planning an Iraq invasion, an endeavour which started in earnest in December 2001 two months after the invasion of Afghanistan.\(^{491}\) The goal of the new war plan was to “conduct military operations to remove Saddam from power, eliminate the threat


\(^{488}\) Ibid.


\(^{490}\) Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, p. 36.


141
The first version of the Iraq war plan was the Generated Start or “90-45-90” plan. The first 90 referred to the 90 days it would take to move forces and otherwise prepare for the 45 days of bombing and Special Operations activity. The second 90 days was the period in which ground forces would engage in combat operations to overthrow Saddam Hussein’s regime. The Generated Start Plan evoked concern among Bush’s foreign policy team, particularly the “Fortress Baghdad” scenario in which Saddam’s forces would retreat to the city and force the US to engage in urban warfare – a high-risk endeavour in a foreign state where the enemy had the potential to attain an asymmetrical advantage. According to Franks, there were varying considerations that Bush needed to put into place before undertaking this strategy option. While not an extensive list, they included the attainment of host nation support, the creation of a sustainable supply line, the movement of the alternate air command and control centre into Qatar, and the prepositioning of aircraft around the world in order to transport forces and equipment. In essence, this meant that Bush would need to orchestrate the groundwork for war in advance of a decision to execute it. In the event that the President only gave them short notice (less than the 90 days), a second version of the plan, “Running Start,” would go into effect. This scaled-down version would begin with air operations and would escalate over time. Running Start planned for a bare minimum of troops (50,000) to move into Iraq with plans to send two more divisions within the span of three weeks. The third version of the Iraq war plan – the Hybrid Plan – in simple terms, merged aspects of the Generated Start and the Running Start plans. First and foremost, it vied for a dramatic time frame in which the front end would move forces into place prior to the commencement of offensive military operations. It comprised of four phases – Phase One would take sixteen days: five to establish an air bridge and eleven to transport initial forces. Phase Two would entail 16 days of air attacks and Special Force operations. Phase Three consisted of 125 days of combat operations, and finally, Phase Four which comprised of post-war stability operations, but included no time limit as it was not defined at that stage. The idea was to pressure Saddam Hussein’s regime to the breaking point, and thereby, avoid a long war. In

493 Ibid., pp. 98-99.
494 Ibid., p. 61.
495 Ibid., p. 135.
496 Ibid., p. 146.
terms of feasibility, the Bush Administration judged that a full scale, preventive invasion had a greater chance of achieving the policy goal than the other, more limited options. For example, when asked by the Armed Services Committee why the Iraq proliferation problem could not be solved with air strikes against its nuclear facilities only, Rumsfeld replied:

The problem with doing it piecemeal is this: First, we do not know where all of Iraq’s WMD facilities are. We do know where a fraction of them are. Second, of the facilities we do know about, not all are vulnerable to attack from the air. Some are underground. Some are mobile. Others are purposefully located near population centers – schools, mosques, hospitals, etc. – where an air strike could kill large numbers of innocent people. The Iraq problem cannot be saved with airstrikes alone.\(^\text{497}\)

Moreover, the Pentagon assessed that the Iraqi army was even weaker than it had been in the 1991 Gulf War, making the probability of a successful campaign high. This was mainly due to economic sanctions which had prevented Saddam Hussein from modernising the military and seriously diminished its offensive capability. The second part of the preventive option focused on re-building the Iraqi government without Saddam Hussein. Although a State Department team had been working on a project entitled “The Future of Iraq” for months, the Pentagon’s Undersecretary for Policy, Douglas Feith, became responsible for planning a post-Saddam Iraq, while Centcom was to orchestrate the invasion and removal of the regime. Feith delegated the actual planning to Centcom, however, after several months, the work was largely discarded due to criticisms that it did not reach out “to real-world people and information.”\(^\text{498}\) On January 20, 2003, the White House issued a National Security Presidential Directive that established the Pentagon post-war planning office – the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance. In essence, post-war planning encountered several false starts and in many instances could be deemed as relatively ad hoc. In fact, the apparent last minute nature of the post-war planning indicated that Bush and his advisers did not take the occupation portion of the preventive option into account when deciding which option to choose.

Although the Bush Administration had assessed the probability of a successful preventive war against Iraq as being fairly high, they also acknowledged the risks associated with such an attack. As a means to ensure that the President understood the types of impediments and

\(^{497}\) Prepared Testimony of US Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld before the House and Senate Armed Services Committees Regarding Iraq, September 18, 2002.

problems the US may encounter in the effort to oust Saddam Hussein’s regime, Rumsfeld sent a three page memo to Bush on October 15, 2002, detailing the risks of a preventive attack on Iraq. As stated:

Another state could try to take advantage of the US involvement of preoccupation with Iraq; oil disruption could cause international shock waves; Iraqi intelligence services, who have a global presence including inside the US, could strike the US, our allies or other deployed forces in unconventional ways; there could be higher than expected collateral damage; Fortress Baghdad could prove to be long and unpleasant for all; Iraq could experience ethnic strife among the Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds as had happened before; Iraq could use chemical weapons against the Shiites and blame the United States; and Iraq could successfully beat the US in public relations and persuade the world that it was a war against Muslims.\(^{499}\)

This option was considered the riskiest as it posed the widest variance in outcome. That is, disarming Iraq through regime change and taking the first step in spreading democracy to the Middle East would be considered a success. However, an Iraq response that entailed a WMD counter attack that caused thousands of US casualties, increased the cost and length of war, as well as potentially inciting ethnic strife or increased anti Americanism, would obviously be deemed as the worst case scenario. Nonetheless, the decision was clear. Likening the terrorist attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania to another tragic day in US history, Bush described the events in his diary on the night of September 11, 2001. He stated, “The Pearl Harbor of the 21st century took place today.”\(^{500}\) The preventive war undertaken against Iraq on March 20, 2003 initiated the second “theatre” in the War of Terror and the second major response by the US to the events of 9/11.

Bush later acknowledged that despite George Tenet’s warnings about bin Laden, prior to the events of 9/11 he had not “felt that sense of urgency.”\(^{501}\) In simple terms, 9/11 motivated Bush’s movement from a cautious policy of containment to a risk-seeking one of prevention. As indicated above, the President’s heightened sensitivity to external threats and keen sense of crisis in the aftermath of 9/11 influenced how he began to view Saddam Hussein and the risks he was willing to take as a means to disarm Iraq and topple his government:

\(^{500}\) Ibid., p. 24.
\(^{501}\) Ibid., pp. 12 and 24.
The threat comes from Iraq... and its drive toward an arsenal of terror. It possesses and produces chemical and biological weapons. It is seeking nuclear weapons... We also must never forget the most vivid events of recent history. On September the 11th, 2001 America felt its vulnerability – even to threats that gather on the other side of the earth. We resolved then, and we are resolved today, to confront every threat, from any source, that could bring sudden terror and suffering to America... The evidence indicates that Iraq is reconstituting its nuclear weapons program... Some citizens wonder, after 11 years of living with this problem, why do we need to confront it now? And there’s a reason. We’ve experienced the horror of September the 11th. We have seen that those who hate America are willing to crash airplanes into buildings full of innocent people. Our enemies would be no less willing, in fact, they would be eager, to use biological or chemical, or a nuclear weapon.502

Before the attacks, Bush advocated a policy of containment for Iraq, however, after 9/11 he viewed Iraq’s threat to the US as more acute and immediate – as the influence of this event became his frame of reference. As stated:

Before September the 11th, many in the world believed that Saddam Hussein could be contained. But chemical agents, lethal viruses and shadowy terrorist networks are not easily contained. Imagine those 19 hijackers with other weapons and other planes this time armed by Saddam Hussein. It would take one vial, one canister, one crate slipped into this country to bring a day of horror like none we have ever known.503

Despite a lack of credible intelligence linking Iraq to either 9/11 or al Qaeda and the unfounded assumption that Saddam Hussein would give nuclear weapons to terrorists if he had them, Bush’s new view of Iraq as an intolerable threat and probable culprit of a horrific future attack on the US suggested that once 9/11 put the President in a domain of loss, his reference point became the pre-9/11 status quo; an America impervious to external, asymmetric attacks, which he felt he could regain only by dismantling the Iraqi regime.

The Lead Up

At least six weeks before the completion of the UN inspections, Bush made the decision to use preventive force as a means to topple Saddam Hussein’s regime. Convinced that the inspections were not going to put enough pressure on Iraq and subsequently force the government to fall, Bush, according to Woodward, informed Rice that, “time is not on our

503 Bush, State of the Union Address.
side here. Probably going to have to, we’re going to have to go to war.” Indeed, when Blix’s February 14, 2003 announcement to the UN Security Council was made, it only worked to embolden Bush’s resolve. Despite “more than 400 inspections covering more than 300 sites” covering a wide range of facilities, inspectors had “not found any such [WMD] weapons, only a small number of empty chemical munitions, which should have been declared and destroyed.” While this was a key finding which fundamentally undermined the rationale for war – it did nothing to deter Bush from his decision to launch a preventive war against Iraq.

At Tony Blair’s request, Bush went back to the UN for two reasons: in hope of garnering a coalition to assist in or at least support an attack against Iraq and to seek a second UN resolution authorising military force. Despite Powell’s efforts to persuade the President to keep war as a last resort and to continue with stern UN inspections, Bush requested that the Secretary of State present the US case for war in Iraq. Powell’s February 5, 2003 UN speech illustrated his shift from periodical objector within the Administration to what appeared to be defender of the Bush’s determination to end the Hussein regime in the pursuit of disarmament; defining the threats from Iraq as “real and present dangers to the region and the world,” and the “sinister nexus between Iraq and the al Qai’da terrorist network.” Bush and Blair’s desire for endorsement from the UN were lost when the leaders of France, Russia and Germany issued a statement calling for extended weapon inspections, stating that, “Nothing today justifies war. Russia, Germany and France are determined to ensure that everything possible is done to disarm Iraq peacefully.” With failure imminent, Powell

505 Cirincione, Mathews, Perkovich & Orton, WMD in Iraq: Evidence and Implications, p. 59
506 Ibid.
507 Before President Bush’s decision on Iraq, Powell’s language around the issue consistently referred to disarmament as opposed to regime change. However, once Bush selected the preventive option, Powell fell in behind his commander-in-chief and supported the Administration’s efforts to pull together a coalition at the UN. Powell himself has made very few public comments about his shift in stance but Greg Thielmann, former director of the Strategic Proliferation and Military Affairs Office at the State Department said Powell eventually supported the preventive military option because he was a “loyal secretary of state, a ‘good soldier,’ as it were, building the Administration’ case before the international community.” (Interview with Greg Thielmann, Truth, War & Consequences, PBS Frontline, August 13, 2003). Lawrence Wilkerson, Powell’s chief of staff during the decision making process on how to handle the perceived threat from Iraqi WMD, echoed Thielmann, calling Powell the “world’s most loyal soldier,” implying that Powell did not continue to push the LN option once it became clear that Bush had selected a different alternative. (“Weighing the Uniqueness of the Bush Administration’s National Security Decision-Making Process: Boon or Danger to American Democracy?” New America Foundation, American Strategy Program Policy Forum, October 19, 2005). Whatever the case, though he remained committed to a philosophy of overwhelming force, popular support and well-defined mission, like his colleagues at the top of the Bush’s foreign policy apparatus, Powell, in the end publicly supported a preventive attack on Iraq.
pulled the vote. Undaunted, Bush went to war with a small and unimpressive coalition, at least in comparison to his father’s 1991 standards. That Bush proceeded with his plans for regime change in Iraq with substantial and material support from only three countries – Great Britain, Australia and Spain – made his decision to wage preventive war in Iraq all the more risk-acceptant.

**Bush Announces War with Iraq**

On March 19, just hours after he had ordered the first attacks on Iraq, Bush announced his decision to attack Iraq to the American public and spoke of the Iraqi threat. As stated, “...we meet that threat now, with our Army, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard and Marines, so that we do not have to meet it later with armies of fire fighters and police and doctors on the streets of our cities.”

Even as he announced the commencement of war with Iraq, Bush reconnected with 9/11 – an event wholly unrelated in practical terms to Iraq – to justify the action. Bush chose the preventive option because he believed it could allow him to recoup the pre-9/11 status quo of American invulnerability and this could be attained by ousting Saddam Hussein, disarming Iraq and therefore averting future attacks similar but more deadly than 9/11. The preventive option had the highest outcome value if it succeeded, but one of the lowest outcome values if it failed. Bush selected the riskiest option in order to take a chance at recouping previous losses, re-establishing the previous status quo, and averting future losses.

According to Cheney, “After we got hit on 9/11 the President said no more and enunciated in the Bush doctrine that we will hold states that sponsor terror, that provide sanctuary for terrorists to account, that they will be treated as guilty as the terrorists themselves of whatever acts are committed from bases on that soil.”

From 2001-2003, when faced with the prospect of having to wage preventive war against one of three rogue proliferators – Iraq, Iran and North Korea – the Bush Administration chose to preventively attack Iraq, a decidedly weaker state. This seemed to provide strong evidence to support Richard Ned Lebow’s basic claim that “a [major] consideration militating against war can be its expected costs. In some circumstances they may be high enough to dissuade policy-makers from using force regardless of the magnitude of the expected gains... The absolute cost of war... was probably an important restraining factor for American policy-

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510 Bush, State of the Union Address.
makers... This indicates that as the absolute cost of war increases, the importance of relative gains diminishes and may ultimately become irrelevant to the decision for war or peace."

Although many arguments have been proposed to account for the US decision to attack Iraq rather than Iran or North Korea, given the vast similarities between them – it appears that the main palatable difference between the three threatening states at the time was their relative military strength. Nonetheless, it was evident that Bush’s regular public refrain about the threat from Iraq, centred on the dangers and risks inherent in doing nothing to thwart the suspected Iraqi WMD programs and Saddam Hussein’s intent to use them against the US. In simple terms, the President framed the options in public on Iraq as merely twofold: preventive war or “trusting in the sanity and restraint of Saddam Hussein.”

In seeking to avert future losses similar to the one suffered by the US on 9/11, Bush took a worst-case scenario perspective and thus gave little credence to the middle of the road alternatives involving weapons inspections or sanctions that might have worked to disarm Iraq, but not to remove Saddam Hussein from power.

The fact that Bush ordered the invasion before inspections had been completed indicated that when it came to Iraq, preventive military force was not a last resort. A tendency to disregard information both from the intelligence community and from his advisers, specifically Powell, which ran contrary to his goal of regime change, also suggested that Bush sought war with Iraq as a way to re-establish the pre-9/11 status quo and avert a future loss to US national security. A March 2005 White House-commissioned report on NBC intelligence was extremely critical of American intelligence on Iraqi NBC prior to the 2003 Iraq War, “noting the thin body of information.” While Greg Thielmann, former head of the Office of Strategic Proliferation and Military Affairs in the State Department’s Office of Intelligence and Research, admonished that, “The effectiveness of any first-strike military doctrine depends on reliable intelligence. The US intelligence community’s inability to produce accurate information on enemy threats renders such a doctrine feckless and reckless.”

In essence, Bush and his team disregarded intelligence analysts whose conclusions did not coincide with their own, and at the same time, challenged intelligence that questioned the

existence of Iraqi WMD or Saddam’s ties to al Qaeda, or generally, called into question the ultimate goal of regime change in Iraq. Powell, who believed disarmament could be achieved without war, was regularly “outweighted” by Cheney, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, all of whom embraced Bush’s view that war was necessary to permanently disarm Iraq. Illustrating how removed Powell was from influencing the “final” decision, Bush chose preventive war and conducted it in a manner that contradicted Powell’s doctrine of overwhelming force. Rumsfeld’s speed and mobility won out and the post-Saddam occupation occurred without a clear vision for the future or an exit strategy.

In making the decision on how to handle the perceived proliferation of nuclear weapons in Iraq, Bush gave small thrift to options other than preventive war on the grounds that they had been tried to no avail, albeit not during his Administration. The President also chose the preventive option despite the lack of solid evidence indicating Saddam Hussein was complicit in 9/11, that he had ties to al Qaeda or that Iraq’s suspected nuclear program was close to producing a nuclear weapon. He made repeated declarations regarding the dire nature and immediacy of threat from Iraq and embedded these declarations with images of a nuclear 9/11 orchestrated by Saddam Hussein – even when there was little evidence to link Saddam to terrorism or to 9/11 – and in fact – a statement by the CIA expressing a view that Saddam would not attack the US unless attacked first. That Bush viewed the 9/11 attacks as a type of harbinger of extreme consequences to follow if he did not act to avert it, also likely played a role in his decision to opt for preventive war. As he later stated in the National Security Strategy of 2006:

For America, the September 11 attacks underscored the danger of allowing threats to linger unresolved. Saddam Hussein’s continued defiance of 16 UNSC resolutions over 12 years, combined with his record of invading neighboring countries, supporting terrorists, tyrannizing his own people, and using chemical weapons, presented a threat we could no longer ignore. The UNSC unanimously passed Resolution 1441 on November 8, 2002, calling for full and immediate compliance by the Iraqi regime with its disarmament obligations. Once again, Saddam defied the international community. 516

Condoleezza Rice’s decision making process was also heavily defined by the events of 9/11. As late as 2000, Rice felt Iraq could be deterred much as the Soviet Union had over the last forty years. Against Iraq and North Korea, she advocated that “the first line of defense

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should be a clear and classical statement of deterrence – if they do acquire weapons of mass
destruction, that weapon will be unusable because any attempt to use them will bring national
obliteration.” Yet, after 9/11, Rice’s views on how to conduct foreign policy underwent a
sea change. She saw 9/11 as a sign that it was time to change the direction of American
foreign policy. As stated:

The international system has been in flux since the collapse of Soviet power. Now it is possible – indeed probable – that the transition is coming to an end... This is, then, a period akin to 1945 to 1947, when American leadership expanded the number of free and democratic states – Japan and Germany among the great powers – to create a new balance of power that favored freedom. 518

Within this context, Rice stressed the new vulnerability facing the United States in the wake
of 9/11:

It will take years to understand the long-term effects of September 11th. But there are certain verities that the tragedy brought home to us in the most vivid way. Perhaps most fundamentally, 9/11 crystallized our vulnerability... Today’s threats come less from massing armies than from small, shadowy bands of terrorists – less from strong states than from weak or failed states. And after 9/11, there is no longer any doubt that today America faces an existential threat to our security... 519

Rice clearly discussed both the loss on 9/11 of America’s sense of security and the future
threats which must be averted. In the same speech, she also illustrated how the September
11th attacks influenced her thinking on how the US should respond to other actors perceived
as threatening in order to avert future losses similar to 9/11: “...since 9/11, our nation is
properly focused as never before on preventing attacks against us before they happen.” 520 A
manifestation of Rice’s new perspective was the National Security Strategy of 2002, which
embodied the Bush Doctrine and created a framework for foreign policy which Rice arguably
believed would allow the Bush Doctrine and created a framework for foreign policy which Rice arguably
believed would allow the US to recoup the pre-9/11 status quo of a feeling of security. Using
9/11 as context, Rice asserted that adopting the Bush Doctrine did not constitute throwing out

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520 Ibid.
containment or deterrence, but that these traditional concepts were not enough to prevent future losses caused by terrorist attacks. As stated:

Some threats are so potentially catastrophic – and can arrive with so little warning, by means that are untraceable – that they cannot be contained. Extremists who seem to view suicide as a sacrament are unlikely ever to be deterred. And new technology requires new thinking about when a threat actually becomes “imminent.” So as a matter of common sense, the United States must be prepared to take action, when necessary, before threats have fully materialized. 521

In authoring the National Security Strategy of 2002, Rice married the threat and dangers of terrorism to warnings about Saddam Hussein and his desire to acquire weapons of mass destruction in a formula seemingly designed to recoup the pre-9/11 status quo of security and to avert future losses – which Rice suggests may come in the form of terrorist attacks similar to, but even deadlier than those perpetrated on 9/11. On this basis, Rice made the case for going after Iraq as part of the war on terrorism.

Terrorists allied with tyrants can acquire technologies allowing them to murder on an ever more massive scale. Each threat magnifies the danger of the other... For these reasons, President Bush is committed to confronting the Iraqi regime, which has defied the just demands of the world for over a decade... The danger of Saddam Hussein’s arsenal is far more clear than anything we could have foreseen prior to September 11th. And history will judge harshly any leader or nation that saw this dark cloud and sat by in complacency or indecision. 522

When it came to choosing between the available options, Rice was not diametrically opposed to seeking a UN resolution on Iraq or renewing inspections, because this method of disarmament had actually worked in South Africa. She initially advocated going to the UN to obtain a new resolution on Iraq and encouraged the President to at least try new weapons inspections, likely because, even if they failed, US efforts at the UN could justify and possibly garner international support for a war in Iraq. However, Rice ultimately believed that the only way to remove the perceived threat of Iraqi WMD was to launch a preventive war. She told House minority leader Nancy Pelosi at a meeting at the White House on February 5, 2003, that “we tried sanctions, we tried limited military options, we tried resolutions. At some point, war is the only option.” 523 Although Rice entered the Bush

521 Ibid.
522 Ibid.
Administration as a well-known realist who advocated a foreign policy that focused on big, powerful countries in pursuit of the national interest, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, she began to frame external threats to the US differently. When asked by Bush if he ought to pursue war, Rice answered:

Yes, because it isn’t American credibility on the line, it is the credibility of everybody that this gangster can yet again beat the international system... To let this threat in this part of the world play volleyball with the international community this way will come back to haunt us someday. That is the reason to do it.524

Indeed, the Bush Administration’s ideologically-driven framing of the Iraq issue, and the mindset that regime change in Iraq was necessary to prevent another 9/11, resulted in a tendency to overlook nuance and to reduce complex issues to simple, Boolean choices which produced an all or nothing perspective on the decision problem regarding Iraq. Even before he went to the UN, Bush publicly cast the decision on how to handle Iraq as a choice between two options – doing nothing or toppling the regime – while ignoring any options in the middle. In a November 2002 speech, he stated that there is a “risk in all action we take. But the risk of inaction is not a choice, as far as I’m concerned. The inaction creates more risk than doing our duty to make the world more peaceful.”525 This characterisation of the options did not in fact reflect the way Bush approached his available alternatives, suggesting that his depiction of the options as: a) go to war; b) do nothing and put your fate in the hands of Saddam Hussein, was rhetoric constructed as a means to persuade the American people to back military action. Bush never considered inaction an option and he appears to have viewed all options other than military action as distinctly limited. His conviction that regime change was a necessary step in preventing another 9/11 manifested itself to the extent that the President believed that options other than military force had already been exhausted. For example, in the weeks before he made the decision on Iraq, Bush dismissed two new options proposed by UN members with the justification that they had been tried in some shape or form and had failed: a German and French proposal for a tougher program of coercive inspections and renewed UN inspections under an explicit threat of force – until it was established with certainty that Saddam Hussein had dismantled his weapons program or inspectors were obstructed from completing their jobs.526 Bush was convinced regime

524 Ibid., p. 251.
525 Bush, “President Outlines Priorities.”
526 Cirincione, Mathews, Perkovich & Orton, WMD in Iraq: Evidence and Implications, p. 59.
change was the only viable option for achieving Iraqi disarmament, and thus, making the US more secure, suggesting that the President approached the UN, not to prevent a war with Iraq, but to justify one. Such logic would again be prevalent in the National Security Strategy of 2006. And once again, replacing preventive war with pre-emption, he stated:

> When the consequences of an attack with WMD are potentially so devastating, we cannot afford to stand idly by as grave dangers materialize. This is the principle and logic of pre-emption. The place of pre-emption in our national security strategy remains the same. We will always proceed deliberately, weighing the consequences of our actions. The reasons for our actions will be clear, the force measured, and the cause just.\(^{527}\)

In terms of the “choice” of Iraq, the cultivation of the preventive war doctrine (rhetorically and formally in the context of the National Security Strategy of 2002), the alignment of the preventive war option to Iraq, as well as the orchestration and lead up to the preventive war itself – it appears that the Bush Doctrine could be deemed as overzealous, extreme and unprecedented. In fact, when looking at Bush’s unbridled determinism to wage war with Iraq, this seemed to be nothing short of the truth. However, despite such appearances of a radically new approach, at its core, the Bush Doctrine’s push for preventive war in Iraq in 2003 has long pervaded the strategic thought of policy-makers, officials, and military planners at the highest levels of the US government. As the next chapter will argue, since the end of World II, each time a rogue state has attempted to acquire nuclear weapons, the US has seriously considered taking unilateral preventive action as a means to impede this development – even in the dubious case of Iraq where action was actually undertaken. Indeed, the second half of the 20\(^{th}\) Century is sated with examples of prominent US decision-makers who have contemplated the undertaking of major unilateral preventive military actions as a means to forestall the proliferation of nuclear weapons by rogue states. Although much attention has been paid to the recent actions in Iraq and the potential for future wars in Iran and North Korea, precious little has been written about the three other earlier preventive war targets. The next section will thus seek to investigate and analyse each of those cases in order to assess the extent to which the US considered waging preventive war against them, and to uncover why in the final analysis, US decision-makers in each case decided to refrain from such action. If we find that the US abstained from preventive war against these three states primarily because of practical concerns directly related to military costs (i.e. the size and strength of the enemy and its prospects for retaliation), then perhaps a strong case can be

made for the effectiveness of deterrence in mitigating the US drive for preventive war against rogue proliferators in both the past and present.
Chapter 5
The Bush Doctrine and Prevention:
Evident in 20th Century US Foreign Policy –
Case Studies
The core theoretical thrust underpinning the Bush Doctrine, and specifically, the preventive motivation for war, has long been an intrinsic strategic thought of policy-makers, officials, and military planners at the highest levels of the US government. While it has often been depicted as a distinct and markedly new National Security Strategy, the Bush Doctrine was, in fact, neither new nor era-defining. As Peter Lavoy contended, the Bush Administration’s “new” strategy read much like “old wine in a new bottle” and hardly represented the fundamental policy shift that many portend. As this chapter will argue, since the dawning of the nuclear era in 1945, at least three other US Presidents (Dwight D. Eisenhower, Lyndon B. Johnson and William J. Clinton) have faced the potential threat of nuclear technology in the hands of states hostile to their respective Administrations and each dealt with the same decision faced by President Bush in 2003: whether to use preventive military force as a means to counter the proliferation of such nuclear weapons technology. Each was forced to make their decision regarding the preventive use of force in the face of uncertainty. Each had to weigh the costs – many of them unknown – of preventively striking an adversarial state perceived to be developing nuclear weapons against the costs of refraining from preventive intervention and employing more conservative diplomatic methods, even while the threat of future military conflict hovered. Indeed the historical record of the last half century is replete with examples of high level US decision-makers who seriously considered the undertaking of major unilateral preventive military actions as a means to thwart the proliferation of nuclear weapons by rogue states. As early as January 1946, in a foreboding memorandum on the military implications of the development of nuclear weapons, US General Leslie Groves, then wartime commander of the Manhattan Project, expressed the simple but compelling temptation of preventive war thinking: “If we were ruthlessly realistic, we would not permit any foreign power with which we are not family allied and in which we do not have absolute confidence, to make or possess nuclear weapons. If such a country started to make nuclear weapons we would destroy its capacity to make them before it had progressed far enough to threaten us.” Prior to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the US had considered preventive options against no less than three additional rogue proliferators: the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Union) from 1945-54; the People’s Republic of China (China) from 1960-64; and the Democratic People’s Republic of North Korea (North Korea) from 1993-94. This chapter will investigate the above case studies as a means to appraise the extent to which the US seriously considered executing preventive war against these states, and in the final

analysis, will reveal that what Bush advocated in 2003, was not “new,” “radical” and certainly not “revolutionary.”

According to Schneider, for any leader to order a preventive counter-proliferation strike a “very special set of circumstances” was required. As stated:

The nuclear aspirant would have to be approaching the nuclear weapons threshold and be led by a hostile government that appears ready to take extreme risks. Such a government is unlikely to be deterred from future warlike actions. Moreover, the developing scenario would have to directly and immediately threaten a vital interest of the country considering the pre-emptive strike. It would require information on important nuclear target locations of the adversary and the ability to achieve tactical surprise. Moreover, the adversary should not be able to threaten the pre-emptor with nuclear arms or other weapons of mass destruction or have a strong ally who is likely to do so on its behalf. All other reasonable options should have been exhausted before such a strike is undertaken. The head of state should have adequate domestic and international political support for the action and for bringing any military campaign to a successful conclusion before choosing this type of non-proliferation activity.530

That these conditions were not met in the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 is less noteworthy than the fact that the invasion constituted the application of the preventive war doctrine in US national security strategy. The Bush Doctrine, at its core, gave primacy to the use of preventive military intervention both as a central component of US foreign policy and a method of counter proliferation. However, prevention has not only been a common motive for war, it has actually been “quite routine.”531 As argued by Gray, it is difficult to find historical cases of warfare wherein prevention was not a motivator: “Wars typically occur for several, even many, reasons. Prevention is nearly always prominent in the cluster of those reasons. The concept of preventive war has an ominous ring to it that is not entirely deserved. Poor historical understanding is the explanation.”532 What this monograph suggests is that considerations of prevention typically played a sometimes greater, sometimes lesser, role. As Gray further asserted, it has been rare to find a conflict wherein there was no spore of a preventive motive to be found: “With regard to the great Cold War of 1947-89, it was standard to cite the deadly trio of geopolitics, ideology, and personality as combining to produce the fatal brew which resulted in 42 years of nuclear shadowed global menace. But,

532 Ibid.
austerely viewed, in 1946-47 both Washington and Moscow decided to wage preventive non-military conflict. The United States was determined to prevent the USSR from expanding its sphere of control any further, while the USSR was no less determined to prevent the United States from rolling back its hard won gains. In relation to the National Security Strategy of 2002, many of the Administration’s critics denounced the policy as new and dangerous, while the Administration itself argued the need to go beyond past practice, warranted by the novel and dangerous threats facing the United States. But as indicated by Steinberg, the use of preventive force – including the debates over its legality and wisdom – predate the Bush Administration’s post 9/11 strategy. As stated, “a careful examination of the history, rationale, costs and benefits of using preventive force suggests that while rare, preventive force has had a legitimate role to play in tackling some of the most dangerous security problems facing the United States and the wider international community.”

For Trachtenberg, the claim that the Bush strategy of dealing with developing threats “preventively” marked a total break with American tradition was an argument that needed to be both examined and challenged:

It turns out that preventive war thinking played a much greater role in shaping US policy than most people realize. During the early Cold War period, this sort of thinking was by no means limited to the lunatic fringe. Could the United States simply sit back and allow first the Soviets and then the Chinese to develop nuclear capabilities of their own? Many people, both inside and outside the government, were worried about what would happen if America did nothing and thought that the possibility of preventive action had to be taken seriously. In the post-Cold War period, the Clinton Administration seemed ready to do whatever was necessary to prevent North Korea from going nuclear; it seemed prepared, in fact, to go to war over the issue. Even in the pre-nuclear world, preventive war thinking played a major role in shaping policy: American (post-war) policy was strongly influenced by this kind of thinking.

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533 Ibid.

Preventive Considerations
As World War II came to an end, it became increasingly evident that the first unallied foreign power that would attempt to revise the international system by acquiring nuclear weapons would be the second greatest power in the world, that being, the USSR. Following the cessation of hostilities, the once expedient wartime alliance between the US and the Soviet Union quickly unravelled into an ideological and strategic chasm. As Russell Buhite and William Hamel stated, “in the years immediately following World War II basic conflicts of interest, not to mention mutual suspicion and misperception, tore the Grand Alliance apart and precipitated a dramatic deterioration of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Since their pre-war relationship had provided nothing solid on which to build, it is not surprising that their conflicting world views and objectives in the post-war period gave rise to the Cold War.” With Germany and Japan devastated, Great Britain severely weakened, and the rest of Western Europe on the cusp of political and economic collapse, the US and the Soviet Union after World War II enjoyed a unique period of uninhibited strength and opportunity with which to expand their relative influence throughout the world and especially in Western Europe. Given their vast disparities and mutual interest in this contested region, it was not surprising that by the end of 1945 most US government officials and military planners, to say nothing of the American public, viewed Soviet aggression, expansionism and intransigence as the most serious threat to the future of US and world security. Indeed, concerns pertaining to the perceived actions, motives, capabilities and intentions of the Soviet Union informed, and to a certain degree, distorted, American attitudes during this time of great uncertainty. As argued by Campbell Craig:

The primary reason the American officials instigated the Cold War was that... the official ideology of the Soviet Union was to seek the eradication of capitalist regimes like the US. The Soviet Union had cynically signed a peace treaty with Nazi Germany... Josef Stalin, had killed millions of his fellow citizens, and the Red Army... continued to dominate...several eastern European states... this threat derived from the existence of military technology capable of traversing the oceans, and of a regime potentially interested in using such a technology for the purposes of conquering the US. This did not mean... that the Soviet Union was

destined to mount a Hitler-like campaign against the US. But it was possible to believe, especially given the vivid lessons of recent history, that it might.\textsuperscript{537}

With a diametrically opposed ideology that espoused sentiments of a worldwide “communist revolution,” “capitalist encirclement” and “inevitable conflict;” an estimated four to six million troops already mobilised in Eastern Europe and an estimated 10.5 million in reserve (more than enough to overturn and occupy all of Western Europe); alleged aggression in Berlin, the Baltic republics, Finland and Hungary; and a perceived desire and ability to develop nuclear weapons; the Soviet Union represented a clear threat to the US and its European allies. As articulated by Michael Nacht, “[concern over the Soviet Union] was surely predicated on... the threatening character of Soviet communist ideology, consolidation of Soviet political control of Eastern Europe, the potential threat posed by Soviet conventional forces against Western Europe, the subversive techniques of this international communist movement controlled by Moscow, and the intransigent character of Soviet negotiating behavior on a wide range of post war issues.”\textsuperscript{538} The supposed Soviet desire to attain nuclear weapons was of specific concern to the US during this volatile period. As conveyed by Trachtenberg: “If the Soviets were allowed to develop nuclear forces of their own there was no telling what might happen. If they were so hostile and aggressive in the period of America’s nuclear monopoly, what would they be like once this monopoly had been broken... wouldn’t the Soviets someday try to destroy the one power that prevented them from achieving their goals by launching a nuclear attack on the US?”\textsuperscript{539} For many observers during this period the very spectre of such an outcome led to a “surprisingly widespread” espousal of Bush Doctrine-like preventive war thinking.

From 1945-49 the US held a clear nuclear monopoly in which no other state in the world had nuclear weapons. From 1949-54, although the Soviet Union had developed a diminutive nuclear capability, the US still enjoyed a vast nuclear superiority, and thus, it was argued, still had the capacity to remove the burgeoning Soviet nuclear program. Once this monopoly/superiority was lost, however, most American observers believed that the Soviet Union would likely undertake an even more aggressive, expansionist foreign policy or potentially undertake a quasi-“nuclear Pearl Harbor” against the US mainland. Indeed, shortly after Stalin’s emotive ideological address to the Soviet citizenry on February 6, 1946,


\textsuperscript{538} Nacht, “The Future Unlike the Past,” p. 194.

\textsuperscript{539} Trachtenberg, “A Wasting Asset,” p. 5.
William Bullit, the first American ambassador to the Soviet Union warned, “as the conquest of the earth for Communism is the objective of the Soviet government, no nation lies outside the scope of its ambitions.”\textsuperscript{540} Furthermore, as Trachtenberg reported, “the assumption that the Soviets were intent on world domination and thus on the destruction of American power, and the belief that they were absolutely ruthless and that their policy was ‘guided only by considerations of expediency,’ implied that they would strike when they had developed [a nuclear] capability.”\textsuperscript{541}

In this light, it was viewed by policy-makers in the US and Western Europe that the only reason the Soviet Union had not yet pressed its interests any further west was the fact that the US held a clear nuclear deterrent. Once the Soviet Union was securely in possession of a large nuclear weapons arsenal of its own, however, it was feared that the US line would no longer hold and that the Soviet Union would swiftly move to overthrow or undermine the existing status quo in Western Europe. As Campbell reported: “always a fanatical regime bent on world domination, the Kremlin had avoided confrontation in the Cold War’s early years because of the American nuclear monopoly... Once Stalin obtained nuclear parity... he would use it to cancel out the American arsenal, move his vast almost omnipotent conventional forces into the ‘Eurasian land mats’ and dare the Americans to risk World War III by stopping him.”\textsuperscript{542} As a result, many policy-makers in the US and Western Europe at the time argued that the attainment of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union would be completely unacceptable and would have to be “rolled back.” It was perceived that the surest way to do so was to “strike first and strike hard,” before it was too late. It was with this in mind that preventive war thinking during this time received an extensive level of support in which, according to Trachtenberg, the “impact on actual policy was both enormous and pervasive.”\textsuperscript{543}

The call for preventive war against the USSR came as early as mid 1945, when several high ranking members of the US government began discussing the need to address the expanding “Soviet problem.” In what is now viewed as an infamous phone conversation with General Joseph T. McNamey, General Dwight D. Eisenhower’s deputy at the time, one of the most

\textsuperscript{540} Quoted in Buhite & Hamel, “War for Peace,” p. 374.
\textsuperscript{542} Campbell, Destroying the Village, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{543} Trachtenberg, “A Wasting Asset,” p. 6.
vocal and anti-Soviet advocates of preventive war, General George S. Patton first conveyed the emerging preventive war sentiment:

Hell, why do you care what the Goddamn Russians think? We are going to have to fight them sooner or later within the next generation. Why not do it now while our army is intact and the damn Russians can have their hind ends kicked back into Russia in three months? We can do it ourselves easily with the help of the German troops we have, if we just arm them and take them with us; they hate the bastards. In ten days I can have enough incidents happen to have us all at war with those sons of bitches and make it look like their fault. So much so that we will be completely justified in attacking them and running them out.\(^{544}\)

While Patton was one of the first and most overt proponents of preventive war against the Soviet Union, he was certainly neither the last nor the most extreme. Over the course of the next nine years many others would reiterate his proactive view of assertive counter-proliferation. For instance, later in 1945, the State War Navy Coordinating Committee constructed an official government memorandum which audaciously declared that “when it becomes evident that forces of aggression are being arrayed against us by a potential enemy, we cannot afford, through any misguided or perilous idea of avoiding an aggressive attitude, to permit the first blow to be struck against us.”\(^{545}\) Furthermore, in September 1946, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended in clear fashion, that the US needed to “press the issue to a prompt political decision while making preparations to strike the first blow if necessary... the US should demonstrate its readiness and determination to take prompt and effective military action abroad to anticipate and prevent an attack on the US.”\(^{546}\) Additionally, in a report to the Secretary of War (now Secretary of Defense), General Henry H. Arnold of the US Air Force staunchly asserted that “the only certain protection against [Soviet] aggression is to meet it and overcome it before it can be launched or take full effect.”\(^{547}\) Coinciding with these sentiments, General Ely Culbertson articulated before a US Senate committee that the US was “facing within the next five or six years a preventive war by the capitalist world to eliminate the threat of a rising Russian giant state. And if that war does not take place, then we are facing in fifteen or twenty years a war for the control of the world by Communist Eurasia lead by Russia.”\(^{548}\) Further to this, in August 1950, Secretary of the Navy, Francis Mathews reportedly stated:

\(^{544}\) Quoted in Buhite & Hamel, “War for Peace,” p. 372.
\(^{545}\) Buhite & Hamel, “War for Peace.”
\(^{546}\) Foreign Relations of the United States: p. 1163.
\(^{547}\) Quoted in Buhite & Hamel, “War for Peace,” p. 373.
The US should be willing to pay any price to achieve a world at peace even the price of instituting a war to compel cooperation for peace... [The Communists] would brand our program as imperialist aggression. We could accept that slander with complacency, for in the implementation of a strong affirmative, peace-seeking policy, though it casts us in a character new to a true democracy – an initiator of a war of aggression – it would win for us a proud and popular title – we would become the first aggressors for peace...

Finally, as recounted by Buhite and Hamel:

Other officers joined the chorus... [they] assumed that in the next war the nation that struck first with nuclear weapons would win; therefore, preventive war seemed like an attractive option. According to General Carl Spaatz, the way to deal with a possible Soviet air attack was ‘to get them at the place they start before they are launched.’ And in response to concerns that the Soviet Union might acquire and use the nuclear bomb, General Arnold argued that the ‘one defense against the nuclear bomb’ was to ‘hit it before it starts.’ ‘The first blows’ in the next war, wrote Ira Eaker, ‘would be struck through the air, and to prevent destruction of this country in the event of such an attack, we must strike the enemy first.’ General Orvil Anderson subsequently spoke out in favour of a surprise attack.

Proponents of preventive war were not limited to the US military. It became clear that notions of preventing the USSR from attaining nuclear weapons by offensive means gained a substantial following among some of the most renowned government officials, journalists and political scientists in the western world. Of these, many were in favour of a proposal that would take the onus away from the US, placing it firmly upon the Soviet leadership. In this way, the US would present the Soviet Union with an unambiguous nuclear ultimatum: cease research and development efforts on nuclear weapons or face an American preventive war. Indeed, several US government officials and military planners, some of considerable prominence and authority, endorsed this potentially catastrophic assertive proposition. That is, Ambassador Bullit suggested that the US should threaten Moscow with “annihilation” and “if that failed,” he wrote, “then the US, should annihilate the Soviet Union.” Moreover, according to Trachtenberg, “William Laurence, the science correspondent for the New York Times and then America’s leading writer on nuclear issues, wanted to force the Soviets in 1948 to accept nuclear disarmament through an ultimatum if necessary. If they turned down this American demand, their nuclear plants should be destroyed before bombs could be

produced. If that meant war, he said, it would be one forced on America by Soviet insistence on a nuclear armament race which must inevitably lead to war anyway. Under the circumstances, it would be to our advantage to have it while we are still the sole possessor of the nuclear bomb.”\textsuperscript{552} Another of the earliest and clearest advocates of preventive war came from the world famous British mathematician and logician, Bertrand Russell. As explained by George Quester: “Russell in the years from 1945 to 1949, authored some very long letters, and newspaper and journal articles, lamenting the day of the future when more than one country would have nuclear bombs, and applauding the fact that it had been the US and not some other country that had first acquired them, and concluding that it would be a great service to humanity if the US applied this monopoly to prevent any duopoly from emerging.”\textsuperscript{553}

Preventive war-thinking garnered even more support following the outbreak of the Korean War. Given the Soviet Union’s apparent complicity with the North Korean communists, several officials within and outside of the Truman Administration – and now containing what they deemed to be a “legitimate” pretext for which to justify a war with the Soviet Union – began considering an even more aggressive stance vis-à-vis Moscow. One of these mainstay advocates of preventive war against the Soviet Union included the aforementioned General Anderson, then commandant of the Air University at Montgomery, Alabama, who, on September 1, 1950, stipulated the reasons as to why confrontation was necessary:

> Since we’re at war, damn it, I don’t advocate preventive war, I advocate the shedding of illusions. I advocate saying to Stalin: ‘Joe, you’re not kidding anybody. You are saying you are going to destroy us.’ And if he says ‘yes’ – and he has been saying ‘yes’ all the time – we must conclude civilization demands that we act. Give me the order to do it and I can break up Russia’s five A-bomb nests in a week! When I went up to Christ I think I could explain to Him that I had saved civilization.\textsuperscript{554}

Significantly, in January 1952, President Harry Truman at least fleetingly considered confronting the Soviet Union with “an ultimatum with a ten day expiration limit informing Moscow that we [the US] intend to blockade the China coast from the Korean border to Indochina, and we intend to destroy every military base in Manchuria including submarine bases, by means now in our control and if there is further interference we shall eliminate any

\textsuperscript{552} Trachtenberg, “A Wasting Asset,” pp. 7-8.
\textsuperscript{554} Quoted in Buhite & Hamel, “War for Peace,” p. 378.
ports or cities necessary to accomplish our peaceful purposes... Moscow, St. Petersburg, Mukden, Vladivostok, Peking, Shanghai, Port Arthur, Dairen, Odessa, Stalingrad, and every manufacturing plant in China and the Soviet Union will be eliminated.”

Dwight D. Eisenhower

Under the Eisenhower Administration, it was evident that preventive war options were put on the table on at least two different occasions: firstly, as an additional option in Project Solarium; and secondly, after the Soviets tested their first thermonuclear bomb in August of 1953. The Project Solarium preventive option was summarily dismissed (and containment favoured) as Eisenhower saw prevention as too extreme given the nature of the perceived Soviet threat at the time. However, once the Soviets displayed their formidable and unexpected progress in thermonuclear weapons development one year ahead of US expectations, the President began to view the Soviet nuclear threat more acutely and became willing to at least consider the preventive option in addition to those already posited as part of Project Solarium. Indeed, the status quo after the Soviet thermonuclear test constituted the reference point in which Eisenhower gave serious consideration to launching preventive strikes against the Soviet Union. In a memorandum he sent to Secretary Dulles on September 8, 1953, he stated:

Among other things, we should describe the capabilities now and in the near future of the H-bomb, supplemented by the A-bomb. We should patiently point out that any group of people, such as the men in the Kremlin, who are aware of the great destructiveness of these weapons – and who still decline to make any honest effort toward international control by collective action – must be fairly assumed to be contemplating their aggressive use. It would follow that our own preparation could no longer be geared to a policy that attempts only to avert disaster during the early “surprise” stages of a war, and so gain time for full mobilization. Rather, we would have to be constantly ready, on an instantaneous basis, to inflict greater loss upon the enemy than he could reasonably hope to inflict upon us.

Additionally, Eisenhower posited further preventive war considerations when he admonished that, “...if the contest to maintain this relative position should have to continue indefinitely, the cost would either drive us to war – or into some form of dictatorial government. In such

556 Eisenhower Memorandum to Dulles, September 1953, DDE Diary, August-September 1953, Folder 2, DDE Diary, Box 3, Ann C. Whitman File - Eisenhower Presidential Papers, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library.
circumstances, we would be forced to consider whether or not our duty to future generations did not require us to initiate war at the most propitious moment that we could designate.”

Ultimately, Eisenhower was unwilling to accept the cost of employing the preventive option against the Soviet Union, as it potentially risked tens of thousands and maybe millions of deaths from a retaliatory strike. Prevention was also viewed by some decision makers as morally questionable; a violation of US founding principles and unlikely to produce a successful outcome – that being, the total demolition of the Soviet Union’s nuclear capabilities and its ability to threaten the US with complete destruction. From a position of gains in which no lives had yet been lost, Eisenhower judged the options according to which would prevent a massive loss of life and cautiously chose containment over the preventive option. On January 1955, Eisenhower formally put a halt to the preventive consideration and signed NSC-5501 – entitled “Basic National Security Policy.” He declared that:

The United States and its allies must reject the concept of preventive war or acts intended to provoke war. Hence, the United States should attempt to make clear, by word and conduct, that it is not our intention to provoke war. At the same time the United States and its major allies must make clear their determination to oppose aggression despite risk of general war, and the United States must make clear its determination to prevail if general war eventuates. 

The document argued that the notion of undertaking a preventive war had passed, and hence, signified the end of the 1945-54 “preventive war era.” Instead, Eisenhower’s national security strategy involved “deterring further Communist aggression and preventing the occurrence of total war” by using a “flexible combination of military, political, economic, propaganda, and covert actions which enables the full exercise of US initiative.” Taking the Soviet Union’s imminent nuclear parity into account, the national strategy noted that “Programs for the general strategy between now and the time when the USSR has greatly increased nuclear power should be developed as a matter of urgency.” Containment was thus instituted as a long-term solution to the emerging problem of impending Soviet nuclear parity. Eisenhower showed cautious restraint in dealing with Soviet nuclear proliferation and the threat it posed to the US. Later, in 1956, despite the capability of the US to launch a

557 Foreign Relations of the United States.
559 Basic National Security Policy. All quotations in this paragraph are from the 1955 BNSP, NSC 5501, January 7, 1955, FRUS, 1955-1957, Vol. XIX.
decisive strike against the Soviet Union, Eisenhower also took the cautious path and rejected the preventive option.

**Preventive Restrictions**

While the record clearly illustrates that the US enjoyed either a clear-cut nuclear monopoly or vast superiority during this time frame, it ultimately chose not to exploit this extraordinary advantage – despite the grave and gathering proliferation threat posed by its main adversary. Why was this the case? Why did neither Truman nor Eisenhower, despite their intense repugnance to the Soviet Union and the strong pressures upon them to act, ever authorise a preventive war against the rising power of the USSR? Or, as Quester queried, “Why exactly did the US not then use this monopoly to force some major political concessions on the Soviet Union, perhaps even to force on Moscow what was imposed on Tokyo and Berlin, a surrender and disarmament and democratization? Or why was the monopoly not at least used to perpetuate itself, to retain and maintain whatever advantages stemmed from our ability to bomb Leningrad or Moscow with no fear of nuclear retaliation against Washington or New York.”

Upon further investigation, it was evident the US refused to undertake a preventive path of action on the grounds of morality and practicality.

First, it was apparent that several powerful US government officials and military planners, including some preventive war advocates, believed that the very concept of preventive war was “out of step” with America’s political traditions and strategic culture. That is, preventive war was both “aggressive” and “dishonorable,” “the kind of thing inflicted on the American people, not initiated by them.” As Richard Smoke explained:

> It is worth recalling the option of preventive war, because more recently people have forgotten the moral significance of the fact that the US never considered it. America is the one nation in all of recorded history that for a few years probably had – to put it bluntly – the chance to rule the world. The nuclear monopoly would almost certainly have carried the US to victory in a war against the Soviet Union. Thereafter the US might have enforced pax Americana on the world indefinitely, either directly, or through a UN that America controlled. This possibility was never seriously entertained in Washington, and that fact has a permanent moral meaning. However uncomfortable Americans may have felt, and still feel, about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and more recently about the war in Vietnam, it will always be to their nation’s credit that the US possessed the one

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560 Quester, *Nuclear Monopoly*, p. 3.
561 Quoted in Ricks & Loeb, “Bush Developing Military Policy of Striking First,” A01.
opportunity in history to be master of the globe, and was not even seriously
tempted.\textsuperscript{562}

Indeed, in the history of the US, preventive war had long been equated with aggressive war. As posited by Scott Silverstone, “In normative or moral terms, one problem with preventive war is that throughout history it has been closely tied to the concept of ‘wars of aggression.’ Witness the cast of characters most frequently cited as engaging in preventive war: Louis XIV, Frederick the Great, Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, Hitler, Imperial Japan.”\textsuperscript{563} Further to this, as conveyed by Walter Slocombe, “… preventive war… is not only in violation of international law, but an unbounded invitation to use of force on mere suspicion of the ambitions or intent of another nation; it is indeed a negation of the very concept of international law.”\textsuperscript{564} Distinctly conscious of this traditionally negative and unlawful connotation, Army Chief of Staff Matthew Ridgway and several others regularly condemned preventive war as a viable means to impede the Soviet Union from proliferating nuclear weapons – as it was “wholly contrary to every principle upon which our Nation has been founded,” and “utterly abhorrent to the great mass of American people.”\textsuperscript{565} Furthermore, in the now infamous NSC-68, Eisenhower and his advisors maintained:

It goes without saying that the idea of ‘preventive’ war – in the sense of a military attack not provoked by a military attack upon us or our allies is generally unacceptable to Americans… [a] surprise attack upon the Soviet Union, despite the provocations of recent Soviet behavior, would be repugnant to many Americans. Although the American people would probably rally in support of the war effort the shock of responsibility for a surprise attack would be morally corrosive. Many would doubt that it was a ‘just war’ and that all reasonable possibilities for a peaceful settlement had been explored in good faith... The US therefore cannot engage in war except as a reaction to aggression of so clear and compelling a nature as to bring the overwhelming majority of our people to accept the use of military force.\textsuperscript{566}

Moreover, many during this period believed that it would be difficult for the US to undertake an aggressive war against the Soviet Union while maintaining its credibility as a benevolent state attempting to engender liberal democracy and notions of world peace. As articulated by

\begin{itemize}
  \item Silverstone, “Can Democracies Initiate Preventive War?” p. 8.
\end{itemize}
Ray Reuther, “America rejects the theory of preventive war as the answer to Soviet aggression. We could not live with ourselves nor stand before the world as defenders of human freedom... if we accepted the ‘moral responsibility’ for launching a war of aggression.”

Finally, and perhaps more significantly, both Truman and Eisenhower were concerned with the contravention of American values and ideals that a preventive war against the Soviet Union would signify. In 1954, for example, James Reston of the New York Times asked Eisenhower what he thought of preventive war. Eisenhower replied: “A preventive war, to my mind, is impossibility... I don’t believe there is such a thing, and frankly I wouldn’t even listen to anyone seriously that came in and talked about such a thing.”

Truman was especially clear that preventive war was contrary to American principles and could not be perceived as a policy option in an action sense. On varying occasions, Truman renounced preventive war thinking, having declared: “We do not believe in aggression or preventive war. Such a war is the weapon of dictators, not of free democratic countries like the US” and “Starting a nuclear war is totally unthinkable for rational men,” and finally, “There is nothing more foolish than to think that war can be stopped by war. You don’t ‘prevent’ anything but peace.”

Aside from the moral considerations presented in opposition to preventive war, many US observers at the time were also concerned about the logistic and strategic practicality of such an action. Indeed, there were a plethora of such “practical” variables from 1945-54; three that specifically appeared to be the most defining: a lack of US bombs and bombers; the prospect of Soviet retaliation against Western Europe; and the enormous costs of post-war occupation/reconstruction. In the first instance, the US quite simply did not possess a sufficient amount of nuclear bombs and bombers with which to execute a major preventive campaign against the USSR as envisaged by military war planners. As explained by Quester:

While the world was led to believe that the US had a sizable stockpile of nuclear weapons...one of the best kept secrets of the post-war years was that the total of nuclear weapons in the US arsenal was indeed quite small... By some accounts, moreover, even the few bombs for which components had been assembled... were no longer functional or usable. The actual totals of nuclear weapons possessed by the US, counting components as if they were assembled into bombs, rather than badly maintained, is something like the following: perhaps

three or four at the end of 1945, and nine by the middle of 1946, and perhaps thirteen by the middle of 1947... by the middle of 1948 the total had climbed to perhaps fifty.\textsuperscript{570}

While an intensive bomb building campaign resulted in a stockpile of approximately 250 nuclear bombs by the end of 1949, the USSR had already developed its own nuclear bomb by that time. Aside from this, the burgeoning US military complex demanded more bombs than those that existed in the US arsenal during the early 1950s. David Allan Rosenberg posited that, “[during] the vaunted era of American nuclear monopoly, the nation’s stockpile and delivery capability were extremely limited. There were very few weapons available and none of these weapons was assembled... when nuclear war planning began in earnest, this focus was diluted reflecting scarce resources, poor intelligence, and operational difficulties.”\textsuperscript{571}

Moreover, even if the US had been in possession of a sufficient amount of nuclear bombs – as a means to meet its preventive war plan objectives – it still would have been palpably limited in executing an attack by virtue of the fact that it lacked a satisfactory delivery capability. From 1946-1947 the US possessed only twenty-seven modified B-29 bombers suitable for delivering the enormous nuclear bombs (each weighed over 10,000 pounds and had to be delivered one at time); in 1948 it had only thirty-two; and through 1949 that number continued to hover around thirty, not nearly enough to ensure a successful delivery capability.\textsuperscript{572} Further to this limitation, compared to modern bombers, the B-29 had a relatively short range of only fifteen to seventeen hundred miles depending on the payload. If deployed from the US American pilots would be forced to undertake costly and inefficient one-way suicide missions. Finally, until the technology and operational capacity improved in 1950, it took approximately 39 men close to a week to assemble the bombs, prepare the modified planes and move them to the appropriate bases for an attack.\textsuperscript{573} In short, from 1945-54 the nuclear wherewithal of the US, in terms of having both the quality and quantity of bombs and bombers, was far too inadequate and unreliable in which to undertake a preventive war on a level that would be necessary to efficiently nullify the Soviet threat.

In addition, while there was no distinct concern in relation to a nuclear retaliation against American cities from 1945-54, there was a legitimate fear of Soviet conventional retaliation

\textsuperscript{570} Quester, \textit{Nuclear Monopoly}, pp. 57-58.
\textsuperscript{573} \textit{Ibid.}
against Western Europe. As posited earlier, it was widely perceived that the only reason that the USSR had not yet advanced to occupy and/or devastate all of Western Europe was based on US nuclear deterrence. Indeed, “if we see American nuclear weapons and extended nuclear deterrence as the crucial barrier to Soviet conventional attack one might thus in reverse see the Soviet conventional grip on Western Europe as a necessary and sufficient counter to the American nuclear grip on Soviet cities.”

Therefore, a defining concern for high-level US government officials and military planners from 1945-54 was the Soviet Union’s ability to retaliate against Western Europe. According to Buhite and Hamel: “Nothing could prevent the Soviet Union, with its overwhelming superiority in conventional forces in place in Eastern Europe, from occupying Western Europe. Short of using nuclear bombs – an obvious impossibility – nothing the US could do would then dislodge them. Moreover, any nuclear attack on the Soviet Union would result in a stalemate – the US could devastate a large portion of the Soviet Union, but the Soviets could hold on to the western section of the continent indefinitely.”

As elaborated by Quester: “A more certain explanation of the American failure to... initiate a preventive war must therefore go back to the limitations on the potency of the American nuclear stockpile; it was not widely expected that the Russians would surrender even if their cities were regularly being hit by nuclear weapons, as long as they could install themselves in the cities in Western Europe.”

Finally, it was evident that the US was “self-deterred” from undertaking a large-scale preventive war against the Soviet Union because of the significant, indeed, unmanageable costs it would incur while attempting to occupy and/or reconstruct the largest state in the world. In November 1947, Air Force General Hoyt Vanderberg admonished, “...in a war with the Soviet Union is our purpose to destroy the Russian people, industry, the Communist party, the Communist hierarchy, or a combination of these?... Will there be a requirement to occupy, possibly reconstruct, Russia after victory, or can we seal off the country letting it work out its own salvation?” Years later, Eisenhower exhibited the same concern, stating: “What do you do with the world after you have won victory in such a catastrophic nuclear war? The colossal job of occupying the territories of the defeated enemy would be far beyond the resources of the US at the end of such a war... the only thing worse than losing a

574 Quester, *Nuclear Monopoly*, p. 77.
global war was winning one.” In essence, even if a general preventive war could be won in any meaningful sense, the logistical issues that the US would encounter in the post-war period were both overwhelming and, quite obviously, prohibitive.

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Preventive Considerations

By the time President John F. Kennedy took office in early 1961, a second major strategic competitor emerged to alter the nuclear balance – China. While having some similarities to the USSR, the case of Chinese proliferation from 1960-63 was extensively distinct from that of the USSR during the period of 1945-54. The USSR epitomised a proliferation threat. It was unequivocally an antagonistic and expansionist state with both the will and the means to challenge the US in strategically significant regions throughout the world. China on the other hand, although clearly hostile towards the US and a formidable regional power, was never considered a threat to the very survival of the US or a legitimate contender for global dominance. As argued by Robert H. Johnson, a high-ranking US State Department Policy Planning Council East Asian specialist in the 1960s:

We do not believe that the explosion of a first device, or even the acquisition of a limited nuclear weapons capability, would produce major changes in Communist China’s foreign policy in the sense that the Chinese would adopt a general policy of open military aggression, or ever become willing to take significantly greater military risks. China’s leaders will recognize that their limited capabilities had not altered the real power balance among the major states and could not do so for the foreseeable future. In particular, they would recognize that they remained unable either to remove or neutralize the US presence in Asia... so long as the ChiComs only have soft, vulnerable delivery means, they will have to take account of the danger of a US nuclear or non-nuclear counterforce attack as a possible response to major ChiCom aggression. This could increase ChiCom caution.  

Roger Hilsman, director of the State Department’s Intelligence Bureau, also subscribed to Johnson’s view when commenting in public in 1962 that as “dramatic” as the prospect of China’s exploding a nuclear device may have been, “it [would] not change the balance of power in Asia, much less throughout the world.” Moreover, in late July 1963, a CIA report on China’s anticipated response to the Limited Test Ban Treaty further discounted the possibility of Chinese aggressiveness, stating that the Chinese “over the past few years, in spite of their warlike oratory, have followed a generally cautious policy... The Chinese have thus far shown marked respect for US power, and we do not expect them to change this basic

In essence it was apparent that several US government officials and military planners from 1960-63 believed that the unique variables surrounding China’s nuclear proliferation program – specifically, its historically cautious military policies and weak strategic position vis-à-vis the US – would make its nuclear movements more of a “tolerable inconvenience” than an ominous threat. Many in Washington were therefore unmoved by China’s attainment of nuclear weapons and their capacity to effectively challenge the US military.

Of course, not all observers during this period embodied this optimistic assessment. According to Nacht, many “US policy-makers saw Communist China as, other than the Soviet Union, the most powerful threat to American security interests, especially in Asia but in other regions of the developing world as well. The decade of the 1950s included the Sino-American armed conflict in Korea and several major crises over Taiwan and the neighboring offshore islands... The Sino-American relationship, prior to Chinese nuclear weapons acquisition, was wholly adversarial, and those Americans who thought it should be otherwise either had no influence or were summarily discredited if they voiced their views too loudly.”

Indeed, the acrimony that had characterised the Sino-American relationship during the previous ten years, in which China and the US had recently concluded a bitter war on the Korean Peninsula, almost came close to another conflict over the status of the Taiwanese-held offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. This encompassed extensive exchanges of bellicose rhetoric in which many US government officials and military planners, not least of which included President Kennedy, were inclined to view Communist China through a decidedly suspicious and guarded lens. According to William Burr and Jeffrey T. Richelson, “implicit to Kennedy’s view, shared by area specialists at the CIA and State Department that the position of the Soviet leadership on peaceful coexistence and the dangers of nuclear escalation was substantially more responsible and less dangerous than Beijing’s.”

For example, in a classified report entitled, “China as a Nuclear Power,” a group of high-ranking US State Department policy planners portentously concluded that:

As China goes down the road of becoming a nuclear power she will do her utmost to exploit her new weapons to achieve her goals. These goals are perfectly evident. China is determined to gain status, as a world power,
primarily by reducing US power and influences in Asia and the Western Pacific. The Chinese Communists seem determined to eject the US from Asia. We can be sure that they will be seeking ways to exploit their nuclear weapons to this end. China is determined to seize the leadership of the Communist movement. This is to be done by... proving by example that China is the only militant and reliable source of aid to revolutionaries seeking to overthrow the existing order by force... Hopes that nuclear weapons will bring greater caution to the Chinese are made to appear rather forlorn by the Chinese criticism of the Soviets for having been too timid in the use of their nuclear deterrent to aid the spread of Communism.\footnote{584}

More significantly, it was apparent that Kennedy himself viewed China as an aggressive state with an expansive agenda. According to Robert Garson, Kennedy at various intervals had described China as being “intrinsically hostile to the US,” a “dangerously radical nation that preached and encouraged world revolution that would take any opportunity to eliminate American influence from Asia.”\footnote{585} Moreover, as reported by Burr and Richelson, “Kennedy was hostile to Mao’s regime and found the prospect of a nuclear China disquieting. The President... saw a Chinese nuclear test as likely to be historically the most significant and worst event of the 1960s.”\footnote{586} Furthermore, Kennedy’s closest advisers regularly overheard him bemoaning China as “the great menace in the future to humanity, the free world, and freedom on earth,” who was “prepared to sacrifice hundreds of millions of [Chinese] lives to carry out Mao’s aggressive and militant policies” and was likely to become Washington’s “major antagonist of the late 60s and beyond.”\footnote{587} Defining Kennedy’s stern position on the Chinese nuclear program was “the perception of Mao’s China as fundamentally more dangerous and irresponsible than the Soviet Union (with which the terms of ‘peaceful coexistence,’ as Khrushchev put it, could be negotiated).”\footnote{588} As stated by Alice Langley Hsieh, even the Soviet Union – at this stage China’s communist ally and exemplar – had intimated that the real reason the Chinese vied to develop its own nuclear capacity independent of Moscow was to “pursue special aims and interests which could not be supported by the military forces of the socialist camp... her basic foreign policy objectives [included] the incorporation of Taiwan into Peking’s domain, the achievement of hegemony in the Far East, and the removal of US power and influence from the area – the Chinese had little alternative but to seek to rely on their own military potential and to develop their own

\footnote{584} Department of State Policy Planning Council, “China as a Nuclear Power: Some Thoughts Prior to the Chinese Test,” College Park, US National Archives and Records Administration, October 7, 1964, p. 34.
\footnote{586} Burr & Richelson, “Whether to ‘Strangle the Baby in the Cradle,’” p. 61.
\footnote{587} Chang, “JFK, China and the Bomb,” p. 1293; Burr & Richelson, “Whether to ‘Strangle the Baby in the Cradle,’” p. 67.
nuclear weapons, in order to make gains where Soviet military support or assistance could not be expected, or where Soviet aid would be subject to conditions and controls imposed by Moscow.\textsuperscript{589}

It was of course difficult to fully know the underlying motivations or potential consequences of the Chinese desire for nuclear weapons from 1960-63. Nonetheless, it was quite apparent that any such development, whether intended for “peaceful” or aggressive purposes, was widely perceived in the US to be a potential threat to national and international security. In the first instance, once China had nuclear weapons there was always the real prospect that it may use them against the US. While China had no intercontinental ballistic missiles at the time, it did have a comparatively sizeable fleet of military aircraft that could reach all parts of Asia, including US military installations and allied structures in Japan, Taiwan and South Korea. Moreover, as one writer from the \textit{National Review} warned in 1965, “even today a ship can carry a Chinese bomb into the harbors of New Orleans, San Francisco, New York, or London.”\textsuperscript{590} In fact, the US navy even suggested that “the Chinese might consider initiating a ‘catalytic war’... attacking the US with submarine-launched missiles in such a way as to make the US believe the attacker was the Soviet Union and respond accordingly.”\textsuperscript{591} This rather extreme scenario in itself may have engendered a sufficiently strong justification for acting against China’s nuclear weapons program. However, based on the empirical record, it is evident that it was not, as a matter of policy, Washington’s primary concern. For the US, the potential for continuous negative political-psychological effects (particularly in the context of the Cold War), together with an increase in China’s involvement in low-level border wars, as well as an expected “chain reaction” of nuclear proliferation in Asia, proved even more distressing (and realistic) than the prospect of an overt Chinese nuclear attack.

According to some US officials, Chinese nuclear proliferation had the potential to engender politically significant “psychological effects” on both allies and enemies throughout the region and around the world. As Johnson observed in early 1964, “the ChiComs will value their nuclear capability for... its psychological effects in weakening the will of countries resisting insurgency, inhibiting their requests for US assistance, and in stimulating and exploiting divisions within Asia and between Asian countries and the West. It will be used to

\textsuperscript{590} Quoted in Chang, “JFK, China and the Bomb,” p. 1287.
\textsuperscript{591} Burr & Richelson, “Whether to ‘Strangle the Baby in the Cradle,’” p. 95.
put political pressure on the US military presence and to obtain support for Chinese acknowledgement of claims to pre-eminence in Asia and status as a world power.”

Hence, if the Chinese were allowed to attain nuclear weapons, “a heightened sense of China’s power would create a bandwagon effect with greater political pressures on states in the region to accommodate Beijing and loosen its ties with Washington... a nuclear China could only weaken Washington’s influence in the region and its capabilities to intervene on behalf of its allies there.” In short, the political and psychological effects following the detonation of a Chinese nuclear weapons was expected to raise China’s “stock” or prestige while at the same time undermining the US presence in Asia.

A second and related concern pertained to the possibility of how a dramatic increase in international power and prestige may encourage China to use its new capability as a type of “political weapon... to earn respect, to promote [and] encourage revolutionaries.” Given its storied history of actively supporting communist Marxist and Maoist revolutionary movements along its borders, the US certainly had legitimate reason to believe that an emboldened nuclear China would “feel very much stronger and this mood would doubtless be reflected in their approach to conflicts on their periphery.” While Johnson and other policy-makers believed it to be unlikely that China would risk a general war on the continent for such revolutions, they did believe that Beijing would come to doubt America’s willingness to intervene on the Asian mainland. As a result, China’s policies were expected to grow more assertive. This could very easily translate into increased Chinese “political pressures and the indirect support of local ‘wars of liberation,’” as well as a more direct play towards hegemony on the Asian continent.

Third and finally, many US government officials and military planners at the time were concerned that the acquisition of nuclear weapons by China would foster an unwelcome “chain reaction” of nuclear proliferation in the greater Asia region and beyond. As stated by Johnson, “...the possibility of development of additional national nuclear capabilities has been one of the central concerns of our interdepartmental Chinese nuclear exercise because of the general possibility that Asian nations might be tempted in this direction and because of

592 Department of State, “Memorandum for the President,” p. 2.
593 Burr & Richelson, “Whether to ‘Strangle the Baby in the Cradle,’” p. 61.
594 Ibid., p. 77.
595 Ibid., p. 11.
596 Ibid., p. 11.
the more specific evidence that India was at least developing the option for such a capability.‖

Furthermore, as indicated by Burr and Richelson, “...in early 1961, CIA analysts mused that when China or Israel went nuclear, ‘other nations might enter the field if only to counter the power and prestige which their rivals or their enemies might gain... Intelligence reports from the capitals of two key countries, Japan and India, suggested that heads of state there were considering the possibility of developing national nuclear weapons programs...’”

It was envisaged that if this scenario was to take place, a major level of “global instability would result,” in which “even a small increase in the number of nations possessing nuclear weapons will add to the dangers inherent to critical situations when they arise... an increase in the number of states with nuclear-threat capabilities would increase the chances for irrational and desperate action...”

Although there is substantially less corporeal information pertaining to the prevalence of preventive war thinking in the US from 1960-63 than from 1945-54, a number of recently declassified government documents signify that the logic of preventive war had in fact infiltrated some of the most influential offices of the US government – including that of the President. In February 1963, the Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara drafted a secret memorandum for Kennedy on the prospects and implications of the “diffusion of nuclear weapons,” concluding that their spread was “clearly not in the interest of the US” and “in some cases... would probably have to [be met] with stronger incentives and sanctions than has seriously been considered so far,” encompassing both economic and military “penalties.” Furthermore, in July 1963, Secretary of State Dean Rusk reportedly informed the US ambassador to West Germany that robust coercion would be undertaken against Beijing “not to go down the nuclear path,” and if China persisted, “other action might have to be taken to prevent this.” In a meeting with Taiwan’s powerful “security czar” in October 1963, National Security Assistant McGeorge Bundy made clear that the US was “very interested in whether something could be planned... that could have a delaying and preventive effect on the nuclear growth of China.”

599 Ibid., p. 62.
600 Quoted in Chang, “JFK, China and the Bomb,” p. 1301.
602 Quoted in Burr & Richelson, “Whether to ‘Strangle the Baby in the Cradle,’” p. 73.
McGeorge Bundy

When Gordon Chang revealed in 1988 that President Kennedy had seriously considered using preventive military force to destroy China’s nuclear installations, McGeorge Bundy denied that such action had ever been considered. He wrote, “...there had been talk in Washington about the possibility of pre-emptive action against the Chinese bomb – talk, not serious planning or real intent...”603 However, Bundy’s denial directly contradicts the paper trail of documents declassified in 1997 which portray him as “the point man in countering the Chinese nuclear effort, passing Kennedy’s instructions to the CIA, holding secret discussions with Nationalist Chinese officials and seeking to enlist Soviet diplomats in joint efforts against China’s nuclear program.”604 Indeed, it appears that Bundy was more in favour of preventive attacks on Chinese nuclear sites than Johnson’s other senior advisors. His willingness to seriously consider preventive force began during the Kennedy Administration from the period when China’s nuclear program was discovered. Bundy continued to hold this position despite the opposing views of colleagues and key subordinates in the subsequent Johnson Administration. Motivating Bundy’s proclivity for preventive military action was his belief that a nuclear China presented a grave threat to United States national security. He believed that while the Soviet Union under Khrushchev was a cautious nuclear power, China under Mao was volatile:

...Mao regularly insisted that nuclear war would bring the end of imperialism and the final victory of socialism, while Khrushchev argued that the right way to victory was by the peaceful proof that socialism was better.605

Indeed, throughout 1963 and the beginning of 1964, Bundy continued to favour some type of preventive military action despite contrary opinions from his colleagues. Following an informal Planning Group lunch on November 5, 1963 at which Communist China’s nuclear developments and US possible responses were posited, NSC staffer Robert Komer reported to Bundy that “[while] there was much discussion on how to ‘strangle the baby in the cradle’ before the Chinese developed a capability... the essential conclusion is that the ChiCom acquisition of a semi-nuclear capability will not have much more than a marginally significant impact and can probably be coped with by some marginal stepping up of existing

604 Quoted in Burr & Richelson, “Whether to ‘Strangle the Baby in the Cradle,’” p. 55.
605 Bundy, Danger and Survival, p. 530.
However, in spite of Komer’s virtual dismissal of preventive action, Bundy wanted to see more work and planning done in the “preventive action field.” In response to another memo from Komer on February 26, 1964, in which he wrote, “WWR [Walt Rostow] is also poking around in the preventive action field. Do we want this?” Bundy wrote in the margin, “I’m for it.” In short, Bundy appeared to be willing to take on the “option.”

John F. Kennedy

As indicated in the above, it was evident that Kennedy himself had taken a considerable interest in the notion of using preventive military action as a means to “strangle the baby in the cradle” and impede China’s expanding nuclear weapon program. Indeed, since his untimely assassination on November 22, 1963, a wide range of previously classified and significant information regarding Kennedy’s thinking on China and preventive war has been released. As Burr and Richelson stated, “Less than a year after President John F. Kennedy’s assassination, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Director William Foster told a historian that Kennedy had been rivalling to ‘consider politically dangerous moves... to coerce the People’s Republic of China into complying with the 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty.’ Foster, whose comments remained classified until 1994, asserted that Kennedy was willing to ... secure Soviet cooperation ‘in taking action, if necessary physically, against China.’ Moreover, Foster told his interviewer that the President would ‘think out loud’ saying ‘You know, it wouldn’t be too hard if we could somehow get kind of an anonymous airplane to go over there, take out the Chinese facilities... they’ve only got a couple... and maybe we could do it, or maybe the Soviet Union could do it, rather than face the threat of a China with nuclear weapons.’ Kennedy also articulated his concerns in a conversation with Director of Central Intelligence, John McCone, in which he stated that “[a nuclear China] would so upset the world political scene [that] it would be intolerable.” According to Bundy, Kennedy felt that “we should be prepared to take some form of action unless they [China] agreed to desist from further efforts in this field.” Specifically, at the January 22, 1963 National Security Meeting, Kennedy said that the Chinese would be “our major

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607 “Memorandum From Robert W. Komer of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy),” February 26, 1964, FRUS, 1964-1968, Vol. 30, Lyndon B. Johnson Library, pp. 23-24; a marginal note in Bundy’s handwriting connected to Komer’s question read, “I’m for it.”
608 Burr & Richelson, “Whether to ‘Strangle the Baby in the Cradle,’” p. 54.
609 Quoted in Burr & Richelson, “Whether to ‘Strangle the Baby in the Cradle,’” p. 67.
antagonists of the late 1960s and beyond,” such that the US’ main purpose in treaty negotiations with the Soviet Union should be to “halt or delay the development of an atomic capability by the Chinese Communists.”\(^6\)\(^1\) China’s nuclear efforts had so concerned Kennedy that since June of 1961, he had been considering approaching the USSR in hopes of exploiting the widening Sino-Soviet split and persuading Khrushchev to work with the US in countering or delaying China’s nuclear program.\(^6\)\(^2\)

It was the possibility of joint action by the US and the Soviet Union, combined with his concerns about the political implications and consequences of a nuclear China, that spurred Kennedy to seriously consider the use of preventive military force to stop China from obtaining nuclear weapons. In February of 1963, Paul Nitze, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to conduct a study on using “persuasion, pressure, or coercion” to persuade China to sign a test ban treaty. Influenced by the thinking of Ambassador-at-Large Averell Harriman, Kennedy felt a US and Soviet Union agreement to stop nuclear development in China would create enormous pressure on China to give up their nuclear program or at least provide justification for a military strike by the US – but blessed by the Soviet Union.\(^6\)\(^3\) However, while the report submitted to Nitze by the JCS in April of 1963 included a myriad of indirect measures involving propaganda campaigns and diplomatic schemes, as well as direct coercive measures including both multilateral and unilateral military options, the Acting Chairman General Curtis LeMay ultimately concluded that because there was no guarantee that China would actually adhere to a nuclear test ban treaty, it was “unrealistic to use military force” to try to achieve that goal. However, the report also stated that Soviet cooperation, in the event the US decided to conduct air strikes against Chinese nuclear facilities, could “well be the difference between escalation and quick acquiescence by the ChiComs.”\(^6\)\(^4\)

In July 1963, Kennedy sent a secret cable to Assistant Secretary of State, Benjamin H. Read, the US official responsible for communications with the Soviet Union. It related to what he referred to was the largest Chinese nuclear development and clearly affirmed his preventive


\(^6\)\(^3\) Burr & Richelson, “Whether to ‘Strangle the Baby in the Cradle,’” p. 68.

war inclinations vis-à-vis the Chinese. As articulated by Kennedy, “I remain convinced that the Chinese problem is more serious than Khrushchev’s comments in the first meeting suggest, and believe you should press question in private meeting with him. I agree that large stockpiles are characteristics of US and USSR only, but consider that relatively small forces in hands of people like ChiComs could be very dangerous to us all... You should try to elicit Khrushchev’s view of means of limiting and preventing Chinese nuclear development and his willingness either to take Soviet action or to accept US action armed in this direction.” While Kennedy did not clearly specify the type of “action” he had in mind, it was apparent that he was advocating something more than mere diplomatic or political strategies. Moreover, at a meeting of the National Security Council on 22 January, 1963, Kennedy explained that “our primary purpose in the ongoing Nuclear Test Ban Treaty negotiations with the Soviet Union is to halt or delay the development of an atomic capability by the Chinese Communists.” Finally, in response to a question on how a nuclear test ban treaty would thwart China and other states from acquiring nuclear weapons, Kennedy argued that “the ban” should stipulate that signatories would “use all the influence that they had in their possession to persuade others not to grasp the nuclear nettle.” Further to this, Kennedy added, “quite obviously,” countries pursuing nuclear weapons “may not accept this persuasion and the, as I say, they will get the false security which goes with nuclear diffusion.” While such words are hardly conclusive, they do signify that Kennedy was at least attuned to the consideration of waging preventive war against China.

Despite the general advantages in taking such an approach – the elimination of the Chinese nuclear capability would “eliminate the need for US consideration, in responding to Communist aggression or even the marginal possibility of ChiCom use of nuclear weapons... deprive the ChiComs of the political psychological and military-defense advantages of a nuclear capability... [and] greatly reduce the incentive and justification for Indian development of nuclear weapons and the possible subsequent movement of Japan [and Taiwan] in the same direction... thus eliminat[ing] an important source of a possible chain reaction leading to further nuclear proliferation – the preventive war option was, quite obviously, never made a reality.” Shortly after Kennedy’s assassination, newly appointed President Lyndon B. Johnson, who was said to be “rhetorically more cautious about China”

615 Chang, Friends and Enemies, p. 1300.
616 Burr & Richelson, “Whether to ‘Strangle the Baby in the Cradle,’” p. 67.
617 Chang, Friends and Enemies, p. 1297.
and “wholly averse to confrontation with China,” quickly and quietly decided to put aside the preventive war option, and instead, put in place a more cautious, less intrusive means of counter-proliferation, including trade and export controls, assertive military containment and continued intelligence monitoring. However, on October 16, 1964, China detonated its first nuclear weapon, and thus, ended the 1960-63 preventive war era. Johnson described his perspective on the Chinese nuclear test in his memoir, seven years after his cautious decision to try again with the Soviets:

Peking’s accomplishment came as no great surprise because we had been expecting it for some time. Nonetheless, the fact that a large country with a hostile government had mastered the technology of nuclear explosives was necessarily a source of worry. I was not concerned for the immediate future. A long and expensive road separated setting off a nuclear blast and developing the powerful and accurate missiles to carry nuclear weapons across seas and continents. But what of my successor? Or his successor? Some future President would have to face the question of how to deal with this situation. The problem was not just a matter of China. It was a question of how to deal with a great many nations, of all sizes and levels of political stability, equipped with nuclear weapons. All I could do was to move as fast and as far as possible during my Presidency to slow the arms race, to achieve international agreements on their control, and to prevent the continuing proliferation of weapons that could mean an end to civilization as we knew it.

In the months that followed, Johnson Administration officials continued to evaluate the use of force, however, officials at the top no longer viewed such a strategy as being viable unless Beijing first launched a major aggressive act against its neighbours. Johnson and his advisers “would monitor China’s nuclear progress closely and search for ways to delay it through trade controls, but it was clear that the President had tacitly decided to live with the Chinese bomb.”

Preventive Restrictions
The 1960-63 period was the second time in ten years that the US had an extraordinary opportunity to preclude a major strategic competitor from acquiring nuclear weapons via preventive action – but refrained from doing so. As indicated in the case of the Soviet Union, when faced with a similar situation, both Truman and Eisenhower were apt to forgo a preventive course of action on the basis of both moral and practical considerations. In the

621 Burr & Richelson, “Whether to ‘Strangle the Baby in the Cradle,’” p. 56.
case of China, however, it appears that only latter restraint proved politically influential. Indeed, very little evidence exists to support an argument that the Kennedy Administration was dissuaded from taking preventive action against China on account of morality. This is not to say that the Kennedy Administration completely eschewed international norms or American traditions regarding the use of force – after all, during the Cuban missile crisis President Kennedy and his brother, US Attorney General Robert Kennedy, ultimately condemned a surprise US air strike against Soviet missile sites under construction in Cuba because they believed it was morally repugnant. At one point in the famous “Excom” debates, Robert Kennedy passed a note to President Kennedy which read, “I know now how Tojo felt when he was planning Pearl Harbor” and “[attacking Cuba] would be a Pearl Harbor in reverse, and it would blacken the name of the US in the pages of history” as a great power who attacked a small neighbor. However, regardless of this, the fact remains that neither legal nor moral questions were explicitly addressed in any of the available government documents concerning preventive action in China.622

Nevertheless, Kennedy’s political advisers did frequently express concerns pertaining to the potential for “heavy foreign policy costs,” “adverse international political reactions,” and “difficult international opinion” that were expected to accompany an unprovoked US preventive attack on China. As Burr and Richelson indicated, the Kennedy Administration well understood that “an unprovoked US attack could entail heavy foreign policy costs,” “was dangerous and likely to fail and... could hurt the US image and weaken its prestige.”623 Moreover, Johnson concluded that any US action “with no justification than a general argument that the US was seeking to preserve the peace of the world through depriving a potential aggressor of nuclear weapons would be subject to [adverse international political reactions].”624 Finally, acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Curtis LeMay, concluded that “it was unrealistic to use overt military force against China because... if the US took unilateral action, whether initiating a blockade or military action, policy-makers had to consider the strong prospects for retaliation and escalation, not to mention the difficulty of justifying such an action to international opinion.”625 While such statements hardly prove that the Kennedy Administration had a strong moral aversion to preventive war, they may

623 Burr & Richelson, “Whether to ‘Strangle the Baby in the Cradle,’” p. 82.
625 Burr & Richelson, “Whether to ‘Strangle the Baby in the Cradle,’” p. 69.
imply that there was, at least on some level, a general concern for the “rightness” or “wrongness” of such action.

Whereas morality seemed to play a very small role in restraining the Kennedy Administration from taking preventive action against the Chinese nuclear program, the practicality (or impracticality) involved in such an attack was ever present. Indeed, as posited by Robert H. Johnson in one of his many studies on the Chinese Communist nuclear capability and some “unorthodox” approaches to the issues of nuclear proliferation: “It is evident... that the significance of a ChiCom nuclear capability is not such as to justify the undertaking of actions which would involve great political costs or high military risks.”626 In particular, many observers believed that the chances of operational failure (a la the “Bay of Pigs” fiasco) and Chinese retaliation were far too great. First, it was evident that the intelligence “portfolio” on China from 1960-63 was inadequate. According to Burr and Richelson, the “US intelligence collection capabilities, particularly with respect to China were limited. Satellite imagery of China became available only in August 1960, and at first on an intermittent basis. Meanwhile, the location deep in China’s interior of critical nuclear facilities... made it difficult to cover such targets with U-2 spy planes...with all the gaps in intelligence about the PRC’s nuclear program, Washington may not have identified all relevant targets.”627 Moreover, Johnson concluded: “There is considerable uncertainty regarding the location of critical facilities... we have no certainty, even now, that we have identified all nuclear production facilities.”628 Clearly, this was a major impediment for the Kennedy Administration and the preventive war option, for without accurate intelligence, it would have been near impossible for the US to “have full assurance that its action [would] eliminate the ChiCom capability.”629 Not eliminating the Chinese nuclear program would, of course, have undermined the very purpose of launching a preventive attack in the first place.

The second and perhaps more important restraint upon the US was the strong possibility of Chinese retaliation against Taiwan or US bases in East Asia. Indeed, there was a clear apprehension among US leaders at the time that Beijing or Moscow would misconstrue a “limited war action” on select Chinese nuclear installations as the beginning of a major attack

627 Burr & Richelson, “Whether to ‘Strangle the Baby in the Cradle,’” p. 59.
629 Ibid.
on the Chinese mainland, and such developments could engender a massive communist retaliation against allied positions by China, the Soviet Union, or both. As explained by Johnson: “The possibility of military retaliation by Communist China or the USSR is very difficult to estimate because it would depend in some significant measure upon the particular circumstances in which the US action was taken. However, some kind of ChiCom retaliation (e.g. an attack on the bases in Taiwan or elsewhere from which the US attack was launched) cannot be ruled out... In general, action against Communist Chinese facilities... is highly dangerous, involving grave risk of precipitating war (or escalation of existing conflict) in Asia and even bringing the Soviets to the support of the Chinese.”

In essence, it appears that the Kennedy Administration – like the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations before it – was deterred from waging a preventive war against China based on perceived practical concerns pertaining to the uncertainty of targets, as well as the potential physical costs and/or risks of retaliation. Shortly after the Chinese Communists detonated their first nuclear device, Kennedy’s successor, President Lyndon Johnson, directly addressed this development in a speech to the American people. The President made a point of assuring US allies that Washington was carefully monitoring the nuclear situation in China, making it clear that the US had expected the nuclear test, could specify where and when it had occurred, and emphasised that it would not lead to immediate dangers of war:

As Secretary Rusk noted on September 29, we have known for some time that the Chinese Communists had a nuclear development program which was approaching the point of a first detonation of a test device... The explosion came as no surprise to the US Government. It has been fully taken into account in planning our own defense program and nuclear capability. Its military significance should not be overestimated. Many years and great efforts separate testing of a first nuclear device from having a stockpile of reliable weapons with effective delivery systems. Still more basic is the fact that if and when the Chinese Communists develop nuclear weapons systems, free world nuclear strength will continue to be enormously greater.

Three days later, the Chinese Government issued a statement, setting forth in detail China’s position on the question of nuclear weapons: “China’s mastering of nuclear weapons is entirely for defense and for protecting the Chinese people from the US nuclear threat.”

The Chinese government also announced it would never be the first to use nuclear weapons

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and stated their position against all nuclear weapons. The Chinese immediately began acting like a cautious nuclear power, validating CIA and State Department political analysis. However, examination of debris picked up by US Air Weather Service aircraft revealed that the bomb exploded by the Chinese had in fact contained U-235, proving wrong the CIA’s conclusion that the first Chinese bomb would be fuelled by plutonium. This discovery indicated to US officials that China was likely to become a full nuclear power sooner than originally had been expected.\textsuperscript{633}

The combination of Johnson’s reassuring announcement just hours after the test, and previous leaks and announcements about the approaching Chinese explosion, proved to be effective in downplaying the significance of the event and keeping allies calm – with the notable exception of Taiwan. Not surprisingly, the Chinese test ended Chiang-Kai-shek’s hopes for returning to power on the mainland.

\textsuperscript{633} Burr & Richelson, “Whether to ‘Strangle the Baby in the Cradle,’” p. 91.
c. Preventive War and North Korea – 1993-94

Preventive Considerations
The third and final case in which preventive options were extensively considered, related to the state of North Korea in 1993-94. Once again, the US was confronted with a “strange, secretive, dangerous, and deeply troubled small country” actively working to acquire a nuclear capability.\(^\text{634}\) Often known as the “hermit kingdom,” North Korea was, in short, viewed by many US policy-makers as an extremely volatile and highly militarised old-fashioned communist state dominated by a ruthless dictator committed to reunification of the Korean peninsula. As contended by Michael O’Hanlon and Mike Mochizuki, “North Korea’s official name, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, could not be more misleading. It is as badly out of place in today’s world as Castro’s Cuba but a far worse place to live and much more threatening to the international community... [North Korea] is a major military threat to South Korea ... a country it has invaded once, in 1950, as well as American forces in the ROK, Japan’s nearby population centers, and the region as a whole with the possibility of a second unprovoked war, including massive artillery and missile attacks.”\(^\text{635}\) Indeed, North Korea at the time had the second largest military in Asia (behind China) including one million troops out of a population of only 22 million. In per capita terms, this represented the highest percentage in the world and ten times the global average. Moreover, North Korea also devoted a far greater share of its gross domestic product to its armed forces than any other state in the world, thus contributing to the DMZ’s characterisation as the “densest concentration of firepower in the world.”\(^\text{636}\)

Aside from creation of a nuclear weapon for its own individual use, the spectre of newly developed and inadequately safeguarded North Korean nuclear materials becoming “lost” was a further concern. As Carter and Perry reported, “...if nuclear weapons are controlled by a country enmeshed in social and political turmoil, they might end up commandeered, bought or stolen by terrorists. Who knows what might happen to North Korea’s nuclear weapons as that state struggles to achieve a transformation, possibly violent, to a more normal and prosperous nation.”\(^\text{637}\) Such potentiality garnered sentiments of striking first, because once


\(^{635}\) Ibid., p. 25.

\(^{636}\) Ibid., p. 25-26.

North Korea had produced nuclear materials – given the small size of a critical mass of plutonium and the porous nature of international borders – thwarting their transfer would be virtually impossible. As confirmed by Wit et al., “this scenario is as stealthy as it is worrisome... A detonation somewhere might well be the first evidence of such a transfer... The US could not expect to prevent, deter, or defend against such an act.”

Additionally, the US was once again concerned that North Korea’s acquisition of nuclear weapons could engender a “chain reaction.” As explained by Carter and Perry, “a nuclear North Korea could very well set in motion a domino proliferation effect in East Asia. The US had successfully persuaded South Korea to forgo nuclear weapons on the grounds that North Korea had none and with the US as an ally the South did not need nukes for its defense. That argument could be undermined by a North Korean bomb. The next dominoes to fall might be Japan and Taiwan.” Indeed, it was viewed that if North Korea was able to develop nuclear weapons, a regional arms race could result, producing significant and destabilising tensions within Japan, South Korea and Taiwan as well other states within the region. If such an arms race began, it was hard to predict where it might lead and how it might end. As Secretary of State Dean Rusk argued in 1961, “[if the US abetted nuclear proliferation], it would start us down a jungle path from which I see no exit.”

It is with this in mind that when confronted with the 1994 North Korean nuclear crisis – in which a rogue state was actively engaging in the proliferation of nuclear weapons – the Clinton Administration, like its predecessors, seriously “contemplated its own act of prevention against the strange, isolated regime then considered the greatest threat to US national security.”

Unlike the cases of the Soviet Union and China, however, preventive war thinking towards North Korea developed in response to a single, very specific and highly publicised nuclear crisis. Beginning in March 1993 with North Korea’s rejection of the International Atomic Energy Agency’s (IAEA) request for a “special inspection” of two suspected nuclear waste sites at the Yongbyon nuclear complex (of which the North Koreans were required to permit as a signatory to the NPT) and the controversial announcement that it would soon secede completely from the NPT, the 1994 nuclear crisis lasted approximately fifteen months and almost ended in outright conflict. Indeed, at its peak, the US and North Korea came very

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639 Carter & Perry, “Nuclear over North Korea.”
641 Carter & Perry, “Nuclear over North Korea.”
close to the brink of conflict when the latter indicated that it had already begun to remove spent nuclear fuel rods from the Yongbyon reactor containing enough plutonium to produce up to five nuclear bombs. When the US threatened to impose economic sanctions on the embattled regime, Pyongyang responded by stating that, “sanctions mean war and there is no mercy in war.” Clinton’s advisers viewed this declaration with varying degrees of alarm, but agreed that it would have been irresponsible for the US to ignore the warning. As Daniel Poneman explained:

The North Koreans had said that they would view the imposition of UN Security Council sanctions an act of war. Now we were not shaking in our boots when they said this but, you know, if you’re Bill Perry, Secretary of Defense, you cannot ignore that. Therefore, what we were doing quietly and pretty much continuously, with the exception of the Patriots which got hung up politically, was we were enhancing our force presence and our posture in the Korean peninsula and in that theater. The view of the Principals was that at such time as the UN Security Council sanctions would actually kick into force, that we should have a sufficiently robust presence in theatre to deter the North Koreans from any foolish military action and response to sanctions, so effectively, to call their bluff and say “You’re going to call that an act of war... well let me put enough forces in here that you don’t treat it as such.” And so the trick is to put enough force in to deter but not so much in that you provoke the attack you’re trying to deter.

Aside from the outcomes or provocative nature of sanctions, the actual notion of using preventive military force to preclude North Korea from obtaining a nuclear arsenal became a distinct possibility based on the issue of defueling. Reprocessing was a further possible trigger: If the US learned that the North Koreans had begun reprocessing – the step after defueling in which the plutonium would be easier to transport and hide – the preventive option certainly would have moved to the forefront of deliberation. This is not to say that such sentiments were not already on the agenda; the DOD had been studying the requirements for attacking Yongbyon since the discovery of the existence of the nuclear facility in 1989. The methods of preventive strikes considered by the Pentagon ranged from targeting single buildings to the entire installation, employing everything from cruise missiles to raids carried out by commandos. Assistant Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter and Secretary of Defense William Perry have at varying intervals admitted that a preventive military option was on the table during 1994. As stated, “The two of us, then at the Pentagon

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644 Furches, Interview with Dan Poneman, p. 176.
readied plans for striking at North Korea’s nuclear facilities and for mobilising hundreds of thousands of American troops for the war that probably would have followed.”645 Indeed, a successful attack required “timely intelligence, accurate targeting, tight command and control, and pinpoint timing” as the “option” needed to take place just as the North Koreans were moving the spent fuel to the reprocessing plant, but before the separated plutonium was moved to a different location to manufacture nuclear weapons.646 Tactically complicating the execution of this attack was the nearby placement of more than 300 antiaircraft guns and the construction of a half dozen new surface-to-air missile bases.647 Despite the complexity of this option, Defense Secretary William Perry declared to Congress in 1995, “I can tell you flatly that we know how to do that.”648

Not wanting to take any chances with what was perceived as a hostile regime, many in the US advocated “seizing the initiative” and striking first via preventive war. Indeed, due to its unprecedented media coverage, preventive war thinking during the 1994 North Korean nuclear crisis commanded a wide range of support throughout the US government as well as the general population. So popular was the notion that the US should eliminate North Korea’s nuclear capability that one high-ranking South Korean diplomat on his first trip to Washington was reportedly “struck by the willingness of the American witnesses – think-tank experts and former US officials – to advocate a preventive strike against North Korea.”649 In June 1994, six out of every ten Americans surveyed thought that US “vital” interests were at stake in North Korea – a far higher figure than for any other international situation at the time (generally speaking, a vital interest is one for which the US would be willing to wage war). While this does not provide a conclusive assessment into those Americans who supported the taking of preventive military action against North Korea in 1994, it does illustrate that “the stakes were both high and well understood; the American people viewed the threat of nuclear proliferation in North Korea as the top foreign policy risk facing the nation.”650

In addition, various media commentators and think-tank observers throughout the US openly endorsed preventive action against North Korea before it was able to produce a nuclear

645 Carter & Perry, “Nuclear over North Korea.”
646 Wit, Poneman & Gallucci, Going Critical, p. 103.
649 Wit, Poneman & Gallucci, Going Critical, p. 28.
650 Ibid., p. 241.
weapon. As argued by Larry DiRita of the Heritage Foundation, “...rather than trying to appease one of the last remaining Stalinist dictatorships in the world, [the Clinton Administration] should set a deadline for North Korea to allow international inspectors, or else impose sanctions and consider destroying military headquarters, ballistic missile launch sites, or command and control facilities.”

Moreover, as exhorted by *Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer, “the Administration’s response to North Korea’s nuclear drive has been all carrots and no stick. As an inducement to be nice, we have already given the North Koreans their first direct high-level talks with the US. We have dangled diplomatic recognition. We are now dangling an offer to cancel joint US military exercises with South Korea. These are gestures of weakness. Enough talk. The time has come for action.”

As the crisis deepened, former National Security Council staff member Richard Haas insisted that the Clinton Administration should “launch a preventive military attack against North Korea’s nuclear facilities at Yongbyon that is comparable to Israel’s attack that destroyed Iraq’s reactor in 1981.”

Meanwhile, within the pages of the *Economist* periodical, various “hawks” and “hard-liners” expressed their opinions in which one commentator stated that, “at some point the talking has got to stop... Faced with a chilling choice of risk – between a pre[ventive] strike to cripple North Korea’s nuclear program and waiting until its tough talk is backed up by nuclear threats – America would in the end be right to strike first.”

In a more direct endorsement of preventive action, former Pentagon official Frank Gaffney, Jr. stated that “... [the US] should take military steps to neutralize those facilities we know about... It is a question of risking going to war now, when US military capabilities are still relatively strong and North Korean forces are minimal, if extant, rather than later when such advantageous conditions will almost surely not exist.”

Finally, throughout the 1994 North Korean nuclear crisis, preventive war thinking also received a great deal of attention from many high level US government officials and military planners. On ABC’s Nightline, for example, US Senators John McCain and Bob Kerrey exhibited rare bipartisan agreement when they together argued that resolving the North Korean nuclear crisis warranted running the risk of war. In articulating his case, McCain incorporated preventive logic, querying that, “is it better to act now, while the nuclear

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651 Quoted in Sigal, *Disarming Strangers*, p. 71.
652 Sigal, *Disarming Strangers*, p. 81.
653 Ibid., p. 163.
654 Ibid., p. 82.
655 Ibid., p. 81.
weapons program is still in an embryonic state, or is it better to wait two or three or four years when you are facing an enemy with nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them as far away as Japan? I think the answer is we have to act now." Moreover, in the Wall Street Journal, US Congresswoman Karen Elliot House observed that, “... negotiations, pleas and promises of cooperation for good behaviour haven’t had the slightest effect [on the North Koreans] ... [instead of sending former President Jimmy Carter to negotiate] President [William J.] Clinton ought to be sending [General] Norman Schwarzkopf – perhaps with a few sample photos of high-tech warfare in the Gulf... The Administration has to be willing not only to go to war on the Korean peninsula but also to put the US-China relationship on the line...” Furthermore, according to Wit et al., “former [George H.W.] Bush Administration officials Brent Scowcroft and Arnold Kanter advocated such a strike unless the North allowed the IAEA continuous, unfettered monitoring to ensure that no further reprocessing took place.” Aside from the above, specific policy-makers within the Clinton Administration also considered and weighed up the notion of using the preventive option.

**Anthony Lake, National Security Adviser**

From the beginning of the crisis, National Security Adviser, Anthony Lake, was prepared to run the risk of a violent North Korean reaction to sanctions and undertake preventive air strikes if it meant stopping Pyongyang from obtaining a nuclear arsenal. For Lake, North Korea’s effort to develop a nuclear capability was especially dangerous because of their ballistic missile program and the likelihood that Pyongyang would export both technologies to other rogue states. As stated:

North Korea has become one of the foremost merchants of such [ballistic missiles] weapons. It has sold Scud missiles to Syria and Iran, and it is actively marketing its next generation of ballistic missiles. In short, if North Korea develops nuclear weapons, we face a greatly increased danger that other hostile, rogue states around the world will soon have them also.

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However, despite Lake’s thinking on the preventive option, he was convinced that it “almost certainly would have provoked a North Korean attack.”661 Lake characterised preventive air strikes as riskier than sanctions, noting there was a general belief among Clinton Administration officials that a second Korean war would be won by the US but at a considerable cost. “We... went through intensive planning on what a Korean conflict would entail – concluding that it would be very bloody, with heavy civilian as well as military casualties, but we would win.”662 According to Lake, there were three issues that could hinder the preventive air strikes option:

One is would they work? Would you get it all? The second is what sort of plume would you create? And the third was what were the chances of the North Koreans then responding with a conventional attack across the parallel? And what would be the consequences of that and how well would we be prepared for it?663

William Perry, Secretary of Defense

Secretary of Defense, William Perry, “thought this was one of the most serious crises that we faced during his tenure... the most serious and [he] did not believe that we could permit the North Koreans to go forward with their nuclear program and was preparing unilateral military options...”664 Underscoring the risk of escalation, however, Perry ruled out the use of force up front, but made it clear that preventive military force would not be taken off the table. As stated, “at the other end of the spectrum would be the application of military pressure, but even limited application of military pressure entails the risk of a large-scale war. Although we will not rule out any option for all time, this course should only be considered when all other possibilities have been exhausted.”665 In a June l0 memo to Clinton, Perry cautioned the President against limiting US options, “either in terms of military preparations or pre-emption.”666 However, Perry stressed that military action was considered a last resort:

It was serious enough that we had put together a detailed plan to do it but I want to emphasize, it was never something we considered doing without having first exhausted many other alternatives. So, it was something that was on the table but at the end of the table not at the beginning of the table. We would not

661 Ibid.
662 Ibid.
663 Ibid.
665 Perry, “Remarks by Secretary of Defense William Perry to the Asia Society.”
666 Witt, Poneman & Gallucci, Going Critical, p. 204.
consider doing it until we had first positively exhausted our diplomatic alternatives and then exhausted all of the non-military coercive diplomatic alternatives. So, it was in the sequence but it was at the end of the sequence.667

Perry’s aversion to the preventive air strikes option was related to its astronomical consequences. While he felt confident that the US would win a second Korean war, Perry judged that the cost would be disastrously high.

We understood that it would be very costly – very costly to the Koreans and to the American forces as well. So, we considered that we wanted to take every step we could possibly take to avoid that alternative short of allowing North Korea to precede with a full blown nuclear arsenal. The way I presented it to the President was that we had – that if we got to that military option, we would have to consider the choice between two terrible alternatives: one of them was taking action which might precipitate a war and a war which would be very – would have disastrous consequences for everybody or allowing North Korea to precede with a nuclear arsenal which we also believed could have disastrous consequences. Had we gotten to that point, we would have had to choose between two very bad alternatives therefore our whole strategy was to try to figure out – to try to take a course of action which would keep us from having to make that choice.668

James Woolsey, Director of Central Intelligence (DCI)

Of the senior-level officials in the Clinton Administration, DCI James Woolsey was the strongest proponent of preventive war as a means to destroy North Korea’s nuclear program; particularly upon their announcement that defueling was imminent. Throughout the crisis, Woolsey had viewed the possibility of a negotiated solution with scepticism, predicting that North Korea would negotiate only as a means to buy time in which they could continue building nuclear weapons. From Woolsey’s viewpoint, Kim Il Sung was “a dictator and a liar and a cheat” and “I didn’t think we could trust him as far as we could throw him.”669 This lack of trust for the regime and the knowledge that North Korea could soon process plutonium for more nuclear weapons motivated Woolsey’s hawkish stance on the nuclear crisis. According to Gallucci, “In terms of what the [North Korean nuclear] program was all
about and therefore, [were] negotiation[s] a reasonable thing to be engaged in – the Director of the CIA at the time, thought we were nuts, absolutely nuts.  

While Woolsey did endorse the preventive war option, he also held some misgivings about the long-term effectiveness of launching preventive, surgical air strikes against Yongbyon. That is, Woolsey agreed with Clinton’s senior advisers that a surgical strike against the North would not be guaranteed to get all of the nuclear material, as the location of the plutonium was unknown and would likely motivate some response from the North Korean military.  

As explained:

It seems to me you always want to know what the practicality is of the use of force. And, whereas most thinking centers on a surgical strike against Yongbyon, I don’t think that would have been very reasonable because of the North Koreans would have attacked the South. I think you had to answer the question, “What would it take to pull their teeth and their capacity – this was now eleven years ago – and their capacity to move effectively against the South?” I don’t think it matters that they have a huge army. A huge army is a sitting duck for smart weapons as we’ve showed time and time again. It’s those artillery sites and possibly missile launching sites that could hit South Korea that we would have had to have been able to take out virtually all of them.

In essence, Woolsey rationalised that if surgical strikes were going to lead to armed conflict between the US and North Korea, then it made more sense to launch the initial strike against their artillery sites as well as the nuclear facilities; in effect, to launch a preventive war. The DCI believed preventive surgical strikes were only a short-term solution, unlikely to permanently halt the North Korean nuclear program, and instead, urged officials to at least consider all variables pertaining to the execution of a preventive attack against North Korea. Woolsey believed such an attack would be less risky than just striking Yongbyon because he judged that a first strike with overwhelming force would give the offensive advantage to the US, whereas preventive surgical strikes could incite a full-scale response in which case the US would be on the defensive. Although Woolsey was the highest level official opposed to negotiating a solution to the nuclear crisis with North Korea, his role as DCI precluded him from participating in the policy process in the same way other high level Administration officials did. As stated:

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671 Furches, Interview with James Woolsey, p. 200.
672 Ibid.
My opinion wasn’t solicited on policy matters at all... One of the only things that we did talk about was that the DCI really shouldn’t be a policy adviser. He asked me what I thought. I said that I did not think he should, that I thought he ought to call it the way he saw it – if the DCI was a policy adviser, people were going to get the idea that intelligence was getting skewed to support the policy beliefs of the DCI... The President didn’t want me to be so I was there to present the intelligence, period.673

As a result, Woolsey’s assertive position on North Korea played little to no role in the President’s ultimate decision on how to deal with Pyongyang’s nuclear program.

**Clinton: Returning to Negotiations**

Clinton described the North Korean nuclear crisis as “by far the biggest foreign policy issue.”674 The showdown over defueling presented the President with a problem to which every solution involved risks: How to preserve the security of the US by preventing the North Koreans from becoming a nuclear power without provoking a second Korean War. On the one hand, choosing a non-military option diminished the prospect of expeditiously ending North Korea’s nuclear program and still stood a chance of provoking a major war if Pyongyang was serious that sanctions equalled war. If he chose not to launch preventive strikes against Yongbyon, and Pyongyang began not only defueling the reactor but also reprocessing the spent fuel, Clinton risked missing the opportunity to destroy the fissile material before it was hidden away. Refraining from preventive strikes also risked allowing the North Koreans to level the playing field for a future war by providing them with the time to develop a nuclear arsenal. On the other hand, launching preventive strikes at Yongbyon would possibly achieve the policy goal of preventing North Korea from building a nuclear arsenal in the short term, but there was no guarantee it would destroy all of the fissile material possessed by Pyongyang. There was also a very good chance striking Yongbyon would provoke a retaliation that could escalate into a costly second Korean War.675

**The Turning Point**

The commencement of defueling also marked the point when Clinton moved closer to considering preventive strikes against Yongbyon, although this alternative was always an option of last resort. On May 18, as a sanctions package was being pulled together and military preparations continued, Perry and Shalikashvili called in every active four-star

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673 Ibid.
675 Ibid., pp. 602-603; and Oberdorfer, *Two Koreas*, p. 313.
general and admiral in the US military to discuss support for Commander, US Forces and Korea and General Luck’s war plan for Korea. The ensuing meeting discussed troops, materiel, logistics, and in particular, “details of preparatory deployments of troops and transport from other commands, the shifting of US aircraft carriers and land-based warplanes closer to the Korean coast and plans for massive reinforcements – deployment of roughly half of all US major combat forces – if hostilities actually got under way.”

According to Don Oberdorfer’s account, on May 19, Perry, Shalikashvili and Luck informed the President of the costs and consequences should the nuclear crisis escalate to military conflict and then potentially to general war with North Korea.

Luck told Clinton that the US-ROK chances against North Korea in a conventional war were good but success would be costly. In the first ninety days, the generals estimated “52,000 US military casualties, killed or wounded, and 490,000 South Korean military casualties... at a financial outlay exceeding $61 billion, very little of which could be recouped from US allies.”

Overall, US officials estimated that the damage caused by a second Korean war would be in the range of a million lives and a trillion dollars.

Clinton Changes Approach

The following day (May 20), now armed with information regarding the human and economic costs likely to result from a war with North Korea, Clinton held a meeting with his senior advisers to discuss the crisis. Here, despite North Korea’s defiant defueling of the reactor at Yongbyon, the President changed tactics, moving back to pursuing a diplomatic solution; a far less risky endeavour than sanctions or prevention. Clinton offered to join Pyongyang in a third round of high-level negotiations and attempted to set up a direct meeting between Kim Il Sung and Senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar in hopes of communicating directly with North Korean leadership to ease the rising tension. In simple terms, Clinton altered his direction because he hoped to avoid the risks associated with an option that could escalate to war. However, based on the IAEA’s June 3rd declaration that North Korea had deliberately destroyed information that would reveal the operating history of the reactor, the Nunn and Lugar meeting did not take place. According to Clinton, “...they

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676 Oberdorfer, Two Koreas, p. 313.
677 Ibid.
678 Ibid., p. 315.
679 Ibid.
680 Ibid.
681 CRS Report for Congress, CRS94-470F, North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons Program.
have triggered this, not the United States or anyone else. I just don’t think we can walk away from this.”

Just as the Clinton Administration began to again consider more assertive options, former President Jimmy Carter intervened, offering to meet with Kim Il Sung. Carter’s unofficial “eleventh hour” mission to North Korea was successful and averted what was likely to be a very costly war on both sides. As recalled by Clinton:

President Carter called me on June 1 and said he would like to go to North Korea to try to resolve the problem. I sent Ambassador Bob Gallucci, who was handling the matter for us, down to Plains, Georgia, to brief Carter on the seriousness of the North Korean violations. He still wanted to go, and after consulting with Al Gore and my national security team, I decided it was worth trying. About three weeks earlier, I had received a sobering estimate of the staggering losses both sides would suffer if war broke out... Al Gore called Carter and told him that I had no objection to his going to North Korea as long as President Kim Il Sung understood that I would not agree to a suspension of sanctions unless North Korea let the inspectors do their jobs, agreed to freeze its nuclear program and committed to a new round of talks with the United States on building a non-nuclear future.

It was here that Carter’s diplomatic effort not only helped averting a major crisis, but also served to mark the end of the third era of the preventive war option.

Preventive Restrictions
Implementing the preventive war option against North Korea carried significant risks. The augmentation of US force posture in South Korea was meant to pressure North Korea into staying at the negotiating table to avoid sanctions, deter a North Korean attack, and better prepare US-ROK forces in the event that negotiations faltered, deterrence failed or the US opted to launch air strikes against Yongbyon. But the military build-up necessary to accomplish this could actually provoke the North Koreans to launch an assault below the 38th parallel. Pyongyang had made a study of US actions preceding the 1991 Gulf War, particularly the build-up of US troops in the Gulf prior to the fighting. Kim Il Sung was likely to view any build-up in American forces as a prelude to war with his country. Launching preventive strikes against North Korea’s nuclear facilities also risked putting off much needed allies like Japan – who did not want to get involved in a major war but whose

682 Oberdorfer, Two Koreas, p. 315.
683 Clinton, My Life, p. 603.
involvement was critical to US success – and China – who would not take kindly to US aggression on the Korean peninsula. Launching preventive strikes against North Korea ran the very real risk of potentially provoking a form of Chinese intervention, just as it had done in June 1950. Foremost in terms of risks was the very high probability that North Korea would retaliate against a US military strike and that any retaliatory strike could escalate quickly to a second Korean war. US intelligence and several Clinton Administration officials estimated that the US could not launch preventive surgical strikes against Yongbyon and destroy North Korea’s nuclear facilities without facing retaliation, although there was uncertainty about what form this retaliation would take.\textsuperscript{684}

Part of the ambiguity relating to this option was the lack of US intelligence on how North Korean leadership thought and how they might react to a US limited strike on Yongbyon. While US knowledge on North Korea’s nuclear program was considered to be relatively sound by most high level Administration officials, intelligence on the intricacies of the leadership and how the regime functioned was limited. Pyongyang’s response could range from a contained artillery barrage to a full-scale attack in which the North Korean army moved south over the 38\textsuperscript{th} parallel. Specifically, military planners were concerned about a possible attack on South Korean nuclear power plants which were vulnerable to sea attack and which, if hit, could shower parts of South Korea with significant radioactive fallout and damage the economy by knocking out much of its power.\textsuperscript{685} Additionally, the vast majority of North Korea’s troops were gathered just north of the 38\textsuperscript{th} parallel, only 30 miles north of Seoul – the population of which accounted for one fourth of the people in South Korea and close to one half of the country’s economic output – increasing the risks associated with any military option.\textsuperscript{686}

General Gary Luck, Commander, US Forces Korea at the time of the crisis, thought North Korea would respond to any US strike with an all-out counterattack: “If we pull an Osirak, they will be coming south.”\textsuperscript{687} In this event, according to Daniel Poneman, “A variety of target sets were looked at including target sets that would interfere with their ability to move

\textsuperscript{684} CRS Report for Congress, CRS94-470F, \textit{North Korea’s Nuclear Weapons Program}.
\textsuperscript{685} Wit, Poneman & Gallucci, \textit{Going Critical}, p. 104.
\textsuperscript{687} Wit, Poneman & Gallucci, \textit{Going Critical}, p. 104; Osirak refers to the Israeli strike against Iraq’s nuclear facility at a location called Osirak.
A former, senior US military official assessed the situation, asserting that from a military perspective, preventive surgical strikes were not truly an option if President Clinton wanted to avoid a second Korean war.

A surgical strike was not really an option because what you did with a surgical strike is you gave them the reason to attack you, which then put the odds in their favor for the first phase of the campaign. If you attack Yongbyon, then you’ve got to put down the probabilities that go with that; the probability that they’ll accept that without retaliating. That’s a real small probability. And then you keep doing your math-calculus – if they surprise attacked us while we’re in the defensive crouch, what are the losses? If we take the aggressive approach, and attack them, which we would have to do anyway after they attacked us, what are the odds? It made sense that if we felt strongly enough about punishing North Korea for continuing with their nuclear program, the best option would have been for us to launch a full-scale attack as opposed to a few preventive strikes. The third option – you boil all the smoke out of it and that’s what you’ve got... Preventively attacking Yongbyon would have just been an invitation to the fight. There was nothing clean about this. It was either you’re going to fight or you’re going to negotiate.

The option was also constrained because of the significant risk that a preventive attack would not necessarily destroy all North Korean plutonium or important bomb-making equipment. Military planners were concerned that North Korea would unload the fuel rods and move them to the reprocessing facility and separate the plutonium, which could then be transported to a secret location and made into nuclear weapons. According to a former senior US military official:

We didn’t know where they had the stuff. They [the North Koreans] don’t have anything else to do up there except dig tunnels. Who knew where they had stored the material? How much credence do you put in an intelligence report from a closed society? We had nothing other than overhead pictures to tell us anything.

In essence, a US preventive strike risked releasing a significant amount of radiation or, if the radioactive material was moved, the attack would fail to destroy it, thus giving the North Koreans a chance to rebuild the foundation of their nuclear program. Moreover, the option was the riskiest of those examined because it offered the largest variance in outcome – the destruction of the North Korean nuclear program – if successful, but also the worst outcome.

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689 Ibid.
690 Ibid.
if North Korea responded with an all out attack on the South, which the Clinton Administration judged it was likely to do.\textsuperscript{691}

Litwak further conveys the potential risk of a preventive war when he stated that “the North Koreans did not distinguish between a narrow US counter-proliferation option on the North’s nuclear facilities and general war. On the American side, the fear of inadvertent escalation and catalytic war – the possibility that a counter-proliferation strike on the North’s nuclear infrastructure would provoke an all-out war on the Korean Peninsula – was a key policy determinant. This overriding concern prompted the Clinton Administration to pursue alternative non-military approaches...”\textsuperscript{692} Indeed, although no one was certain about the extent to which North Korea may respond, most observers agreed that that if attacked, North Korea would undertake some form of massive counterattack against allied positions. According to Philip Saunders, Pyongyang had various options at its disposal: “North Korean long-range artillery could hit Seoul with artillery shells and chemical weapons, causing panic and massive civilian casualties... it could hit Japan with its... missiles. Seventy percent of North Korean army ground units are located within 100 miles of the demilitarized zone... positioned to undertake offensive ground operations. These units could fire up to 500,000 artillery rounds per hour against South Korean defenses for several hours. Finally, if North Korea does have one or two deliverable nuclear weapons, nuclear retaliation (or nuclear threats) would also be available...”\textsuperscript{693} In any event, the results were expected to be disastrous. According to Wit et al.:

If war were to occur, the US and South Korea would win, but it would be costly. Computer projections showed 30,000 American casualties and 450,000 South Korean casualties, but these numbers might be too low; the killed-in-action numbers would likely be higher since the battlefield was far more lethal during the Korean War in the 1950s... another Korean war would kill or wound 1 million civilians, cost more than $60 billion, devastate the South Korean economy to the tune of at least $1 trillion, cause an Asian recession, and adversely affect the rest of the global economy. When asked by the President...

\textsuperscript{691} It is important to note that the actual implementation of the options just described would lack the linearity implied by characterising them as part of a sequence. Using continued talks with the US as a carrot also involved threatening North Korea with stick-sanctions – which the US would not be able to move to quickly unless it reinforced its military posture on the peninsula. But boosting the US force posture in South Korea could easily inflame an already tense situation and cause North Korea to accelerate instead of halt its nuclear program, which in turn would put pressure on the US to use force to destroy the nuclear facilities before it was too late. In short, the overlap between the options, specifically the force build-up needed to implement the second and third options, increased the riskiness of these options and arguably played a material role in how Clinton and his advisers viewed them.

\textsuperscript{692} Litwak, “The New Calculus of Pre-emption,” p. 70.

whether the US would win the war, General [Gary] Luck [commander of the US forces in South Korea] replied, ‘Yes, but at the cost of a million [casualties] and a trillion [dollars].’

In simple terms, the costs in executing the preventive option on the Korean peninsula were so high as to be prohibitive. The significant possibility that a preventive attack on North Korea’s nuclear facilities would engender a general war on the Korean peninsula, in essence, effectively removed the US military option from consideration.

In the Context of the Bush Administration

Despite claims to the contrary, it appears that the efforts by the Bush Administration to prevent rogue states from acquiring nuclear weapons were not altogether new or groundbreaking. In fact, as evident in aforementioned, every single time a state hostile to the US has sought to acquire nuclear weapons, the incumbent Administration – whether composed of Republicans or Democrats – has considered utilising force as a means to hinder this development. Indeed, not including Iraq, Iran and North Korea from 2001-03, over the last fifty years, the US has assessed the viability in waging large-scale unilateral preventive wars against three additional rogue proliferators: the Soviet Union from 1945-54; China from 1960-63; and North Korea from 1993-94. Significantly, in all three cases, it is apparent that the US opted not to take preventive action due to a number of overriding moral and practical inhibitions. What can we infer from this record of inaction and how does this evidence help to explain the 2003 War in Iraq?

In the first instance, while it is impossible to fully comprehend the specific reason as to why each respective Administration chose not to employ the preventive war option – analytically it is difficult if not unworkable to separate normative concerns from strategic calculations. As stated by Lebow, the former are “intangible considerations that do not lend themselves to ready assessment let alone to quasi-quantification,” and based on the available information, it is fair to assume that the key US decision-makers in all of the cases reviewed in the above were more heavily influenced by the practical costs of said action. To be sure, none of these Administrations were completely unaware or unmoved by the immorality and illegality associated with preventive war, however, it was clear that each one – from Truman and Eisenhower to Kennedy and Clinton – was ultimately willing (if not always able) under the “right” conditions, to embark upon a preventive path of action irrespective of the moral costs. If any of these Administrations were truly concerned with or repulsed by the “moral depravity” of preventive war, we would expect to find an immediate and wholesale dismissal of such thinking. The sheer fact that not a single one was willing to dismiss preventive war in an absolute fashion signifies that morality was not the most significant restraint. As confirmed by Trachtenberg, “[the reason that a preventive war strategy was never adopted as policy]… was not that Eisenhower was shocked or appalled by this... the real problem was

that it did not make any strategic sense.\footnote{Trachtenberg, “A Wasting Asset,” pp. 40-43.} While Trachtenberg was referring specifically to the case of the Soviet Union, it would be accurate to attribute such a conclusion to the cases of, China from 1960-63, Iraq 2001-03 and North Korea from both 1993-94 and 2001-03 as well.

Indeed, one cannot resolutely pronounce that normative objections by themselves restricted American action against any of the aforementioned states. In only one of the three cases reviewed – the Soviet Union from 1945-54 – was morality explicitly mentioned and considered; in the other two cases it is evident that very little, if any, discussion was prevalent in the context of morals, arms or legality. Furthermore, it was apparent that in some cases, morality was actually used to endorse and promote preventive war. For example, in the early 1950s James Burnham, a political scientist at Harvard University argued that, “if there is good reason to believe that a sudden and massive blow [to the Soviet Union] would save many lives and goods [in the US], result in less destruction and social disintegration [than if the US waited for the Soviet Union to acquire nuclear weapons and attack first], give a better chance for building a workable world polity, then to strike such a blow, far from being morally wrong, is morally obligatory. If there is to be war in any case, it is hard to comprehend why a war is morally better because it is more difficult, longer, more cruel and costly and bloody.”\footnote{Quoted in Silverstone, “Can Democracies Initiate Preventive War?” p. 13.}

Four phenomena may assist in articulating this apparent disregard for traditional morality.

First, there exists substantial empirical evidence to support the claim that largely dynamic moral constructs such as the characterisation of preventive war as “aggressive” or “dishonourable” may be either refined or deferred in times of supreme national crisis. Many historians and political scientists have explained Japan’s 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor in these terms. Second, it was not uncommon for conventional morality to be temporarily suspended whenever the results were expected to produce a more favourable long-term outcome. For example, torturing an individual to gain valuable information which will save a number of lives was widely viewed to be an occasion in which the postponement of morality was acceptable. Similarly, the preventive motivation was based on the belief that war was probably inevitable and that it is better to fight now while the costs and/or risks are low(er), than later when they are expected to be high(er). In both cases, the “ends” were said to
“justify the means.” Third, it is significant to note a critical difference between the case of the Soviet Union – the only case in which the moral implications of undertaking a preventive war were seriously debated – and the remaining cases. In the former, a successful preventive strike would have required the US to use nuclear weapons as a means to annihilate both counter-force and counter-value targets, including major Soviet cities; in the latter, it would have been possible for the US to employ superior military technology to eliminate the requisite nuclear programs without causing an overzealous level of collateral damage. In this light, the preventive option in the more recent examples would have required far less violence, and thereby, meant that debates pertaining to notions of morality were far less pressing. Finally, in respect to non-proliferation, it has been apparent in the last twenty years that a strong international norm has developed against the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, to the extent that such proliferation is widely considered to be an unlawful act. In this view, any state actively working to attain weapons is deemed a “criminal” and thus subject to appropriate sanctions and diplomatic condemnation. Moreover, because a nuclear proliferator has already broken the “law,” any military action taken against it would be considered reactive, not preventive. Maintaining this position thus removes the moral approbations surrounding the “unprovoked” use of force.

Nonetheless, the fact that none of the aforementioned Administrations were compelled to reject or even thoroughly discuss the moral consequences of preventive war strongly supports the argument that practicality, especially concerns pertaining to enemy retaliation and general war, and not morality, did more to coerce US decision-makers away from waging preventive war against the Soviet Union from 1945-54, China from 1960-63 and North Korea from 1993-94. Indeed, it was apparent that political leaders and military planners during each of the periods in question were not guided primarily by legal or moral reasoning. In any of the cases reviewed, if the extremely prohibitive practical situations had not existed, would the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Clinton Administrations have measured morality in the same way? More importantly, would they have been deterred by morality alone? For instance, if the US had been in possession of a more substantial amount of nuclear bombs and bombers from 1945-54, and the Soviet Union was not able to effectively retaliate against Western Europe or so big as to prohibit a post-war occupation/reconstruction, would things have turned out differently? Would the US have attacked the Soviet Union? We will of course never know for sure, however, if viewed in the context of Iraq from 2001-2003, it is evident that morality alone did not impede the US from
undertaking a preventive war against a comparatively small and weak rogue proliferator, with no real prospects for retaliation. The circumstances surrounding the Soviet Union from 1945-54, China from 1960-63, and North Korea from 1993-94 and Iraq from 2001-03 differ in some very distinct and important ways (i.e. the September 11 terrorist attacks and the newly perceived threat of nuclear terrorism may have allayed some of the opposition to preventive war). The application of preventive war in the latter suggests that the historically pervasive anti-preventive war moral sentiment in the US has neither changed dramatically, nor has it been the most significant deterrent when it comes to waging preventive war.

Indeed, assuming that the moral purview of preventive war thinking in the US has not changed significantly over the last half century – and recent polls and studies, to say nothing of the academic and political rhetoric, have shown that it has not – and furthermore, that the Bush Administration subscribed to the same morality as its predecessors, it stands to reason that the practical costs of waging preventive war was – and still is – the more critical of the two deterrent variables. In essence, while morality may be a necessary constraining factor of preventive war, alone it is not sufficient. If this is true and if states are more likely to wage preventive attacks when the practical costs and/or risks of retaliation are low, then it lends robust support to the claim that the Bush Administration’s decision to pursue the preventive option against Iraq is best seen as a strategic choice primarily based upon practical considerations, especially the relative military capabilities of the targeted states. It also underscores the powerful logic of deterrence and yields some important conclusions.

First, it was evident that from 2001-03, the Bush Administration likely preferred to wage preventive war against Iraq first because it was the weakest of the three perceived threats. (Iran being second and North Korea a distant third.) If the US continued to believe that the cost of inaction was higher than the cost of action (which, as we have seen may be significant), we can expect that the Bush Administration – if given the chance – would have sought to attack the outstanding threats in that order. Second, if a rogue proliferator emerges in the future, the US will again strongly consider waging preventive war against it. For example, if Syria were to make a serious drive to acquire nuclear weapons, we can expect that the US would seriously consider taking preventive measures to stop it from doing so. Even so, it is highly unlikely that a strategy of preventive war will ever replace or supplant the reality of deterrence or be implemented uniformly against all nuclear proliferators. Indeed, the fact that the US has historically been extremely reluctant to attack militarily
strong rogue proliferators suggests that the US will continue to differentiate between big and small, weak and strong states and also continue to weigh the military costs involved in waging war against them. A commensurate statement was articulated by Feaver and Niou:

A military strike is simply not a credible option against many countries that might develop nuclear weapons, regardless of the strength of US resolve... There are obvious costs involved in executing a military strike against proliferators, and these costs vary directly with the military capabilities of the [rogue] proliferators. The costs of a decapitating strike against a Great Power like the Soviet Union would be prohibitive, making the force option not viable... [strong] enemies are simply too large for such an option to be workable. Indeed, the military option is only credible against small enemies. But even here, the military option is not credible once the country has, in fact, deployed nuclear weapons because of the risk that the proliferator would be able to fire off one of the weapons before the US could destroy the arsenal... Weighing these factors, our argument draws the following conclusions. The US will never...attack a large enemy... [and] the final deployment of nuclear weapons could be thought of as rendering a ‘small’ country into a ‘big’ one... making the costs of a military strike prohibitive.\(^{698}\)

Similarly, Drell and Goodby have observed that the relevant lessons to be learned from America’s experience with preventive war and rogue proliferators are as follows: “Military force, or the threat of it, was only usable when the likelihood of successful retaliation against the homelands of the attacking power by the potential proliferant was low... Military force is not likely to be used when the costs of doing so are judged to be higher than allowing proliferation to occur... The conclusion from this analysis is that military force or the threat of using such force is quite circumscribed in its application to the problem of nuclear proliferation.”\(^{699}\)

Indeed, based upon the historical record, we may anticipate that in the future the US will “think twice” before waging war against three kinds of strong rogue proliferators: those that have strong conventional forces capable of defending against a US invasion (i.e. a large, populous Iran); those that have strong conventional forces capable of deterring a US invasion (i.e. North Korea’s artillery over Seoul); and those that have nuclear weapons, which can, by themselves, raise the costs/risks of preventive war to an unacceptable level by defending against a US invasion, deterring it, or both (i.e. North Korea with proven nuclear capability).

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Simply put, in the future it is reasonable to say that the US will continue to “aim at what is feasible, holding in view the real sentiments... that right as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.”\textsuperscript{700} For Trachtenberg, the preventive war term is one that endorses the notion of force being used even if a country has not been attacked, “but we also mean a policy rooted in concerns about the future, about what might happen tomorrow if nothing is done today.”\textsuperscript{701} By this definition it was evident that the Bush policy certainly qualified as a preventive war policy, however, did the “adoption of that strategy of ‘prevention’ mark a total break with American tradition, or did earlier Administrations, to one extent or another, also think in ‘preventive’ terms?” As affirmed by Trachtenberg, “it turns out that the sort of thinking one finds in the Bush policy documents is not to be viewed as anomalous. Under Roosevelt and Truman, under Eisenhower and Kennedy, and even under Clinton in the 1990s, this kind of thinking came into play in a major way. Concerns about the future – about what might happen if nothing were done – weighed heavily on American policy during the period from 1941 through 1963.” This continued through to end of the Cold War and the 1990s, and will no doubt continue on in the 2000s and “beyond.”\textsuperscript{702}

\textsuperscript{700} Thucydides, \textit{The History of the Peloponnesian War}, p. 110.
\textsuperscript{701} Trachtenberg, “Preventive War and US Foreign Policy,” p. 29.
\textsuperscript{702} \textit{Ibid.}
Chapter 6
The Bush Doctrine and the Nuclear Option:
The Transition from
Clinton to Bush
As has been established, the motivation and consideration of preventive war has been an implicit part of US policy-makers’ strategic thinking since 1945. While it can be argued that the preventive tenets of the Bush Doctrine stalled in Iraq after the quick and easy defeat of Saddam Hussein in 2003, the nuclear dimension encompassed in the Doctrine, and the reassertion of this option, became the legacy of the Bush Administration when he departed in January, 2009. As the focus of Chapter 7, Bush asserted nuclear weapons as a distinct pillar within US security strategy, articulating and refining such sentiments through the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), the 2002 National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWMD), CONPLAN (Concept Plan) 8022 (Global Strike), the 2005 Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, the 2006 Strategic Operations Joint Operating Concept Version 2.0, and in recent times, the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program. While it is clear that Bush attempted to place the nuclear option back to the fore in an assertive fashion, acknowledgment to the transition between the Clinton and Bush Administrations is imperative when analysing and evaluating the extent of the shift that the Bush Doctrine engendered, and will thereby, be the focus of this chapter. In many instances, it can be argued that the Clinton Administration ignored its historic opportunity to reverse decades of dangerous and provocative nuclear weapons planning, while the Bush Administration – in its punctuating and reaffirming policy instruments (as posited above) – furthered the process towards increasing the role of nuclear weapons in US policy and security strategy. Indeed, the Bush documents and policy instruments signified a renewed role for nuclear weapons and the quest of his Administration to upgrade US offensive forces, deploy missile defenses, reconfigure communications and satellite systems, and overall, revitalise the nuclear complex. Nonetheless, it would be both remiss and incorrect to see this as merely the result of the Bush Administration’s policies. It was evident that the Clinton Administration retained much of the existing US nuclear weapons policy and force posture in the decade after the demise of the Soviet Union and affirmed the role of nuclear weapons in US security strategy. Furthermore, the Clinton Administration began to develop targeting options for the use of nuclear weapons in response to chemical or biological attacks from states other than Russia, and, in its declaratory policy, the Administration did not rule out the possible first use of nuclear weapons in these circumstances. It was here that military planners and policy-makers – through the Defense Counter-Proliferation Initiative (CPI) 1993, Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) 1994, Doctrines for Joint Operations (Joint Pub 3-12) 1993/1995, Doctrine for Joint Theater Nuclear Operations 1996, Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) 1997 and Presidential Decision
Directive (PDD) 60 1997 – maintained the significance of nuclear weapons despite the Cold War’s conclusion. Ultimately, it was the Bush Doctrine and its accompanying guidance documents that expanded on this Clinton “base” in a much more defined and assertive posture, foreshadowing a new nuclear era in which the once termed “weapon of last resort” became a usable and necessary preventive war-fighting option.

During the Cold War, the United States maintained nuclear forces that were sized and structured as a means to deter any attack by the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies, and if deterrence failed, to defeat the Soviet Union. In the period after the 1989 collapse of the Berlin wall and 1991 demise of the Soviet Union, officials in the US government and analysts outside government pursued numerous reviews and studies of US nuclear weapons policy and force structure. While these studies varied in scope, intent and outcome, most attempted to define a new role for US nuclear weapons, including the appropriate size and structure of the US nuclear arsenal in the post-Cold War era. In positing their recommendations, these analyses addressed not only the end of the hostile US-Soviet global rivalry, but also the emergence of new threats and regional challenges to US security. As stated by Siracusa and Coleman:

As the defence forces began to look beyond containment, it became readily apparent that the threats to US security had not faded away – they had changed. Rather than giving way to a time of peace and stability as many had hoped, the end of the Cold War paved the way for instability and the surfacing of regional issues that had long been suppressed during the Cold War and introduced other, non-traditional threats.

In response, the US Department of Defense conducted several far-reaching reviews – including the 1993 Bottom-up Review, the 1994 Nuclear Posture Review and the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review – that contributed to the Clinton Administration’s response to changes in the international security environment. These formal reviews, when combined with less prominent internal studies, resulted in numerous changes to the structure of US nuclear forces and policy guiding their potential use. It was with this in mind that by the end of the 1990s many critics of the Clinton Administration argued that the US nuclear posture looked very much as it had at the beginning of the decade. While the number of deployed

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nuclear weapons had declined – reflected in its implementation of the first Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) as well as the completed withdrawal of most of its non-strategic nuclear weapons – the Clinton Administration and others argued that nuclear weapons remained important as a means to deter the range of threats faced by the United States. Indicative of such thinking was expressed by Secretary of Defense Perry in his Annual Report for 1995, noting that “recent international upheavals have not changed the calculation that nuclear weapons remain an essential part of American military power. Concepts of deterrence... continue to be central to the US nuclear posture. Thus, the United States will continue to threaten retaliation, including nuclear retaliation, to deter aggression against the United States, US forces, and allies.”706 In theory, this deterrent strategy extended beyond Russia in which “the United States must continue to maintain a robust triad of strategic forces sufficient to deter any hostile foreign leadership with access to nuclear forces and to convince it that seeking a nuclear advantage would be futile.” Furthermore, according to the Clinton Administration, “nuclear weapons serve as a hedge against an uncertain future, a guarantee of our security commitments to allies and a disincentive to those who would contemplate developing or otherwise acquiring their own nuclear weapons.”707 Clinton retained the existing US policy on “first use” and specifically, did not forswear the actual first use of nuclear weapons. The Clinton Administration signified that states other than Russia might encounter nuclear retaliation if they attacked the United States with nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. Indeed, while it reaffirmed the US negative security assurance in 1995, Administration officials indicated that the United States would reserve the right to use nuclear weapons first “if a state is not a state in good standing under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) or an equivalent international convention.”708 Furthermore, a state might relinquish its protections under the negative security assurance if it attacked the United States or US forces with weapons of mass destruction (WMD).709 Hence, regardless of the Cold War’s demise, it was apparent that Clinton both maintained and even asserted nuclear weapons as a mainstay of US security strategy and counter proliferation.

For the United States government, the 1991 Gulf War highlighted the significance of being prepared to fight WMD-armed adversaries. While Iraq did not ultimately use chemical or

biological weapons in the conflict, post-war intelligence into the nature of Iraqi WMD developments shocked those within the national security community; startling even well informed observers and highlighting the potential susceptibility of US regional security strategies. According to the US Gulf War Air Power Survey (GWAPS):

The Iraqi nuclear program was massive, for most practical purposes fiscally unconstrained, closer to fielding a weapon, and less vulnerable to destruction by precision bombing than Coalition air commanders and planners or US intelligence specialists realized before Desert Storm. The target list on 16 January 1991 contained two nuclear targets, but after the war, inspectors operating under the United Nations Special Commission eventually uncovered more than twenty sites involved in the Iraqi nuclear weapons program; sixteen of the sites were described as “main facilities.”

As further articulated by Keaney and Cohen, after the war, it was concluded that “the air campaign no more than inconvenienced Iraqi plans to field atomic weapons.” The GWAPS study stated that, “we now know that the Iraqis’ program to amass enough enriched uranium to begin producing atomic bombs was more extensive... further along, and considerably less vulnerable to air attack than was realized at the outset of Desert Storm.” It was in response to such findings that at the Gulf War’s conclusion, Defense Secretary Cheney orchestrated the classified Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy (NUWEP), formally advising the military to plan for nuclear operations against nations it deemed to be capable of developing weapons of mass destruction. It was evident that had Iraq used chemical and biological weapons (CBW), the US and allied forces may not have been sufficiently equipped to counter them. This Iraqi “capacity” – albeit somewhat exaggerated by the more conservative sector of the national security community – together with its supposed (and largely undetected) technical progress, defined the emergence of a major post-Cold War defense planning challenge. As the (post Cheney) Secretary of Defense Les Aspin declared, “we are making the essential change demanded by this increased threat... adding the task of protection to the task of prevention.” In his view, while containment remained the United States’ main focus, the Defense Department had undertaken a new strategy:

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711 Müller, Fisher and Kotter, Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Global Order, p. 131.
713 Ibid., p. 82.

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developing military capabilities as a means to cope with WMD-armed regional adversaries.\textsuperscript{716} As Aspin further articulated, “...the American experience in the Gulf War made manifest the implications of NBC proliferation for defense planning. For DOD to do its job in the post-Cold War era, it must take seriously the potential NBC dimension of future conflicts. US forces must be properly trained and equipped for all potential missions, including those in which opponents might threaten or use NBC weapons. The Defense Counter-proliferation Initiative is designed to meet these challenges.”\textsuperscript{717}

\textbf{Defense Counter-Proliferation Initiative (CPI) 1993}

From the outset, there has been much conjecture pertaining to counter-proliferation as a policy based on its inclusion of nuclear weapons in the resources available to US commanders for use against enemy NBC weapon targets. The inclusion of nuclear use doctrines during the 1990s, for this purpose and the potential use of nuclear weapons in regional wars, evoked a dichotomy in viewpoints and opinions. While there is some merit to the notion that Bush merely continued the policies implemented by the Clinton Administration, in reality, it was Bush who took Clinton’s “base” and asserted the emphasis of nuclear weapons to one of centrality within US security strategy. Nonetheless, to define the Clinton era as one of unbridled internationalism devoid of any degree of nuclear weapon assertions would be both careless and historically selective. Indeed, while the Bush Administration certainly placed the nuclear option back to the fore, the nuclear dimension of US security during the Clinton era was more than evident – as these following initiatives, documents and policy instruments will clearly highlight. Beginning in 1993, it was evident that nuclear considerations would definitely play a role in Clinton’s Counter-Proliferation Initiative. That is, pursuant to a Presidential Directive, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin announced on December 7, 1993, that the United States would add a military dimension to its fight against the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). In a speech before members of the National Academy of Science in Washington, DC, Aspin explained the rationale and initial program of what he termed a US “Defense Counter-Proliferation Initiative (CPI).” Aspin signified that the post-Cold War threat of nuclear, chemical, biological and ballistic missile systems posed by unstable states or terrorist groups required a five-point counter-proliferation drive. He informed the audience that the five points would

\textsuperscript{716} Ellis, “The Best Defense,” p. 17.

encompass: an understanding that this was a new mission, not the old Cold War mission; the
development of new US weapons to destroy weapons of mass destruction; a reassessment of
the strategies used against the new kind of threat; a concentration of intelligence efforts on
detecting weapons of mass destruction; and, the facilitation of international cooperation in
curtailing the threat of such weapons. 718 As described by Schneider:

The new program, called the Counter-Proliferation Initiative (CPI), provides
funding to prepare for combating foes with nuclear, biological, and chemical
(NBC) and missile weapons on future battlefields, improves monitoring for
locating rival NBC/missile programs, improves theater defenses, and develops
weapons capable of penetrating and destroying underground facilities. US
efforts will include a diplomatic offensive to persuade US allies to take similar
counter-proliferation steps... The central thrust of the CPI is to prepare US and
allied forces for dealing with future enemies on the battlefield who are armed
with weapons of mass destruction... An important secondary thrust of the CPI is
to provide the Commander-in-Chief with the tools to disarm an adversary
unilaterally if necessary, before the adversary can initiate the use of WMD in
situations where we are on a collision course with such an enemy and no
alternative course seems feasible. 719

Aspin stated that the United States was now undertaking a campaign to improve and
specialise military capabilities, doctrine, training and contingency plans to pursue such
counter-proliferation policies. Further to this, he signified that the Department of Defense
was tripling the number of people assigned to gathering counter-proliferation intelligence.
The DOD Counter-Proliferation Initiative (CPI) would encompass: extra preparations for
countering nuclear, biological, chemical (NBC) and missile weapons on future battle zones
through changes in contingency planning, doctrine, equipment, and training; 720 increased
monitoring of specific NBC/missile programs on a global level, including a sounder
coordination of US defense and intelligence operations directed against emerging programs
and arsenals; improved non-nuclear weapons capable of penetrating and destroying
underground facilities; a US diplomatic offensive aimed at NATO, Japan and other allies as a
means of persuading them to take on similar initiatives – thereby strengthening their own
counter-proliferation efforts; and accelerated funding for high-technology defense programs
as a means to detect and locate mobile missile systems. 721 Additionally, it would: enlist
Japan in a cooperative effort to develop a regional ballistic missile defense program against a

718 Counter-proliferation Initiative, PDD/NCS 18, December 1993, Presidential Decision Directives, Clinton Administration
720 Ibid.
721 Ibid.
potential North Korean nuclear missile threat; renew the focus on creating effective theater missile defenses capable of intercepting missiles with NBC warheads;\footnote{Known as the Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) System. See “Aspin Emphasizes Missile Defense in Proliferation Approach,” \textit{Defense Daily}, December 8, 1993, p. 347.} alter the 1972 ABM Treaty to permit the development, testing, and deployment of an effective US theater defense system and create an interservice body as a means of dealing with defenses against biological weapons.\footnote{“Aspin Emphasizes Missile Defense in Proliferation Approach.” Also, Bill Gertz, “Aspin Outlines Threat of Arms Proliferation: Pentagon Unveils Counterstrategy,” \textit{Washington Times}, December 8, 1993, p. 4. During the Gulf War, the United States forces failed to stockpile enough vaccine to inoculate all personnel to prevent infection from germ warfare agents, had they been used by Iraq.} While positing such new military and intelligence initiatives, Aspin also indicated that diplomacy, export controls, treaty restrictions, security assurances, non-military sanctions and economic cooperation would still remain an important component with the US security framework of preventing, and coping with, the proliferation of WMD.\footnote{Schneider, “Radical Responses to Radical Regimes,” pp. 1-3.} Nonetheless, the role of nuclear weapons would remain an integral part of the CPI as it would provide improved US capability to deal with, in Aspin’s words, a “Saddam Hussein with nukes,” either in a reactive or a pre-emptive mode, primarily the former, but also the latter when no other option provided a better means of defense.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}} As further articulated by Schneider:

This new US policy anticipates a troubled world in which more states acquire WMD – with some of those states governed by dangerous and hostile radical regimes. Hopefully, leaders of such states can be deterred from WMD use. However, it is for those states who are willing to accept risks, are very dissatisfied with the status quo, and may not be deterred by threats to their people or their nation’s economy that the DOD Counter-Proliferation Initiative was designed.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}

The arms control community regarded Aspin’s strategy as a declaration of war on traditional non-proliferation tools such as diplomacy and arms control. For them, Aspin appeared to be suggesting that failure in US and international non-proliferation efforts was preordained, even though he did try to qualify his “declaration” by stating that “prevention remains our preeminent goal... The CPI in no way means we will lessen our non-proliferation efforts.”\footnote{Aspin, Address to National Academy of Sciences.} The dichotomy of opinion at the time was expressed by Angus McColl:

To some analysts, pursuit of both paths appears to pose a conflict of interest. Many proponents of traditional diplomatic non-proliferation efforts fear that the
coercive element of counter proliferation, especially the threat to use military force, will undermine the international cooperation and consensus upon which non-proliferation depends for its success. They also criticize counter-proliferation as a short-term solution to the WMD proliferation problem because it does not directly confront the long-term security concerns that motivate regional adversaries to acquire WMD in the first place. Others point out that some people view counter-proliferation as a panacea, whereas, at best, it is probably only a stopgap measure that could be stillborn if required technologies cannot be developed. They know that military operations are not without risk, pointing to past intelligence and operational failures. Finally, some people fear that counter-proliferation will undermine the traditional US leadership that has been so vital to negotiating, implementing, and improving various non-proliferation treaties and agreements.\footnote{Angus McColl, “Is Counter-proliferation Compatible with Non-proliferation? Rethinking the Defense Counter-proliferation Initiative,” \textit{Airpower Journal}, Spring, 1997, 11: p. 100.}

Aspin’s announcement also engendered reactions from various executive departments and agencies. The State Department viewed it as a challenge to its preeminent role in dealing with all things related to proliferation. Officials there moved right away to limit the scope of the CPI to protect their role as vicars of non-proliferation policy.\footnote{Chris Williams, “DOD’s Counter-proliferation Initiative: A Critical Assessment,” \textit{Fighting Proliferation: New Concerns for the Nineties}, edited by Henry Sokolski, Washington, DC: Air University Press, 1996, pp. 1-3.} The Department of Energy (DOE) – particularly its Defense Programs element – saw the CPI as a means of reversing the downward spiral of its budget. The national laboratories, in particular, saw it as a potential godsend; after all, their primary mission – the development and testing of nuclear weapons – clearly did not have the support of the Clinton Administration. Thus, DOE scientists sought to sustain certain critical skills through challenging projects other than nuclear testing – and the CPI held great promise in that regard. The military services reacted sceptically, seeing the CPI as: (1) a potential drain on service budgets already strained; and (2) as another OSD driven “initiative,” such as the Strategic Defense Initiative, imposed from above without a great deal of forethought and with little or no involvement of the military. Their concern was heightened when Dr Harold Smith, assistant to the Secretary of Defense for atomic energy, speaking at a conference in New Mexico, suggested that the DOD would budget $300-400 million per year on the DCI, mostly for new hardware programs.\footnote{Ibid.} How would OSD seek to pay for this new, unfunded mandate? Each of the services fully expected to be hit with a “tax” that would further undermine readiness and slow the few remaining modernisation projects. The services also reacted negatively to the blunt challenge issued by OSD’s Dr Carter. In a July 1994 interview with Jane’s Defence Weekly, Carter warned that DOD civilians would dictate to the services how much would be spent on the CPI. As stated,
if the services “do not hear the music, then we will have to do it ourselves.” Such words clearly did not convey a strong willingness on the part of senior OSD officials involved in the CPI to take into account service concerns. Indeed, as observed by analyst Joseph Pilat, the counter-proliferation debate became unnecessarily “complicated by divergent bureaucratic interests and the absence of a widely accepted definition of the term.”

**Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) 1994**

Nonetheless, regardless of the conjecture and debates at the time, it was clear that the usage of counter-proliferation and the role that US nuclear weapons would play was given greater weight and clarified within a formal review of nuclear policy and force structure. Initiated in October 1993, the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) was described as the most ambitious review of US nuclear weapons and nuclear planning in decades. The six working groups were to investigate: the role of nuclear weapons in US security strategy; nuclear force structure and infrastructure; nuclear force operations and Command & Control; nuclear safety, security, and use control; the relationship between alternative US nuclear postures and counter-proliferation policy; the relationship between alternative US nuclear postures and the threat reduction policy with the former Soviet Union. Of the six working groups that were created to review US nuclear policy and force structure, one was specifically given the role of investigating the link between alternative US nuclear postures and counter-proliferation policy. The group approved STRATCOM’s incorporation of regional WMD contingencies into nuclear war planning. During the meeting process, Ashton Carter’s special assistant and former professor at the University of Maryland, Dr. Steven Fetter, stated vehemently that nuclear weapons could only deter nuclear use or acquisition, although the effect on acquisition was intensely debated. For Fetter, no reasonable contribution was likely

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734 Ibid.
735 STRATCOM’s responsibility is directed in the Unified Command Plan. Apart from overall responsibility for maintaining the strategic nuclear war plans and reconnaissance forces, STRATCOM provides theater nuclear and counter-proliferation support to combatant commanders to assist them in developing tailored annexes designed to counter weapons of mass destruction. STRATCOM also provides specialised planning and consequence analysis, when requested by other combatant commanders. Additionally, CINCSTRAT works closely with other combatant commanders to initiate crisis action procedures contained in the Nuclear Supplement to the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan. In crisis situations, when assigned as a supporting CINC, CINCSTRAT supports planning and execution of military operations for the combatant commander. See: Vice Admiral Richard W. Mies, US Navy, Director, Strategic Target Plans, US Strategic Command, Commander, Allied Submarines, Mediterranean, Commander, Submarine Allied Command, Atlantic, written response to Strom Thurmond, Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, US Senate, June 15, 1998, reprinted in US Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Nominations Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Second Session, 105th Congress, Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1999, S. HRG. 105-868, pp. 362-363.
to come from nuclear weapons in deterring chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction. For the military leaders of STRATCOM, it was all or nothing if deterrence was to be seen as credible. The documents from the group’s meetings provide a sound insight into the inner “ideology” of STRATCOM and its perception of the role of nuclear weapons against proliferating states. For STRATCOM, while nuclear weapons may not have directly impacted Third World countries’ acquisition of WMD, maintaining nuclear weapons could support US political aims. This would be accomplished, it was argued, “through demonstrating intent by maintaining an arsenal and continuously providing war plans to support regional CINCs [Commanders-in-Chief]...” As stated:

…the US should preserve its options for responding to the situation by maintaining its current policy in which the DOE does not preclude first use of nuclear weapons. While it would not be in our interest to unleash the destructive power of a nuclear weapon, the loss of even one American city, or the endangerment of vital American interests overseas is unacceptable. To counter this threat, the US should not rule out the pre-emptive first use of nuclear weapons. In addition, following the use of WMD, the US should again seek to preserve its options. The US policy should not require retaliation with nuclear weapons, but it should leave that option open as one of a complete spectrum of possible options.

The Nuclear Posture Review of 1994 affirmed the role of nuclear weapons and endorsed STRATCOM’s force structure as posited above. Not only did it accept STRATCOM’s broad nuclear deterrence vision, it also subscribed to the philosophy that deep and extensive reductions in US nuclear weapons may influence proliferators negatively as they attempt to match US numbers or allies under US protection – such as Japan and Germany – and go nuclear. Within the counter-proliferation group there was a “consensus that [the] full range of nuclear options was desirable to deter proliferant nations,” and the majority wanted the “unique contribution of nuclear deterrence to counter-proliferation” to be “stated more forcefully.” Additionally, the group also argued that nuclear weapons should remain as

738 Ibid.
the core method of destroying specific types of targets including deeply buried structures and facilities.\footnote{US Strategic Command, Nuclear Posture Review Slides, Update Briefing, December 3, 1993, slide 7. Partially declassified and released under the Freedom of Information Act.} It was in relation to the scenario of deterring terrorist use of WMD that the group envisaged limitations to the role of nuclear weapons and stipulated that nuclear deterrence should only be applicable to state sponsored terrorism as non-state actors would not be deterred by the US nuclear posture.\footnote{US Strategic Command, J51 Memorandum, NPR Report #80, Working Group #5, February 23, 1994, p. 2. Partially declassified and released under the Freedom of Information Act.} However, this inclusion was only temporary as the Joint Chiefs of Staff would later include non-state actors as potential targets for US nuclear weapons in their Joint Theater Nuclear Doctrine publication from early 1996 (discussed later in this chapter).\footnote{This document is available online at the Joint Chief of Staff electronic library, available at <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp3_12_1.pdf>.} In essence, STRATCOM was pleased with the outcome and impact it had on the NPR, for when the findings were conveyed to Congress in September 1994, nuclear weapons featured extensively in counter-proliferation roles. Interestingly, such findings were largely absent from the “spin the Clinton Administration gave on the NPR in public, which instead portrayed the NPR as a continuation of the disarmament process and a further reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in US national security policy.”\footnote{Hans M. Kristensen, \textit{US Nuclear Strategy Reform in the 1990s}, The Nautilus Institute, March 2000, p. 16.}

In September 1994, the Clinton Administration approved the recommendations of the Pentagon’s Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). A significant conclusion of this review was that the United States would retain a triad of strategic nuclear forces with the capacity to deter any potential hostile state or group – who had access to strategic nuclear forces – from acting against US interests and would be able to convince the state or group that seeking “a nuclear advantage would be futile.”\footnote{Clinton, \textit{A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement}, 1995, p. 15.} As a result, the 1994 National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement paper argued that the United States would continue to maintain nuclear forces of sufficient size and capability as a means “to hold at risk a broad range of assets valued by such political and military leaders.”\footnote{Ibid.} Indeed, encompassed in the NPR’s “broad range of assets” and strategic nuclear force posture were: 14 Trident submarines, each carrying 24 Trident II submarine-launched ballistic missiles; 3 wings of Minuteman III intercontinental range ballistic missiles, each equipped with a single warhead;
66 B-52 bombers capable of carrying air-launched cruise missiles; and 20 B-2 bombers capable of carrying gravity bombs.\textsuperscript{747}

The Nuclear Posture Review reaffirmed the need for ICBMs and SLBMs and signified that it would undertake “extensive studies to identify how to keep ICBMs and SLBMs on alert for decades to come.”\textsuperscript{748} Additionally, it highlighted that the DOD would develop an investment plan for ICBM service life extension which would encompass new technologies in the “propulsion systems, guidance systems and re-entry vehicles.”\textsuperscript{749} Such programs, it was stated, would extend the service life of this system through to 2020. Other programs and initiatives encompassed in the NPR further illustrated the significance that nuclear weapons would play in US security strategy in the post-Cold War era. These included: the Minuteman III propulsion replacement program – a $2.9 billion effort that included repouring rocket motors; the $1.6 billion Guidance Replacement Program to provide a full upgrade for aging Minuteman III electronics; modification of the B-1 and B-2 fleet for conventional missions to help keep these strategic-alternative systems ready; investment in a $4.5 billion D-5 backfit program to replace C-4 missiles aboard Trident submarines; and a $250 million Trident Navigation Commonality Program to provide an updated, D-5 compatible navigation suite.\textsuperscript{750} The NPR also contained nuclear infrastructure requirements for the DOE as a means to maintain the enduring stockpile, namely to: preserve nuclear weapons capability without underground testing or the production of fissile material; develop a stockpile surveillance engineering base; provide the capability to refabricate and certify weapon types in the enduring stockpile; maintain the capability to design, fabricate and certify new warheads; maintain a science and technology base; ensure tritium availability; and accomplish these tasks with no new-design nuclear warhead production.\textsuperscript{751}

It was evident that the 1994 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) reaffirmed the role of nuclear weapons in US Security and that such weapons would be retained as a means of deterring “any future hostile foreign leadership with access to strategic nuclear forces from acting against our vital interests and to convince it that seeking a nuclear advantage” would be fruitless. “Therefore we will continue to maintain nuclear forces of sufficient size and

\textsuperscript{748} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{749} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{750} Nuclear Posture Review Implementation, PDD/NSC-30.
\textsuperscript{751} Ibid.
capability to hold at risk a broad range of assets valued by such political and military leaders.”

The Nuclear Posture Review assessed the size and role of US nuclear forces in the global arena and the extent to which the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, rather than the nuclear arsenal of a hostile superpower, posed a security risk to the United States. However, while it reiterated the significance of the Counter-Proliferation Initiative (CPI) and in the instance of a potential WMD threat or use, senior political and military leaders also required a wide array of options, particularly those of a non-nuclear nature. According to some observers, it was here that in NPR, the Department of Defense attempted to strike a balance between what it deemed to be “leading the way to a safer world” and hedging against the unexpected. As stated by William Perry, “in the post-Cold War environment the United States continues to require a nuclear deterrent. The strategic triad has been streamlined and adjusted, as have non-strategic nuclear forces, to account for the new role nuclear weapons play in US national security. Major force reductions and cost savings are already underway, leading to a smaller, safer, and more secure US nuclear force.”

In one sense, while the Pentagon indicated that the NPR had changed the way it thought about nuclear weapons and the changing nature of their role, it still quietly endorsed the importance of nuclear weapons as a means to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As Deputy Secretary of Defense John Deutch explained to the Senate, “an examination of the remaining nuclear threat from Russia and the non-Russia republics that possess nuclear weapons as well as the emerging threat from other countries around the world indicate that the United States will continue to need nuclear weapons for deterrence for the foreseeable future.” The NPR was widely reported at the time to provide only non-nuclear responses to hostile use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in regional conflicts. However, nuclear weapons were clearly advocated in counter-proliferation roles pertaining to deterring both acquisition and use. Moreover, several non-strategic nuclear weapon missions in support of the non-proliferation scenarios were, according to Kristensen and Handler, “deleted from public record.”

753 Ibid.
754 Ibid.
755 US Congress, Senate Committee on Armed Services, Briefing on Results of the Nuclear Posture Review, 103rd Congress, 2nd session, 22 September 1994, pp. 9, 10, 16, 17.
Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations (Joint Pub 3-12) 1993

The impact of STRATCOM was also apparent in instruments outside of the NPR domain and needs to be acknowledged in both emphasising and complimenting the role of nuclear weapons within the Clinton security framework. This was evident when in April 29, 1993, the first Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations (Joint Pub 3-12) was published, stating that with the conclusion of the Cold War, the reorganisation of US military planning for joint operations was needed. The doctrine utilised Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) as the key term in defining the role of nuclear deterrence in US security strategy:

> The fundamental purpose of nuclear forces is to deter the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), and to serve as a hedge against the emergence of an overwhelming threat... credible and capable nuclear weapons are essential for national security.\(^\text{758}\)

For the main extent, the Joint Pub 3-12 transferred notions and strategies of Cold War deterrence against the Soviet Union over to the new security arena that encompassed a more regional context. STRATCOM’s efforts to formulate a regional nuclear deterrence against “rogue” states armed with WMD, engendered notions of nuclear strike options and requirements for new capabilities, including those of a low low-yield nature. As stated:

> WMD used on US forces would cause a significant tactical or operational loss; greatly change the character of the war, putting the outcome in doubt and threatening escalation; leave the United States with a difficult choice: to retaliate or not to retaliate. A selective capability of being able to use lower-yield nuclear weapons in retaliation, without destabilizing the conflict, is a useful alternative for the US National Command Authorities (NCA).\(^\text{759}\)

The proponents of Joint Pub 3-12 argued that it caught up with the realities of nuclear planning that was well underway at the time.\(^\text{760}\) Even before JP 3-12 was approved, STRATCOM planners had been undertaking an extensive modernisation process of weapon systems and nuclear planning capabilities as a means to target specific states on a global scale. As a result, the “new” doctrine JP 3-12 was based on existing key nuclear planning documents that directed detailed nuclear planning against rogue states: NUWEP (Guidance for the Employment of Nuclear weapons) issued by Defense Secretary Dick Cheney in


\(^{759}\) Ibid.

\(^{760}\) Ibid.

**Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations (Joint Pub 3-12) 1995**

During December 1995, the JCS released a newer version of Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations (Joint Pub 3-12 1995). As in the case of its predecessor, STRATCOM played a leading role. The 1995 Joint Pub 3-12 was a more thorough document than the 1993 version, expanding on the role of nuclear deterrence and force posture and deployment considerations in much greater detail. As indicated in the above, the Clinton Administration’s NPR affirmed the importance of nuclear weapons and maintained a Cold War-type triad of nuclear warheads on submarines, land-based missiles and bombers. Joint Pub 3-12 reiterated this expansive role of nuclear deterrence outside of Russia and China to those deemed as “rogue” states. While the 1995 Joint Pub 3-12 doctrine was published after the 1995 Congressional ban on low-yield nuclear weapons development (the so-called PLYWD legislation), it nonetheless repeated the need for such weapons, particularly in relation to regional conflicts.762 The expanded role of nuclear deterrence beyond nuclear to also cover non-nuclear opponents armed with chemical or biological (or just ballistic) missiles had real implications for the NPT. The indefinite extension of the treaty was secured partially because the US (together with the other five original nuclear powers) pledged not to use nuclear weapons to threaten or attack non-nuclear states party to (and in compliance with) the NPT. However, since the NPT only regulates nuclear but not other forms of WMD, the expanded US nuclear deterrence meant that a non-nuclear NPT country could potentially find itself a target for US nuclear weapons threat or use if it possessed chemical or biological weapons. Proponents argued that, as with its predecessor, the 1995 Joint Pub 3-12 brought official nuclear doctrine “up to the realities of nuclear planning as it occurred at the time”763 and reaffirmed that as per the NPR of 1994, nuclear weapons would remain fundamental to the US security strategy in the post-Cold War era. As stated:

US nuclear forces serve to deter the use of WMD across the range of military operations. From a massive exchange of nuclear weapons to limited use within

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a theater, US nuclear capabilities must confront an enemy with risks of unacceptable damage and disproportionate loss should the enemy choose to introduce WMD in a conflict.\textsuperscript{764}

As a result of the increased focus on regional military operations and nuclear deterrence of “rogue” states armed with WMD, the 1995 Joint Pub 3-12 addressed mainly strategic nuclear operations. It did include descriptions of theater nuclear operations, however, this was from a strategic context and threats from terrorists were only looked at in the context of securing nuclear weapons against theft. Such issues, as well the targeting of “rogue” states and terrorists, were addressed in a more in-depth level in the Doctrine for Joint Theater Nuclear Operations 1996.\textsuperscript{765}

**Doctrine for Joint Theater Nuclear Operations 1996**

Efforts to further align nuclear deterrence with the requirements for regional conflicts resulted in the publication in February 1996 of a doctrine document specifically focused on theater nuclear operations. The Doctrine for Joint Theater Nuclear Operations (Joint Pub 3-12.1) outlined a regional security situation where the risk of use of nuclear and other forms of WMD was said to have increased after the Cold War:

> The dissolution of the Soviet Union has greatly reduced the possibility of a large scale nuclear exchange. However, the loss of the stability inherent in a clearly bipolar world has increased the likelihood of a nuclear exchange by regional powers. In addition, the threat to the United States, its allies, and its deployed forces due to the proliferation of WMD has grown following the end of the Cold War. The flow of advanced technology to potential or actual hostile nations has led to a proliferation of systems (missiles and aircraft) capable of delivering WMD. The possibility of a WMD exchange in a regional conflict has risen dramatically, threatening our forward-deployed forces and challenging our long-range power projection capabilities.\textsuperscript{766}

The emergence of a specific doctrine for theater nuclear operations followed on the heels of efforts in 1993-1995 within STRATCOM to more clearly define how nuclear deterrence would work against regional aggressors armed with WMD. With its focus on regional nuclear deterrence, Joint Pub 3-12.1 included important details that were not described in Joint Pub 3-12. Foremost among these were the kind of targets that

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{765} Kristensen, “Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations.”
\end{footnotesize}
might be subject to nuclear strikes in a regional conflict. Enemy combat forces and facilities that may be likely targets for nuclear strikes, included: WMD and their delivery systems, as well as associated command and control, production, and logistical support units; Ground combat units and their associated command and control and support units; Air defense facilities and support installations; Naval installations, combat vessels, and associated support facilities and command and control capabilities; Non-state actors (facilities and operation centers) that possess WMD; and Underground facilities. 767 As explained by Kristensen:

The focus was on the regions, and in February 1996 regional nuclear counter-proliferation was formally enshrined into nuclear doctrine when the JCS published its Doctrine for Joint Theater Nuclear Operations (Joint Pub 3-12.1). This document “translates” the overall joint nuclear doctrine from 1995 for use in regional scenarios such as in Europe, the Middle East and the Korean Peninsula. The emphasis on WMD is striking. Joint Pub 3-12.1 defines that the threat of nuclear exchange by regional powers and the proliferation of WMD have grown following the end of the Cold War... Short, medium, and intermediate-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear, biological, or chemical warheads, the doctrine concludes, are “the primary threat” in theaters. 768 Most of these target categories were “mirrored” from Cold War nuclear targeting onto regional scenarios, but there was one big surprise: “non-state actors.” The 1994 Nuclear Posture Review spent considerable time analysing the effect of nuclear deterrence against regional opponents, and while the review concluded that nuclear weapons should have a prominent role against “rogue” states armed with WMD, it also concluded that nuclear weapons were unlikely to have any deterrence effect on non-state actors. 769 STRATCOM was a participant in that analysis but apparently did not let the findings affect the language of Joint Pub 3-12.1 which fully endorsed non-state actors as a target. Indeed, it was apparent that while the Clinton Administration retained much of the existing US nuclear weapons policy and force posture and affirmed the role of nuclear weapons in US security strategy, it also began to develop targeting options for the use of nuclear weapons in response to chemical or biological attack from states and regions other than Russia, and as conveyed in its declaratory policy, the Administration did not rule out the possible first use of nuclear

767 Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Theater Nuclear Operations, February 9, 1996, Chapter 3, p. 6.
768 Kristensen, “Nuclear Futures,” p. 17.
weapons in these circumstances. The Doctrine for Joint Theater Nuclear Operations (Joint Pub 3-12.1) was testament to this mode of thinking.

**Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) 1997**

Undertaken in 1997, the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) examined US nuclear strategy and force posture and once again, reaffirmed the continuing need for “a robust and flexible nuclear deterrent.” In simple terms, nuclear forces were assessed and deemed to be an integral part of United States’ security strategy. The review of defense “issues” encompassed those pertaining to threat, strategy, force structure considerations, and finally, resource issues. As the fourth comprehensive review of the US military since the end of the Cold War, the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) was an attempt to extend on the United States’ experience with the policy and forces of the 1991 Base Force Review, the 1993 Bottom-Up Review (BUR) and the 1995 Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces (CORM). It was argued that as a result of such reviews, the US had made extensive adjustments in its forces, procedures and organisations. While it had “accumulated a wealth of experience” in a new and constantly changing security environment, it recognised that this was a propitious time to re-examine its assumptions, programs and operations. Indeed, “the rapid rate of change in the world since the end of the Cold War underscores the importance of undertaking such a re-examination on a regular basis.”

The QDR was a collaborative effort between the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the Joint Staff, with extensive participation from the Military Services and the Commanders–in-Chief of the Combatant Commands. The Review was designed to be both bottom-up and top-down: It was bottom-up in the sense that the QDR sought expertise and ideas from the Department and solicited additional ideas and support from beyond DOD. The effort was top-down in the sense that the Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff guided the process to ensure that all choices and alternatives provided the

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770 The QDR is required by the Military Force Structure Review Act, which was included as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997. The Department of Defense designed the QDR to be a fundamental and comprehensive examination of America’s defense needs from 1997 to 2015: potential threats; strategy; force structure; readiness posture; military modernization programs; defense infrastructure; and other elements of the defense program. The QDR is intended to provide a blueprint for a strategy-based, balanced and affordable defense program.


773 Ibid.
capabilities necessary to execute the strategy.\textsuperscript{774} The QDR was structured into three organisational tiers or levels. At the first level, seven panels conducted reviews of strategy, force structure, readiness, modernisation, infrastructure, human resources and information operations and intelligence. At the second level, an “Integration Group” collated the panel results into a streamlined set of “integrated options” designed to be consistent with the defense strategy. At the third level, a Senior Steering Group, co-chaired by the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, oversaw the entire process and made recommendations to the Secretary of Defense, who, in turn, reviewed the recommendations in consultation with the Chairman and other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.\textsuperscript{775} It was here that a road map was established, requiring close adherence to the following milestones:

- **Start-up and guidance phase (December 1996):** Identify issues, provide guidance and direction to panels, and begin evaluation of the threat assessment.
- **Strategy and fiscal context phase (January 1997):** Present defense strategy and projection of fiscal environment and program risks.
- **Analysis phase (February 1997):** Report initial results of panel reviews.
- **Integration phase (March 1997):** Evaluate and refine integrated options within the defense strategy framework.
- **Decision phase (April 1997):** Present refined alternatives to Secretary of Defense for decision and identify issues for further evaluation.\textsuperscript{776}

Drawing on the basic principles of the Review, work in each phase built directly upon the work of the preceding phase, leading ultimately to the decisions that are conveyed below. Work in the second and third phases began simultaneously and was initially conducted largely in parallel because of the enormity of the task and the tight schedule. The second and third phases were then reconciled in the last two phases in order to produce an integrated result. The National Defense Panel received regular briefings on the work of the panels as well as on the integration options and decisions. The National Security Council staff and other Administration agencies also participated at various points in the Review. As the decision options began to take shape, the Department began consultation with Congress. The President reviewed and then approved the defense strategy and the final decisions regarding program directions.\textsuperscript{777} For Thomason, Richanbach, Fiore and Christie, the QDR process

\textsuperscript{774} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{775} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{776} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{777} Ibid.
fostered a range of structured comparisons of alternative ways to implement the newly articulated defense strategy – “Shape, Respond, and Prepare.” Through this process the Secretary of Defense made a series of choices among options, or “paths,” and selected a path to “balance available resources across the major requirements of the strategy, both for the near and the longer term.” Three paths were explicitly described in the QDR report. Each was said to be an equal cost option and the three were compared for their relative prospects of achieving the capabilities to carry out each dimension of the “Shape, Respond, and Prepare” strategic construct at acceptable levels of risk. At the Secretary’s direction, each path was examined to ensure that it was fiscally executable. Overall, and most importantly, the QDR review concluded that the policy and strategy to maintain US nuclear forces was “still correct.” Indeed, as stated by the Secretary of Defense at the time, William Cohen, “it is imperative that the United States maintain its military superiority in the face of evolving, as well as discontinuous, threats and challenges. Without such superiority, our ability to exert global leadership and to create international conditions conducive to the achievement of our national goals would be in doubt.” Moreover, as explained by Conetta:

> The priority that the QDR places on maintaining military superiority and the role it accords military power as a means of influence constitute a wager about the future character of international competition. A contending view holds that military contests among the great and emerging powers will be less important in the new era than in the old, while economic and other forms of international competition will be more critical. The BUR partially reflected this view in recognizing the primacy of economic and social renewal as a national goal. Against this perspective, the QDR implies that military power is now and will continue to be as relevant as ever to the attainment of national goals.

**Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 60 1997**

During November 1997, and in response to the QDR, President Clinton signed and approved a new Decision Directive (known as Presidential Decision Directive [PDD] 60) on nuclear weapons employment policy guidance. While US nuclear plans had been updated regularly and refined through Presidential Decisions such as the Presidential Nuclear Initiatives and the

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781 William S. Cohen, quoted in Conetta, “Backwards Into the Future.”

782 Conetta, “Backwards Into the Future.”
Nuclear Posture Review, this was the first revision of such guidance in over 15 years.\textsuperscript{783} The directive considered the changes in policy and force posture brought on by the end of the Cold War and expanded on the findings of previous policy reviews, such as the NPR and QDR. According to The Washington Post, the highly classified Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 60 contained language that “would permit” US nuclear strikes after enemy attacks using chemical or biological weapons. As stated, “rogue states, a terminology commonly used by the Pentagon for countries such as Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea and Syria, are specifically listed as possible targets in the event of regional conflicts or crises.”\textsuperscript{784} Aside from positing the broad Presidential guidance for developing operational plans, the directive articulated guidelines for maintaining nuclear deterrence and US nuclear forces.\textsuperscript{785} As stated:

...the United States must maintain the assured response capability to inflict “unacceptable damage” against those assets a potential enemy values most. It also posits that the US must continue to plan a range of options to insure that the US can respond to aggression in a manner appropriate to the provocation, rather than being left with an “all or nothing” response. The new guidance also continues the policy that the US will not rely on “launch on warning,” but will maintain the capability to respond promptly to any attack, thus complicating an adversary’s calculations. However, the new guidance eliminates previous Cold War rhetoric including references to “winning a protracted nuclear war.”\textsuperscript{786}

Moreover, PDD 60 reaffirmed that the United States should have a triad of strategic deterrent forces as a means to complicate an adversary’s attack and defense planning. It also argued that deterrent forces and their associated command and control should be “flexible and survivable, to ensure that the US would be able to make an adequate and appropriate response.”\textsuperscript{787} In essence, the PDD 60 ordered the military to no longer target Russian conventional forces and industry, but focus on destroying nuclear forces as well as the military and civilian leadership. In simple terms, it replaced a nearly 17-year old directive signed by President Reagan in 1981 at the height of the Cold War in which “fighting and winning a protracted nuclear war against Russia would no longer be an objective.”\textsuperscript{788} PDD 60 was drafted by an extremely small and specialised group, led by Special Assistant Robert

\textsuperscript{783} PDD/NSC 60.
\textsuperscript{784} R. Jeffrey Smith, “Clinton Directive Changes Strategy on Nuclear Arms.”
\textsuperscript{785} PDD/NSC 60.
\textsuperscript{786} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{787} Ibid.
Bell of the National Security Council and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Affairs, Franklin Miller. There was no review or panel, and while the State Department was supposedly involved, the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency were not consulted, signifying an inability to consider the impact on non-proliferation efforts. According to Bell, the three basic situations in which the United States might use nuclear weapons were not changed by the new PDD 60. The criterion were as follows: if the attacking country has nuclear weapons; if the aggressor is not in compliance with the international treaty to curb the spread of nuclear weapons; or if it is allied to a nuclear power in its attack on the United States. While Bell emphasised that the PDD 60 reflected the reality of the time in which an attacker using weapons of mass destruction could face nuclear reprisal, Kristensen argued that “a reaffirmation of the commitments to non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament by removing chemical, biological, and radiological weapons and facilities from US war planning would be a more fitting post-Cold War measure.” As the above Clinton initiatives and documents suggest, planning for nuclear war in “the Third World” against states and non-state actors evolved significantly after the Gulf War of 1991. For nuclear planners, the logical conclusion of proliferation and the US renunciation of chemical and biological weapons, was that nuclear weapons would now remain prominent in deterring the acquisition and use of WMD. Behind a mask of military secrecy, planning in the form of guidance documents and initiatives progressed virtually unopposed. As Kristensen further lamented, “with little informed opposition and public debate, the result was a nuclear doctrine that borrowed heavily from Cold War nuclear thinking. President Clinton’s Decision Directive of November 1997 merely permitted this planning to continue.”

**National Security Strategy 1999**

Interestingly, such planning was not mentioned nor addressed in President Clinton’s 1999 National Security Strategy Report. The report, entitled “A National Security Strategy for a New Century,” outlined the President’s vision for America’s role in the world and discussed the Administration’s international priorities. The three core objectives of NSS1999 were: to

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789 Kristensen, “Nuclear Futures,” p. 23.
790 Ibid.
792 Smith, “Clinton Directive Changes Strategy on Nuclear Arms.”
793 Kristensen, “Nuclear Futures,” p. 23.
794 Ibid.
795 Ibid.
enhance America’s security; to bolster America’s economic prosperity; and to promote democracy and human rights abroad. All of these themes were present in the NSS1998 and were expanded upon in this document. Central to the President’s strategy for achieving these aims was US engagement and leadership in world affairs. The NSS1999 placed less of an emphasis on the role of military power in promoting American interests as it was not considered “a substitute for other forms of engagement, such as diplomatic, economic, scientific, technological, cultural and educational activities.” While Clinton’s NSS placed more of an emphasis on “soft power” and the ability to influence foreign powers through cultural or ideological means, the role of nuclear weapons in US security strategy was conspicuously presented in a non-proliferation “only” fashion. As stated:

We have a fundamental responsibility to limit the spread of nuclear weapons and reduce the danger of nuclear war. To this end, the United States remains committed to bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) into force... and is encouraging all other states to do the same. We are encouraging all states that have not done so to sign and ratify the CTBT. We remain committed to obtaining Senate advice and consent toward ratification of the CTBT... The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the cornerstone of international nuclear non-proliferation efforts and reinforces regional and global security by creating confidence in the non-nuclear commitments of its parties... To reinforce the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, we seek to strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system and achieve a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament... Through the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program and other initiatives, we aim to strengthen controls over weapons, usable fissile material and prevent the theft or diversion of WMD and related material and technology from the former Soviet Union... At the Cologne summit in June 1999, the leaders of the G-8 nations affirmed their intention to establish arrangements to protect and safely manage weapons-grade fissile material no longer required for defense purposes, especially plutonium... We seek to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) with a new international regime to ensure compliance.

Despite Clinton’s willingness to embrace internationalist approaches to nuclear weapons proliferation, his tenure in office saw the continued (and potentially offensive) role that nuclear weapons would play in his security strategy. As evident in the above excerpt from

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797 Ibid.
798 The term “soft power” was coined by Joseph Nye, who served as Assistant Secretary of State during the Clinton Administration.
800 Ibid.
801 Ibid.
NSS1999, when it came to the public domain, the Clinton Administration emphasised its multilateral nuclear drives and initiatives, but in reality, hedged its approach and kept the nuclear platform intact.

From Clinton to Bush

When looking at the nuclear weapons policy initiatives, policies, documents and instruments of the Clinton Administration, it would be easy to assume that George W. Bush merely continued the trend. However, if we are to compare both the Clinton Doctrine and the Bush Doctrine it is apparent that Bush clearly downplayed traditional non-proliferation measures in favour of an assertive counter-proliferation stance; one that encompassed a driving assertion of the nuclear option. Whereas the National Security Strategy of 1999 issued by Clinton detailed action on initiatives such as the Biological Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and the START agreements, the National Security Strategy of 2002 outlined its non-proliferation activities in one paragraph, mentioning a recent Group of Eight agreement gauged towards the disposal of weapons in Russia. There is no doubt that the Clinton Administration was a key factor in formally defining and maintaining the role of nuclear weapons in US security strategy. However, while the concept of prevention as a means to counter the perceived threat of an adversarial use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) was explicit in the Bush Administration’s National Security Strategy of 2002, and evident in several of the requirements of the 1993 Defense Counter-proliferation Initiative (CPI) that called for an “improved counterforce capabilities to destroy adversary WMD,” they cannot be viewed in the same degree. That is, the National Security Strategy of September 2002, as well as the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) of 2002, expanded on the Clinton platform in a more vigorous fashion, calling for contingency plans to be made for nuclear attacks on seven nations, in both “pre-emptive” and wartime counter-proliferation operations. While it is apparent that Clinton’s guidance documents and instruments (discussed throughout this chapter) emphasised that the significance of nuclear weapons remained a central pillar in US security strategy, they appeared to be at least somewhat balanced with a national strategy predicated on traditional and more non-proliferation measures – albeit at times rhetorically. Although there were occasions where pre-emptive or preventive measures were actively contemplated by the Clinton Administration against proliferant states, such as North Korea in

802 Counter-proliferation Initiative, PDD/NSC 18.
1993-1994, the Administration’s general approach revolved more around diplomatic dissuasion than military operations.

Perhaps the greatest dichotomy between the two strategies, and certainly the most contentious, was the Bush Administration’s unbridled determination in not allowing enemies of the United States to strike first, emphasising that the risks of inaction or containment in specific cases may outweigh the risks of action. The National Security Strategy of 2002 stated that in the face of a looming threat, the United States “will, if necessary, act pre-emptively” to “forestall or prevent hostile acts by our adversaries.” Even though discussion pertaining to “pre-emption” was certainly evident during the Clinton Administration, the sentiments were articulated through terms such as, “potential future requirements,” “prospective utility” and “potential liabilities” – with the required strategic and operational framework and military capacity to enact such an approach perceived as an impossibility that could derail the Defense Counter-proliferation Initiative (CPI). However, under the Bush Administration, such “issue” considerations were lowered as the nuclear option came to the forefront of national strategy. The urgency that motivated Bush in 2002 and subsequent years derived from two underlying arguments: that WMD and missile capabilities would continue to proliferate; and that the use of such weapons against US forward-deployed forces, US friends and allies, or even US or allied homelands was increasingly likely. In response, the United States sought to advance its security along two parallel and mutually reinforcing lines – that being, an assertive and proactive drive against security challenges emerging from the proliferation-terrorism nexus, while bolstering homeland and transforming military capabilities as a means to deter, protect against, and nullify the effects of an attack. It is with this in mind that Bush actively sought to devalue the appeal of WMD and missiles and to impede the dire consequences to US interests should adversaries successfully execute such attacks. Therefore, while it has been argued by some commentators that Bush continued a policy that was initiated by the Clinton Administration, his National Security Strategy of 2002, or “doctrine,” and subsequent nuclear weapons guidance documents, focussed on a more assertive counter-proliferation route as a means to impede or remove existing adversarial holdings of WMD before they could be

used. In the adjoining National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWMD), Bush began with an excerpt from his National Security Strategy of 2002, reemphasising the path that his Administration would take:

Our enemies have openly declared that they are seeking weapons of mass destruction, and evidence indicates that they are doing so with determination. The United States will not allow these efforts to succeed... as a matter of common sense and self-defense, America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed. We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. So we must be prepared to defeat our enemies’ plans, using the best intelligence and proceeding with deliberation. History will judge harshly those who saw this coming danger but failed to act. In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action.806

Furthermore, in the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review, the Pentagon outlined a list of contingencies and targets where nuclear weapons might be used. As stated:

In setting requirements for nuclear strike capabilities, distinctions can be made among the contingencies for which the United States must be prepared. Contingencies can be categorized as immediate, potential or unexpected...North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Libya are among the countries that could be involved in immediate, potential, or unexpected contingencies. All have longstanding hostility toward the United States and its security partners; North Korea and Iraq in particular have been chronic military concerns. All sponsor or harbor terrorists, and all have active WMD [weapons of mass destruction] and missile programs.807

While it is evident that Bush continued on the policy first instituted by Clinton, the above words signified a defining assertion in terms of his counter-proliferation policy. Indeed, the adaptive planning described in the 2002 NPR expanded the role of nuclear weapons beyond the primary role of deterring a nuclear attack, and suggested that nuclear weapons could be employed against targets able to withstand non-nuclear attack or in retaliation for use of biological or chemical weapons.808 The 2002 NPR suggested that the US must develop new nuclear weapon capabilities as a means to defeat “hardened and deeply buried targets” in states that are party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (including Iran, Iraq, Libya and Syria). Parts of the 2002 NPR that were leaked to the media illustrated Bush’s view on how nuclear

weapons could be used in three different scenarios: against targets able to withstand non-nuclear attack; in retaliation for attack with nuclear, biological or chemical weapons; or “in the event of surprising military developments.” The 2002 NPR proposed that the US be prepared to launch a nuclear strike to destroy stocks of chemical and biological weapons as well as to break regional conflicts like an Arab-Israeli conflict, a North Korean attack on South Korea, or a military confrontation between China and Taiwan. The Bush Administration further articulated the notion of threatening the use of US nuclear weapons to prevent the proliferation of NBC weapons to other states or non-state groups in the September 2002 National Security Strategy and December 2002 National Strategy to Combat WMD respectively:

We know from experience that we cannot always be successful in preventing and containing the proliferation of WMD to hostile states and terrorists. Therefore, US military and appropriate civilian agencies must possess the full range of operational capabilities to counter the threat and use of WMD by states and terrorists against the United States, our military forces, and friends and allies.

In contrast to Bush’s nuclear amplification (and as indicated in the above), the Clinton Administration retained much of the existing US nuclear weapons policy and force posture in the decade after the demise of the Soviet Union. While the Clinton Administration, and the Bush Snr Administration before it, eliminated many specific targets from the US war plan and reduced the size of the US nuclear arsenal, the central tenets of the US deterrence strategy and nuclear employment plans remained relatively unchanged and intact. Furthermore, during the 1990s, the Clinton Administration began to develop targeting options for the use of nuclear weapons in response to chemical or biological attack from states other than Russia, and, in its declaratory policy, the Administration did not rule out the possible first use of nuclear weapons in these circumstances. At the same time, many participants in the public debate over nuclear weapons policy argued that the United States should distinctly redefine its nuclear weapons strategy and force posture. They argued that in the absence of the global threat from the Soviet Union, the United States could maintain its deterrent posture with a far smaller number of nuclear weapons; many proposed reductions to levels of around 1,000 warheads. Some even argued that due to its overwhelming superiority

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809 Ibid.
812 Ibid.
in conventional weapons, the United States could defeat almost any potential adversary without threatening to resort to nuclear weapons. Indeed, several studies came to the conclusion that a policy of “nuclear abolition” could be a practical, albeit long term, goal for the United States and other nations with nuclear weapons. In the meantime, it was posited, that the United States should use its nuclear weapons only to deter the potential use of nuclear weapons by other states. As stated by Michael Gordon:

...as the Cold War waned, so did the notion that nuclear weapons could be used to fight a war. While Washington did not give up its option to make the first use of nuclear weapons against a Warsaw Pact attack, it cast the use of such weapons as a last resort. With the end of the Cold War, the need for nuclear weapons seemed to fade further.

While maintaining the nuclear role as affirmed under Clinton, the Bush Administration also provided a different description of what this role would entail. Indeed, Bush assumed that nuclear weapons would be a part of US security strategy for at least the next 50 years. Given this time frame, the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) of 2002 recommended that the United States should undertake a development process of its weapons systems that would enter the force in the years between 2020 and 2040. It was clear that the Bush Administration did not assume that the “current systems” in the US nuclear arsenal would be the last, and that to have an efficient nuclear option would involve redevelopment of such systems – even with the potential of creating a new nuclear weapon. It was evident that the Bush Administration amplified the role for nuclear weapons beyond the “weapon of last resort” designed to deter only nuclear attack. The Administration not only argued that nuclear weapons could deter chemical, biological, and conventional attack, it believed that they could also be used to assure allies of US commitments, dissuade adversaries from acquiring weapons of mass destruction or threatening the United States and defeat adversaries by destroying critical targets if deterrence failed. The Bush Administration outlined plans to develop a more focused nuclear war-fighting capability for the United States, and emphasised the development of such penetrating nuclear weapons as a means to destroy hardened and deeply buried targets, together with the “capabilities” based approach in which it would seek the ability to destroy threatening capabilities possessed by any potential adversary. Critics argued that these changes in the US nuclear posture made it more likely that the United States would use nuclear weapons in a future crisis. However, according to Doyle McManus, the

813 Ibid.
Bush Administration argued that US plans and capabilities to use nuclear weapons against smaller countries would make nuclear use less likely because it would make the US deterrent more credible and robust.\textsuperscript{815} For Sokolsky and Rumer, the Bush Administration’s approach had distinct limitations as “leaders of rogue states may not take seriously a US threat to launch massive nuclear strikes on leadership and weapons sites... Thus, having the capability to destroy such targets with smaller and less destructive weapons would strengthen, rather than erode deterrence.”\textsuperscript{816} The Bush Administration, however, argued that this expanded role for nuclear weapons did not mean that the United States was increasing its reliance on nuclear weapons. It noted that the addition of missile defenses and precision-guided conventional weapons to US deterrent forces would give the President a greater number of options in a crisis and actually reduce the likelihood of nuclear use.\textsuperscript{817}

Critics questioned this mode of thinking, arguing that the Bush Administration’s approach would blur the distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons and increase the likelihood of nuclear use. According to Brookings Institute analyst, Ivo Daalder, the Administration outlined a role for nuclear weapons that emphasised war-fighting over deterrence. As stated, “if military planners are now to consider the nuclear option any time they confront a surprising military development, the distinction between nuclear and non-nuclear options fades away.”\textsuperscript{818} Others also concluded that the Bush Administration’s plan did increase US reliance on nuclear weapons. Former Senator Sam Nunn, former Secretary of Defense William Perry and retired General Eugene Habiger argued that the Administration’s policy was “expanding options for nuclear attacks, widening the number of targeted nations and developing new nuclear weapons variants.” They noted that “each of these ideas may have a plausible military rationale,” but “their collective effect is to suggest that the nation with the world’s most powerful conventional forces is actually increasing its reliance on nuclear forces.”\textsuperscript{819} Additionally, other critics of the Bush Administration queried as to whether threats to use nuclear weapons in response to anything other than a nuclear attack would be either necessary or credible. In this regard, according to Peter Scoblic, “the US would be far better served by adopting a genuinely new nuclear posture, one that

maintains nuclear weapons only to deter nuclear attack. Given the awesome power of US conventional forces, we do not need nuclear weapons for any other purpose, even to deter a chemical or biological attack. Furthermore, given the long-standing “taboo” against the use of nuclear weapons, some argued that the United States would enhance its standing in the international community if it sought to reduce, rather than expand, the role of nuclear weapons in international affairs.

Regardless of such critical sentiments, the Bush Administration emphasised that nuclear weapons would “continue to be essential to our security, and that of our friends and allies.” In simple terms, nuclear weapons would remain the only weapons in the US arsenal that could hold at risk the full range of targets valued by an adversary, and as a result, would continue to play a key role in US deterrent strategy. In contrast to Clinton, the Bush Administration described a more comprehensive and integrated role for nuclear weapons. In outlining the results of the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review, the Administration stated that nuclear weapons, along with missile defenses and other elements of the US military establishment, would not only deter adversaries by promising an unacceptable amount of damage in response to an adversary’s attack, they also assured allies of the US commitment to their security by providing an extended deterrent, dissuading potential adversaries from challenging the United States with nuclear weapons or other “asymmetrical threats” by convincing them that they can never negate the US nuclear deterrent; and defeat enemies by holding at risk those targets that could not be destroyed with other types of weapons.

According to former Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith, “linking nuclear forces to multiple defense policy goals, and not simply to deterrence, recognizes that these forces ... perform key missions in peacetime as well as in crisis or conflict.” In addition to expanding the role of nuclear weapons beyond deterrence, Bush altered the role of deterrence in US national security strategy. As will be expanded upon in the next chapter, the Bush Administration through varying guidance documents, instruments and speeches argued that the United States would not necessarily be able to contain or deter the types of threats “emerging today,” and therefore, must be prepared to “pre-empt” these threats by launching

822 Feith, Prepared Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee.
824 Feith, Prepared Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee.
strikes against adversaries before the adversary attacks the United States, its allies or its interests. Some analysts concluded that, with this change in perspective, the Bush Administration foresaw the possible preventive / “pre-emptive” use of nuclear weapons against states or groups that were not necessarily armed with their own nuclear weapons.  

In its National Security Strategy of 2002, the Bush Administration stated that the United States would “deter and defend against the threat [of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons] before it is unleashed.” However, the document also stated that the United States would seek to “strengthen non-proliferation efforts to prevent rogue states and terrorists from acquiring the materials, technologies, and expertise necessary for weapons of mass destruction.” The report said that the United States would “enhance diplomacy, arms control, multilateral export controls, and threat reduction assistance that impede states and terrorists seeking WMD...” According to the Administration, the development of new types of nuclear weapons that could defeat hardened and deeply buried targets, along with the potential use of nuclear weapons in retaliation for non-nuclear attacks, were a part of the US effort to deter and dissuade state and non-state actors from acquiring and threatening to use chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons. Many critics at the time argued that the Administration’ approach was likely to undermine US diplomatic efforts to discourage nuclear proliferation and in most instances they have been proven correct. According to one analyst, “by emphasizing the important role of nuclear weapons, the Pentagon is encouraging other nations to think it is important to have them as well.” Senator John Kerry conveyed a similar viewpoint when he stated that the 2002 National Security Strategy and the 2002 NPR would undermine US credibility as they sought to convince other states to forgo nuclear weapons, noting that “it reduces all our bona fides on the proliferation issue.” Critics of the Bush Administration’s policy pointed specifically to the implications its views on the US negative security assurance might have for US non-proliferation efforts. Many at the time noted that, through the negative security assurance, the United States sought to convince other states that they would not need their own nuclear weapons to deter a nuclear threat from the United States. However, there would be “no reason for other countries to

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825 See, for example, Arkin, “Not Just a Last Resort?”  
refrain from acquiring nuclear weapons” if the United States abandoned that policy. Not only would these states receive no security benefit from the absence of nuclear weapons in their arsenals, they might also conclude that they could only deter a US attack if they were to acquire their own nuclear weapons. Others, however, argued that the negative security assurance has done little to stem proliferation or enhance US security because other states do not consider the US nuclear posture or declaratory policy when making their decisions about the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Even if the United States did not have any nuclear weapons, some states would seek them for themselves to counter their neighbours or offset the US advantage in conventional weapons. Furthermore, some analysts consider the negative security assurance, and its specific focus on nuclear weapons, as an “outdated policy that effectively gives non-nuclear countries a safe haven for developing chemical and biological weapons.”

Nevertheless, many critics of the Bush Administration’s policy questioned the wisdom of an approach that may have undermined US nuclear non-proliferation objectives, even in the interest of providing new tools to address chemical and biological weapons. They noted that the United States possessed conventional forces that were far superior to those of any other country. If, however, potential adversaries were to acquire nuclear weapons, they may present the United States with an “asymmetrical threat” that could offset US conventional superiority. Therefore, according to Daalder and Lindsay, the United States should have sought to “marginalize as much as possible the role that nuclear weapons play in US defense and foreign policy.” States can only negate the overwhelming US conventional superiority with nuclear weapons, so “it is in US interest to keep the firewall between nuclear and conventional high and strong.” Despite such sentiments, the Bush Administration vigorously pursued and outlined a posture that reflected the view that nuclear weapons should play a broader role in US national security strategy than just the deterrence of nuclear attack, that a credible deterrent required the capability to effectively threaten and destroy a range of critical targets, and that the United States may need different numbers of nuclear weapons and different types of nuclear weapons to address threats that emerge in the future. Under this formula, the flexibility to restore nuclear warheads quickly, expand the number of deployed warheads over time, and develop new weapons with new capabilities – the doctrine

argued – would make it possible for the United States to reduce its deployed weapons in the near term without creating potential risks to its security in the future.\textsuperscript{832}

As an extension of the broader National Security Strategy posited two months earlier in September 2002, the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWMD) illustrated that Bush’s policy was indeed a deviation in direction that endorsed and advocated an assertive nuclear weapons policy. While the Clinton Administration reaffirmed earlier US pledges not to use nuclear weapons to attack non-nuclear-weapon states-parties to the nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), at the same time, it kept open the option to use nuclear weapons, even in nuclear-weapon-free zones. Indeed, as stated by Siracusa and Coleman, for the Clinton Administration “nuclear weapons... were still a vital part of US efforts to hedge against an uncertain future.”\textsuperscript{833} In essence, both Administrations found new reasons as to why nuclear weapons would remain vital to US security while they sought to keep the rest of the world denuclearized.\textsuperscript{834} Clinton retained much of the existing US nuclear weapons policy and force posture in the decade after the demise of the Soviet Union and affirmed the role of nuclear weapons in US security strategy through the Defense Counter-Proliferation Initiative, (CPI) 1993, Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) 1994, Doctrines for Joint Nuclear Operations (Joint Pub 3-12) 1993/1995, Doctrine for Joint Theater Nuclear Operations 1996, Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) 1997 and Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 60 1997. However, it was the Bush Administration that expanded on the Clinton “platform” by amplifying the role of nuclear weapons, to the extent that they could be considered and used as a distinct option against potential nuclear, biological, and chemical threats from other states and non-state actors – even preventively. As the next chapter will illustrate, the Bush Administration, through the National Security Strategy of 2002 (the Bush Doctrine) and the classified and unclassified guidance documents and instruments it implemented – notably the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), the 2002 National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWMD), the 2005 Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, the 2006 Strategic Operations Joint Operating Concept Version 2.0, and in recent times, the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program – engendered a new era in which nuclear weapons were not just a mere feature of the United State’s security strategy, but were reinvigorated as both an assertive and

\textsuperscript{833} Siracusa & Coleman, “Scaling the Nuclear Ladder: Deterrence from Truman to Clinton,” p. 293.
\textsuperscript{834} Mendelsohn, “The Muddle of US Nuclear Weapons Strategy.”
driving force behind the Bush Administration’s view of the world – and can be viewed as one of his legacies when he himself departed office in 2009.
Chapter 7
The Nuclear Option:
Bush and the “Real” Doctrine
The Bush Doctrine can be defined as the set of policies that President George W. Bush implemented in response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and formalised on the 20th of September 2002 in his National Security Strategy. Bush declared that the United States would make “no distinction between terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them,” an a statement that defined “the doctrine” and launched the policy of preemptive war against potential aggressors before they were capable of launching an attack against the United States. As the core rationale and justification for the 2003 Iraq invasion and subsequent conflict, the National Security Strategy of 2002 has been often depicted as a marked departure from the policies of deterrence that characterised US foreign policy during the Cold War and “Phase 1” of the post-Cold War period (1991-2001). But if one is to thoroughly examine this subject, it is evident that elements of the Bush Doctrine pertaining to pre-emption, preventive considerations and regime change have been implicit in US foreign policy over the course of the last sixty five years. Critics and commentators have often viewed the doctrine as a “hawkish” moment in time, the quest of a belligerent warmonger, the beginning of “Phase 2” of the post-Cold War era, and in doing so, define it in isolation. While there may be some merit to these views, they fail to comprehend the broader critical dimension of the doctrine – that being, the nuclear policy instruments and documents that it indirectly and directly sponsored throughout the entirety of Bush’s two terms in office. It is with this in mind that the National Security Strategy cannot be moribund to 2002 perceptions, but a document that must be viewed as a dangerous and living catalyst; a document that punctuated, updated, refined and reaffirmed its core sentiments through the unclassified and classified documents it spawned over the period of 2002-2008.

In simple terms, these nuclear arteries of the Bush Doctrine can be viewed as formal policy instruments that advocated the United States’ willingness to use nuclear weapons on states that it deemed to be adversarial. The 2002 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), the 2002 National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWM), the 2003/04 CONPLAN (Concept Plan) 8022 (Global Strike), the 2005 Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, the 2006 Strategic Operations Joint Operating Concept Version 2.0, and in recent times, the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program, clearly illustrate that the Bush Doctrine should not be simply dismissed or defined as a doctrine of preventive intervention alone, but as one that advocated nuclear weapon

reactivation. Specifically, it was these documents that signified the resurgent role of nuclear weapons and the Bush Administration’s push to modernise US offensive forces, deploy missile defenses, upgrade communication and satellite systems, and overall, revitalise the nuclear military complex. Behind the Administration’s rhetoric of post-Cold War restraint were expansive plans to revitalise US nuclear forces and all the elements that would support them within a so-called “New Triad” of capabilities that combined nuclear and conventional offensive strikes with missile defenses and nuclear weapons infrastructure.\textsuperscript{836} Not since the escalation of the Cold War in Ronald Reagan’s first term had there been such an emphasis on nuclear weapons in US defense strategy. The deeper policy within the Bush Doctrine and its accompanying documents foreshadowed a new nuclear era in which the once-termed “weapon of last resort” evolved into a usable and “necessary” device. Russell and Wirtz described this as a “quiet revolution” in which the spectre of nuclear reactivation would become the Bush Doctrine’s main legacy.\textsuperscript{837} As Defense Secretary Robert Gates stated in May of 2007, the assertion of nuclear weapons will “play a critical role in the defense of the United States…their unique capabilities contribute in vital and irreplaceable ways to the ability to deter adversaries and dissuade others from pursuing nuclear capabilities on their own...”\textsuperscript{838} These words coincided with the release of the Reliable Replacement Weapon program,\textsuperscript{839} clearly signifying both the culmination and continuum of a nuclear reactivation process that began with the National Security Strategy of 2002.

When the Iraq conflict began on March 20, 2003, the United States’ intervention strategy rested on four core principles founded in the Bush Doctrine. Firstly, that the United States should act preventively to thwart strikes on US targets. Secondly, that Washington should be willing to act unilaterally, alone or with a select coalition when the United Nations or allies balk. Thirdly, that Iraq was the next cornerstone in the global war on terrorism. Finally, that Baghdad’s transformation into a new “democracy” would foster region-wide change. Of course, the Bush Doctrine’s quest to legitimise a state intervention based on such pillars was undermined by the initial failure to find weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the inability to prove Iraq’s ties to al Qaeda, the ongoing spectre of violence, limited reconstruction, the

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\item \textsuperscript{836} National Resources Defense Council, “Faking Nuclear Restraint.”
\item \textsuperscript{837} Russell and Wirtz, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{839} The Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) was a new American nuclear warhead design and bomb family that was intended to be simple, reliable and to provide a long-lasting, low-maintenance future nuclear force for the United States. It was also the project name for the ongoing US Department of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) design project, started in 2004, to develop those designs.
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US’s apparent inability to cope with an asymmetrical threat and mounting Arab disillusionment with the US leadership and occupation.\textsuperscript{840} When critics point to the Iraq war as a clear repudiation of the Bush Doctrine, perhaps they are not considering all of the applications of the doctrine in a broader context. True, Iraq was where the Bush Doctrine was most visible and most noticeably put to the test. It was equally true that it failed this test—regardless of the 2007 surge and claims of success made by General Petraeus in recent times. But while it is crucial to highlight the doctrine’s key tenet failures, it is also imperative to acknowledge that it remained “alive” in the nuclear classified and unclassified instruments it engendered over the course of the Bush Administration’s tenure.

**Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) 2002**

Of course, the ominous nuclear seeds of the Bush Doctrine were evident when the Bush Administration announced in January 2002 that a congressionally mandated review of US nuclear capabilities had been conducted. Defined as the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), the examination argued that a “new strategic triad, encompassing nuclear and precision non-nuclear strike forces, inert and active defenses and a revitalised defense infrastructure would be emphasised and implemented.”\textsuperscript{841} The architects of the review considered nuclear weapons as one option in an array of capabilities designed to adapt to the perceived threats posed by the proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missiles. On a more specific level, the main focus of the Bush Administration’s “new strategic triad” was to integrate defenses (i.e. missile defense), nuclear weapons and “non-nuclear strike forces”\textsuperscript{842} into a streamlined capability as a means to dissuade and deter adversaries, while maintaining the ability to undertake conflict should deterrence fail. The NPR stated that the strike elements “could provide greater flexibility in the design and conduct of military campaigns to defeat opponents decisively. Non-nuclear strike capabilities may be particularly useful to limit collateral damage and conflict escalation. Nuclear weapons could be employed against targets able to withstand non-nuclear attack.”\textsuperscript{843}

While the Nuclear Posture Review advocated the reduction of operationally-deployed nuclear forces to 1,700-2,200 warheads by 2012, it ambiguously vied for a “flexible” and “responsive

\textsuperscript{841} Russell and Wirtz, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{842} Jack D. Crouch, United States Department of Defense Special Briefing on the Nuclear Posture Review.
nuclear force” that could be “uploaded within days” and guard against “potential contingencies.”844 This was evident in the NPR’s quest to develop hardened and deeply-buried targets (HDBTs), considered a key “unmet” capability in US defense. For the Bush Administration, the new triad encompassed a wider range of options available in which the United States would have what it deemed to be “an appropriate way to respond to aggression, thereby bolstering deterrence.”845 The most concerning aspect of the new triad was the greater latitude it gave to the Administration. As Russell and Wirtz posited, it enabled a way to “sidestep bureaucratic resistance to changing what constitutes one of the most respected elements of the nuclear creed that shaped US nuclear doctrine, the sanctity of the old (Cold War) triad of forces and the focus on guaranteeing a massive nuclear response under any circumstances.”846 On a surface level, the Bush Administration argued that the new strategic triad allowed for further reductions in US strategic nuclear forces because it cleared a path for the possible elimination of one of the arms of the old nuclear triad. However, its quest for flexibility and “boutique” nuclear applications only highlighted a willingness to utilise the nuclear option.847

The Bush Administration released its classified Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) to Congress on December 31, 2001, and followed up in September 2002 with the broader and well known National Security Strategy. While the focus of this thesis has been focussed primarily on the Bush Doctrine, the NPR can essentially be defined as an integrated release that provided a more detailed insight into a key artery of the “doctrine” itself, namely, the concept of assertive counter-proliferation. While both documents called explicitly for pre-emptive (or preventive strikes), taken together they represented an alteration in US “declaratory policy regarding nuclear weapons use.”848 If one is to closely assess the NPR as an implementation strategy for the goals encompassed in the National Security Strategy of 2002, it is evident that the United States was placing itself in a position in which it was more likely to use nuclear weapons first against a perceived threat, or even a potential attacker – whether a state or non-state actor; whether armed with nuclear weapons or not.849 As the National Security Strategy of 2002 stated, “our enemies… are seeking weapons of mass destruction… America will act

846 Ibid.
847 Ibid.
848 Hitchens, “Slipping Down the Nuclear Slope.”
849 Ibid.
against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.\textsuperscript{850} It further argued that deterrence, or at least deterrence defined in its traditional sense, was unlikely to work against terrorists or “rogue” states, warning that the United States “cannot not let our enemies strike first.”\textsuperscript{851} The Bush Administration worked to support the “pre-emption” strategy by arguing that the United States was permitted under international law’s recognised right of self defense, to undertake pre-emptive action against an “imminent attack.” However, it is clear that the Administration’s approach pushed the boundaries of the traditional definition of “imminent” to include preventing a state or non-state body from obtaining even the capacity to attack the United States or US interests, especially if the state or non-state actor was pursuing WMD as a means of attack.\textsuperscript{852} While the NPR did not specifically identify the issue of preventive or pre-emptive nuclear war, the document did endorse at an in-depth level the need for a “flexible” arsenal with weapons that “vary in scale, scope and purpose” to address expanding threats. Specifically, the document emphasised the potential to use nuclear weapons as a means to penetrate secluded targets such as chemical or biological weapons storehouses or factories, or underground command centres. It further advocated new nuclear weapons “options,” including “possible modifications to existing weapons to provide additional yield flexibility in the stockpile; improved earth-penetrating weapons (EPWs) to counter the increased use by potential adversaries of hard and deeply buried facilities; and warheads that reduce collateral damage.”\textsuperscript{853}

In essence, the NPR examined the changes in the post-Cold War security environment and identified contingencies in which nuclear forces could be utilised.\textsuperscript{854} The effort defined the relationships among nuclear forces and other military capabilities, set objectives for nuclear and related capabilities, and outlined programs to further these ends. As indicated in the above, the NPR called for the exploration of new nuclear weapons concepts to defeat hard, deeply-buried targets (HDBT) such as underground WMD bunkers, as well as Agent-Defeat

\textsuperscript{851} Ibid., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{852} Hitchens, “Slipping Down the Nuclear Slope.”
\textsuperscript{853} US Department of Defense, \textit{The Nuclear Posture Review}.
Weapons (ADW) to nullify biological and chemical weapons agents and thereby, required the development of several new nuclear warheads.\(^{855}\) As the report articulated:

Greater flexibility is needed with respect to nuclear forces and planning than was the case during the Cold War. The assets most valued by the spectrum of potential adversaries in the new security environment may be diverse and, in some cases, US understanding of what an adversary values may evolve. Consequently, although the number of weapons needed to hold those assets at risk has declined, US nuclear forces still require the capability to hold at risk a wide range of target types. This capability is key to the role of nuclear forces in supporting an effective deterrence strategy relative to a broad spectrum of potential opponents under a variety of contingencies. Nuclear attack options that vary in scale, scope, and purpose will complement other military capabilities. The combination can provide the range of options needed to pose a credible deterrent to adversaries whose values and calculations of risk and of gain and loss may be very different from and more difficult to discern than those of past adversaries.\(^{856}\)

Advocates of the NPR asserted that the new posture was imperative as a means to change the US deterrence stance from a “one-size-fits-all” structure gauged towards the Cold War global posture to one that could defeat all sizes and types of adversaries. Indeed, both the NPR and the National Security Strategy engendered the continuum of policy guidance and reshaped US strategic planning by advocating the transferral of the top-heavy Cold War Single Integrated Operational Plan into a suite of boutique, flexible plans designed to thwart adversaries and those who might seriously undermine the security of the United States.

In conjunction with the National Security Strategy of 2002, the Bush Administration’s NPR can be perceived as a significant document that posited long-range nuclear weapons policy, plans and aspirations. A year in the making, the expansive classified report was presented to Congress at the end of 2001, and was very quickly leaked to the media.\(^{857}\) Not since the reassertion of the Cold War during the Reagan era had there been such a focus on nuclear weapons in US defense strategy. In many respects, the NPR reversed notions of post-Cold War progress by expanding the range of potential conflicts in which nuclear weapons could be employed; advocating the design and building of a new generation of warheads to meet these perceived needs; and putting in place a planning and command structure that would


\(^{856}\) Ibid.

make it easier to plan and launch nuclear attacks. The Administration believed that its reinvigorated nuclear posture via the NPR and National Security Strategy of 2002 would restrengthen national security by deterring adversaries from using or even acquiring nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Yet the evidence from the Russian and Chinese responses to this assertive nuclear posture was not encouraging. It was clear that the United States’ intention to retain stockpiles of nuclear weapons and its motives for potentially creating new and more usable weapons have caused competitors to act with varying degrees of countermeasures since the NPR’s inception. Russia adjusted its nuclear forces in response to the NSS, NPR and subsequent US nuclear instruments, retaining warhead missiles that have the capability to penetrate the prospective US missile defense system. China also created more missiles and warheads than it originally had envisaged and has possibly deployed MIRVed (multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicles) missiles in response to a US ballistic missile defense system. Similarly, the assertive US stance since the NPR and NSS and its pursuit of reduced-yield weapons – or what has been at times referred to as “boutique” nuclear weapons – have no doubt engendered certain state and non-state actors to seek weapons of mass destruction as leverage against the US.

Nonetheless, the NPR argued that an assertive nuclear policy made the United States more secure, and as such, to articulate the expanded role that nuclear weapons would play in defending US security, it adopted the terminology used in the Quadrennial Defense Review issued in 2001. As stated in the review, the Department of Defense was vying for the expansion of its nuclear framework around four core pillars: to instil confidence in its allies; to deter military competition; to impede threats and coercion against US interests; and to defeat any adversary if deterrence failed. The NPR used similar rhetoric to support the United States’ ongoing usage of nuclear weapons when it stated that “US nuclear forces [would] continue to provide assurance to security partners” and would “serve to reduce the incentives for friendly countries to acquire nuclear weapons of their own... Systems capable of striking a wide range of targets throughout an adversary’s territory may dissuade a potential adversary from pursuing threatening capabilities.” Indeed, both the NPR and the NSS can be deemed as the cornerstone of the Bush Administration’s quest in placing the nuclear option back to the fore. The NPR was clear in urging the United States to retain

858 Norris, Kristensen and Paine, Nuclear Insecurity, p. 1.
859 Ibid., pp. 2-3.
860 US Department of Defense, Quadrennial Defense Review.
existing nuclear weapons, while also positing the notion of developing new ones. While the Bush Administration publicly pledged to reduce the nuclear stockpile in the vicinity of 1,700 to 2,200 “operationally deployed strategic warheads” by 2012, the Administration continued to impose unwarranted Cold War levels of secrecy on the changes it was making in the size of the active and reserve nuclear stockpile.\(^{862}\) It was evident through the NPR and subsequent guidance documents that followed that the Administration pursued a new mix of weapons in a future arsenal. Since 2001, both the Pentagon and the Department of Energy played an assertive role in paving the way for a new generation of nuclear weapons. Through a wide array of programs, they began soliciting a new intercontinental ballistic missile that was to be operational in 2018, a new submarine-launched ballistic missile and a nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine for 2030, and a new heavy bomber ready in 2020, all presumably needing new or modified warheads.\(^{863}\)

A central pillar of the NPR was to make nuclear war planning speedier and flexible. The virtue of flexibility in nuclear war conflict is that it enables agility and quick adjustments in “campaigns,” even after a mission has begun. It can potentially provide a greater number of nuclear attack options available to the President, while enabling the ability to shift seamlessly from the identification of a target to one of destruction. The NPR’s quest was not just limited to notions of “flexibility” and making the nuclear arsenal easier to use, it also advocated the merging of forces as a means to carry out nuclear and conventional “global strikes.” That is, an intercontinental ballistic missile could carry either a nuclear warhead or a conventional warhead. It was this that further accentuated Bush’s nuclear option quest in that the “assimilation” dispelled the boundaries that had traditionally placed nuclear weapons with an extreme classification. Incorporating the use of nuclear weapons as another step in the defense “suite” only increased the likelihood of usage. Indeed, the NPR’s pursuit in combining nuclear and conventional weapons posed a very specific danger in which nuclear warheads could be utilised in regional conflicts as a means to destroy structures or facilities that conventional weapons could not. For instance, the NPR called for the development of nuclear earth-penetrating and low-yield weapons to enhance the capability – meaning utility – of the strike force.\(^{864}\) The rhetoric that surrounded such weapons – “bunker busters,”

\(^{862}\) Norris, Kristensen and Paine, pp. 3-4.
\(^{863}\) Ibid., p. 5.
\(^{864}\) Ibid., pp. 5-6.
“mininukes,” “micronukes,” “collateral-damage limiting nukes” – illustrated a shift that potentially lowered the threshold of utilising them.865

As was clearly outlined in the National Security Strategy of 2002, the Bush Administration expanded the set of adversaries, and coinciding with this, war plans that demanded that the US have a more specialised set of weapons to destroy them. The NPR articulated these sentiments and contributed to the wide array of guidance documents that altered previous large-scale permanent nuclear strike plans, and instead, assembled attack plans in the event of hostilities with another nuclear state. Given the destructive power of nuclear weapons, having fewer warheads in place at all times would not diminish their perceived power to deter enemies. As the NPR emphasised, the Bush Administration had no intention of quashing the planning infrastructure left over from the Cold War. Instead, it reasserted the nuclear option with the notion of creating new and specific types of weapons. Indeed, the NPR’s suggested force structure and number of deployed nuclear warheads was intended to support not only the pressing requirements for deterrence, but also to contribute to the further goals of assuring “allies and friends,” dissuading potential opponents from taking the path of arms competition or military challenge, and providing a barrier against the possible emergence of more extreme military threats or severe technical issues in the arsenal.866 As stated in the foreword to the NPR report by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, the review “put in motion a major change in our approach to the role of nuclear offensive forces in our deterrent strategy.”867

In Rumsfeld’s testimony to Congress and several statements made by other officials, the Bush Administration portrayed the NPR as reducing the role of nuclear weapons, lowering the readiness requirement for nuclear forces and increasing the role of non-nuclear and missile defense capabilities.868 However, as the rest of this chapter will highlight, both the NPR and NSS only worked to reinvigorate the nuclear option – evident in the subsequent guidance documents that they have spawned.

Indeed, the National Security Strategy of 2002 and “editing” documents (particularly the NPR “foundation document”) illustrated the significant contradiction between the Bush

Administration’s public rhetoric about reducing the role of nuclear weapons and the guidance issued to nuclear planners. That is, while the overall number of warheads was being reduced, the National Security Strategy of 2002, NPR and subsequent guiding planning for the remaining arsenal, reaffirmed the assertive position in relation to having nuclear forces on high alert; ready to be used in an increasing number of limited-strike scenarios against adversaries anywhere, and even preventively. In many ways, the National Security Strategy appeared to be precipitated by anticipation among military planners that deterrence would fail and US nuclear weapons would be used in a conflict sooner or later. While the NPR laid the foundation in articulating requirements for forces and planning tools that reemphasised operations against regional adversaries armed with WMD – and called for a “New Triad” that intertwined nuclear and conventional weapons in offensive operations, the National Security Strategy of 2002 publicly articulated a preventive doctrine against WMD that required the transformation of military forces to rapidly and precisely impede rogue states before they were able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States.

**National Security Strategy of 2002**

In other words, if the Nuclear Posture Review of 2002 established the nuclear framework and the supposed necessity of “flexible” requirements for forces and planning tools by the US military, it was the National Security Strategy of 2002 (the “Bush Doctrine”) that placed the nuclear option back to the fore. As stated by Woolf, “The Bush Administration’s Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), completed at the end of 2001, sought to adjust the US nuclear posture to reflect, on the one hand, the emergence of a more cooperative relationship between the United States and Russia, and, on the other hand, increasing threats from other states and non-state actors, particularly those armed with nuclear, chemical and biological weapons (weapons of mass destruction or WMD). The Administration has highlighted these changes in the international security environment in several documents, including the US National Security Strategy... The Administration has also emphasized that the United States will use any means necessary to deter or defeat the use of WMD by rogue nations or terrorist groups. One of the issues highlighted in the Nuclear Posture Review is the role that nuclear weapons

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869 Ibid.
871 Ibid.
might play in addressing these emerging threats.” Indeed, the National Security Strategy of 2002 document provided the first official public articulation of a strategy of “pre-emptive” action against hostile states and terrorist groups developing weapons of mass destruction (WMD). As the document stated:

We must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies and friends... The greater the threat, the greater the risk of inaction – and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of our enemy’s attack. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act pre-emptively... To support pre-emptive actions, we will...continue to transform out military forces to ensure our ability to conduct rapid and precise operations to achieve decisive results.

While many commentators have focussed on the Administration’s endorsement of pre-emptive intervention, it was the in the latter stages of Chapter 5, and more significantly, the conclusive chapter [9] that revealed the “real” doctrine and its reference to nuclear applications. As Chapter 5 admonished:

Proactive counter-proliferation efforts [will continued to be pursued]. We must deter and defend against the threat before it is unleashed. We must ensure that key capabilities – detection, active and passive defenses, and counterforce capabilities – are integrated into our defense transformation and our homeland security systems. Counter-proliferation must also be integrated into the doctrine, training, and equipping of our forces and those of our allies to ensure that we can prevail in any conflict with WMD-armed adversaries.

Through the course of the National Security Strategy of 2002, Bush provided veiled nuclear option references via a broad range of symbols and often undefined rhetoric. References pertaining to “proactive” forms of counter-proliferation were used at varying levels and no doubt provided an insight into what he would deliver on the nuclear front. As Chapter 5 further argued:

In the Cold War, weapons of mass destruction were considered weapons of last resort whose use risked the destruction of those who used them. Today, our enemies see weapons of mass destruction as weapons of choice. For rogue

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states these weapons are tools of intimidation and military aggression against their neighbors. These weapons may also allow these states to attempt to blackmail the United States and our allies to prevent us from deterring or repelling the aggressive behavior of rogue states. Such states also see these weapons as their best means of overcoming the conventional superiority of the United States.

Traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents; whose so-called soldiers seek martyrdom in death and whose most potent protection is statelessness. The overlap between states that sponsor terror and those that pursue WMD compels us to action. For centuries, international law recognized that nations need not suffer an attack before they can lawfully take action to defend themselves against forces that present an imminent danger of attack. Legal scholars and international jurists often conditioned the legitimacy of pre-emption on the existence of an imminent threat – most often a visible mobilization of armies, navies, and air forces preparing to attack. We must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today’s adversaries. Rogue states and terrorists do not seek to attack us using conventional means. They know such attacks would fail. Instead, they rely on acts of terror and, potentially, the use of weapons of mass destruction – weapons that can be easily concealed, delivered covertly, and used without warning. The targets of these attacks are our military forces and our civilian population, in direct violation of one of the principal norms of the law of warfare. As was demonstrated by the losses on September 11, 2001, mass civilian casualties is the specific objective of terrorists and these losses would be exponentially more severe if terrorists acquired and used weapons of mass destruction.

By stating that “we must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today’s adversaries” and “traditional concepts of deterrence will not work,” it was apparent that Bush was alluding to the ominous shift in the US military complex as a means to counter such proliferators. In fact, while the National Security Strategy of 2002 was rife with rhetorical ambiguity, it was clear that “proactive counter-proliferation” was to be the new course, and that such counter-proliferation would entail a reinvigorated nuclear option. Chapter 9 further illustrated this direction:

Our military’s highest priority is to defend the United States. To do so effectively, our military must: assure our allies and friends; dissuade future military competition; deter threats against US interests, allies, and friends; and decisively defeat any adversary if deterrence fails... A military structured to deter massive Cold War-era armies must be transformed to focus more on how an adversary might fight rather than where and when a war might occur... Innovation within the armed forces will rest on experimentation with new

875 Ibid., pp. 15-16.
approaches to warfare, strengthening joint operations, exploiting US intelligence advantages, and taking full advantage of science and technology.\footnote{876}{Ibid., p. 29.}

While the above two passages broadly conveyed Bush’s nuclear weapon intentions, it was the NPR and the subsequent National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWMD) that, in essence, provided the NSS’s detailed nuclear expository. Indeed, as indicated above and through the course of this chapter, the Bush Administration consistently released updates of this nuclear strategy, suggesting that while the National Security Strategy of 2002 may appear to lack specific nuclear “detail,” it can be perceived as the guiding force that must be viewed as a dangerous and living catalyst – a document that punctuated, updated, refined and reaffirmed its core sentiments through the unclassified and classified documents it sponsored.

**National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWMD) 2002**

It was only six weeks later on December 10, 2002 that the Bush Administration released the emphatically titled National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction which specifically advocated the use of nuclear weapons on states it deemed to be developing weapons of mass destruction (WMD). However, what made this expansion of the Bush Doctrine controversial was the classified version of the “National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction” – National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 17 – which stated that “the United States will make clear that it reserves the right to respond with overwhelming force – including potentially nuclear weapons – to the use of [weapons of mass destruction] against the United States, our forces abroad, and friends and allies.” The wording in NSPD 17 used the rhetoric of “potentially nuclear weapons,” whereas the declassified version replaced this with the very ambiguous “all of our options;”\footnote{877}{Bush, *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWMD)*, pp. vi, vii, viii, ix.} no doubt an attempt by the Administration to soften and dilute potential international criticism.

The specific detail pertaining to nuclear weapons reassertion that the NSS perhaps lacked was clearly supplemented in the concise NSCWMD, and in particular, the classified NSPD 17. The fact that the NSCWMD was introduced with a direct quote from the NSS illustrated the linkage, continuum and more importantly, guiding pillar that the NSS provided from here on in nuclear instrument formation. As the NSCWMD quoted from the NSS:

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\footnote{876}{Ibid., p. 29.}
The gravest danger our Nation faces lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. Our enemies have openly declared that they are seeking weapons of mass destruction, and evidence indicates that they are doing so with determination. The United States will not allow these efforts to succeed. History will judge harshly those who saw this coming danger but failed to act. In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action.  

The NSCWM D even specified this link further in its earlier stages by emphasising how the countering of WMD, including the use and further proliferation, was “an integral component of the National Security Strategy of the United States of America.” It then argued that the United States’ strategy for homeland security, and its new concept of deterrence, including the ability to combat WMD, represented a fundamental change from the past and that the United States must take advantage of “today’s opportunities” – including the utilisation and application of new technologies, the increased focus on intelligence collection and analysis, the strengthening of alliance relationships, and the establishment of “new partnerships with former adversaries.” The focus on Weapons of Mass Destruction was further expanded on in the NSCWM D by highlighting how such weapons could enable adversaries to inflict massive harm on the United States, its military forces at home and abroad, and “our friends and allies.” That is, some states, including several that have supported and have continued to endorse terrorism, already possessed WMD and were pursuing even greater capabilities, as vehicles of coercion and intimidation. For “them,” the NSCWM D emphasised, such weapons were not of the last resort but a militarily useful weapon of choice with the intention of undermining the United States’ “advantages in conventional forces,” and impeded it from “responding to aggression against our friends and allies in regions of vital interest.” In addition, it argued, terrorist groups have sought and are seeking to attain WMDs with the stated goal of killing large numbers of US people and those of friends and allies – “without compunction and without warning.”

Notions of counter-proliferation, including the capability and willingness to utilise nuclear weapons began to emerge as the NSCWM D shifted into its second stage. It was here that the possession and increased likelihood of WMDs being used by hostile states and terrorists was

878 Ibid.
879 Ibid., p. 1.
880 Ibid.
881 Ibid.
presented as stark “realities of the contemporary security environment.”\textsuperscript{882} In response to this, the document argued that it was imperative that the US military and applicable civilian agencies be prepared to deter and defend against the full range of possible WMD employment situations. The NSCWMD further alluded to notions of nuclear weapons use and emphasised how all capabilities to combat WMD needed to be fully assimilated into the emerging defense transitional plan and into the homeland security structure.\textsuperscript{883} Counter-proliferation, it continued, would also be fully integrated into the “basic doctrine, training, and equipping of all forces” as a means to “sustain operations to decisively defeat WMD-armed adversaries.”\textsuperscript{884} While the NSCWMD advocated a “Strengthened Non-proliferation [effort] to Combat WMD Proliferation,” as well as “Consequence Management to Respond to WMD Use,” its main focus and further articulation of the National Security Strategy was evident in its rhetoric pertaining to an assertive counter-proliferation with a nuclear dimension. That is, in the section entitled “Interdiction,” the NSCWMD argued that the US must enhance the capabilities of the military, intelligence, technical, and law enforcement communities as a means to prevent the movement of WMD materials, technology and expertise to hostile states and terrorist organizations.

Endorsement of nuclear considerations was made clear in the “Deterrence” section. It stipulated that as a consequence of state and non-state actors’ willingness to take high risks to achieve their goals – including the aggressive pursuit of WMD and their means of delivery as critical tools in this effort – new methods of deterrence were imperative. This would entail, it argued, a strong declaratory policy and effective military force as core elements for the United States’ contemporary deterrent posture from here on in. While the US would utilise a wide range of political tools to deter potential adversaries from seeking WMDs and the use of WMDs, it unequivocally reserved the “right to respond with overwhelming force – including all of our options [including potentially nuclear weapons]\textsuperscript{885} – to the use of WMDs against the United States, its “forces abroad, and friends and allies.”\textsuperscript{886} It was here that the willingness to consider or utilise the nuclear option was emphasised in a clear and concise fashion – albeit interchanged in the classified and classified versions – and can be deemed as

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{882} Ibid., p. 2.  \\
\textsuperscript{883} Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{884} Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{885} Bush, \textit{National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWMD)}, pp. vi, vii, viii, ix.  \\
\textsuperscript{886} Ibid., p. 2.
\end{flushleft}
a critical juncture in the guidance process that began with the NPR and National Security Strategy.

In addition to the spectre of nuclear response and defense capabilities, the NSCWMD signified that the US deterrent platform against WMD threats would be reaffirmed by effective intelligence, surveillance, interdiction, and domestic law enforcement capabilities. Such assimilation in combined capabilities, it emphasised, would improve deterrence by “devaluing an adversary’s WMD and missiles,” and by positing the notion of an extreme response to any use of such weapons.\(^{887}\) In the case that deterrence was not successful, the NSCWMD argued, US military forces and applicable civilian agencies must have the capacity to defend against WMD-armed adversaries, including in some instances, the capability to undertake “pre-emptive measures.”\(^{888}\) This would require capabilities as a means to detect and destroy an adversary’s WMD structures before such weapons were used. Furthermore, active defenses that impeded, undermined, or destroyed WMD en route to their targets as well as vigorous air defense and effective missile defenses against threats were required. Conversely, passive defenses needed be shaped to the individual and varying forms of WMD, as well as the means to enable the mitigation of the effects of a WMD attack against deployed forces. The NSCWMD again alluded to the potential development of nuclear weapons or strike force without being overly specific. As with deterrence and prevention, it argued, an effective response needed rapid attribution and a robust strike capability – and thereby, required the acceleration of efforts to create and field new capabilities as a means to defeat WMD-related assets.\(^{889}\) Further nuclear and preventive emphasis was made when the document stipulated the United States’ need to undertake post-conflict operations as a means to destroy or dismantle any residual WMD capabilities of the rogue state or terrorist network. Such a response would not only eliminate the source of a WMD attack but could potentially work as a deterrent to other adversaries that possess or seek WMD or missiles.\(^{890}\)

While the National Security Strategy of 2002 provided the platform for nuclear option aspirations, the NSCWMD – as an artery of the NSS – began the refining process. This was evident when it was revealed in a top secret appendix to NSPD 17, that Iran, Syria, North

\(^{887}\) Ibid., pp. 2-3.
\(^{888}\) Ibid.
\(^{889}\) Ibid., p. 3.
\(^{890}\) Ibid.
Korea and Libya were specifically named among the states that were deemed to be the central focus of the new US strategy. A senior Administration official briefing reporters on the new strategy stated at the time that the options included nuclear weapons. The motivation, according to one participant in the interagency process that drafted the new strategy, was the conclusion that “traditional non-proliferation has failed, and now we’re going into active interdiction.”\footnote{Hans M. Kristensen, “US Nuclear Weapons Guidance,” The Nuclear Information Project: Documenting Nuclear Policy and Operations, Federation of Atomic Scientists, available at <http://www.nukestrat.com/us/guidance.htm>.} The Joint Chiefs of Staff further explained that the NSPD 17: “outlines a comprehensive approach to counter nuclear and other WMD. The strategy has three principal pillars: Counter-proliferation to Combat WMD Use – recognising that the possession and increased likelihood of WMD use by hostile states and terrorists are realities of the contemporary security environment; strengthened Non-proliferation to Combat WMD Proliferation – determined to undertake every effort to prevent states and terrorists from acquiring WMD and missiles; and Consequence Management to Respond to WMD Use – to reduce to the extent possible the potentially horrific consequences of WMD use at home and abroad.”\footnote{Ibid.} It was clear that the National Security Strategy of 2002 was not limited to notions of prevention alone, but would be further articulated and kept “alive” via the nuclear classified and unclassified documents it would engender – the core catalyst in advocating the United States’ willingness to use nuclear weapons on states or non-state actors that it deemed to be adversarial.

This is no clearer than the US nuclear war plan that entered into effect in March 2003 – including new executable nuclear strike options against regional states seeking or holding weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, the declassified US Strategic Command (STRATCOM) document was a further crystallisation of the nuclear option initiated in the NSS and NPR guidance platforms. When sections of the Nuclear Posture Review were leaked in the \textit{Los Angeles Times} in March 2002, Bush Administration officials responded by attempting to devalue the significance of the document and its impact on nuclear option planning. As stated by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard B. Myers, the NPR “is not a plan, it’s not an operational plan… It’s a policy document. And it simply states our deterrence posture, of which nuclear weapons are a part… And it’s been the policy of this country for a long time, as long as I’ve been a senior officer, that the President would always reserve the right up to and including the use of nuclear weapons if that was
appropriate. So that continues to be the policy."\textsuperscript{893} A formal comment articulated by the Department of Defense further highlighted that the NPR “does not provide operational guidance on nuclear targeting or planning,” but that the military merely “continues to plan for a broad range of contingencies and unforeseen threats to the United States and its allies.”\textsuperscript{894} However, such rhetoric was proven folly with the release of the US Strategic Command’s (STRATCOM) plan to expand and transform the NSS, NPR and NSCWMD into reality in which a series of new nuclear strikes against regional states would become a physical and viable option.

**CONPLAN (Concept Plan) 8022 (Global Strike)**

In November 2003, the first CONPLAN (Concept Plan) 8022 (Global Strike) was completed by STRATCOM. When Bush signed the National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 17 he enacted the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWMD) as an approach to thwart not just nuclear but also other weapons of mass destruction, including the willingness to use nuclear weapons – even preventively – against any state or non-state actor using weapons of mass destruction against the United States, its forces abroad, and friends and allies. The initial STRATCOM CONPLAN 8022, entitled Global Strike was further articulation of this putting in place for the first time a pre-emptive and offensive strike capability. The Concept Plan included processes for designing courses of action and decision-making, target selection, and the forces available.\textsuperscript{895} The origins of the STRATCOM CONPLAN 8022-02 were evident when President Bush approved Change 2 to the Unified Command Plan in January 2003, stipulating four missions: Global Strike; missile defence; information operations; and global C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance). This was followed in March 2003 by the Nuclear Posture Review Implementation Plan, a 26-page list of specific items from the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review that the armed forces were ordered to implement in creating the force structure that would make up the New Triad.\textsuperscript{896} To orchestrate the new guidance, STRATCOM devised a major reconstruction of the strategic war plan, previously


\textsuperscript{896} Kristensen, “US National Security Strategy and Pre-emption.”
known as the SIOP. The new plan, entitled OPLAN 8044 Revision 05, became effective on the 1st of October 2004, providing “more flexible options to assure allies, and dissuade, deter, and if necessary, defeat adversaries in a wider range of contingencies.” As a means to create the New Triad, the new plan encompassed the “integration of conventional strike options” for the first time. As an artery of the New Triad, Global Strike was added to STRATCOM’s portfolio by the Unified Command Plan in January 2003, and was deemed to be one of the most significant components of the implementation of the “pre-emption” doctrine. The Unified Command Plan defined Global Strike as “a capability to deliver rapid, extended range, precision kinetic (nuclear and conventional) and non-kinetic (elements of space and information operations) effects in support of theatre and national objectives.”

CONPLAN 8022 was not operational at the time in November 2003, but was nonetheless available for activation if instructed by the Secretary of Defence. This occurred in June 2004, when shortly after the NUWEP was issued, Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld ordered the military to implement CONPLAN 8022 as a means to provide the President with a prompt, global strike capability. As he stated in the document, “US nuclear forces must be capable of, and be seen to be capable of, destroying those critical war-making and war-supporting assets and capabilities that a potential enemy leadership values most and that it would rely on to achieve its own objectives in a post-war world.” In response to this, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Richard Myers signed the Global Strike Alert Order (ALERTORD) on June 30, 2004 which ordered STRATCOM to set CONPLAN 8022 into action in conjunction with the Air Force and Navy. The nuclear option spectre became closer to being a reality when on August 17, STRATCOM published Global Strike Interim Capability Operations Order (OPORD) which changed CONPLAN 8022 from a concept plan to an operational contingency plan. This development was further expanded on when on November 18, 2005, the Joint Functional Component Command Space and Global Strike achieved Initial Operational capability after “being thoroughly tested in the nuclear strike exercise Global Lightning 06.”

897 Ibid.
899 The nuclear option in CONPLAN 8022 was first described in Arkin, “Not Just a Last Resort?” Washington Post, p. B01.
901 Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy (NUWEP), April 2004, quoted in Kristensen, Global Strike, p. 4.
902 Kristensen, Global Strike, p. 5.
The National Security Strategy of 2002 and subsequent documents and policy instruments pertaining to the reinvigorated nuclear option it engendered (including the Global Strike mission) signified much more than a hypothetical “what if.” They illustrated real change in US planning and assumptions about the use of nuclear weapons. CONPLAN 8022 was a new offensive war plan created specifically to support and substantiate the Administration’s willingness to strike first. Indeed, it is evident that the nuclear option in CONPLAN 8022 was not about influencing adversaries but about destroying targets that, according to the Administration, could not be destroyed by other means. The underlying premise was that deterrence was ultimately flawed and limited, and as such, when it did fail, nuclear weapons would be available and used accordingly. As again stated by Chairman General Richard Myers at the July 2004 retirement ceremony of Admiral James Ellis as STRATCOM commander in Omaha:

[You reshaped] the roles and missions of that old command to better posture our military forces to defeat existing and future threats against our nation [after 9/11]... You did this by expanding the options available to the President, both from a strong nuclear deterrence standpoint and conventional and non-kinetic response options.

The following year, General Myers repeated his description of the expansion of the nuclear option in a statement before Congress:

Within DOD, the Secretary of Defense has tasked the US Strategic Command to synchronize our efforts to counter WMD and ensure the force structure and the resources are in place to help all combatant commands defeat WMD. STRATCOM has revised our strategic deterrence and response plan that became effective in the fall of 2004. This revised, detailed plan provides more flexible options to assure allies, and dissuade, deter, and if necessary, defeat adversaries in a wider range of contingencies.

A year after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, the Bush Administration released the National Security Strategy of the United States of America. Expanding on the events of 9/11 – and a decade or so of gradual development of nuclear doctrine gauged towards Russia and China to one focused increasingly on regional actors armed with weapons of mass destruction – the new strategy defined the combination of

terrorism and WMD proliferation as requiring a more assertive US military and nuclear posture. The Administration argued that they must be prepared to stop rogue actors and their terrorist clients before they were able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States. As means to impede or “forestall” such hostile acts the United States would need to “transform” its “military forces” as a means to ensure its “ability to conduct rapid and precise operations to achieve decisive results.”

In 2005, the military and nuclear product of this strategy became operational under the banner of Global Strike; a strike plan created by STRATCOM in conjunction with the Air Force and Navy that would provide global strike options to the President with nuclear, conventional, space, and information warfare capabilities. It is important to understand that the Global Strike mission and CONPLAN 8022 were different than previous missions and plans both in their aims and capabilities. While often defined and portrayed by its advocates at the time as a way of increasing the President’s options for deterring adversaries, in reality Global Strike was an offensive and pre-emptive instrument firmly based on the notion that deterrence would fail sooner or later. “Rather than waiting for the mushroom cloud to appear,” a phrase used at various intervals by the Bush Administration, the Global Strike mission was gauged towards defeating a threat before it came to the fore. At the most extreme end of the spectrum, Global Strike’s main premise was to attain “near-invulnerability” for the United States by forcing “vulnerability upon any potential adversary.” It is with this in mind that CONPLAN (Concept Plan) 8022 (Global Strike), as a continuum of the National Security Strategy’s endorsement of the nuclear option, can be deemed as an instrument focussed principally on war fighting rather than deterrence. As stated by William M. Arkin:

CONPLAN 8022 anticipates two different scenarios. The first is a response to a specific and imminent nuclear threat, say in North Korea. A quick-reaction, highly choreographed strike would combine pinpoint bombing with electronic warfare and cyber-attacks to disable a North Korean response, with commandos operating deep in enemy territory, perhaps even to take possession of the nuclear device. The second scenario involves a more generic attack on an adversary’s WMD infrastructure. Assume, for argument’s sake, that Iran announces it is mounting a crash program to build a nuclear weapon. A multidimensional

907 Kristensen, Global Strike, p. 3.
908 Ibid.
909 Ibid.
910 Ibid.
bombing (kinetic) and cyber-warfare (non-kinetic) attack might seek to destroy Iran’s program, and special forces would be deployed to disable or isolate underground facilities. By employing all of the tricks in the US arsenal to immobilize an enemy country – turning off the electricity, jamming and spoofing radars and communications, penetrating computer networks and garbling electronic commands – global strike magnifies the impact of bombing by eliminating the need to physically destroy targets that have been disabled by other means. The inclusion, therefore, of a nuclear weapons option in CONPLAN 8022 – a specially configured earth-penetrating bomb to destroy deeply buried facilities, if any exist – is particularly disconcerting. The global strike plan holds the nuclear option in reserve if intelligence suggests an ‘imminent’ launch of an enemy nuclear strike on the United States or if there is a need to destroy hard-to-reach targets.911

**Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations (Joint Publication 3-12) 2005**

The regional strike plans posited and envisaged in STRATCOM’s CONPLAN (Concept Plan) 8022 (Global Strike) also found their way into the draft Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations (Joint Publication 3-12); further illustrating that the Bush Administration’s nuclear option extended outside notions of retaliation, including “pre-emptive” strikes. The second draft from March 2005 listed five scenarios where the use of nuclear weapons might be requested. *Firstly*, to counter an adversary *intending to use* weapons of mass destruction against US, multinational, allied forces or civilian populations; *secondly*, to counter an *imminent attack* from an adversary’s biological weapons that only effects from nuclear weapons can safely destroy; *thirdly*, to attack adversary installations including weapons of mass destruction, deep, hardened bunkers containing chemical or biological weapons, or the command and control infrastructure required for the adversary to execute a WMD attack against the United States or its friends and allies [this was probably the “target base” in OPLAN 8044 Revision 03]; *fourthly*, to counter potentially overwhelming adversary conventional forces; *lastly*, to demonstrate US intent and capability to use nuclear weapons to deter adversary WMD use.912

It is evident with the 2005 Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations that the continuum of the Bush Doctrine’s nuclear aspirations were further accentuated, reaffirming the strategic planning concept of assimilating “pre-emption” into a US nuclear doctrine with conventional weapons and missile defenses. The document signified how combatant commanders attempted to articulate the Administration’s quest to redefine US nuclear policy into

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911 Arkin, “Not Just A Last Resort? A Global Strike Plan, With a Nuclear Option.”
912 Kristensen, “Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations.”
operational guidance for military forces. It came nearly five years after the completion of the Bush Administration’s Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) in December 2001 and National Security Strategy of 2002, and represented the first revision of basic nuclear doctrine in a decade. In simple terms, the Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations formally reaffirmed pre-emption into a joint nuclear doctrine in which the threshold for nuclear use was lowered, endorsed a role for nuclear weapons against all forms of weapons of mass destruction, a role for nuclear weapons against terrorists, and described missile defenses as a means of defending nuclear forces rather than people against attack. Encompassing the findings of the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review, the core sentiments of the National Security Strategy of 2002, and the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction, it reflected the impact of 9/11 on US strategic thinking in which a focus on all WMD threats – whether from state or non-state actors – would be pursued. As a result of these developments, the updated Joint Pub 3-12 changed significantly in comparison to the previous versions of the document (as discussed in the previous chapter).

Indeed, the decision to update the doctrine dated back to March 2001, when the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a program directive in which the consolidation of Joint Pub 3-12 and Joint Pub 3-12.1 (theater) was to be undertaken in which a single Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations would be established as a means to guide the employment of both strategic and non-strategic (theater) nuclear forces. The format of the new nuclear doctrine changed considerably from the 1995 version. It was twenty-two pages longer because of a new chapter on theater nuclear operations, a discussion of the role of conventional and defensive forces, and an expanded discussion on nuclear operations. The insertion of a chapter on theater nuclear operations illustrated the post-Cold War focus of US nuclear planners in their quest to dissuade and deter regional aggressors (i.e. rogue states) holding nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.913 Importantly, the document also reflected a decade-old rivalry between the regional combatant commanders and US Strategic Command (STRATCOM) over who “owned” regional nuclear strike planning. The document showed that STRATCOM “today” has responsibility for more than “half of the phases in the theater planning support process.”914

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913 Ibid.
914 Ibid.
The Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations further illustrated the Bush Administration’s willingness to utilise the nuclear option, as it gave nuclear pre-emption an increasingly flexible component that made nuclear weapons an easy to draw on device. The revised doctrine enshrined notions of nuclear pre-emption into official US joint nuclear doctrine for the first time, defining four key goals that would guide the development of US force capabilities, their development and use:

...assuring allies and friends of the US steadfastness of purpose and its capability to fulfil its security commitment; dissuading adversaries from undertaking programs or operations that could threaten US interests or those of our allies and friends; deterring aggression and coercion by deploying forward the capacity to swiftly defeat attacks and imposing severe penalties for aggression on an adversary’s military capability and supporting infrastructure; and, decisively defeating an adversary if deterrence fails. 915 Developing and sustaining a modern and diverse portfolio of military capabilities serves the four key defense policy goals, identified earlier, that guide the development, deployment, and use of military forces and capabilities, including nuclear forces. 916

The second final coordination draft of the Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations (JP 3-12) was published by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and reaffirmed a prominent role for nuclear weapons against regional adversaries armed with weapons of mass destruction. As articulated by Kristensen:

For the first time, JP 3-12 includes descriptions of pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons: an adversary intending to use WMD against US, multinational, or allies forces or civilian populations; imminent attack from adversary biological weapons that only effects from nuclear weapons can safely destroy; attacks on adversary installations including WMD, deep, hardened bunkers containing chemical or biological weapons or the command and control infrastructure required for the adversary to execute a WMD attack against United States or its friends and allies; to demonstrate US intent and capability to use nuclear weapons to deter adversary use of WMD. 917

In nuclear “pre-emption,” the goal would no longer be deterrence through threatened retaliation, but the destruction of targets with nuclear weapons in anticipation that deterrence would fail. As the Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations argued, to deter a potential adversary from utilising WMDs, that adversary’s leadership must “believe the United States

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915 Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations Final Coordination (2), Joint Pub 3-12, March 15, 2005, p. vii.
916 Ibid., p. ix.
917 Kristensen, Global Strike, pp. 37-38.
has both the ability and will to pre-empt or retaliate promptly with responses that are credible and effective.” 918 The document also noted that US policy in the past had “repeatedly rejected calls for the adoption of a ‘no first use’ policy of nuclear weapons since this policy could undermine deterrence.” 919 In other words, to deter the use of WMD against the United States, the Pentagon paper endorsed preparations in which the use of nuclear weapons and determination to use them was “necessary to prevent or retaliate against WMD use.” 920 Indeed, the use of the nuclear option espoused in the Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations depicted a post-Cold War scenario in which the use of nuclear weapons may take place at a much lower intensity level than envisioned during the Cold War. This was evident as the document regularly replaced “war” with “conflict” as a means to convey the lower intensity of hostilities that could involve the use of US nuclear weapons in post-Cold War nuclear battle zones. As further explained by Kristensen:

...the pre-emption language in the draft is accompanied by replacing the word “war” with “conflict” in the war determination section. In proposing this change, STRATCOM argues that it better “emphasizes the nature of most conflicts resulting in use of a nuclear weapon. Nuclear war implies the mutual exchange of nuclear weapons between warring parties – not fully representative of the facts.” Echoing STRATCOM’s assessment, European Command (EUCOM) further explains that “the use of a bunker-buster ‘mini-nuke’ might not, in fact, be ‘provoked by some action, event, or perceived threat’ per se; rather, it may be used simply because it is the only weapon that will destroy the target!” 921

Unlike the two previous versions of the Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations from 1993 and 1995, 922 however, the new doctrine did not mention a need for weapons with lower yields. The paragraph included in the previous version was deleted. Instead, lower yields were mentioned in the section that discussed reducing nuclear collateral damage as a matter-of-fact potential capability. As stated, “…specific techniques for reducing nuclear collateral damage may include lower yield weapons, improving accuracy, employing multiple smaller weapons, adjusting the height of burst, and offsetting the desired ground zero.” 923

918 Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations Final Coordination (2), Chapter 1, p. 6.
919 Ibid., p. 7.
921 Kristensen, Global Strike, pp. 37-38.
922 See Joint Pub 3-12, 1993; Joint Pub 3-12, 1995; Joint Pub 3-12.1, 1996.
923 Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations Final Coordination (2), Joint Pub 3-12, p. 2.
Another distinct change was the insertion of discussion pertaining to the use of conventional weapons and defensive forces into the sections describing the purpose, planning, and employment of nuclear forces. As the document states, “as non-nuclear strike capabilities and nuclear strike are integrated, targets that may have required a nuclear weapon to achieve the needed effects in previous planning may be targeted with conventional weapons, provided the required effects can be achieved.” This no doubt echoed the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review in which the creation of a “new triad” with nuclear weapons was depicted as constituting only part of (together with advanced conventional weapons) one of the pillars in the triad. A second pillar, the NPR stated, would be missile defense, and together the two (conventional weapons and missile defenses) would reduce the role of nuclear weapons by providing the President with other response options than nuclear retaliation. Regardless of this, however, the Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations admonished that while “some contingencies will remain, the most appropriate response may include the use of US nuclear weapons.” Further to this, the document appeared to posit another objective, that being, how advanced conventional weapons and missile defenses could be used to increase the survivability and effectiveness of US offensive nuclear forces.

Aside from the specific new components inserted into the Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations, the core nuclear mission remained surprisingly similar to that described in previous versions of the document. As such, the major reduction in the role of nuclear weapons promised by the Bush Administration in 2001-2002 was not evident. Instead, the “new” Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations can be viewed as opportunistic in both deepening existing missions and defining new roles for nuclear weapons. Despite the continued White House rhetoric about reducing the role of nuclear weapons, the document reaffirmed the significance of maintaining an aggressive nuclear option in which “modernised forces would be on a high readiness level, capable of destroying – even pre-emptively – targets anywhere on the globe.” As argued in the above, aside from immersing pre-emption into a nuclear doctrine, the Joint Nuclear Operations doctrine of 2005 lowered the threshold for nuclear use by further reducing the level of hostilities where US nuclear weapons might be used; endorsed a role of nuclear weapons against all forms of

924 Ibid., p. xi.
926 Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations Final Coordination (2), Joint Pub 3-12, p. xi.
927 Kristensen, “Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations.”
weapons of mass destruction; advocated a role of nuclear weapons against terrorists, and described missile defenses as a means of defending nuclear forces rather than people against attack.928 The doctrine expanded on the arguments and “findings” of the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review, the 2002 National Security Strategy and the 2002 National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction in which a flexible and nuclear option was no longer a last resort, but a defining and strategic device. As a marked expansion on the Bush Doctrine, the 2005 Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations and its intricate definitions of the “preemptive” use of US nuclear weapons was so controversial, it evoked the Senate Armed Services Committee to ask for a briefing and 16 lawmakers to protest in writing to President Bush to what they considered to be a “drastic shift in US nuclear policy.” The detail of the controversial doctrine was leaked to Arms Control Today and in September 2005, the Washington Post followed up with a front-page story. Embarrassed by the exposure, the Pentagon cancelled not only the draft doctrine (and four other related doctrine documents) but also the existing Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations document that had been publicly available on the Joint Chiefs of Staff website for a decade. A Joint Staff official explained that the documents would not be published, revised or classified, explaining that they had been found not to be real doctrine documents but “pseudo doctrine” documents discussing nuclear policy issues. The public “visibility led a lot of people to question why we have them,” he said.929

**Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) 2006**

Nonetheless, this was only a minor derailment to the Bush Doctrine’s nuclear reactivation process. The apparent relentlessness of the Administration was again evident with the February 6, 2006 release of the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). Formally created by the Department of Defense and Donald Rumsfeld, the review articulated the need for “prompt global strike capabilities (that) would be available to attack fixed, hard and deeply buried, mobile and re-locatable targets with improved accuracy anywhere in the world promptly upon the President’s order. Nuclear weapons will be accurate, safe and reliable, and tailored to meet modern deterrence requirements.”930 The QDR also gave the People’s Republic of China more emphasis and reaffirmed its standing as an ongoing strategic competitor. As the


review stated, “of the major and emerging powers, China has the greatest potential to
compete militarily with the United States and field disruptive military technologies that could
over time offset traditional US military advantages absent in US counter strategies.”931 Aside
from the China connection, the 2006 QDR furthered continued the refinement of the nuclear
option – in which a shift from a “one size fits all” approach to deterrence would be tailored
towards an approach it deemed appropriate for advanced military competitors, regional
WMD states, as well as non-state terrorist networks.932 Indeed, the QDR clearly advocated
“full balanced, tailored capability” as means to deter both state and non-state threats –
including the utilisation of WMD, terrorist attacks in the tangible and information categories,
and opportunistic aggression – while at the same time, assure allies and “dissuading
potential competitors.”933 The QDR remained very consistent with the New Triad priorities
developed during the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review and consolidated with the National
Security Strategy of 2002. That being, the assertion of force and how it would now
encompass a wider range of non-kinetic and conventional strike capabilities, while also
maintaining a stern and bold nuclear deterrent – the cornerstone of US national power.934
This included an integrated ballistic and cruise missile defenses and a responsive
infrastructure that would be supported by an agile and diligent National Command and
Control System, superior intelligence, flexible planning systems and the capacity to maintain
access to legitimate, high-quality information for “timely situational awareness.”935

Of course, the most startling aspect of the document pertained to the notion that the Bush
Administration was considering the development of a new nuclear weapon. The document
articulated how the Department of Defense was working with the Department of Energy as a
means to assess the viability and cost of a Reliable Replacement Warhead and, if required,
would begin the development of that system. This “system,” it argued, would enable
reductions in the number of older, non-deployed warheads maintained as “a hedge against
reliability problems in deployed systems,” while assisting in the evolution and creation of a
smaller, boutique and more responsive nuclear weapon infrastructure. Overall, it was evident
that the Quadrennial Defense Review of March 2006 revalidated the 2002 NPR planning
assumptions that required defined yet flexible deterrence for rogue powers, terrorist

931 Ibid., p. 29.
932 Ibid., p. 49.
933 Ibid.
934 Ibid.
935 Ibid.
networks, and near-peer competitors. It restated that international conditions “are trending toward – if anything – a more stressing strategic landscape, for example, with respect to North Korea, Iran, and nuclear proliferation.” But even more than this, the QDR again reinforced the Bush Doctrine’s planning assumptions and the “continuum of transformation in the Department... with strong, sound and effective war fighting capabilities in the decades ahead.”

Indeed, as stated by Josh White and Ann Scott Tyson in *The Washington Post*:

> The United States is engaged in what could be a generational conflict akin to the Cold War, the kind of struggle that might last decades as allies work to root out terrorists across the globe and battle extremists who want to rule the world, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said yesterday. Rumsfeld, who laid out broad strategies for what the military and the Bush Administration are now calling the “long war,” likened al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden to Adolf Hitler and Vladimir Lenin while urging Americans not to give in on the battle of wills that could stretch for years. He said there is a tendency to underestimate the threats that terrorists pose to global security, and said liberty is at stake. The speech, which aides said was titled “The Long War,” came on the eve of the Pentagon’s release of its Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), which sets out plans for how the US military will address major security challenges 20 years into the future. The plans to be released today include shifts to make the military more agile and capable of dealing with unconventional threats, something Rumsfeld has said is necessary to move from a military designed for the Cold War into one that is more flexible.

While the “long war” was an ambiguous title it did nonetheless reflect the Bush Administration’s transformative quest and desire for an “agile” nuclear option – a process that began in 2002.

**National Security Strategy of 2006.**

Of course, such nuclear aspirations and force agility was to be further articulated in the National Security Strategy of 2006. Published by the White House in March 2006 as a means to guide military and other areas of strategic planning in the future, the *National Security Strategy of 2006* began with four words: “America is at war.” The morbid but perhaps realistic first sentence was distinct to the introductory words stated in the previous National Security Strategy from 2002, in which the “war on terror” focus remained (perhaps

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strategically) in the background to notions of social struggle between democratic and oppressive societies. Nonetheless, both documents were creations of the post 9/11 attacks which engendered the so-called “pre-emption” doctrine in which the United States would “no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past” but strike first if necessary. The NSS2006 document reiterated this bold proclamation when it stated that the United States would “act pre-emptively in exercising our inherent right of self-defence.” Since it was first published in September 2002, the Bush Administration’s “pre-emption” doctrine has been widely lambasted for conveying an overly aggressive security strategy. While the NSS of 2006 did acknowledge this (“The United States will not resort to force in all cases to pre-empt emerging threats. Our preference is that non-military actions succeed. And no country should ever use pre-emption as pretext for aggression”), it signified that regardless of the fact that US military forces were tied down in Iraq following the preventive invasion in 2003, very little had changed in terms of US security strategy. As the document stated:

If necessary, however, under long-standing principles of self defense, we do not rule out the use of force before attacks occur, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack. When the consequences of an attack with WMD are potentially so devastating, we cannot afford to stand idly by as grave dangers materialize. This is the principle and logic of pre-emption. The place of pre-emption in our national security strategy remains the same. We will always proceed deliberately, weighing the consequences of our actions. The reasons for our actions will be clear, the force measured, and the cause just.

The 2002 and 2006 National Security Strategy documents, as well as the guidance instruments that have punctuated them since, clearly shifted the emphasis more decisively toward prevention with nuclear aspirations. Of course, what did change was the geographic positioning and depth of the preventive scenarios, the methods to execute them, and the type of conflict that could necessitate them. While preventive strike options were no doubt still being refined against Russian and Chinese nuclear forces, the NSS2006 pre-emptive planning was focused on developing strike options against regional proliferators armed with weapons of mass destruction, in low-intensity conflicts, even before armed hostilities had broken out – and in doing so, echoed the sentiments expressed in the defunct Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations of 2005. As has been emphasised above, the 2002 and 2006 National Security Strategy documents were only a small public insight into the evolution of the Bush

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941 Ibid., p. 18.
942 Ibid., p. 23.
Administration’s reassertion of the nuclear option. While significant, they form part of a consortium of documents (most of which remain classified) that have been issued since 2001 as a means to guide, refine and direct the military on how to implement the preventive doctrine. This included over a dozen major new guidance documents issued by the White House and the Office of Secretary of Defence, as well as an entirely new strike plan designed by US Strategic Command (STRATCOM) to provide the President with new nuclear and conventional strike options against regional states and non-state actors. The NSS of 2006 merely reaffirmed this shift and how the nuclear option would continue to play “a critical role” in US national security strategy:

...safe, credible, reliable [nuclear weapons]... and will continue to play a critical role. We are strengthening deterrence by developing a New Triad composed of offensive strike systems (both nuclear and improved conventional capabilities)... These capabilities will better deter some of the new threats we face, while also bolstering our security commitments to allies... If necessary, however, under long-standing principles of self-defense, we do not rule out the use of force before attacks occur, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack. When the consequences of an attack with WMD are potentially so devastating, we cannot afford to stand idle grave dangers materialize. This is the principle and logic of pre-emption.943

In essence, the National Security Strategy of 2006 further re-emphasised the function of nuclear weapons in pre-emptive military strikes against terrorists and “aggressive” states armed with chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. As Hans Kristensen stated, the document “was the Bush Administration’s last opportunity to demonstrate that it has reduced the role of nuclear weapons after the Cold War... Instead it has chosen to reaffirm their importance and in the most troubling way possible: prevention and the nuclear option.”944

**Strategic Operations Joint Operating Concept Version 2.0 2006**

The extent to which the Bush Doctrine’s nuclear option becomes a “Bush only” legacy remains to be seen. But as the 2006 Strategic Operations Joint Operating Concept Version 2.0 indicates, long-term plans were clearly on the Department of Defense’s agenda. As stated:

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The challenges identified in the National Security Strategy require a new concept for ‘waging’ deterrence paired with revised joint force capabilities that provide a wider range of military deterrent options. Deterrence requires a national strategy that integrates diplomatic, informational, military, and economic powers.\(^945\)

The core platform of the document was to stipulate ways to coerce decisively an adversary’s decision-making process, and thereby, thwart hostile actions against US key interests. The document’s timeframe extended to 2025 and provided what it deemed to be “a set of steps necessary to operationalise deterrence planning that supports the National Military Strategy (NMS) objective of ‘Prevent Conflict and Surprise Attacks’ and the NMS requirement to develop a wider range of options that discourage aggression and coercion. It provided the operational context and conceptual basis for further concept development, capability based assessments (CBA), integrated architectures and experimentation.”\(^946\) The document did not distinguish between nuclear and non-nuclear missions, but combined nuclear, conventional and non-kinetic capabilities under “Global Strike” means as a way of directly influencing an adversary’s decision process by creating deterrence operations to specific adversaries and contexts. As such, the document focussed more than its predecessor on how to influence different kinds of adversaries. In simple terms, it provided the “conceptual framework needed to meet the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review requirements for deterrence activities tailored for rogue powers, terrorist networks and near-peer competitors.”\(^947\) While it is often believed to be static and slow to change, US nuclear weapons policy since 2002 was continually punctuated with the above reaffirmative documents as a means to steer and refine the broader nuclear sentiments and ideology posited in the Bush Doctrine. Indeed, the Strategic Operations Joint Operating Concept Version 2.0 merely continued this process.

**Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW)**

The deeper policy within the Bush Doctrine and its accompanying documents foreshadowed a new nuclear era in which the once-termed “weapon of last resort” became a usable and “necessary” option. The “quiet revolution” was further accentuated with “Complex 2030” and the encompassing Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program; perceived by many as potentially being the United States’ first development of a new nuclear weapon since 1992. Under the US Department of Energy’s (DOE) Complex 2030, it was envisaged that the entire


\(^{946}\) US Department of Defense, *Strategic Operations Joint Operating Concept Version 2.0*, p. 3.

US nuclear weapons complex would be upgraded whilst also designing and producing a series of new nuclear warheads.\textsuperscript{948} Such new weapons produced via the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program would ultimately replace the entire US nuclear arsenal.\textsuperscript{949} The main argument of Complex 2030 was that for the US to maintain warheads that were reliable and safe in the future, it was necessary to develop a responsive weapons complex that could rapidly produce additional warheads, remain cost efficient, and allow the United States to reduce the size of its nuclear arsenal.\textsuperscript{950} The Department of Energy (DOE) – through the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and in partnership with Department of Defense (DOD) – believed that the RRW would enable the United States to have “a safe, secure, and reliable nuclear deterrent.”\textsuperscript{951} The Complex 2030 document acknowledged the changes implemented 2001 in which strategic deterrence was based on the “premise… of deterring a peer adversary to one of responding to emerging threats.”\textsuperscript{952} Indeed, as has been emphasised throughout the course of this thesis, the National Security Strategy of 2002 directed a change in the platform of the deterrent as a means to adapt to the perceived changing nature of the threat. The NSS and NPR called for the following:

- Changing the size, composition, and character of our nuclear stockpile in a way that reflects the reality that the Cold War is over;
- Achieving a credible deterrent with the lowest possible number of nuclear warheads consistent with our national security needs, including our obligations to our allies;
- Transforming the NNSA nuclear weapons complex (also referred to as the “Complex”) into a responsive infrastructure that supports the specific stockpile requirements and maintains the essential US nuclear capabilities needed for an uncertain global future.\textsuperscript{953}

As part of the ongoing continuum of nuclear option considerations, Complex 2030 and its accompanying documental instruments illustrated the desire to cultivate a future nuclear weapons enterprise, in which the deployed stockpile would be transformed into one smaller than today. It is here that the document posited the concept of the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) in which the “warhead design limitations” imposed on Cold War systems would be more easily and efficiently “manufactured at fewer, modernized facilities with safer

\textsuperscript{948} Nelson, “Complex 2030: DOE’s Misguided Plan to Rebuild the US Nuclear Weapons Complex.”
\textsuperscript{949} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{950} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{952} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{953} Ibid.
and more environmentally benign materials.” In an assertive fashion, Jacqueline Cabasso, described “Complex 2030” as the “publicly announced United States plan to modernize its nuclear weapons complex and replace its entire nuclear arsenal with new ‘Reliable Replacement Warheads’ by the year 2030... the proposed project, which could cost more than $150 billion over 25 years, is tantamount to a US declaration of ‘nukes forever,’ and a repudiation of its obligation under Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to end the arms race ‘at an early date’ and to negotiate ‘in good faith’ the elimination of its nuclear arsenal.” However, proponents of Complex 2030 argued that such replacement warheads would have the same military characteristics, could be transferred on the same kinds of delivery systems, and hold at risk the same targets as the warheads they replaced. They would be redesigned to foster a greater sense of safety and security, while enabling an easier production process and maintenance. Moreover, the document contended, confidence in the stockpile would remain high, minus the resurrection of nuclear testing, as the RRW enabled the increase in performance margins based on a sounder understanding of nuclear weapons attained from the Stockpile Stewardship Program (SSP) as well as the accompanying research and development (R&D). The structures that supported this smaller stockpile would be robust and able to efficiently address any technical problems in the stockpile, while simultaneously, being able to respond to adverse geopolitical change.

Supporting the NNSA’s argument and concern, Congress provided capital for the RRW program in the FY2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act, P.L. 108-447. The RRW was conveyed in the conference report as a “program to improve the reliability, longevity, and certifiability of existing weapons and their components.” Congress provided further authorisation in the FY2006 National Defense Authorization Act, P.L. 109-163, Section 3111. As indicated in the above, Congress stipulated several goals for the RRW program, in particular, an increase in confidence that warheads would perform as intended over the long-term without nuclear testing. Other goals pertained to increasing the ease of manufacturing and certification, the reduction in life cycle cost, the increase in weapon safety and use.

954 Ibid.
956 Ibid.
957 Ibid.
958 Ibid.
control, and reduction in potential damage to the environment. As expected, the RRW program engendered varying levels of debate. One commentator argued that “the plutonium research results obliterate the chief rationale for NNSA’s emerging strategy” of RRW, while the New York Times opined that RRW “is a public-relations disaster in the making overseas” and “a make-work program championed by the weapons laboratories and belatedly by the Pentagon.” Indeed, while Complex 2030 and the RRW it encompassed were depicted by the NNSA as developing a smaller and efficient nuclear weapons complex designed for the 21st century with safety and security in mind, others were more wary of such developments. As Jacqueline Cabasso testified, while the NNSA claimed that “RRW is not a new weapon providing new or different military capabilities and/or missions,” NNSA chief Linton Brooks was clear that the nuclear option and potential to develop a new nuclear weapon was not a farfetched proposition:

In 2030, our Responsive Infrastructure can also produce weapons with different or modified military requirements as required. The weapons design community that was revitalized by the RRW program can adapt an existing weapon within 18 months and design, develop and begin production of the new design within 3-4 years of a decision to enter engineering development... goals that were established in 2004. Thus, if Congress and the President direct, we can respond quickly to changing military requirements.

As stern advocates of the RRW and its quest to redesign the physical aspects of the nuclear option, the Bush Administration argued that the current stockpile – most units of which were manufactured between 1979 and 1989 – were designed to deter and, if necessary, defeat the Soviet Union. In today’s international climate, the threat, strategy and missions have changed, leaving the United States with an “out of date stockpile.” As Brooks further stated, current warheads are wrong technically because “we would [now] manage technical risk differently, for example, by ‘trading’ [warhead] size and weight for increased performance margins, system longevity, and ease of manufacture.” These warheads were not “designed for longevity” or to minimize cost, and may be wrong militarily because yields are

961 Kimball, “New Reasons to Reject New Warheads.”
965 Medalia, The Reliable Replacement Warhead Program, p. 3.
too high and “do not lend themselves to reduced collateral damage.” They also lack capabilities against buried targets or biological and chemical munitions, and they do not take full advantage of precision guidance.\textsuperscript{966} As O’Brien articulated in \textit{Sustaining the Nuclear Enterprise: A New Approach}, the stockpile was wrong because it was too large:

We retain “hedge” warheads in large part due to the inability of either today’s nuclear infrastructure, or the infrastructure we expect to have when the stockpile reductions are fully implemented in 2012, to manufacture, in a timely way, warheads for replacement or for force augmentation, or to act to correct unexpected technical problems.\textsuperscript{967}

Moreover, it was argued by RRW advocates that the stockpile was not appropriate in terms of physical security, as it was not designed for a situation in which terrorists may attain control or detonate a nuclear weapon. As further exemplified by Brooks, “if we were designing the stockpile today, we would apply new technologies and approaches to warhead-level use control as a means to reduce physical security costs.”\textsuperscript{968} Of course, there were those who questioned the notion that the RRW would improve the current stockpile. For the likes of Speed and May, new weapons may not offer much new capability: that is, earth penetrators may not necessarily destroy hardened facilities buried very deeply or at imprecisely-known locations, and nuclear weapons are of questionable effectiveness against chemical and biological agents.\textsuperscript{969} Medalia expanded on such doubts in his Congress Research Service, 2008 Reliable Replacement Warhead program report:

They (opponents of the RRW) anticipate that RRWs, like any other product, would have “birth defects,” whereas such defects have been wrung out of existing warheads, and believe that such defects could require a larger stockpile. They state that performance margins of current warheads are adequate and can be improved somewhat if needed, such as by new systems to deliver boost gas. They question the argument that RRW would reduce physical security costs on grounds that a terrorist attempt to seize and detonate a nuclear warhead in place is most unlikely given the high level of security currently in place, and doubt that Congress or NNSA would reduce the guard force because of RRW.\textsuperscript{970}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{967} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 3.
\item \textsuperscript{968} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 4.
\item \textsuperscript{970} Medalia, \textit{The Reliable Replacement Warhead Program}, p. 12.
\end{itemize}
During the course of the 20th Century, the nuclear weapons complex has expanded and contracted in response to what the Administration of the day perceived to be the national interest security imperative. Whether it was the rush to produce the first bomb in World War II, the quest to produce many thousands of warheads of many different types during the Cold War, the desire for dismantlement and less production with the conclusion of the Cold War or the current era in which state and non-state actors are both nuclear players, “the US Complex” has attempted to shift and adjust but with varying degrees of success. Indeed, the nuclear stockpile was constructed as a means to address Cold War demands in which, for example, high explosive yield per unit of warhead weight (the “yield-to-weight ratio”) was “critically important while cost, ease of manufacture, and reduction of hazardous material were less so.” In today’s climate, Medalia argued, “yield-to-weight has become less important, the others just mentioned have become more important, new constraints have appeared in the wake of 9/11, and warheads must continue to be safe and reliable.” As a result, the Bush Administration asserted, the RRW made it possible to adapt the stockpile to reflect such changes.

The quest to update and reassert the nuclear option to the fore was reflected in the Bush Administration’s support of the RRW from the outset. The Administration saw the RRW program as the basis for addressing and complimenting the nuclear aspirations stipulated in the National Security Strategy of 2002 and NPR and the subsequent documents, instrument and plans. This transformation was evident when Representative David Hobson, Chairman of the House Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee in the 108th and 109th Congresses, presented himself as a major advocate of the RRW. In introducing the FY2005 energy and water bill (H.R. 4614) to the House, he highlighted the need to reconfigure the Complex as a means to adhere to the NPR, but also realign the nuclear option to what he perceived were “today’s” requirements. As stated:

...much of the DOE weapons complex is still sized to support a Cold War stockpile. The NNSA needs to take a ‘time-out’ on new initiatives until it completes a review of its weapons complex in relation to security needs, budget constraints, and [a] new stockpile plan.  

\cite{Ibid, p. 16.}\
\cite{Ibid, p. 12}\
\cite{Ibid.}\
\cite{Congressional Record, June 25, 2004, p. H5085.}
For Hobson, the RRW would be an integral part of the Administration’s effort to readjust US nuclear strategy, reshape the nuclear weapons stockpile and Complex to hold up that key strategy, pursue weapons programs aligned with that strategy, and reject those that were inconsistent.\textsuperscript{975} Indeed, the RRW further illustrated that notions of transforming the Complex into the responsive infrastructure articulated in the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review and National Security Strategy were becoming a reality. As Thomas D’Agostino, then NNSA Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs, articulated in 2006:

By “responsive” we refer to the resilience of the nuclear enterprise to unanticipated events or emerging threats, and the ability to anticipate innovations by an adversary and to counter them before our deterrent is degraded... much remains to be done to achieve stockpile and infrastructure transformation... The “enabler” for transformation is our concept for the RRW. The RRW will benefit from relaxed Cold War design constraints that maximized yield to weight ratios. This will allow us to design replacement components that are easier to manufacture; are safer and more secure; eliminate environmentally dangerous, reactive, and unstable materials... RRW, we believe, will provide enormous leverage for a more efficient and responsive infrastructure and opportunities for a smaller stockpile.\textsuperscript{976}

It was evident that those who endorsed the nuclear option continuum encompassed in the RRW, focussed extensively on safety and cost efficiency, rather than the fact that the RRW program also contained the capability to enable the development of a new nuclear weapon. As the Committee stated:

The RRW weapon will be designed for ease of manufacturing, maintenance, dismantlement, and certification without nuclear testing, allowing the NNSA to transition the weapons complex away from a large, expensive Cold War relic into a smaller, more efficient modern complex. A more reliable replacement warhead will allow long-term savings by phasing out the multiple redundant Cold War warhead designs that require maintaining multiple obsolete production technologies to maintain the older warheads.\textsuperscript{977}


\textsuperscript{977} The House Appropriations Committee reported the FY2006 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill, H.R. 2419, on May 18, 2005 (H.Rept. 109-86). Please note: The bill passed the House, 416-13, on May 24 with no amendments to the Weapons Activities section. In its report, the committee offered a “qualified endorsement” of RRW “contingent on the intent of the program being solely to meet the current military characteristics and requirements of the existing stockpile.”
Those who were wary of the real potential of new nuclear weapons development expressed concerns about the link between RRW and the nuclear weapon Complex transformation. As Representative Peter Visclosky, Chairman of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee indicated:

I am also troubled by the apparent unbridled enthusiasm of the nuclear weapons complex over the Reliable Replacement Warhead and wish I saw that same enthusiasm replicated, as far as their dedication to downsizing the complex... The department [DOE] will have to develop a modernization plan that is near term and demonstrates a recognition that the long-term requirements of the nuclear weapons complex are tied to a much smaller nuclear stockpile.\(^{978}\)

Of course, proponents for a reinvigorated nuclear option lamented that if nothing was done, confidence in the stockpile would decline, and with it, the ability of the US to assure allies that its deterrent capacity was sound and able “to dissuade competitors from beginning nuclear programs, to deter adversaries, and if necessary to defeat enemies, as called for in the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review and National Security Strategy of 2002.”\(^{979}\) The Bush Administration attempted to soften the RRW by portraying it as a pathway to attain a replacement weapon option, rather than a new weapon with new military capabilities. It would be one that would be easier to manufacture, maintain, and certify than current warheads; with broader performance margins as a means to instil the confidence as intended.\(^{980}\) Critics of the Bush nuclear option argued that the RRW would make it more challenging for the United States to negotiate with Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs, and those programs in turn could lead to a follow-on wave of possible proliferators. By conveying to the world that they were willing to emphasise the nuclear option through the RRW program instead of seeking to quell and devalue such weapons, the United States ultimately could undermine its capacity to lead global nuclear non-proliferation efforts.\(^{981}\) As former Senator Sam Nunn stated:

On the RRW itself, if Congress gives a green light to this program in our current world environment – and I stress in our current world environment – I believe that this will be misunderstood by our allies, exploited by our adversaries, complicate our work to prevent the spread and use of nuclear weapons... and make resolution of the Iran and North Korea challenges all the more difficult.


\(^{979}\) Medalia, *The Reliable Replacement Warhead Program*, p. 50.

\(^{980}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{981}\) *Ibid.*
Also, I think it will make it more difficult to discourage the many new countries that are right on the tipping point of beginning their enrichment process... we will pay a very high price in terms of our overall national security if Congress goes forward with this program... So I would not fund additional work on the RRW at this time, certainly not development and going forward with deployment.\(^{982}\)

Former Secretary of Defense William Perry reiterated the above sentiments when he argued that the development of a new nuclear weapon could be deferred, as this “would put us in a stronger position to lead the international community in the continuing battle against nuclear proliferation, which threatens us all.”\(^{983}\) Aside from external considerations, the Bush Administration repeatedly downplayed the possibility of a new nuclear weapon. In the medium term, the plan conveyed involved the mixing of existing and RRW warheads in the stockpile as a means to increase the diversity of warheads pertaining to each of the nuclear triad.\(^{984}\) As highlighted above, the new warheads, the Administration claimed, would have more “flexible design parameters and be simpler and cheaper to maintain without nuclear testing.”\(^{985}\) In the long term, however, all warhead types in the “enduring” stockpile could be replaced. In its justification for the RRW nuclear option, the Administration undermined the original objective of a ban on nuclear testing – that being, the prevention of new nuclear weapons development and production. Now, production was said to be necessary to avoid nuclear testing.

In the latter stages of his Administration, it was apparent that Bush’s quest for a new nuclear option was facing extensive opposition from a Congress that was (post 2006 mid-term elections) quite hostile to such aspirations. Throughout the fiscal 2008 budget process, Congress was sceptical of the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) Program, which the Bush Administration had promoted as a more reliable, proliferation-proof option, and some committees cut funding for RRW dramatically.\(^{986}\) They felt that it was premature to rush forward with a new warhead design and a production complex before basic questions were answered. Such questions related to the amount of bombs that would be built, and more

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\(^{983}\) Ibid.


\(^{985}\) Ibid.

fundamentally, the role of nuclear weapons in US security policy. In part to address these issues, the Senate Armed Services Committee directed Defense and Energy to submit a new Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) to Congress in December 2009. The committee advised: “The new NPR would include a review of policy objectives with respect to nuclear forces and weapons and include the relationship among United States nuclear deterrence policy, targeting strategy, and arms control objectives.”

Nonetheless, the Bush Administration remained determined in its nuclear option quest. For FY2009, DOE requested $10.0 million and projected a similar amount for each year in the FY2010-FY2013 period. It justified the request as follows:

$10 million is requested to enable maturation of the RRW design to address questions raised by the JASON review of RRW feasibility study activities. Design refinement is necessary to establish parameters for potential impact on certification. Without further design work, there is insufficient detail available to use this design to resolve certification questions raised by the JASON review. This funding will also facilitate documenting the Phase 2A RRW work that has been completed through 2007 (prior to the FY 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 110-161)) to support future Administration decisions on options for our nuclear weapons stockpile. The Department of Defense and the Joint DOD-DOE Nuclear Weapons Council fully support continuing efforts to examine how the RRW concept can address issues of safety, security and long-term reliability of the nation’s nuclear deterrent.

In February 2008, NNSA Administrator Thomas D’Agostino testified that proceeding with the RRW study would provide information crucial to completing the review of the nuclear posture in a “timely manner.” Moreover, it would address concerns about the US capacity in maintaining the stockpile for the long-term with LEP, offer the prospect of improving warhead surety and address the maintenance of nuclear skills. At the same hearing, General Kevin Chilton, USAF Commander, US Strategic Command, argued for the necessity in attaining “a warhead that is designed for the 21st century,” with greater emphasis on reliability, safety, security, and maintainability, rather than on maximizing yield to weight.

990 US Congress, Hearing on FY2009 Budget for Strategic Defense Programs, House Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, 110th Congress, 2nd Session, February 27, 2008, transcript by CQ Transcriptions.
991 US Congress, Hearing on Nuclear Weapon Activities.
According to one report, he also stated that without completing the RRW study “he would be ill-prepared to advise the incoming president next year on how best to modernize the atomic arsenal.” Conversely, others maintained their opposition to the RRW and expressed their sentiments accordingly. In relation to the need to improve surety, Daryl Kimball, Executive Director of the Arms Control Association, argued, “should we spend billions of dollars to replace existing warhead types in our arsenal to reduce by an infinitesimal amount [the possibility] that al Qaeda could detonate it?” Similarly, former Senator Sam Nunn said, “in this world atmosphere, in this climate, for us to build a new warhead now would be a real setback to all of our non-proliferation efforts, so I am opposed to it... At this moment I think it would be a mistake for America to go forward with that program.”

Of course, it was apparent that the views of Kimball and Nunn were to prevail as Bush’s RRW nuclear option faced an impasse after both the House and Senate had an informal conference on the defense authorization bill. According to the Joint Explanatory Statement, “the result of these negotiations comprised the House amendment to S. 3001, which was considered and passed under suspension of the Rules of the House of Representatives on September 24, 2008, by a vote of 392-39. By unanimous consent, the Senate agreed with the House amendment to S. 3001 on September 27, 2008.” The resulting bill had no RRW funds for the Navy or NNSA. It was signed into law, P.L. 110-417, on October 14, 2008.

The House Appropriations Committee marked up the FY2009 energy-water appropriations bill on June 25 and released a committee print version of its report in June. The committee eliminated the $10 million NNSA request for RRW and based its reasoning in the following:

The Committee is aware of the advantages of a modern warhead design and strongly supports improved surety. The Committee also understands that high margin provides protection against failure due to compound unknowns. The Committee supports trading off Cold War high yield for improved reliability, in order to move to a smaller stockpile requiring a smaller and cheaper weapons complex with no need for nuclear testing.

993 Ibid.
996 US Congress, House Committee on Armed Services, pp. 527, 816.
That said, the Committee remains to be convinced that a new warhead design will lead to these benefits. The Committee will not spend the taxpayers’ money for a new generation of warheads promoted as leading to nuclear reductions absent a specific glide path to a specified, much smaller force of nuclear weapons. Similarly, the Committee finds no logic in spending the taxpayers’ money on a new generation of warheads promoted as avoiding the need for nuclear testing, while the Secretary of State insists that “the Administration does not support the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.”

Before the Committee will consider funding for most new programs, substantial changes to the existing nuclear weapons complex, or funding for the RRW, the Committee insists that the following sequence be completed:

(1) replacement of Cold War strategies with a 21st Century nuclear deterrent strategy sharply focused on today’s and tomorrow’s threats, and capable of serving the national security needs of future Administrations and future Congresses without need for nuclear testing; (2) determination of the size and nature of the nuclear stockpile sufficient to serve that strategy; (3) determination of the size and nature of the nuclear weapons complex needed to support that future stockpile.998

The committee argued that while plans to execute these steps were stipulated in the FY2008 Omnibus Appropriations Act, “none of the required plans have been submitted.”999 The committee approved the bill by voice vote on June 25; the report (H.Rept. 110-921) was released December 10, 2008. The Senate Appropriations Committee reported S. 3258, the FY2009 energy water appropriation bill, on July 14. It recommended no NNSA funds for RRW.1000 The House and Senate versions of this bill were not brought to the floor. Instead, funding for NNSA1001 and many other agencies was made available through the continuing resolution component of H.R. 2638, Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009, for the period October 1, 2008 - March 6, 2009 or until enactment of the applicable regular appropriations bill. Section 104 provided that “No appropriation or funds made available or authority granted pursuant to section 101 shall be used to initiate or resume any project or activity for which appropriations, funds, or other authority were not available during fiscal year 2008.”1002 RRW was one such activity; accordingly, the bill provided no NNSA funds for RRW. H.R. 2638 was signed into law.

999 Ibid., p. 124.
1002 Quoted in Medalia, The Reliable Replacement Warhead Program, p. 40.
P.L. 110-329, on September 30, 2008. P.L. 111-6, a one-sentence continuing resolution, extended the expiration of P.L. 110-329 through March 11, 2009. P.L. 111-8, Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009, provided funds for the balance of FY2009. It also, provided no NNSA funds for RRW.\textsuperscript{1003} The Bush Administration also requested $23.3 million in RRW funds for the Navy in the Department of Defense appropriations bill. These funds were part of an $80.1 million request for Program Element 11221N, strategic submarine and weapons system support. While the Defense Appropriations Subcommittees marked up the bill, the full committees did not report their respective bills. Instead, the Department of Defense appropriations bill was contained in H.R. 2638, Division C, as a regular appropriations bill. That bill eliminated Navy RRW funds.\textsuperscript{1004}

With Bush’s departure in January, 2010, it was not surprising that for FY2010, the Obama Administration requested no funds for RRW and included the program in a list of programs to be terminated. Indeed, an Office of Management and Budget report defined the RRW as “not consistent with Presidential commitments to move towards a nuclear-free world.”\textsuperscript{1005} The House Armed Services Committee reported H.R. 2647, the FY2010 defense authorization bill, on June 18, 2009. Section 3112 of the bill would strike Section 4204a of the Atomic Energy Act directing DOE to establish the RRW program.\textsuperscript{1006} The bill passed the House, 389-22, with 1 present, June 25. The Senate Armed Services Committee reported S. 1390, FY2010 defense authorization bill, on July 2. Section 3113 would strike Section 4204a of the Atomic Energy Act.\textsuperscript{1007} The bill passed the Senate, 87-7, on July 23. No amendments on RRW were offered to either bill. The House Appropriations Committee reported H.R. 3183, FY2010 energy and water development appropriations bill, on July 13. It contained no funds for RRW. The House passed the bill, 320-97, on July 17, with no amendments on RRW. The Senate Appropriations Committee reported its energy-water bill on July 9. It also contained no funds for RRW, and most importantly, appeared to be the final conclusion to the Bush Administration’s nuclear drive.

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During its two term tenure, statements and promises posited by the Bush Administration in regard to reducing the dependency on nuclear weapons in US national security through the creation of a “New Triad” were relatively limited. Rather than replacing nuclear weapons, conventional weapons and missile defence systems have been utilised as a means to complement the nuclear posture. Although there has been a stern push in the US Congress to re-examine nuclear policy, there will also be significant resistance as “cutting too deep and changing too much (will be challenged amid) the political development in Russia, the rise of China, and the (continued) fear of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction” by non-state actors.

The nuclear doctrine encompassed in the National Security Strategy of 2002 and the subsequent “editing” documents illustrated the stark contradiction between the Bush Administration’s public rhetoric about reducing nuclear weapons and the guidance issued to the nuclear planners in the role they will really continue to play. While the overall number of warheads was reduced, the new doctrine guiding planning for the remaining arsenal reaffirmed an aggressive posture with nuclear forces on high alert, ready to be used in an increasing number of limited-strike scenarios against adversaries anywhere, even preventively. As signified above, the Bush Doctrine and revitalisation of the nuclear option has obviously been precipitated by the anticipation among military planners “that deterrence would fail and US nuclear weapons would be used in a conflict sooner or later.” Perhaps the best example of how excessive and resilient the US nuclear posture has been since 2001, is that when all the planned reductions have been implemented by 2012, “the US nuclear weapons stockpile will still – nearly a quarter of a century after the Cold War ended – be 15 times greater than when the National Security Council Paper 68 (NSC-68) in 1950 outlined the US justifications for a rapid and massive military build-up to contain the Soviet Union.”

It took the Clinton Administration ten years to dismantle more than 11,000 warheads in the 1990s, but it would take more than fifteen years to dismantle less than half that number under the Bush Administration’s plan. In fact, the Bush Administration dismantled the smallest number of nuclear weapons of any US Administration since 1957. Its rationale was straightforward: the focus was never on disarmament but rather on extending the life of the

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remaining stock of nuclear weaponry. The Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program was testament to this in which the US Department of Energy proposed the development of a new generation of nuclear warheads; an attempt to redesign and replace the entire US nuclear arsenal with new warheads. Despite the apparent defeat of the RRW program and election of Barack Obama, there will be immense difficulties in reversing the course on nuclear weapon development. As stated by Michael O’Hanlon, a military expert at the Brookings Institution who has specialised in nuclear issues, Obama and Gates are ‘at loggerheads on’ the issue of nuclear weapons.\textsuperscript{1011} While serving under former President Bush, Gates had repeatedly called for the Reliable Replacement Warhead program to be put into operation as the current US nuclear arsenal – mostly produced in the 1970s and 1980s – was ageing and thereby had the potential to undermine both the arsenal’s safety and its destructive capacity. As Gates stated in early 2009:

...the Reliable Replacement Warhead is necessary... even though the days of hair-trigger superpower confrontation are over, as long as other nations possess the bomb and the means to deliver it, the United States must maintain a credible strategic deterrent.\textsuperscript{1012}

For all of Obama’s internationalist rhetoric, the sheer fact that he reappointed Gates as Defense Secretary in an unusual step of continuity between Republican and Democratic Administrations, suggests that the nuclear option asserted by Bush may be diluted, but not necessarily removed. As further articulated by Gates, “Congress needs to do its part by funding the Reliable Replacement Warhead Program – for safety, for security, and for a more reliable deterrent”\textsuperscript{1013} and would give the US the confidence to shrink its overall nuclear arsenal. For the likes of Gates, the RRW in essence trades away explosive force for greater assurance that the new warheads would work predictably in the absence of tests – which the US has refrained from conducting for nearly two decades to help advance non-proliferation goals. Under a self-imposed moratorium, the US has not conducted nuclear tests to assure the reliability and potency of its weapons since 1992. But it does spend more than $5 billion a year conducting analyses and computerised tests to monitor the health of the weapons.\textsuperscript{1014}

\textsuperscript{1012} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1013} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{1014} Ibid.
Despite the withdrawal of RRW funding, it is apparent that there is a struggle within the new Administration between the “transformationalists” who seek a new vision to transform US nuclear policy and the “incrementalists” who focus on gradual steps using the techniques of previous years. While Obama has indicated that he does not want to produce “new” nuclear weapons, he has not removed the significance of nuclear weapons in US security policy thus far. Rather than a fully-fledged RRW program, future production of replacement or significantly modified warheads may instead be carried out by expanding the scope of Life Extension Program work to add new features to existing warhead designs. Indeed, under Obama Congress authorised $13 million at the start of 2009 to develop a new arming, fusing and firing unit that can be used on a modified existing design or be used on a RRW. The B83-1 is scheduled to receive a new fuze in 2029 and the W76-1/Mk-4A in 2039.\textsuperscript{1015} Whether or not a form of the RRW continues is a moot point as “other replacement warheads are likely to emerge in the future under other names.”\textsuperscript{1016} It is this nuclear reality that confirms the notion that while key elements of the Bush Doctrine stalled in the context of the Iraq conflict, the deeper nuclear dimension of the doctrine – reiterated, refined, accentuated and guided through the 2002 National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction, the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review, CONPLAN (Concept Plan) 8022 (Global Strike), the abandoned 2005 Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, the 2006 Strategic Operations Joint Operating Concept Version 2.0 and the recent Reliable Replacement Warhead program – foreshadowed a new nuclear era in which the once termed “weapon of last resort” became a usable and, according to the Bush Administration, necessary war-fighting device.

\textsuperscript{1015} US Defense Department & NNSA, “FY08 Refurbishment Planning Schedule,” as of January 25, 2008, obtained from NNSA.

\textsuperscript{1016} Kristensen, “The Nuclear Posture of the United States,” pp. 53-66.
Conclusion
The Bush Doctrine was developed incrementally over a span of approximately eight months. Beginning with the 2002 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush laid the foundation for a “newly” proactive strategy of counter-proliferation. In his address, states such as Iraq, Iran and North Korea and “their terrorist allies,” were identified and defined as an “axis of evil” that was aiming to threaten and undermine the “peace of the world.” In their pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, Bush argued that these regimes presented a “grave and growing danger,” and that the United States would undertake what it deemed to be necessary as a means to preserve and ensure its security. Bush informed his audience that while time was “not on our side,” his Administration would be deliberate and not “wait on events, while dangers gather.” In one of his first hints of prevention, Bush stated that he would “not stand as peril draws closer and closer... and permit the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world’s most destructive weapons.”

Six months later, in a Commencement Speech to the US Military Academy at West Point, Bush elaborated upon the burgeoning national security doctrine, emphasising the need for a more forward thinking strategy that (again) would not wait for “threats to fully materialize.” Maintaining his assertive posture, Bush stated that the United States would “take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge... security will require... preventive action when necessary – to defend our liberty and to defend our lives.”

For Bush and his Administration, the “new” post-9/11 world “we have entered” required a “path of action” and the United States “will act.” The West Point speech expressed such new world concerns in which the spread of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, along with ballistic missile technology – enabled “weak states and small groups” to attain a catastrophic power to strike “great nations.” Furthermore, he argued, these “enemies” declared a very clear intention and were “seeking these terrible weapons” as a means to “blackmail us, or to harm us, or to harm our friends... [Thereby] we will oppose them with all our power.” Polarising his description of the ensuing War on Terror conflict, Bush asserted that there could “be no neutrality between justice and cruelty” and that the United States and its allies were in a conflict between “good and evil.” Again, emphasising his Administration’s dogmatic course, Bush informed his audience that he had no qualms in “confronting evil and lawless regimes” and was “prepared to lead the world” in this quest.

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1017 Bush, State of the Union Address.
1018 Bush, Graduation Speech at West Point.
1019 Ibid.
1020 Ibid.
Finally, in September 2002, the White House released the National Security Strategy of the United States of America – the most comprehensive articulation of the Bush Doctrine – thus officially adopting preventive self-defense as a key element of the US security strategy. Here, Bush further justified the use of preventive war and argued that the biggest threat the United States faced were entities at “the crossroads of radicalism and technology.” In forthright rhetoric, Bush reiterated that the US must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they were able to threaten or use WMD against the US and its allies. His depiction of rogue states and terrorists necessitated that the US could no longer solely rely on the “reactive posture” it had utilised in the past. Once again highlighting the “greater the risk of inaction,” the Administration made it clear that a “compelling case” for “taking anticipatory action” to defend itself was required. Indeed, as some of the most defining words of his doctrine, Bush argued vehemently that in an era where “uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack – to forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the US, if necessary, will act pre-emptively.”

In simple terms, the threat must be eliminated before it materialised.

The National Security Strategy was very conscious of its historical context and how this new phase would “harshly judge those who saw this coming danger but failed to act.” In this new historical stage, the United States would undertake a strategy of action as a means of defending itself, “the American people, and our interests at home and abroad by identifying and destroying the threat before it reaches our borders.”

Foreshadowing the creation of the Coalition of the Willing, the Bush Administration specified that it would strive to enlist the support of the international community, however, if there was a requirement to “exercise” its “right of self-defense by acting pre-emptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country... we will not hesitate to act alone.”

Implicit in this strategy was a very important linkage: the declared enemy was not only terrorists but also anyone, including states, who aided them. Bush articulated this point on the night of 9/11: “We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them.”

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1022 Ibid., p. 1.
1023 Ibid., p. 5.
In contrast to the Cold War period of deterrence, the National Security Strategy of 2002 put forward what it deemed to be necessary in “today’s” environment. During the Cold War, the document argued, deterrence was an effective form of defense. However, in the post-Cold War world the threat of retaliation was “far less likely to work against leaders of rogue states more willing to take risks, gambling with the lives of their people, and the wealth of their nations.”\textsuperscript{1025} Indeed, during the Cold War, weapons of mass destruction were considered weapons of last resort whose use risked the destruction of those who used them. In the post-Cold War period, rogue actors viewed such weapons of mass destruction as weapons of choice; tools of intimidation and military aggression against their neighbours. Moreover, such actors saw these weapons as the best way of overcoming the conventional superiority of the United States.\textsuperscript{1026} For Bush’s National Security Strategy of 2002, the threat confronting the US in the 21st century was the evolving nexus of transnational terrorism and WMD proliferation. It was this combination that engendered “new deadly challenges” from rogue states and terrorists whose nature and motivations, determination to obtain destructive powers hitherto available only to the world’s strongest states, and the “greater likelihood that they will use weapons of mass destruction against us,” that made the post-9/11 security environment “more complex and dangerous.”\textsuperscript{1027} It was with this in mind that the Administration believed that notions of employing traditional concepts of deterrence would no longer be effective against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics were “wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents; whose so-called soldiers seek martyrdom in death and whose most potent protection is statelessness.”\textsuperscript{1028}

The Bush Doctrine argued that states that sponsored terror and those that pursued WMD would compel the United States into preventive action. Interchanging the term preventive with the more “acceptable” term of pre-emption, Bush made it clear that “the United States had long maintained the option of pre-emptive actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national security.”\textsuperscript{1029} Or in other words, the US had long reserved the right to take pre-emptive action in the face of an imminent security threat. However, it was “necessary” to adapt the concept of imminent threat to a new era of security circumstances – where the determination of rogue states and terrorists to use weapons of mass destruction in attacks

\textsuperscript{1026} Ibid., pp. 13-15.
\textsuperscript{1027} Ibid., p. 13.
\textsuperscript{1028} Ibid., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{1029} Ibid.
aimed at the US had become very much apparent. While Bush was adamant that an adjustment to imminence was necessary, the concept itself can be considered a temporal, not a consequential condition. That is, the consequences of a rogue state or terrorist nuclear attack may be of critical – indeed, decisive – importance in the overall assessment of emerging threats, and may in the future provide the basis for permitting some form of anticipatory self-defence. But it is irrelevant to the temporal appreciation of that threat and should not be folded into the concept of imminence.  

Whether a single rifle shot or a massive nuclear attack, an imminent threat is just that – one that is “instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means, and no moment for deliberation.” Bush’s extended understanding of imminent threat connected logically to a consideration of “pre-emption” (or preventive war) as a strategic option in confronting that threat. The Bush Doctrine hastened to add that “pre-emption” would not necessarily be the first or the only option considered when confronting these threats. Nor, it warned, should other states use this option as a pretext for aggression. But henceforth, it insisted, the US retained the option of acting pre-emptively when the cause was just – in other words, pre-emption if necessary, but not necessarily pre-emption. As articulated, to forestall or impede such hostile acts by “our adversaries,” the United States would be prepared to “act pre-emptively (preventively)… To support pre-emptive actions (preventive war), it will… continue to transform its military forces (assert the nuclear option).”

It was the above philosophy, rhetoric, ideology and security strategy of the Bush Administration’s National Security Strategy of 2002 that provoked vigorous debate in the United States and abroad. Indeed, many argued that the Bush Doctrine symbolised a total break with American tradition in which the United States had undertaken a more cautious and defensive policy; a policy that was defined by the core arteries of containment and deterrence; a policy that advocated respect for legal norms and for the sovereign rights of other states. It was argued that the United States had a history of refraining from the use of force until it or one of its allies had been attacked, and that the Bush Administration had dispelled this tradition and was now undertaking a far more assertive policy. As the Bush Administration articulated its National Security Strategy to both domestic and international

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1031 Webster’s Revised Unabridged Dictionary.


1033 Trachtenberg, “Preventive War and US Foreign Policy,” p. 2.
audiences, the cessation of debate over United Nations action and Congressional approval for intervention in Iraq presented legitimating issues for these national and international institutions struggling to address security issues in an era of globalisation. In the United States, an anti-terrorist narrative dominated post-9/11 security discourse and shifted the presumption against the acceptance of the Cold War analytical structures that had dominated foreign policy. Citizens and states opposed to US military action against Iraq invariably articulated their opposition through a narrative warning of the perils of US global hegemony. Conversely, advocates of Bush’s policy in the US alluded to the inevitability of future security threats if the United States and a “willing coalition” failed to take preventive action against the state of Iraq. The Bush Administration, as well as international counterparts, all faced the common predicament of how to construct and reposition their arguments amid a frenzied global media environment, while fulfilling the challenging demands of creating a foreign policy rhetoric that addressed the dispositions of their national audiences.

The Bush Administration’s arguments for redefining the United States’ global security strategy depended on the shared premise that 9/11 engendered a new security environment. The National Security Strategy of 2002 explicitly presented rhetoric that worked to reinforce the threats presented by terrorism. The document defined the War on Terror, the nature of the enemy, and in detail, how “the United States of America” was “fighting a war against terrorists of a global reach... The enemy (was) terrorism – premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against innocents.”

Consistent with Bush’s post-September 11 public rhetoric was the emphasis of the “new war,” presented and dramatised in the National Security Strategy of 2002 as a global security struggle that would be different from previous national struggles. Indeed, the document clearly identified how in the post-9/11 order the United States would champion aspirations for human dignity and “oppose those who resist it.”

When looking at the rhetoric, philosophy and security strategy espoused in the National Security Strategy it is not surprising that it came to dominate American political discourse from 2002-04 as political leaders, academic scholars and the general public debated the implications of this broad and contentious initiative. Whereas its proponents contended that an urgent and unprecedented threat revolution was well under way which required new and proactive approaches to using force, critics of the Bush Doctrine viewed its espousal of preventive war as a means to combat the expansion of WMD as further testimony to

1035 Ibid., p. 4.
American unilateralism, and perhaps most importantly, a fundamental and unnecessary departure from the strategies of deterrence and containment. Their political inclinations notwithstanding, both sides agreed that the Bush Doctrine was something entirely “new,” “candid,” “bold” and “revolutionary,” a radical doctrine the likes of which the world had never seen and perhaps the most defining readjustment of US strategic thinking since the end of World War II.

It was the notion that the Bush Doctrine was an apparent radical departure that led to this researcher’s initial investigation, culminating into an approach that engendered two very clear structural paths. First, and as a means to address the extent that this was a radical departure in a historical context, this thesis pursued an approach that looked at both recent history – on a doctrinal level, as well as a broader Administration level – since 1945. As a means to undertake this process, the researcher defined the approach by addressing the following questions/areas: the extent to which the core elements of the National Security Strategy of 2002 (“Bush Doctrine”) were implicit in US foreign policy in comparison to previous National Security Strategies since their inception in 1986 under the Goldwater-Nicholls Act; and the degree to which the most defining assertion of the National Security Strategy of 2002 (the advocacy of preventive war) was evident, considered or even implicit in previous Administrations. Of course, if the Bush Doctrine was indeed an instrument/policy/security strategy that was not overly new, then how did it distinguish itself, if at all? In simpler terms, if it was apparent that the Bush Doctrine was not overly new in comparison to previous National Security Strategies or its advocacy in acting preventively, then did the doctrine actually posit something defining at all? It became apparent to this author during the research process that the Bush Administration was not just advocating prevention in its National Security Strategy of 2002, but was also pursuing the alignment of nuclear weapons to this proactive and assertive framework. As a result, this led to the second focus of the thesis: the extent that the Bush Doctrine attempted to reinvigorate the nuclear option. As a means to address these two question scenarios, the following structure was undertaken:

Chapter One provided an overview and evaluation of the pertinent literature surrounding the controversy deriving from the release of the National Security Strategy of 2002. Such issues and debates pertained to the interpretations and meanings associated with pre-emption and

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prevention, the adaptation of the concept of “imminent” by the Administration and the legal implications associated with the doctrine – particularly its endorsement of regime change via the undertaking of preventive/“pre-emptive” war against sovereign states. The chapter also pointed to the literature surrounding the historical context of these two terms in relation to the security challenges Administrations have experienced when facing adversarial threats, as well as the rhetoric chosen by Presidents in a time of “war” or extreme national crises. The chapter argued that while there exists writers and commentators who have acknowledged the Bush Administration’s nuclear aspirations and subsequent actions, most have not made the correlation emanating from Chapters Five and Nine of the National Security Strategy of 2002, nor the more detailed National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWMD) released a month later. In simple terms, this chapter posited the notion that while there is reasonable discourse assessing the merits of Bush’s penchant for prevention/“pre-emption” and the historical context of these terms (albeit disjointed), sufficient linkages to the nuclear option that the National Security Strategy advocated and punctuated during the period of 2002-2008, have been remiss, fleeting and broadly inconsistent.

Chapter Two illustrated that while the Bush Doctrine was only “formally” introduced to the American public in 2002, the theoretical logic underlying its framework, including perceptions of threat and counter-proliferation, were already an integral part of the strategic thought of policy-makers, officials and military planners at the highest levels of the US government. Despite its portrayal as a “bold” National Security Strategy, the Bush Doctrine was, in fact, neither “new” nor “revolutionary.” As Chapter Two explained, the document of 2002 and its pursuit of strategic counter-proliferation policies as a means to thwart potential and real adversaries, was a core pillar encompassed in each National Security Strategy release since its inception in 1987. These official strategy documents were implemented in accordance to the Goldwater-Nichols Act, and as articulated, provided an overview of the US Administration’s perceptions of the international security environment including WMD threats and arms control opportunities. Additionally, this chapter traced the presidential vision and rhetoric regarding several Administrations’ counter-proliferation policy goals, objectives and initiatives. It was evident that the National Security Strategy of 2002 was setting forth the security strategy of the United States, including a comprehensive description of the worldwide interests, goals, and objectives “that were vital to the national security.” Moreover, it was defining what it viewed to be “the national defense capabilities of the
United States necessary to deter aggression and to implement the national security strategy of the United States… [as well as the] the adequacy of the capabilities of the United States to carry out the national security strategy of the United States, including an evaluation of the balance among the capabilities of all elements of national power of the United States to support the implementation of the national security strategy.‖

When taken in comparison with the National Security Strategy releases of the Reagan Administration (1987, 1988); the first Bush Administration (1990, 1991, and 1993); and Clinton Administration (1994, 1995, 1998 and 2000), it is evident that Bush deviated little from his predecessors and notions of countering, documenting and articulating the perceived threats “of the day” into formal doctrine. Both proponents and critics of the Bush Doctrine argued that the National Security Strategy of 2002 was something entirely “new,” “candid,” and “bold;” a radical doctrine the likes of which the world had never seen and “perhaps the most sweeping reformulation of US strategic thinking in more than half a century.”

As clearly illustrated, however, when taken in comparison to the National Security Strategies that preceded it, the Bush release of 2002 merely continued the US foreign policy desire to counter proliferators and those adversarial states and non-state actors that had the potential to undermine the United States’ national interest objectives and broader hegemonic aspirations.

Chapter Three expanded on the argument in Chapter Two, but more importantly, investigated the most controversial aspect of the National Security Strategy: its official adoption of “anticipatory self-defense” as a key element of the US security strategy, in which the United States was prepared to “act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed.”

Simply put, the Administration’s advocacy of “pre-emption” or, in reality, preventive war. The chapter established and perhaps even resolved some of the debates associated with the meanings and definitions pertaining to pre-emption and prevention. By confirming the core meanings and disparities associated between these two “strategic concepts,” a clearly defined analysis was able to be undertaken in latter chapters in which the researcher was able to assess the extent to which preventive war had long been a deep and implicit consideration in US security strategy. It was evident that what Bush himself was advocating during the period after 9/11 (2001), the release of the National Security Strategy (September 2002), through to

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the Iraq War (March 2003), was the serious consideration, endorsement and ultimately, use of preventive war against those actors deemed to be a major threat to the United States’ security and well-being. The chapter also investigated the extent to which such definitions and interpretations of pre-emption and prevention during this period challenged and transcended every facet of international relations and US security policy – within the context of history, doctrine, international law and use within a Presidential rhetorical framework.

Indeed, while there may be a place for pre-emption both in a state’s national security policy and, as discussed in this chapter, in international law, this does not extend to the brand of prevention/“pre-emption” set out in the Bush Doctrine; particularly in so far as it did not meet the conditions of necessity and proportionality that regulate the anticipatory use of defensive force under the current interpretation of the Charter _jus ad bellum_ regime. The reason being was that the strategic option enshrined in the Doctrine was not pre-emption but, rather, prevention masked in the rhetoric of pre-emption. As explained, such action, based often on ambiguous evidence of potential long-term threats, can engender greater scope for abuse for the pursuit of aggressive ends under the guise of anticipatory self-defence, as well as for major informational mistakes in which thousands die as a result. In order to make its preventive strategy more palatable to the international community – and hence, lessen its instinctive opposition to the strategy – the Bush Administration attempted to convey this strategic post-9/11 direction as pre-emption. It drew the conceptual link (to pre-emption) through its emphasis on an expanded notion of imminence; a key element in the condition of necessity as it related to pre-emption. Here again, the Bush Doctrine embellished the concept of imminence beyond the semantic breaking point. The hypothesised demise of millions of innocents effectively served to justify any level of preventive military action. It is here that while there may have been grounds, at least in principle under the UN Charter _jus ad bellum_ regime for a counter-proliferation strategy of pre-emption that satisfied the conditions of necessity and proportionality, the Bush Doctrine’s brand of pre-emption – prevention by any other name – was extensively limited in this context of international law.\footnote{Bowett, _Self Defence in International Law_; and Brierly, _The Law of Nations_, p. 419. According to Akehurst it was expected in 1945 that all States would eventually join the _UN_. Therefore, the failure to mention protection of non-members from armed attack was “probably due to an oversight.” See, Akehurst, _A Modern Introduction to International Law_, p. 261.}
As many commentators noted, the rules governing the use of force under the Bush Doctrine were deliberately imprecise.\textsuperscript{1041} For Bunn, “[t]he National Security Strategy is notably silent on the issue of what, if any, decision criteria our [i.e., the American] national leadership would apply in considering the possibility of pre-emptive military action to counter WMD.”\textsuperscript{1042} The National Security Strategy of 2002 was clear as to the adversaries against whom it was directed: terrorists and rogue states. However, it was evasive as to what action the US would take under what circumstances. It did not specify the level of threat that would trigger the consideration of preventive/“pre-emptive” action, only that “the greater the threat, the greater the risk of inaction – and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves.”\textsuperscript{1043} Nor did it necessarily commit the US to forcible prevention/“pre-emption” even if the triggering threshold should be crossed: “The United States will not use force in all cases to pre-empt emerging threats.”\textsuperscript{1044} Moreover, as Alvarez maintained, the National Security Strategy of 2002 left an undefined level of evidence needed to substantiate the claim that a situation activating a state’s inherent right of self-defence existed, or whether a state must produce such evidence in the first place.\textsuperscript{1045} Finally, the rules for attributing state responsibility for the violent acts of non-state actors were left “purposely vague.”\textsuperscript{1046} The net result of this multifaceted ambiguity was to leave Washington free to decide against whom it would take whatever self-defence measures it deemed necessary, in response to whatever acts of terror it felt “crossed the line,” based on whatever evidence it deigned to disclose. This ambiguity in the rules was especially useful to the hegemon. Apart from broadening its room to manoeuvre, this ambiguity may have left rogue states unsettled and uncertain as to the circumstances under which they would run afoul of the new rules on the defensive use of force.\textsuperscript{1047} This may have encouraged, in turn, greater caution and prudence in their behaviour. On the other hand, rogue states could “make potentially flawed assumptions about the actual scope of the new policy.”\textsuperscript{1048} Unsure as to whether or not they have been “irreversibly ‘marked’ as irredeemably evil,”\textsuperscript{1049} they may be encouraged to accelerate their efforts to acquire a WMD capability in order to deter US preventive or pre-emptive action.

\textsuperscript{1044} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{1046} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{1047} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 882.
\textsuperscript{1048} Heisbourg, “A Work in Progress,” pp. 75, 79.
\textsuperscript{1049} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 85.
The ambiguity of the rules may have also put off friends and allies. The terminological confusion in the public debate over prevention and pre-emption, for instance, invited “a confluence of strategic worst-case analysis and political anti-US sentiment” among America’s allies.\textsuperscript{1050} At the political and strategic level, this “may [have] hinder(ed) a convergence between the new US national strategy and those of US allies.”\textsuperscript{1051} Not surprisingly, the uncertainty surrounding these definitions came to prominence within American political discourse from 2002-04 as policy-makers, academics and the broader community debated the meanings, historical contexts in which both definitions had been pursued and executed, and potential ramifications if undertaken again by the Bush Administration. Despite the disparities in viewpoints, and as subscribed to in this thesis, what the Bush Doctrine was in fact advocating was prevention and preventive war – a military strategy undertaken by states as a means to address long-term tensions emanating from hostile and/or powerful rivals. Simply put, it is employed “upstream” as a means to confront factors that may be likely to contribute to the development of a threat before they have a chance to become specific, direct, or immediate. Conversely, pre-emption is employed “downstream,” in response to a more specific, direct, and immediate threat where the necessity of self-defense becomes so instant and overwhelming that it leaves no choice of means and no moment for deliberation.

Having established the meanings and definitions associated with pre-emption and prevention; and the extent to which preventive war was considered a viable option, \textit{Chapter Four} investigated the Bush Administration’s task of “choosing” a state in which it would undertake the preventive war strategy. It was clear that from 2001-2003, Iraq, Iran, and North Korea were all perceived by the US to be “grave and gathering threats” – and were all considered rogue proliferators. It was also clear that the US was determined to act preventively against at least one of them. Although many arguments have been proposed to account for the US decision to attack Iraq rather than Iran or North Korea, given the varying similarities between them – it appeared that one of the major palatable differences between the three threatening states at the time was their relative military strength and relative military capabilities. However, even though Iraq may have been deemed as the weaker of the three states in the eyes of the Bush Administration, it was still perceived as being a dangerous “rogue proliferator.” Regardless of some of the varying considerations posited in the chapter, it was

\textsuperscript{1050} Ibid., p. 79.
\textsuperscript{1051} Ibid.
clear that Bush and his Administration chose Iraq because it argued that it allegedly had WMDs, had supposed links to al Qaeda and posed an extensive threat to the United States’ security, but more importantly, had assessed the probability of a successful preventive war against Iraq as being fairly high based primarily upon practical considerations.

As Chapter Four further posited, indications that the Bush Administration was considering a counter-proliferation strategy of preventive war were foreshadowed in statements made well before the publication of the National Security Strategy of 2002. Beginning with a speech given at the Citadel on September 23, 1999, through to the more defining words spoken at the State of the Union and West Point graduation ceremony of 2002 – and formalised with the release of the document itself in September of the same year – the justification and emphasis of prevention and “action” was made abundantly clear. But also coinciding with such developments was a drive to link such notions of preventive war to the state of Iraq – deemed as the “rogue proliferator” of choice. Once the preventive doctrine had been made public in the National Security Strategy of 2002, Bush was both forthright and consistent in his quest to sway the American public of the “threat” that Saddam Hussein posed and of the possible ramifications should he acquire nuclear weapons – an attack similar to, but potentially more devastating than the events of 9/11. In terms of the “choice” of Iraq, the cultivation of the preventive war doctrine (rhetorically and formally in the context of the National Security Strategy of 2002), the alignment of the preventive war option to Iraq, as well as the orchestration and lead up to the preventive war itself – it appears that the Bush Doctrine could be deemed as overzealous, extreme and unprecedented. However, despite such appearances of a radically new approach, at its core, the Bush Doctrine’s push for preventive war in Iraq in 2003 had long pervaded the strategic thought of policy-makers, officials, and military planners at the highest levels of the US government.

Indeed, as Chapter Five clearly argued, since the dawning of the nuclear era in 1945, at least three other US Presidents (Dwight D. Eisenhower, Lyndon B. Johnson and William J. Clinton) have faced the potential threat of nuclear technology in the hands of states hostile to their respective Administrations and each dealt with the same decision problem faced by President Bush in 2003: whether to use preventive military force as a means to counter the proliferation of such nuclear weapons technology. Each was forced to make their decision regarding the preventive use of force in the face of uncertainty. Each had to weigh the costs – many of them unknown – of preventively striking an adversarial state perceived to be
developing nuclear weapons against the costs of refraining from preventive intervention and employing more conservative diplomatic methods, even while the threat of future military conflict hovered. The historical record of the last half century is replete with examples of high level US decision-makers who seriously considered the undertaking of major unilateral preventive military actions as a means to thwart the proliferation of nuclear weapons by rogue states. Prior to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the US had considered waging preventive war against no less than three additional rogue proliferators – the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Union) from 1945-54; the People’s Republic of China (China) from 1960-64; and the Democratic People’s Republic of North Korea (North Korea) from 1993-94. By appraising these examples, it became clearly evident that several US Administrations had considered executing preventive war against their respective adversaries at the time, only to be inhibited in most instances by practical factors – and that what Bush himself advocated in 2003, was not new, radical and certainly not revolutionary. It was clear that the Bush policy certainly qualified as a preventive war policy, however, the adoption of that strategy of prevention did not mark a total break with American tradition or earlier Administrations. As affirmed by Trachtenberg, when looking at various Administrations in the post-World War II era, it turns out that the “sort of [preventive] thinking” that one finds in the Bush policy documents, should “not to be viewed as anomalous. Under Roosevelt and Truman, under Eisenhower and Kennedy, and even under Clinton in the 1990s, this kind of thinking came into play in a major way.”

If the earlier chapters of this thesis dispelled arguments pertaining to the supposed “revolutionary,” “new,” or “radical” nature of the Bush Doctrine – based on comparisons with previous National Security Strategies and previous Administrations’ penchant for prevention – it was apparent that what was “new” or “bold” about the Bush Administration’s National Security Strategy of 2002, was its willingness to embrace “innovation within the armed forces... experimentation with new approaches to warfare... exploiting US intelligence advantages, and taking full advantage of science and technology” – to the extent of reinvigorating a nuclear option which could ultimately be used in the context of prevention. While the motivation and consideration of preventive war has been an integral part of US policy-makers strategic thought since 1945, and while it can be argued that the preventive actions of the Bush Doctrine stalled in Iraq, the nuclear dimension encompassed in the

1052 Trachtenberg, “Preventive War and US Foreign Policy,” p. 29.
Doctrine can be viewed as the truly “bold” assertion. Simply put, the prevention motivation embodied in the Bush Doctrine was not new, but the reinvigoration of the new nuclear option was. In its punctuating and reaffirming policy instruments (released through the period of 2002-2008), Bush furthered the process towards increasing the role of nuclear weapons in US policy and security strategy. Indeed, the Bush documents and policy instruments signified a renewed role for nuclear weapons and the quest of his Administration to upgrade US offensive forces, deploy missile defenses, reconfigure communications and satellite systems, and overall, revitalise the nuclear complex.

However, to look at this development as purely a Bush Administration initiative would be both historically inaccurate and selective. As signified in Chapter Six, it was evident that the Clinton Administration retained much of the existing US nuclear weapons policy and force posture in the decade after the demise of the Soviet Union and affirmed the role of nuclear weapons in US security strategy. Furthermore, the Clinton Administration flirted with targeting options for the use of nuclear weapons in response to chemical or biological attacks from states other than Russia, and in its declaratory policy, did not rule out the possible first use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances. It was here that military planners and policy-makers – through the Defense Counter-Proliferation Initiative (CPI) 1993, Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) 1994, Doctrines for Joint Operations (Joint Pub 3-12) 1993/1995, Doctrine for Joint Theater Nuclear Operations 1996, Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) 1997 and Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 60 1997 – maintained the significance of nuclear weapons despite the Soviet Union’s demise. But as is revealed in the last and most defining chapter of this thesis (Chapter Seven), it was the Bush Doctrine and its accompanying guidance documents that amplified the Clinton “base,” foreshadowing a new nuclear era in which the once termed “weapon of last resort” became a usable and, according to the Bush Administration, necessary preventive war-fighting option. It is with this in mind that the National Security Strategy cannot be moribund to 2002 perceptions, but a document that must be viewed as a dangerous catalyst; a document that punctuated, updated, refined and reaffirmed its core sentiments through the unclassified and classified documents it spawned.

In 1990, as the Cold War was coming to a close and the Soviet Union was entering its final year, the United States had more than 12,000 nuclear warheads deployed on 1,875 strategic
nuclear delivery vehicles. After completing the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), the Bush Administration indicated that the United States would reduce its forces to 2,200 operationally deployed warheads, the number and concept codified in the Moscow Treaty, but it did not identify the specific combination of delivery vehicles or warhead loadings that the United States would maintain to reach the specified number. Subsequent Pentagon studies, including the Strategic Capabilities Assessment in 2005 and the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), offered further guidance on strategic nuclear force structure. As of January 1, 2009, according to the counting rules in the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), the United States had reduced this to 5,576 nuclear warheads on 1,198 strategic nuclear delivery vehicles. In addition, according to the State Department, the United States reduced its number of operationally deployed warheads, a number that excluded many warheads that count under START, to 2,871 as of the end of December 2007. While these figures do not count the same categories of nuclear weapons, they signify that the number of deployed warheads on US strategic nuclear forces has declined significantly in the two decades following the end of the Cold War. Yet, despite such figures, it is evident that nuclear weapons will remain important in the US national security strategy posture. While the United States continues to reduce its deployed forces to meet the mandates of the Moscow Treaty, it is also likely to continue to pursue programs as a means to modernise and adjust its strategic forces. During the 2008 election campaign, then candidate Obama stated that he supported the goal of working to eliminate all nuclear weapons, but he also stated that “America will not disarm unilaterally,” and that “as long as nuclear weapons exist, I will retain a strong, safe, secure, and reliable nuclear deterrent.” Indeed, regardless of Obama’s nuclear reduction intentions, it is apparent that the significance of nuclear weapons in US security policy will continue as other replacement warheads and nuclear options emerge in the future under other names.

1055 Russia, by the same accounting, had 3,909 warheads on 814 delivery vehicles. See US Department of State, START Aggregate Numbers of Strategic Offensive Weapons, Fact Sheet, Bureau of Verification, Compliance and Inspection, Washington, DC, April 1, 2009.
1057 The Bush Administration emphasised this point in early 2002, when presenting the results of the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). Douglas Feith, the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, stated that nuclear weapons “continue to be essential to our security, and that of our friends and allies.” See Feith, Prepared statements before the Senate Armed Services Committee.
Nonetheless, despite this apparent nuclear continuum, it is without a doubt that the Bush Doctrine amplified, asserted and revitalised the nuclear option and the willingness to use nuclear weapons on states or actors deemed to be adversarial. As explored in Chapter Seven, the nuclear arteries espoused by the National Security Strategy – the 2002 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), the 2002 National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (NSCWM), CONPLAN (Concept Plan) 8022 (Global Strike), the 2005 Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, the 2006 Strategic Operations Joint Operating Concept Version 2.0, and in recent times, Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) – cultivated and defined the resurgent role of nuclear weapons and the Bush Administration’s push to modernise US offensive forces and the broader nuclear military complex. Behind the Administration’s rhetoric of post-Cold War restraint were expansive plans to revitalise US nuclear forces and all the elements that supported them within a so-called “New Triad” of capabilities that combined nuclear and conventional offensive strikes with missile defenses and nuclear weapons infrastructure.\(^\text{1059}\) It was the National Security Strategy of 2002 / Bush Doctrine and subsequent “editing documents” that revealed the significant contradiction between the Administration’s public rhetoric about reducing the role of nuclear weapons and the guidance issued to nuclear planners. Although the overall number of warheads was reduced, the doctrine guiding planning for the remaining arsenal reaffirmed an assertive posture with nuclear forces on high alert, ready to be used in an increasing number of strike scenarios against adversaries anywhere – even preventively. It was the National Security Strategy that provided the platform for the “quiet revolution” in US nuclear strategy undertaken by the Bush Administration during the period of 2002-2008. Indeed, it was this deeper policy within the Bush Doctrine that foreshadowed a new nuclear era in which the Administration pursued a path of retaining and upgrading its enormous strategic arsenal as a means to defeat any adversary. It was a “radical” option that placed nuclear weapons back to the fore; “a strategy” that endorsed “repeated regime change... a steadily modernizing nuclear arsenal” and “a determination to retain deployed nuclear weapons forever.”\(^\text{1060}\)


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