US Foreign Policy towards China, Cuba and Iran

The Politics of Recognition

Greg Ryan

ROUTLEDGE

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Historically, the United States saw itself as embodying the best system of government with a foreign policy goal of bringing this system to the rest of the world. While Washington has, at times, dealt more realistically with other great powers at odds with this view, it has also attempted to alienate lesser states who reject the American system. The enduring policies of severed relations with China, Cuba and Iran are marked instances of this phenomenon. As the Obama administration renewed ties with Cuba and contemplated a more cooperative relationship with Iran, staunch opposition arose in defence of maintaining the long-standing policy of disengagement with these regimes.

Providing a timely explanation for the origins of and continued support for US policies of diplomatic alienation towards China, Cuba and Iran, this book demonstrates the links between IR theory and US foreign policy through the lens of the English School concept of International Society. It identifies historic costs stemming from these policies and cautions that maintaining an overly narrow frame for understanding global politics will cause greater difficulties for US foreign policy in the future.

This book will be useful for American researchers, graduate students and upper-level undergraduates in IR and American Foreign Policy. The inclusion of English School concepts and contrasting of IR theory inside and outside the US should also make it appealing to students in the UK and Australia.

Greg Ryan has significant experience in cross-cultural relations from both academic and practical perspectives. In addition to teaching university courses in comparative politics in both the United States and China, Dr. Ryan served as a US naval intelligence officer from 2003 to 2008. His interaction with international students and foreign intelligence officers gives him an informed perspective on cultural barriers that inhibit US comprehension of world politics and problematic polices that stem from this deficient understanding. His most recent publication is 'Regional Security Complex Theory, East Asia and US Re-balancing' in *Review of Global Politics*, a policy journal in Taiwan.

‘This is a welcome new study of US foreign policy and the ideational and pragmatic drivers of America’s external role conception, and then tests these in relation to three important but different case studies. This study offers a sober and honest assessment of America’s actual and perceived role in the world; a first rate diplomatic history of a country arguably still searching for the place of idealism in its international relations. Ryan’s insightful analysis and elegant prose is captivating and his discussion so rich as to make this a must read for those of us trying to make sense of the short and long cycles of America’s engagement with the rest of the world.’

Anoush Ehteshami, *Professor of International Relations, Durham University, UK*

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Preface

In their thinking about foreign policy and the US role in the world, Americans have not typically given much attention to diplomatic recognition and relations. Circumstances, both historic and geographic, have influenced Americans to either ignore the rest of the world or attempt to force it into the American mold. This phenomenon characterizes the view not just of most American citizens, but of American political decision makers and academic analysts of international relations as well. The objective of this study is to provide an explanation of why enduring policies of severed diplomatic relations and refusal to grant diplomatic recognition deserve greater attention because they have been, and continue to be, costly for the United States and the broader international community.

Historic US success at both domestic governance and competition with international competitors has caused Americans to disregard the realities and resentments of other nations and the resulting negative outcomes of American foreign policy rooted in an inattention to the rest of the world. The cases of broken diplomatic relations examined in this study demonstrate that while the impact of severed relations on long-term American interests is often complex, indirect and evolving (and thus difficult to comprehend), this impact is discernibly negative. The word that best describes the American attitude in interacting with other states is *righteousness*. When lesser nations that posed no immediate security threat to the United States repudiated their American-backed leaders and American-influenced policies, these nations essentially disavowed America's faith in its self-designated role of reforming the world. The US responded in kind by alienating them from international society and periodically attempting to restore to them regimes more amenable to American prerogatives by fostering revolutions and insurgencies. The other US alternative, simply maintaining relations with disagreeable states, was too great an affront to American identity.

This perpetual American confidence in US rectitude in international politics has abetted the framing of US disagreements with other states as 'all or nothing' affairs in which the US should either resort to coercion or break relations with offending states, instead of reflecting on the possibility that *some* American actions may be short-sighted and inconsiderate of others' interests and experiences. So far, this penchant for monolithically comprehending the forces of civilization and barbarism in the world has not proved sufficiently expensive to force

a change of attitude. However, refusal to diplomatically engage lesser states that the US views as wayward has periodically proved painful enough, and there is no certainty that the US will have the margin of supremacy in the future that it has enjoyed in the past. This study will attempt to establish that the historic cases of US broken relations with China, Cuba and (continuing to the present) Iran represent crucial policy decisions that proved unproductive at best and indicate that the American future will be less secure if similar policies are enacted going forward.

Acknowledgments

As with any academic work, this study clearly represents an attempt to 'stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before.' Because the efficacy of traditional diplomacy is rarely mentioned in current political analysis, many of the most important scholars who went before me went *many* years before. Among those that I sought hard to channel are Tang Tsou, Herbert Butterfield, Reinhold Niebuhr, George Kennan and David Halberstam. I can only hope that in a small way this study represents a current manifestation of their ideas about international relations. This study certainly would not have been possible without their analysis and elucidation of the value of traditional diplomacy (or the costs of New Diplomacy) during the twentieth century.

As to more immediate influences, my colleagues in the political science department at Union University, Sean Evans and Hunter Baker, provided both regular encouragement and insight that facilitated completion of the project. Also, I want to thank my students, both current and former, for the many in-class and out-of-class discussions about US foreign policy which continually shaped my thinking on the importance of diplomacy for devising sound foreign policy. Finally, I want to acknowledge my US military veteran friends who served on the front lines of recent American wars (I served onboard ship, far from the front lines) for the many conversations we have had about the recklessness and futility of myriad American foreign policy campaigns.

1 Diplomacy and American exceptionalism

> If we say we will have no truck with them, we exempt them from obligation to the game according to the rules.
>
> —Herbert Butterfield[1]

On December 16, 2014, President Obama announced that he would begin the process of restoring diplomatic relations with Cuba, reversing an American policy of broken relations that endured for more than half a century. While Obama's action may not completely restore all ties to Cuba, as some measures such as the American imposed economic embargo can only be overturned with congressional approval, it represented a significant change in US policy towards Cuba and provokes broader questions regarding foreign policy, diplomacy and diplomatic recognition. This book seeks to understand why the United States for decades maintained a policy of broken diplomatic relations towards Cuba and continues to do so towards Iran.

Diplomacy is simply defined as 'the dialogue between states,' and its purpose is 'to mitigate and civilize the differences between states, and if possible to reconcile them, without . . . ignoring them.'[2] Along with making war and conducting trade, diplomacy has been integral to the conduct of foreign policy for all states throughout history. Diplomacy entails communication and negotiation between two states, but as a 'prerequisite' to this, the states involved must extend diplomatic recognition in order to acknowledge each other's legitimacy, or sovereignty, as the governing organization that speaks for the state.[3] Recognition typically entails that the state extending recognition will establish a diplomatic mission, consisting of diplomatic personnel, an embassy and possibly separate consular offices, within the borders of the state receiving recognition. Despite the development of modern instantaneous communication, the necessity of maintaining professional diplomatic missions in foreign capitals remains important for both communication and negotiation. This is because diplomatic communications require interpretation that is dependent on context related to the circumstances under which a message is sent, knowledge of previous related messages and an awareness of what is relevant that is not included in the message. Negotiation is also a specialized activity, as only qualified individuals who have mutual professional respect

can adequately identify where the interests of states overlap, and the setting for negotiation may be crucial to the success of understanding and agreement.

Beyond communication and negotiation, diplomacy also is integral to the collection of intelligence on foreign countries, the minimization of friction in international politics and the representation of existence of an international society (about which more will be said in Chapter 2).[4] If a state does not have an ongoing diplomatic mission present within another state, the first state is constrained in its ability to make policies vis-à-vis the second state, as it has less access to information on which to base its policies. While academics, intelligence officials and other experts may contribute to foreign policy through their broad knowledge of international relations or awareness of a specific country's long-term patterns of interaction, only diplomats can qualify the effect of current personalities and coalitions within a foreign country that may influence deviation from established patterns.[5] The physical presence of diplomats is potentially crucial in overcoming barriers imposed by divergent national perspectives and disparate ideologies, as it is the tendency of diplomats to play down these differences for the purpose of advancing the interest of the state.[6] However, some states purposefully choose not to grant diplomatic recognition to other states or break diplomatic relations with states with which they had previously maintained diplomatic relations. This may occur due to confusion regarding who speaks for a particular state during events such as civil war, or as one state's way of expressing its disapproval of another state's leaders, government or ideology.

While similar and in some cases overlapping, the refusal of a state to offer diplomatic recognition to another state and the action of breaking diplomatic relations with another state are not the same thing. If state A does not recognize state B, state A will necessarily not have diplomatic relations with state B. On the other hand, state A can maintain diplomatic recognition of state B even if it decides to break diplomatic relations with state B. By maintaining recognition, state A can still hold state B accountable to certain principles of international law. According to Shaw, 'The usual method of expressing disapproval with the actions of a particular government is to break diplomatic relations. This will adequately demonstrate aversion . . . without entailing the legal consequences and problems that a withdrawal of recognition would initiate. But one must not confuse the ending of diplomatic relations with a withdrawal of recognition.'[7] However, the practical effect with regard to the benefits of diplomacy is the same. The US did not extend diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China (PRC) when it took power in 1949, thus the US did not initiate diplomatic relations with the PRC. By breaking relations with Cuba and Iran after the establishment of revolutionary governments in both countries, the US removed its diplomatic presence. Although the technical terms differ, in all three cases the US government chose to forgo the benefits of diplomatic exchange.

In addition to Iran, the US also currently does not have diplomatic relations with the states of Bhutan and North Korea. These states, unlike the de facto political entities of the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (recognized only by Turkey), Taiwan (recognized only by several Latin American and Pacific states) and Abkhazia

and South Ossetia (recognized by Russia and several other small states), enjoy diplomatic recognition by and normal diplomatic relations with many or most other countries, as Bhutan is recognized by 52, Iran by 99 and North Korea by 165 other countries, respectively. Both North Korea and Bhutan are small states that are dwarfed by their larger neighbors, and although North Korea's development of low yield nuclear weapons and ballistic missile technology presents a threat to regional stability in Asia, the Pyongyang regime was constrained by the Six Party Talks and the near presence of strong contiguous states. That is, North Korea is a source of concern not just to the United States and its allies but also to China and Russia. Cuba and Iran, on the other hand, represent potentially significant sources of opposition to the United States and its allies while not being opposed by rising non-Western powers.

The American decisions to not seek restoration of diplomatic relations with Cuba and Iran over a period of several decades follow a rhythm that proceeds from early American history and has consistently colored US relations with the rest of the world. The outlines of this pattern are proposed by Tang Tsou in his study of US relations with China from the beginning of World War II to the early 1950s, entitled *America's Failure in China, 1941–1950*. Although the United States extended diplomatic recognition to and established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic in 1979, this followed a 30-year gap dating from the establishment of the communist government in Beijing in 1949. Similarly, the US maintained a policy of broken relations with the Castro regime in Cuba following the Cuban revolution until July 2015 and maintained a similar policy towards the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran that came into power following the Iranian revolution in 1979. The US for a short period attempted to maintain relations with the revolutionary regimes in both countries but broke relations with Cuba in 1961 and Iran in 1980. According to Hans Morgenthau in his introduction to Tsou's account of Sino-American relations preceding the US decision not to recognize the PRC, this outcome was not an outlier but instead demonstrated

> something which is not peculiar to our China policy but has been characteristic of many of our other foreign policies as well: The simultaneous pursuit of contradictory policies and the commitment to ends which could not be achieved with the means employed. The defects of our China policy reveal a style of foreign policy whose roots are embedded in the character of the nation.[8]

Although on the face of it Morgenthau seems to be impugning the character of the United States, his diagnosis of historic problems in American foreign policy needs to be understood in the context of differing visions of the meaning and purpose of foreign policy and the related area of diplomacy. This is because the overarching foreign policies of any given country are based on specific assumptions about the way the world works. These assumptions are not simply derived from abstract principles but are influenced by national experience, rather like individuals who may be rational but still make decisions based on their unique

backgrounds, ideas and relationships. This is no less true of the United States than any other country. What is different about the United States is its peculiar history, very much influenced by the organic circumstances that both enabled and limited Americans' understanding of the world and the American role in it.

The influence of American historical experience has been an important factor in what Geoffrey Wiseman terms a 'distinctive form of "anti-diplomacy," ' which entails seven interrelated traits: (1) an enduring distrust of diplomacy, diplomats and the US State Department, (2) strong domestic influence on foreign policy, (3) prioritizing military solutions over soft power in foreign policy, (4) desire for state-to-state relations over multilateral forums, (5) tendency to diplomatically isolate states that are not ideologically aligned with the US, (6) practice of granting a high percentage of ambassadorships to political appointees instead of career Foreign Service officers and (7) cultural preference for a low-context negotiating style.[9] The following sections, which provide an account of the influence of geography, history, theory, ideology and domestic politics on American diplomacy, will explain how Americans developed a unique attitude towards diplomacy, and will regularly make reference to Wiseman's seven characteristics.

Organic conditions and American ideas about foreign policy

When the first European immigrants began arriving in what would later become the United States, they brought their Western heritage and view of the world with them. European ideas derived from a compounding of classical culture and Christianity formed the basis of their worldview. These ideas, enduringly familiar to all Americans today, included the ability to comprehend nature and the increasing human capability to control it, individualism, rule of law, a time perspective oriented towards the future and confidence in the universal applicability of Western moral and social values. North America proved to be, even more so than the European milieu in which these moral and social values were conceived, an ideal environment to put these ideas into practice. The conditions that settlers of North America faced inclined them to reinforce the view of the world that they brought with them from their native lands. These circumstances presented themselves in two broad and often overlapping categories, the *geographic* and *social* environments of North America. Regarding geographic conditions, three characteristics that differentiated American colonial life from Europe stand out. These were the abundance, savagery and separateness of the North American continent, all of which were to have a marked influence on the development of the way Americans constructed their collective identity and viewed the rest of the world. In other words, these unique conditions played a part in 'nurturing' American foreign policy.

Whereas Europe was constrained in both land and commodities, the New World promised greatly abundant quantities of both. Unlike the rigorously defined and rarely changing borders of European states, the American frontier seemed to stretch limitlessly westward and 'from the sheer force of geography, the boundaries of national aspiration long remained unmarked and unlimited.'[10] Although

the continent was vast, navigable rivers held the potential of serving as highways to the interior. There was rich soil for the cultivation of many crops, large forests and significant deposits of coal, oil and other vital commodities. Because the area of the continent that the colonists concentrated in was farther south than Europe, the growing season was longer. The Great Lakes and lengthy coastline extending from New England to the Gulf of Mexico promised both plentiful fishing grounds and ready access to transportation.

This is not to say that the opportunity to exploit the resources of the continent could be carried out without great effort. The interior was striated with mountain ranges that presented a barrier to direct lines of transportation. The same forests that provided a seemingly inexhaustible supply of timber for the construction of buildings and ships were also an impediment to civilization and were populated by predatory animals and sometimes hostile Native Americans. Even the rivers simultaneously presented both highways to extend human society and barriers against that expansion. However, this harsh natural environment in some ways represented an ideal opportunity for a people who manifestly believed that it was their duty to carve civilization out of wilderness. The geographic circumstances of North American settlement by Europeans provided a unique environment for living out the ideas of the Enlightenment. Concepts such as harnessing nature's possibilities for human progress, allowing individuals to seek their own fortune with a minimum of collective constraints and dispensing with conflicts that had characterized so much of human history in the Old World might now be realized.

In addition to these geographic factors, American colonists experienced social circumstances dissimilar to both Europe and other colonies. The primary social factor that influenced colonists' worldview was that the population was composed of individuals from varied ancestral backgrounds and national origins. Because in the initial stage of colonial life, and later in the Revolution, it was necessary for members of society to contribute to the achievement of common goals, there was a premium on equality and assimilation. There was no entrenched social system of leadership comparable to the monarchism and feudalism that had characterized Europe and the rest of the world since time immemorial that had to be overcome. As many of the new colonists had immigrated for purposes of religious freedom and held a wide variety of religious beliefs, circumstances called for a high degree of religious tolerance and accommodation of diverse viewpoints. Therefore, as colonial citizens (excluding African slaves and Native Americans) were formally equal, it was natural and convenient that collective decision making was accepted as the rule and democratically elected legislatures were instituted and granted broad power to make policy and prioritize collective goods. The democratic process provided a dynamic program for addressing the changing needs of a growing population, and the occasional misfit could always strike out for new territory to reinvent his or her life. Rational social process rooted in the regular consultation of all citizens, rather than the accumulated social power of a ruling elite, could bring about an expanding community of liberty and equality.

It is difficult to overstate how different these circumstances were from those that Europeans faced. Due to their technological and organizational prowess,

Europeans could extend their control over colonial territories, but they did not generally attempt (with the exception of Napoleonic France) to expand their territorial borders to acquire new and permanent national territory due to the countervailing power of their European neighbors. This 'balance of power' system had prevailed in Europe since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Also, because Europe was already extensively populated and mapped, there was a fixed understanding of the types and amounts of resources that could be derived from domestic land. European monarchs governed national populations that were similar in ethnicity, heritage and culture. European society was largely static; there was no more territory within Europe to be exploited, cultivated or civilized. The balance of power system within Europe was necessary because so many strong countries were proximate to one another, if not in all cases directly contiguous. For the balance to be maintained, each state had to make concerted investment in maintaining its military power, which of course meant that taxes and regulations would restrict individual rights and opportunities.

Instead of integrating a continent under common principles, laws and a unified government as Americans did, Europeans acknowledged national difference and after defeating Napoleon's bid to dominate the continent in 1815 set up a system of consultation that aimed at compromise. For Americans, there was no impetus for consultation and compromise with neighbors, as Canada and Mexico did not pose serious military threats and retreating Native Americans were not numerous enough to turn back the westward expansion of European Americans. Whereas Europeans existed in a social milieu – both inside Europe and in dealing with subordinate colonial populations across the planet – that required constant interaction with 'the other,' due to their geographic and social circumstances, Americans rarely had to confront different peoples, at least not of any strength to substantially challenge American power or self-conceptions. When this did occur, Americans sought to conquer, convert or co-opt rather than compromise. As for relations between the US and European states, President Monroe's proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 stipulated that the United States opposed further European intervention in the Western hemisphere. The United States was by far the strongest country in the Western hemisphere, so physical separation from Europe accommodated implementation. Distance, in a word, well situated the formation of policies that both advanced American interests and seemingly protected America's less powerful New World neighbors from predatory European aggressors.

These geopolitical circumstances that favored American prosperity and independence from the rest of the world since the first European settlers established communities in North America remained in place for most of the remainder of the nineteenth century. The American disposition that it was an ideal society like no other in history, which would play a dominant role in transforming the world into a better, wealthier and more tolerant place, was protected from challenge. The idea embodied in Christ's phrase from the Sermon on the Mount and used by John Winthrop as an exhortation to the setters of New England – 'A City Upon a Hill'[11] – seemed to be increasingly substantiated by the American experience.

Because so many newcomers to the new world, both before and after American independence, were searching for religious freedom, because they believed that the Old World was repressive, and because they did find new opportunities for religious expression in North America, the idea that America was a vehicle for a divine mission became deeply embedded in the American psyche. It was America's role to be an example to the rest of the world and, when necessary, to carry civilization to other peoples, even if they were initially resistant to being civilized.

Although the initial and dominant conception of this cultural vision was expressed through adherence to Christianity, the form of thinking*, civilizing*, to a significant degree outlasted the original content, Christianity. As immigration broadened and individualism became even more pervasive, a gradual transformation evolved in which tolerance and secularism became the new content that the American civilizing mission would bring to humanity. As America advanced its values abroad, humans would become more alike, accepting one another's differences to the extent that differences faded into insignificance. This viewpoint contrasted with the traditional diplomatic view that countries need to acknowledge each other's differing interests as a basis for dealing with one another. That the United States did not attach the importance to diplomacy that European states did was evidenced by the fact that from independence until 1893 no chief US diplomat in a foreign capital was afforded the rank of ambassador, instead only being granted the title of US 'minister.'[12] Thus, for over a century, the US government placed American ministers abroad in the position of negotiating with ambassadors who outranked them. All of these factors contributed to sowing the seeds for later American diplomatic misunderstandings and disagreements.

However, an important shift in the circumstances of American foreign policy began to occur with the closing of the frontier in 1894. No longer would the American urge for expansion have a ready outlet on the North American continent. Not coincidentally, by the turn of the century the US had taken control of Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and a portion of Cuba following victory over Spain in 1898. Provoked by increasing European and Japanese involvement in China and the Boxer Rebellion that targeted American missionaries, President McKinley's administration established the Open Door Policy in 1899, attempting to maintain and advance US activities and interests in Asia. The context for American foreign policy altered in that the US now increasingly sought markets and raw materials abroad and had to contend with reticent populations in less developed countries and compete with other major powers seeking their own interests abroad. Nevertheless, the essential security of the United States as dictated by geography and absence of substantial internal social conflict continued. Theodore Roosevelt's naval buildup, the around-the-world cruise of the Great White Fleet, construction of the Panama Canal and negotiation of the Portsmouth Treaty that concluded the Russo-Japanese War all demonstrated that the US was undertaking an increasingly active and far-reaching foreign policy but doing it from a position of safety. Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine was a practical exploitation of the circumstances that allowed the United States to increase its influence southward and across the oceans with little risk, resistance or reason for reflection.

American involvement in World War I again demonstrated the advantages of geographic isolation from other major centers of world power. Sparked by secret alliances, the unforeseen effects of new weapons and the inability of European governments to pull back from the brink, the European war that began in 1914 only peripherally affected the United States. The decision of the German government to pursue unrestricted submarine warfare (and woo Mexico as an ally against the US via the Zimmerman telegram) provoked US involvement in 1917. Until that time the US had largely benefited from the war, as American sale of war materiel and financing of Allied governments had brought significant economic gains. When the US did intervene, it did so from a position of safety. As both the Allied and Central Powers were exhausted from three years of bloodletting but could find no path to peace without risking total defeat, the late US entry granted it an outsized role in deciding the war and influencing the Versailles Conference. However, President Wilson's grand vision for remaking Europe and preventing future wars through establishment of the League of Nations implied that the United States would have to remain engaged in European affairs and constantly confront different political and cultural viewpoints. Accordingly, the US Senate reasoned that it was better to remain on familiar ground and rejected the Versailles Treaty. Warren G. Harding's successful campaign in 1920, based on the theme of a 'return to normalcy,' only further confirmed that the US did not desire any open-ended involvement in broader international organization that might restrict American interests and ideas. Rather than participate in sustained engagement with the European powers that might provoke self-reflection about the American vision of itself and re-assessment of how it perceived other countries, the United States retreated into its familiar isolation.

Given America's singular circumstances and experience, this decision was not unreasonable. Why would any country not want to preserve its foreign policy freedom of maneuver if it could do so without risking its security from foreign threats? European powers had to be constantly aware of their neighbors' foreign policy activities and intentions, and making alliances, committing to international organizations and regularly consulting each other were means of increasing security. This meant having to take other views into account and giving up some measure of freedom in policymaking. Europeans made a habit out of compromise due to necessity. As for the historically powerful Asian states, during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, their latitude in foreign policy making was severely constrained by European colonial intervention and competition. In sum, the circumstances that shaped US foreign policy before World War II were enviable but also limited American capacity to comprehend and cooperate with other states as circumstances evolved.

The Second World War thrust the United States into that role, as the remnants of once far-reaching European powers that were not destroyed in World War I were all but eliminated by World War II. Even before US entry into the war, with the proclamation of the Atlantic Charter in August 1941, the Franklin Roosevelt administration committed US power and resources to creating a postwar world order based on democratic values and economic freedom that reflected American

domestic concepts of good government. The victory of democratic capitalism and international socialism over fascism left the United States and the Soviet Union in unprecedented positions of global influence and created a bipolar distribution of power. As the British, French and Dutch empires receded, the United States was compelled to make strategic commitments in Latin America, the Middle East and Asia, in addition to guaranteeing the security of Western Europe. This time there was no option of returning to the normalcy of American isolation. Advances in weapons technology, both in destructive capacity and delivery capability, were accompanied by ever-increasing means of communication potentially bearing messages and conversations hostile to US interests. The US would have to confront or co-opt potential threats worldwide.

These evolving geopolitical circumstances, however, did not indicate a total eclipse of American pre–World War II experience. Throughout their history, Americans have tended to frame their conflicts as righteous crusades of universal significance. In this sense, the widening scope of US responsibilities was very much a continuation of America's historic mission. The unprecedented power that the United States commanded in 1945 encouraged the belief that it was the historical destiny of Americans to remake the world in their image. The victory over fascism presented the United States with the new challenge of overcoming international socialism and the Soviet Union, the lone communist state prior to the war. In addition to its powerful conventional army that defeated Nazi Germany, the successful Soviet atomic test in 1949 unquestionably demonstrated that the USSR was the leader of the communist world. It was in character for the US to focus all of its attention and resources towards defeating the Soviet threat. For a country that had spent most of its history removed from a plurality of foreign threats, it was natural to focus on a single, unified threat rather than viewing the communist bloc as a collection of states nominally unified by ideology but in some cases having divergent national interests. Historic challenges to American power and ideals had been traditionally understood as monolithic, whether the threat of Native Americans, European intervention or Southern rebellion. It would be the same with the Soviet Union and communism. The fact that other communist states had unique histories, cultures and circumstances was given scant attention. Instead of confronting the Soviet Union and pursuing a strategy of co-opting lesser communist states, US policy painted all communists as enemies who took orders from the Kremlin, setting the stage for a return of options in diplomacy, namely the option of maintaining relations with lesser communist states.

Idealism and realism in American foreign policy

From the establishment of the Republic, there were endemic contradictions between the popular American view of the world (and the corresponding self-conception of America's global role) and the practical necessities of foreign policy. Washington's caution about alliances in his farewell address pointed to these contradictions. The wave of idealism that sparked the revolution only increased with victory over Britain in the Revolutionary War. The successful amalgamation

of peoples, histories and faiths that composed the American identity was combined with a sense of newness, possibility and universality embodied in the 'great experiment' conception that characterized the United States. The unique conditions that Americans enjoyed bolstered the underlying tenets of equality and reciprocity that were central to the philosophy of the Enlightenment.

The citizens of the young country believed that it was their destiny to advance liberal governance and support like-minded ideas abroad. Thus, Americans took strong opinions about the French Revolution, as it was ostensibly about overturning monarchical power and establishing individual liberties and representative government. Washington and other Founding Fathers took a more conservative view, arguing that the young country had neither the power nor the resources to participate in European wars. Prior to becoming president, both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson served as ministers to France. Despite their rhetoric supporting America's special mission in the world, they had learned through experience that it was crucial for the United States to remain free of long-term commitment to either Britain or France, as both controlled vast territory adjacent to the United States. If the United States supported France unconditionally and France dealt Britain a substantial defeat, then a significant obstacle to France's enlargement of its empire in the Western hemisphere would be overcome. Should France decide at this juncture to terminate its alliance with the United States, Americans would have no potential ally to aid them in defending what was then a relatively weak country.

So from the beginning, the Enlightenment-based thinking of the population was contradicted by a much more traditional, European, balance of power conception of foreign policy held by those responsible for actually making policy and realizing its costs and rewards. However, as American power grew, the ability of responsible elected officials to maintain a balance of power approach was bound to diminish. This was particularly true after 1865, as American domestic experience with violent conflict diminished, and American ability to empathize with foreign populations ravaged by war correspondingly decreased. The basis for America's 'historically grounded optimism' seemed increasingly validated; if US leaders made less than optimal foreign policy decisions, it was usually foreigners and not Americans that bore the cost. The only way to hold office and make policy was to win votes, and winning votes meant carrying out the popular will of the moment, potentially granting greater significance to naïve domestic visions rather than international realities.[13]

A second contradiction involved universal concepts of equal rights and forms of racial prejudice. The record of domestic politics during the early decades of American history demonstrates that equality was not enjoyed by all human beings inhabiting the United States. Eventually, the combination of ethical principles and regular human contact that white Americans had with slaves led to reconsidering the slavery question and resolving it through civil war and passage of the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth amendments. The African slave population was inextricable from the general population, therefore the contradiction that its members should be denied equality eventually became untenable. The opposite was true for Native Americans. They were not only racially different but composed a

foreign nation, not sharing a common existence with whites. This meant that they did not receive sympathy and were progressively pushed off their lands to hidden places where the American conscience didn't have to struggle with contradictory impulses. As American industrial and economic power dramatically increased after the Civil War, and land for new settlement simultaneously diminished, it was not surprising that prior United States policies towards Native Americans would be the model for dealing with foreign nations beyond the continental territory of the United States. The superficial way of resolving the contradiction between egalitarian philosophy and actual practice of relations with racially different foreigners was to claim that America was an ever-expanding 'Empire of Liberty.'[14]

Enlightening the rest of the world would take time and teaching, but because Americans believed that they had a universal solution, the rest of the world's peoples would eventually understand that the American formula was the objective path to a better society. For those who absolutely refused to be converted, stronger measures were justified. They would be forcibly separated from civilization or eliminated through war, just as the Native Americans had been. The legitimizing assumption was that a certain level of intelligence and civility was necessary for the reciprocity in diplomacy that was practiced among European states. In the nineteenth century (and today), weaker states populated by racially different peoples and led by politicians who disagreed with American policies were sometimes categorized as 'irrational,' and therefore not deserving of reciprocal treatment.

A third area of contradiction dealt with the belief in economic reciprocity and the profit imperative. In the decades after the Civil War, America increasingly competed with the European powers and Japan for markets and resources in less developed areas of the world. American policy attempted to harmonize the profit motive with the civilizing mission, and American politicians contrasted the wholesomeness of American international business relations with the moral corruption of European, and later Japanese, colonialism that was often preceded by military conquest. American politicians and common citizens alike conceived that American economic ventures in Asia and Latin America were mutually beneficial to the United States and those countries which were fortunate enough to merit American favor. The reality, of which only a very small percentage of Americans were privy to witness, was somewhat different.

At its inception in 1899 and throughout most of the first half of the twentieth century, the Open Door Policy, which maintained that the US should have the same rights and privileges as other countries conducting economic activity in China, appeared to serve US interests well. The Open Door ostensibly promoted development in lesser advantaged countries while advancing American economic aims and discouraging war. Moreover, simultaneous growth in the US economy and in those states that the policy engaged further validated the US mission of remaking the world along American lines. However, over time the inherent contradictions of the Open Door Policy became increasingly apparent. In the quest for an increasing share of the world's resources and markets, both the US government and the private corporations that reaped the temporary benefits of the policy were blind to the long-term resentment it provoked.

Terms of trade were beneficial to the stronger party, the United States, and slighted the weaker party, the target states. This was made possible by compensating the ruling elite of the states in question, who in turn neglected the welfare of their populations, keeping substantial profits for themselves, and by using American military power to maintain foreign economic arrangements beneficial to the US. As to the citizens of the United States, they had no way of comprehending the real outcomes of the Open Door policy, which neglected the majority of the citizens in the Open Door states. However, Americans became accustomed to the economic benefits of the Open Door Policy that they received, and came to see these benefits as the norm. Despite the obvious rewards of the Open Door to the United States in the early decades of its application, the policy was bound to eventually spur resistance from the states whose populations were not benefiting from American engagement.

Americans, confident in the rightness of their interactions with the world and accustomed to the largesse derived from advantageous terms of trade, responded to this resistance by either redoubling their effort to Americanize the country in question, sometimes by military force, or alienating it. One of the foremost implementers of the Open Door and managing negative reaction to it was US Marine General Smedley Butler, the most highly decorated marine in the history of the Corps.[15] After his retirement, he reflected that his periodic service in Latin America and China during a career that spanned from 1898 to 1931 had been anything but mutually beneficial to the countries engaged under the mantle of the Open Door. Instead, he came to believe that he had been merely a servant of dominant American business interests, that he had been the most effective agent they had at doing their dirty work. He summed up by sarcastically comparing his record to that of a well-known mobster:

> I spent 33 years and four months in active military service and during that period I spent most of my time as a high class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street. I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of Brown Brothers in 1902–1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for the American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras right for the American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927, I helped see to it that Standard Oil went on its way unmolested. Looking back on it, I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents.[16]

This disparity in domestic American understanding of the Open Door and the actual effects of the policy abroad meant that conflict would erupt sooner or later. According to William Appleman Williams, the upshot of the Open Door was that

it 'was certain to produce foreign policy crises that would become increasingly severe.'[17] But this was still decades away during the early twentieth century. Despite rapid increases in communications, transportation and weapons technology, the US still enjoyed a greater margin of safety than any of the world's major powers during the early twentieth century and was temporarily insulated from the resentments that the Open Door would later provoke.

The contradictions of enlightenment rationality and practical statecraft, egalitarianism and discrimination and economic reciprocity and exploitative profit seeking that characterized the gulf between American domestic life and American foreign relations were largely hidden from the American population before World War II and temporarily resolved in the American mind through the continued belief in the special American mission to the world. Physical separation from policy outcomes allowed Americans to hold on to historic ideals that had worked well in practice in American domestic politics due to America's unique circumstances but fostered latent resentment in faraway countries experiencing very different conditions from the United States. This was unquestionably buttressed by the US defeat of fascist aggression in World War II that removed foreign domination from many countries in Europe and Asia. At war's end, Americans could genuinely be proud of their contribution to global freedom. However, in the years immediately following the war, the rise of the communist threat and the unchallenged US role as foremost Western state accentuated the contradictions between America's self-conceived global role and the realities of superpower policymaking.

The United States was the leader of the 'free world' but had to support authoritarian, non-communist states to combat communism, meaning that in some cases American aid actually supported the suppression of democracy. While steadily increasing civil rights for minorities within the US, the US government procured special rights for American military personnel abroad via status of forces agreements (SOFAs). The actions of US multinational corporations in a growing number of countries became increasingly exploitative even as the postwar American middle class expanded as never before. American safety from foreign threats was greatly diminished but American familiarity with the rest of the world remained largely superficial, so it was easy to forgo a commitment towards genuine understanding of foreign peoples and circumstances in favor of focusing on an unprecedented military challenge. Relations with both the Russian enemy and Western European allies were given an ultimate priority, but American interaction with lesser powers was not. Thus the contradictory policies that the United States implemented before the war towards less developed, 'less serious' countries culminated in unforeseen foreign policy crises. Writing early in the Cold War and reflecting on American unpreparedness for its new role, Reinhold Niebuhr foresaw how this dynamic would play out. In *The Irony of American History*, Niebuhr lamented:

> We have had little experience in the claims and counter-claims of man's social existence, either domestically or internationally. We therefore do not know social existence as an encounter between life and life, or interest with

> interest in which moral and non-moral factors are curiously compounded. It is therefore a weakness of our foreign policy . . . that we move inconsistently from policies which would overcome animosities toward us by the offer of economic assistance to policies which would destroy resistance by the use of pure military might.[18]

This is an apt description of much US foreign policy towards lesser powers during the Cold War and after. However, in some cases the United States was not able to fully employ its superior military power due to specific geopolitical circumstances. In these situations, not only did the United States perceive a rejection of its ideals but also a feeling of impotence in remaking the world.

This is what occurred in the historic and current cases of US non-recognition and broken relations examined in this account. Although the US decision(s) to maintain a policy of broken relations towards Iran was only indirectly related to Cold War issues, the dynamic is similar to US relations with China and Cuba. In all cases, American aid and influence were rebuffed and the United States attempted to devise military solutions to correct the recalcitrant behavior of its former allies. These solutions were either never implemented or failed due to their limited scope. Rather than accepting these outcomes, American leaders decided to impose the silent treatment and maintain long-term policies of disengagement.

Diplomacy and domestic politics

Americans have never had a strong affinity for traditional diplomacy, nor have they had a deep understanding of it. As elaborated above, the circumstances of American geography and history did not necessitate a broad and continuous role for diplomacy, so it is not surprising that Americans sometimes have often viewed diplomacy with suspicion. These circumstances favored stronger domestic American influence and associated US congressional involvement in foreign policy than is typical of other Western publics and their legislative organs.[19] The practical effect of this is that there is a great deal more internal negotiation among the branches of the US government regarding foreign policy decisions, often confusing the agents of foreign governments about who is ultimately responsible for American policy.[20] Diplomacy involves negotiation; compromise is to be expected. However, while Americans see their system of government as embodying compromise, the idea of compromise with other states often conflicts with American self-perception about its international role. This was evident from the early days of the Republic.

In the 1790s, France and Britain, both of which held vast areas of North America, were once again at war, and both threatened the young United States. President George Washington sought to diffuse rising tensions with Great Britain and appointed the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Jay, to go to London to negotiate what would eventually be known as the 'Treaty of Amity Commerce and Navigation, between His Britannic Majesty; and The United States of America.' Washington was not completely satisfied with the final draft of the treaty but

reasoned that it was the best the United States could do to prevent another war with Britain, so he proceeded to successfully persuade the Senate to ratify the treaty. Many Americans viewed the treaty as a sellout and expressed their feelings by burning John Jay in effigy in cities along the northeastern seaboard. That this compromise had helped to maintain the balance of power between Britain and France and thus temporarily preserved American security was not well understood or appreciated.

Another episode that demonstrates American skepticism towards diplomacy occurred during the Mexican War. President James K. Polk came to office in 1844 amid severe tensions with Mexico over Texas, his predecessor John Tyler already having withdrawn diplomatic recognition from Mexico. As Mexican sovereignty over the areas of what are today New Mexico, Arizona and California was also tenuous, and popular pressure for westward expansion was a pivotal political issue in the United States, Polk aimed to wrest all of these territories away from Mexico through some combination of military conquest and indemnity payment. Initial attempts to simply pay Mexico for the territory failed and Polk sent generals Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott across the Mexican border to coerce agreement. While Taylor and Scott were successful in virtually every battle against the Mexicans, with Scott eventually occupying Mexico City itself, President Polk did not trust either of his generals. (Both were potential future political rivals, with Taylor winning the 1848 presidential election.)

Polk decided to send a low-ranking diplomat, Nicholas Trist, to negotiate any final agreement with the Mexicans that could obtain the desired territories, denying his generals the privilege of presiding over a political settlement. However, as the American citizenry generally and expansionist Democrats in particular became aware of the US Army's tremendous successes, popular demands for annexation of greater portions of Mexico grew, with some even arguing that all of Mexico should be annexed. Meanwhile, Trist's initial negotiating attempts failed, so Polk recalled him. Trist, who had been carrying out his duties, developing relationships with Mexicans as well as British diplomats and business interests in Mexico, refused to return to the United States and eventually gained agreement for a settlement that fulfilled Polk's original diplomatic goals. Instead of rewarding Trist for his determination and success in negotiating the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which procured a vast amount of territory, Polk dismissed him from the government, refusing to pay Trist his salary or recompense his travel expenses after the date of his dismissal.[21]

While Jay and Trist were serving as special envoys for specific purposes, as opposed to carrying out day-to-day diplomatic activities in a US embassy, the nature of the agreements that they negotiated and the popular reaction to them demonstrates a significant level of American mistrust in diplomacy. The two episodes were different in that Jay was attempting to gain an agreement that would forestall British predations against a young, vulnerable America, whereas Trist's mission 60 years later was to add a significant amount of land to the United States, but in each case American citizens and politicians not privy to the actual interaction of negotiation saw fit to condemn the diplomat on the scene. Perhaps a better

deal could have been obtained in both cases, but all things being equal, why would those far removed from the negotiation have accurate information to judge? The American experience had taught Americans to hope in an almost limitless fashion, and the circumscribed agreements that diplomats brought home, achieved only through negotiation that advanced American aims while also taking the interests of other parties into account, were not enough to satisfy this hope.

The moral basis of the American vision of its role in the world also contributed to a limited American ability to countenance the ideas and interests of other nations. Holding a strong belief in their divine mission to bring civilization and liberty to the rest of the world, and due to the rarest of geopolitical conditions which had extended opportunity for regular territorial expansion, many Americans could not conceive that any limited bargain with foreigners was a fair deal. Over time this unreflective belief in the rightness of American actions abroad became undergirded by dominant political and military power, making Americans even more prone to question the value of agreements made with peoples who were 'beyond the pale.' This is not to say that every American diplomat always makes correct decisions or to condemn the moral foundation of American foreign policy, but moral positions are not entirely unaffected by relative power. A country (or individual) who has preponderant power in social situations is less likely to question the rightness of her arguments because her contentions are so seldom challenged by competing ideas backed by countervailing power. In most cases the diplomat is likely to be aware not only of the current power distribution but of potential changes in power that may occur in the future, and is likely to be more broadly informed about the issues at hand because he or she cannot evade the interests of other parties. Due to the hemispheric dominance the United States enjoyed for most of its history, most Americans weren't compelled to compare their ideas about the world with other views that were supported by significant political power. This was certainly true in the nineteenth century, and this mindset continued to influence American foreign policy conceptions after American attention and aims shifted to areas beyond the Western hemisphere.

It was in this context that Woodrow Wilson, elected president in 1912, declared a change in the historical practice of American diplomacy. From the time of the Declaration of Independence, despite Washington's farewell speech admonishing the US to 'avoid entangling alliances,' Monroe's doctrine calling for prevention of expanding European influence in the Western hemisphere, and the imperial turn in American foreign policy at the turn of the century, the US had always sought to maintain diplomatic relations with other states, no matter their form of government. In 1911, the Mexican government under General Diaz, which had elicited American favor by cooperating with American business interests, was overthrown and then temporarily presided over by a slightly unbalanced psychic, Francisco Madero. Madero was in turn deposed by General Victoriano Huerta in February 1913, during the period between Wilson's election and his inauguration in early 1913. After his inauguration, Wilson reacted to this state of affairs by pronouncing that the US would not continue diplomatic relations with Mexico or other Latin American states that did not operate governments based on justice and

law. When Huerta moved to make the Mexican government a military dictatorship in October of 1913, Wilson attempted to use diplomacy to orchestrate support among European states for a US policy of regime change in Mexico.

In April 1914 US navy personnel visiting the Mexican city of Tampico were temporarily held by the local government for entering an unauthorized area, after which they were released. The Mexican government apologized for the detainment of the American sailors but refused to acquiesce to the American demand of rendering a 21-gun salute to the American flag. Wilson issued an ultimatum to Huerta's government and then ordered a US naval raid on the city of Vera Cruz in which 19 Americans and some 200 Mexicans were killed, followed by American occupation of the port for six months. The incident provoked outrage in Mexico and the fall of Huerta but did little if anything to advance American interests, as Mexican sovereignty deteriorated, resulting in greater lawlessness that enabled Pancho Villa's raids across the American border. However, Wilson's policy established a precedent for using withdrawal of recognition and military intervention as means to achieve regime change of weaker governments of which the United States did not approve. This policy of optional recognition, abetted by the enviable geopolitical circumstance of being the only major power in the Western hemisphere, was a course that no European country could afford to pursue with its powerful neighbors. Wilson's policy remained in place until 1930 when President Hoover's secretary of state, Henry Stimson, announced a reversion to the traditional American policy of recognizing all foreign governments with which the United States was not at war. Nevertheless, the precedent of optional recognition had been set and foreshadowed the long-standing policies of broken relations the US has maintained towards Cuba until 2015 and Iran up to the present.

Even a century after Trist's treaty that extended America's borders to the Pacific Ocean, immediately following World War II when the horizons of American foreign policy reached to the corners of the earth, nothing yet had occurred to force Americans to reconsider their burgeoning hope of expanding American influence to all the world's peoples. The outcome of the war was apparent evidence that this hope was on the verge of realization. However, even before Japan's surrender in September 1945, President Truman, his advisers, and State Department diplomats were aware that the immediate postwar era would be filled with challenges to the further extension of American power. By the time Truman, British Prime Minister Attlee and Soviet Marshal Joseph Stalin met at the Potsdam Conference in the summer of 1945, it was increasingly clear that the Soviet Union would not pull back its armies from the Eastern European countries it had overrun while chasing the Nazis back to Berlin.

From their perspective, Stalin and other senior members of the Russian communist party reasoned that Russia had been attacked by Germany twice in the space of a half century, so why should Russia give up a buffer zone against attack that it had won with the sacrifice of tens of millions of its soldiers and citizens? American diplomats who had served in Moscow and at the Yalta and Potsdam conferences did not agree with this position but could at least understand it. However, to many Americans at home it seemed that the peace was being lost, that

their hopes were not being fulfilled. Within five years the consolidation of Soviet conquests in Eastern Europe, the threat of Soviet subversion in Greece and elsewhere and the successful Soviet atomic test had transformed immediate postwar American euphoria into a mood of growing suspicion and fear.

The Soviet atomic test provided material evidence of the seriousness of the Soviet challenge, and there was no question of the United States withdrawing diplomatic recognition from Moscow. For both day-to-day knowledge of Soviet politics and communications during a crisis, the maintenance of diplomatic ties with the USSR was essential. Americans might fear and hate the Russians, but they could not escape dealing with them. With regard to the USSR, the gap in understanding international realities between American diplomats in Europe and the Americans at home significantly diminished. However, this was not necessarily the case with lesser communist countries. Already ill at ease, the American public reacted with shock and outrage when Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) won the Chinese civil war in October 1949. Under the Nationalist regime that lost the civil war, China had been a US ally against Japan, and this followed decades of American missionary and commercial involvement in China. Americans perceived China to be a long-standing friend in need of continuing assistance, and now this ungrateful former ally, the most populous country in the world, suddenly had transformed itself overnight into a communist enemy. For many Americans, this amounted to treachery.

As with the Soviet Union during the war, experienced American diplomats and military members who had worked in China throughout the 1940s were aware that China's future was uncertain. Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist regime was corrupt and increasingly militarily inferior to the CCP and its military contingent, the People's Liberation Army. However, regular diplomatic reporting on the growing likelihood of communist victory in the late 1940s was downplayed or rejected outright by senior State Department members in Washington, with the result that most Americans were completely unprepared for Mao's triumph. American diplomats in Moscow were considered to be patriotic civil servants on the front line of the Cold War, their day-to-day reporting and accumulated experience afterward a crucial asset in making American policy of the utmost seriousness, but American diplomats in China were perceived differently. It seemed that they had been incapable of keeping China in the Allied camp. Outrage over the 'loss of China' set the stage for denouement in official links between the US and Chinese governments that would span the next two decades and the firing and public defamation of many of the most capable American diplomats who served in China during the 1940s.[22]

A brief comparison of the careers of several American diplomats during the early postwar era illustrates the differing attitudes Americans held towards diplomacy with regard to the serious, European, peer competitor Soviet Russia and an Asian country perceived to be a lackey of the Russians. Of course, the US had not initially offered diplomatic recognition to the USSR, not completing this process until 1934. But the alliance against fascism during the greatest war in history, the dramatic rise in tensions between the US and the USSR after the war and

Soviet development of nuclear weapons confirmed the seriousness of the USSR and demanded that it had to be engaged in every way possible. American diplomats who were posted to Moscow before and during World War II were regarded as an indispensable source of information regarding America's foremost Cold War enemy. Two of the most important US Cold War diplomats, George Kennan and Llewellyn Thompson, were Foreign Service officers (FSOs) in Moscow during and before the war. Both served as ambassadors to the Soviet Union after the war, with Thompson filling two stints, 1957–1962 and 1966–1969, and Kennan serving for a short time in 1952.

Kennan is most well known for his 'X Article' of 1947, which provided the basis for the containment strategy that, along with nuclear deterrence, became the guiding philosophy of American foreign policy during the Cold War. Based on his analysis of not only Soviet military prowess and ideological potency, but also on his understanding of specific attributes of the Russian character, Kennan advocated confronting Soviet expansion with military, diplomatic and economic power in a way that would minimize the threat of general war and facilitate the internal decay of the Soviet system over time. Although Kennan later disavowed some American Cold War policies and actions that were supposedly derived from his original conception of containment, and for a time fell out of favor with the Eisenhower administration after his tenure as ambassador to Moscow was cut short due to an intense disagreement with Soviet officials, resulting in his ejection from the Soviet Union, Kennan never completely lost his standing in policymaking circles or in American society more broadly. He was appointed by President Kennedy as Ambassador to Yugoslavia in the early 1960s, served in various academic posts, and continued to write and comment on American foreign policy for decades thereafter.

Thompson's valuable role in managing relations with the Soviet Union is demonstrated by the fact that after serving as ambassador – first during a period that encompassed the Soviet launching of Sputnik, the Soviet shootdown of a US U-2 spy plane over Russian territory, the collapse of the 1959 Eisenhower–Khrushchev summit and the development of friendly relations between Moscow and Havana – he was reappointed ambassador during the Johnson administration. However, Thompson's most important duty may have been his service on President Kennedy's executive decision-making committee during the Cuban Missile Crisis in the fall of 1962, shortly after he had concluded his first stint as ambassador. According to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, it was Thompson who advised Kennedy to respond to a 'soft message' from Moscow and disregard a second 'harder' message during an intense exchange regarding the potential removal of Soviet nuclear-tipped intermediate range ballistic missiles from Cuba.[23] Due to his personal experience with Soviet Premier Khrushchev, Thompson believed that if Kennedy responded to the first message it might open the way for a dialogue that decreased tensions and create an opportunity for Khrushchev to remove the missiles and argue that he was doing so in exchange for an American pledge not to invade Cuba. In so doing, Khrushchev would be able to claim a limited victory and defend himself against accusations of 'backing down' by Soviet hardliners.

Thompson's advice was an essential part of the successful resolution of the crisis (the US also removed Jupiter missiles from Turkey). Essentially, this was a case in which traditional diplomacy worked, as an experienced diplomat with not only extensive knowledge of the relevant issues but also familiarity with personalities on the other side brought his expertise to bear. Thompson later offered valuable advice on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty that was completed in 1967, limiting the possession of nuclear weapons to the permanent members of the UN Security Council (US, UK, USSR, PRC and France).

The experience of Kennan and Thompson stands in stark contrast to that of John Paton Davies, an American diplomat who served in China during the 1930s and 1940s. As a child of missionary parents, Davies had spent a considerable part of his youth in China and had an intimate knowledge of Chinese language and culture before becoming an FSO. He was one of a group of 'China Hands' who realized even prior to US entry into World War II that important changes were coming in China. As he had spent significant time with both the Nationalist government and the insurgent CCP, he was in a position to make informed estimates about China's postwar situation. When the Chinese Civil War resumed after the defeat of Japan, Davies argued against the prevailing American view that if the Chinese Communists won the war, they would take orders from Moscow. Instead, Davies predicted that the Soviets, who refused to give up areas of Manchuria they had taken during the last days of the war, would eventually be perceived as aggressors in China, no matter which side won the Chinese civil war. As Nationalist armies fell back before the communist offensives in 1947 and 1948, Davies warned that communist victory was imminent. For his correct assessments, he was rewarded by his superiors with a security investigation charging him with complicity in aiding the Chinese communists. After nine separate enquiries into his activities in China, all of which found nothing to suggest that he had been involved in aiding the communists, he was dismissed in 1954 from the US Foreign Service by Secretary of State John Foster Dulles for 'overestimating' Chinese communist strength.[24] This, after the communists had won the civil war and fought the US-led UN forces in Korea to a standstill. Davies, who had been posted to Peru before his dismissal, decided to stay there and open a furniture production business. He was still there in the early 1960s, when major American foreign policy decisions about Asia were being made.

Davies' story was not unique, as many of his colleagues were also run out of the State Department and faced security investigations. The 'loss of China' by the United States, coming as it did in close conjunction with high-profile espionage cases such as the Alger Hiss and Rosenberg trials, the Soviet atomic test, the Korean War, the French War in Indochina and destabilization elsewhere across the developing world due to decolonization, provoked a firestorm in American domestic politics. Total victory in war five years before was giving way to a series of defeats, and a search for scapegoats was the order of the day. After FDR's four presidential election victories, the Republicans were confident that 1948 would be their year, but Truman beat Republican candidate Tom Dewey by the narrowest of margins. As FDR's New Deal had established unprecedented social welfare

spending and programs, and FDR had collaborated with Stalin during the war, it was natural for Republicans, now locked out of the White House for 20 years, to blame Democratic collusion with communism for the string of American setbacks that proceeded one after another in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Because Hiss had been employed by the State Department and had Democratic friends, the State Department was also fair game. For a people already somewhat suspicious of traditional diplomacy, going after the State Department appeared to be another solid vote-winning strategy for congressional Republicans. The US Department of State was responsible for carrying out policy towards China and one of its high-profile members (who had nothing to do with China policy) had been convicted of perjury in a federal trial over his links to communism, so Democratic protection of communists in the State Department became inextricably connected in the minds of many Americans to the communist victory in China. Victory in World War II had been undermined by the 'reds' among us, according to Republicans in search of finally winning back the presidency.

There was no real discussion of the factors *within* China that had facilitated the communist victory, nor was there reflection about the possibility of resentment among Chinese provoked by past American policies, including support of Chiang's corrupt regime. Instead of genuinely seeking to understand what happened in China, the US domestic political debate fostered by Republican charges of ineptitude and treachery catered to the preconceived American notion that if the US was suffering foreign policy defeats, it must be due to treasonous behavior by a cabal of American elites who had been contaminated by foreign ideas. This was the political environment that Joe McCarthy, the junior senator from Wisconsin, exploited with his serial (and unsubstantiated) accusations of 'communists within the state department,' beginning in February 1950. McCarthy continued to make spurious charges of communism for another four years, ultimately including insinuations that Truman's Secretary of State Dean Acheson and Secretary of Defense George Marshall, the five-star general who commanded the US Army in World War II and for whom the Marshall Plan was named, were somehow protecting domestic communists, before he was finally censured by the Senate.

Republicans were increasingly successful in national elections during this period, making gains in both the Senate and the House in 1950, and finally taking control of both houses in 1952 in tandem with Eisenhower's presidential election. Of course, there were many factors besides McCarthy's accusations that were responsible for the Democratic losses. The Korean War was increasingly unpopular, Eisenhower was a very popular, non-controversial presidential candidate and increasing numbers of voters simply wanted a change after 20 years of Democratic control. However, despite the fact that his charges never led to any convictions, and his eventual demise in the Senate and popular opinion (and death in 1957), McCarthy's charges of subversion were to haunt the Democratic Party for years to come. He had put many important Democratic politicians on the defensive, linking their failed policies to a supposed lack of patriotism and manhood, provoking an American public in search of someone to blame to submit Democrats to a 'loyalty test' on foreign policy.

The effectiveness of McCarthy's accusations lay not in their accuracy but in their timing. His search for Democratic scapegoats appealed to a faith in ever-expanding American influence which had just been repudiated by the China episode and needed to be reassured. That the debate largely was over what happened in the United States was in character, as most Americans could not conceive that the Chinese themselves were capable of overcoming American directives. From the American point of view, America had never lost a war, America offered an effective vision of progress for other countries to emulate and American policies abroad were benign. Thus, there must be culprits in the United States who were responsible for the policy failure in China. For Republicans, their long period out of power became a political weapon, as they could charge Democrats in failing to advance the American mission to the rest of the world. This would become an ingrained pattern in postwar electoral politics, as Republicans would repeatedly return to charges of Democratic incompetence and gullibility in foreign affairs, often focusing on the China debacle and cowing any politician (of either party) who attempted to raise the issue of normalizing relations with the PRC.

These accounts point to the continuing gap in understanding about issues relevant to American foreign policy between diplomats and the domestic population and their congressional representatives, despite the recent involvement of millions of Americans in foreign theaters during World War II, and illustrate a deficiency for making foreign policy in democratic societies more broadly due to the dynamic nature of international relations. Characterizing this gap and referring specifically to the time lag that occurs in public understanding, noted twentieth-century editorialist and foreign policy commentator Walter Lippmann opined:

> So before the multitude have caught up with the old events, there are likely to be new ones coming up over the horizon with which the government should be preparing to deal. But the majority will be more aware of what they have just caught up with near at hand than with what is still distant and in the future. For these reasons the propensity to say No to a change of course sets up a compulsion to make mistakes. The opinion deals with a situation which no longer exists.[25]

In many instances democratic processes may impose a check on bad policy formation, including foreign policy decisions. However, 'many' does not mean all instances. Democratic populations, especially in a country such as the United States, so geographically separated and insulated from foreign developments and perspectives, are not likely to be up-to-date on changes taking place in the outside world. Moreover, the moral element in America's self-conception of its international role has led Americans in some cases to support long-term alienation of states that defect from American friendship because Americans do not sufficiently comprehend evolving issues relevant to US relations with the demonized country that may supersede whatever caused the initial deterioration of relations. Conversely, it is a primary responsibility of diplomats to be continuously aware of both the negative and positive potentialities for relations between the US and

another country that are affected by domestic developments in both countries as well as broader changes on the world scene. Of course, if diplomatic relations are nonexistent, there are no diplomats to provide this perspective. This is precisely what happened in the China case and would later occur in Cuba and Iran.

The purpose of this introductory chapter, while seldom referring to the recent and ongoing cases of US non-recognition of Cuba and Iran, is to demonstrate that the interplay between the historic geopolitical circumstances, unique foreign policy conception, aggressive international economic policy, fractious domestic politics and tepid support for traditional diplomacy of the United States are integral to a contextual understanding of why the United States maintained long-standing policies of non-recognition towards Cuba and Iran. While neither the Cuban nor the Iranian case is likely to provoke the level of domestic rancor or foreign policy failure associated with the US refusal to recognize Beijing's sovereignty over China from 1949 to 1979, both of these episodes bear important similarities to the China case. In all three instances, the US carried out political and economic programs over decades that alienated a majority of the corresponding countries' population. The US was able to maintain these policies by empowering an authoritarian leader who advanced US strategic and economic interests over those of his own people. To Americans with a deep belief in their own beneficence and in the benefits of these policies that most Americans derived and to the small number of Americans who actually lived in these countries and established personal relationships with an unrepresentative minority there, the revolutions that swept away the former regimes friendly to the United States were viewed as aberrations. For American public opinion, it seemed that these less powerful states whose development the United States had fostered were now acting in a traitorous way, and therefore due both to their treachery and to their inability to pose a direct military threat to the United States, their new and uncooperative regimes were not worthy of diplomatic relations. Within the United States, political leaders who openly sought to re-establish relations became a political target for the other party, leading to suppression of the issue and an entrenched policy of alienation even after many of the major international issues associated the initial reason to break relations had faded.

Notes

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15 Butler is one of only three Marines to be awarded a Marine Corps Brevet Medal and a Medal of Honor. Prior to 1915, Marine Corps officers were not eligible for the Medal of Honor, and the Brevet Medal was the highest combat decoration a Marine officer could receive. Butler is the only person to be awarded a Marine Corps Brevet Medal and a Medal of Honor for two different actions.
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18 Niebuhr, Reinhold. *The Irony of American History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), 41.
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21 Trist petitioned that he be compensated for his service in negotiating the treaty and finally received full restitution in 1871.
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2 Diplomacy and American IR theory

From late 2013 the Obama administration shifted its foreign policy focus towards increased flexibility in its relations with middle power states that have historically been thought of as enemies, Cuba and Iran. This prompts the question of whether Obama's policies of engagement merely represented a temporary departure from the post–World War II norm of confrontational policies brought about by the less than successful outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan, just as Nixon sought an increasingly diplomatic foreign policy once it became evident that the Vietnam War could not be won. Furthermore, another question that needs to be considered is: What part do American international relations (IR) theories play in influencing these policies and aiding understanding of the recent American turn towards more flexible diplomacy? It is this latter consideration that this chapter will address.

The possibility of increased US engagement with non-democratic governments and states that have been viewed as enemies must be placed in the historic context of American diplomacy. Until the twentieth century, US foreign relations, with the exception of the early decades after the American Revolution, did not involve serious challenges to American sovereignty or even to American conceptions of the world. The particular progressive idea of history conditioned by America's distance from major competitors, success of democratic pluralism in domestic politics, continual expansion of physical territory and the bounty of the North American continent was not seriously questioned due to the distance of alternative ideas about both correct domestic political arrangements and the conduct of foreign policy. The closing of the frontier, rise of American industrial power, increasing communications and transportation technologies and growing tensions among the European powers compelled the United States to begin to confront other political conceptions, especially after the Spanish-American War of 1898, in which the US gained strong and enduring influence over Cuban politics.

Even before the First World War, President Wilson reacted to revolution and instability in Latin America by proclaiming a general policy of non-recognition of regimes either unstable or not conforming to US political norms. Not until the early 1930s did the US return to a traditional diplomatic posture in the face of increasing international instability due to the global economic crisis. The international crises prior to and during World War II compelled the United States to remain diplomatically engaged with non-democratic allies, but victory and its

seeming ratification of America's world role reinforced earlier American conceptions of the universal relevance of American values, and postwar US foreign policy became strongly predisposed towards ideological concerns. The influence of America's organic circumstances that encouraged this frame of thinking goes beyond American foreign policy, as these have also extensively affected the academic realm, shaping American IR theories. Both US policy and academic IR theory, as they developed after the Second World War, demonstrate similar tendencies in constraining the viability of diplomacy to do its work of identifying proximate solutions to specific problems. The basic American preference for overarching doctrines in foreign policy and dominance of structure over agency as the elemental assumption of prevailing IR theory are closely related. The following sections discuss in tandem the evolution of American foreign policy and IR theory and provide an explanation for why the US maintained enduring policies of broken diplomatic relations with Cuba and Iran.

American IR theory has never exhibited much interest in analyzing diplomacy as a significant potential factor determining outcomes in international politics.[1] This is because the business of diplomats is to identify potentialities in international politics by seeking to identify where changing American interests converge and diverge from the dynamic interests of other states, entailing acceptance that respective national interests may be legitimate but also in disagreement and that no state is a permanent ally or enemy. Structural theories that assume either a natural harmony of interests among states or that states' interests are fundamentally in opposition have no reason to argue for diplomatic practice that requires continual adjustment to the changing interests of states. For American IR, diplomacy appears to be a symbolic action, not so much a process of negotiation to identify unforeseen possibilities in relations among states but rather one of formal endorsement of alliance or declaration of war.

The New Diplomacy and international society

It is not surprising that American IR theory has granted little significance to the possibilities of diplomacy, because simultaneous to establishment of IR as an independent academic field, diplomacy was being reinvented by the two states that dominated the twentieth century. Whereas prior to the twentieth century much of the world hadn't been significantly exposed to ideals stemming from the European Enlightenment, advances in communication and transportation technology and the European fratricide of 1914–1918 facilitated the rise of the United States and eventually the Soviet Union to great-power status resulting in changes to the conception and conduct of diplomacy. This new vision of interstate relations was simply termed the 'New Diplomacy.' According to Butterfield, 'the call for a simpler diplomacy envisaged a world in which there were 'good' states harassed only because they had to deal with the possible emergence of 'bad' ones and it involved just the inflexible kind of self-righteousness . . . which might be expected to characterize an age of younger democracies.'[2]

The demise of the European balance of power system brought about by the war opened the way for the US and USSR, both proponents of their own universal

justice, to demand an end to the 'Old Diplomacy' of secret agreements and power balancing that culminated in the unforeseen cataclysm of 1914. Even conceding that complicity of European foreign ministries prior to the war was culpable in bringing it about, the New Diplomacy is an inadequate correction, as it fails to allow for the possibility of achieving agreements based on common interests. This is because instead of limiting concerns to a favorable compact with each other, states engaging in New Diplomacy direct their aims towards their domestic populations and third party states to solicit support in the negotiating process and advance universal visions of international order.[3] The criteria of universal justice inherent in the New Diplomacy presents itself in the form of a righteousness that makes few compromises and accords lesser value to either peace or independence. Of course, the difficulty here is that visions of justice may disagree, no matter how forthright their adherents.[4]

The universalism and transhistoricism associated with the New Diplomacy are at odds with the historically contingent character of social enterprises conditioned by changing interests and circumstances. According to this critique, rather than asserting all-encompassing ideology as the cornerstone of international relations, 'it is wiser to imagine ourselves as rather preparing the ground where many of the most important things in life will grow of themselves.'[5] In the worst case scenario, the crusading practitioners of the New Diplomacy may generate self-fulfilling prophecies, turning potential enemies into real ones and transforming actual enemies into more bitter ones.[6] Moreover, the inverse applies, as will be demonstrated in discussion of US relations with China (before rapprochement), Cuba and Iran. That is, those viewing allies through the prism of the New Diplomacy are likely to be caught unawares when old friends suddenly become new enemies.

The argument against the New Diplomacy is essentially that it provides decreased scope for diplomats to actually conduct the business of diplomacy, as their primary task instead becomes making arguments in defense of ideology. Regarding non-recognition, the assumption of the state that chooses not to recognize or conduct relations with another state is that because it is not ideologically qualified, there is no purpose in posting diplomats to that state. In this sense, an ideologically offensive state is not eligible to participate in international society. The exchange of diplomats between countries can thus be seen as 'tangible evidence' of an international society existing among states.[7] According to Bull and Watson, an international society is formed when constituent states

> not merely form a system, in the sense that the behavior of each is a necessary factor in the calculation of the others, but also have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognize their common interest in maintaining these arrangements.[8]

Echoing Martin Wight,[9] Bull and Watson claim that the maintenance of international society should be the primary goal of the great powers and that order must be promoted even at the expense of morality and justice. The crux of international society lies in devising agreements to maintain relations, and common ideology

and domestic political arrangements may facilitate this but are not indispensable to maintaining international society. Although his view evolved over time, Bull ultimately suggested that the solidarist view of international society was too strongly weighted towards an ideal of justice that might be unattainable due to divergent understandings of justice held by Western and non-Western states.[10] In other words, along with Wight and other members of the English school, Bull favored pluralism in international society and cautioned against ideological qualifications for membership in that society, discerning that the crucial task is to build international society in the face of inevitable cultural diversity associated with global politics instead of seeking to eliminate this diversity.[11] In a contemporary interpretation, Buzan claims that pluralism 'generally stands for the familiar Westphalian model based on mutual recognition of sovereignty and non-intervention. This model is widely used in both realist and English school writing, and has easy referents in much modern European and world history.'[12]

Therefore, the dangers of undue emphasis on solidarity in international society are similar to the problems inherent in applying the frame of the New Diplomacy to foreign relations. The aforementioned scholars, all British, and all representing the viewpoint of the 'English School' of IR, have a decidedly different focus than most American IR scholars, emphasizing the importance of international society, with its premium on the traditional diplomatic process. However, some American scholars have advanced similar ideas. Closely resembling the English School dichotomy of solidarist and pluralistic visions of international society, Kenneth Thompson proposes monist and pluralist frames in the conception and conduct of foreign policy. Monism rests on an 'unequivocal moral position in foreign policy' that is straightforward and not beset by complexity and therefore can be more easily marshaled as a 'formidable rhetorical weapon in the marketplace of political debate.'[13] Thompson's pluralism, on the other hand, is less rhetorically adaptable for domestic political purposes but provides a more stable basis for comprehending moral and political issues in the pluralistic realm of international politics.[14]

Thompson identifies monism as the dominant mode of American foreign policy due to the majoritarian tendency to appeal to the lowest common denominator of understanding in the electorate[15] and organic influences unique to the American experience, including attitudes rooted in the renunciation of European mores, resulting from a particular combination of legalism and rationalism, and derived from a strain of continuing religious sectarianism.[16] The outcome of this conception of politics is paradoxical in that it embraces pragmatism in domestic politics while refusing to acknowledge it in international politics.[17] This point is particularly relevant to attempts by US congressional members to thwart administration initiatives related to the Iran nuclear negotiations and the embargo against Cuba. The historical pattern is demonstrated in the recurrent American tendency to posit sweeping and simplistic proclamations as the dominant guide in American foreign relations. These successively include Washington's admonition to beware of entangling alliances, manifest destiny, Wilsonian internationalism and the Truman Doctrine. What gives unity to these guiding principles 'is the conviction that a single abstract doctrine can fundamentally alter and transform the world's

realities.'[18] Referring to his mentor Reinhold Niebuhr's view of overly narrow prescriptions for the conduct of foreign policy, Thompson commented that, 'self-righteous nations are likely to go wrong when they claim to have discovered what is absolutely right and therefore beyond compromise. . . . Isolationism and globalism suffer fundamentally from similar intellectual and political misconceptions, and the remedy for both is basically the same.[19]

In sum, English School scholars and American classical realists, such as Thompson, hold that the problems of international politics are insoluble in an ultimate sense and that overemphasis on ideology disables both analysis and practice of foreign policy. This view gained considerable support during the early and middle parts of the twentieth century, as the circumstances of the world wars and early Cold War encouraged a closer relationship between theory and practice, and as diplomats-turned-scholars overcame attempts to move IR away from foreign policy practice and towards ideologically influenced analysis that claimed objectivity.

The failure of idealism and the temporary triumph of scholar-diplomats

IR theory and the New Diplomacy came of age in the immediate aftermath of World War I and held similar assumptions about the way the world functioned and how international dynamics could (should?) be understood. It is not coincidental that this era also marked the rise of American hegemony in international politics and, eventually, IR scholarship. Although Britain retained its nominal status as the triumphant West's leading state, it was clear that Britain was weaker after the war than before it. American withdrawal from European politics in the interwar years did not invalidate that American entry into the war tipped the balance in favor of the Allies or undermine the influence of Wilson's ideas about how best to achieve a lasting peace. Although American universities were slow to establish IR programs in the interwar years, more classes on international politics were offered and interest in developing a science of international politics increased.

As the delegates were convening at Versailles in 1919, Aberystwyth University in Wales established the first Department of International Politics, under the leadership of the 'Woodrow Wilson Chair of International Politics,' and soon the London School of Economics and Oxford set up their own international studies programs. In the same year, Georgetown University in Washington, DC initiated the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service for the purpose of training diplomats. In 1928, the University of Chicago began offering graduate degrees through its Committee on International Relations, and a year before that the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, receiving most of its funding from the Rockefeller Foundation, opened for the purpose of training League of Nations diplomats. In this formative era of IR scholarship, two enduring traits stand out: confusion about the relationship between theory and practice and pronounced American influence. While Georgetown and Geneva focused on turning out diplomats, Aberystwyth and Chicago leaned towards development of theory which might influence practice.

When former diplomat Edward H. Carr assumed the Woodrow Wilson Chair at Aberystwyth in 1936, he dissented from Wilsonian views on diplomacy and the proper role of social science, arguing in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*[20] that the interests of strong states could be temporarily balanced but not permanently harmonized. Carr's riposte represented opposition to the practice of the New Diplomacy and to positivist IR theory, and qualified what later was classified as the 'First Debate' in IR theory between realists and idealists (or as Carr would have it, 'utopians'). In arguing that scholarship could not ultimately eliminate the problem of competing state interests, Carr elaborated that no ideal solution to the problems of international politics existed and that only the temporary amelioration of conflict by statesmen and diplomats (who understood that permanent peace was ephemeral) might forestall international conflict. The onset of the Second World War in 1939, the same year that Carr published *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, seemed to vindicate Carr, although he clearly misunderstood the nature of German aims, not realizing the utopian tendencies inherent in National Socialism.[21]

From the outset of *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, Carr condemned naturalistic analysis in social enquiry, claiming that 'purpose and analysis become part and parcel of a single process,'[22] rendering objectivity impossible. Troubled by what he saw as the advancement of this trend, he realized that the impetus behind the establishment of IR as an independent academic field was inseparable from the desire to avoid a repetition of the catastrophic violence of 1914–1918, and hence that war avoidance colored the assumptions of foundational IR scholarship. Carr ascertained that Wilson's outsized influence over the Versailles negotiations was inextricably tied to both the development of IR as an academic field and the European fixation on 'utopian' collective security arrangements. Wilson's role as leader of the state that had been decisive in Allied victory and his disposition as a disciple and proselytizer of Enlightenment thinking temporarily restored the nineteenth-century utopian vision that all states could achieve a harmony of interests through the application of knowledge to international problems. For Carr, this was a calamity which could only culminate in disaster.

Indeed, because 'utopians' confused the ephemeral with the eternal, both the study of IR and the practice of diplomacy were bound to significantly misunderstand power and prescribe general and final solutions to crises arising out of specific and dynamic conflicts of interest. When powerful states applied these methods and failed, they charged that either perfidy or obtuseness was at work among the recalcitrant perpetrators. Carr criticized both Great Britain and the US for claiming to represent global interests and condemning dissenters, labeling any opposition to their foreign policies as a threat to global stability and peace and assuming that their dominant position would continue in perpetuity. In both policy and analysis, the danger inherent in hegemony was the adoption of a utopian view that by definition failed to 'provide any absolute and disinterested standard.'[23] This is not to say that Carr failed to appreciate that influencing international opinion was implicit in hegemonic status, and that this in many instances provided hegemonic states with significant opportunities to advance their interests. However, this process would finally result in self-deception and lead to foreign policy failure.

Yet the ability to correct this declension was limited. Despite his reputation as an inveterate realist, Carr accepted the impossibility for anyone, whether scholar or practitioner, to apply completely unbiased analysis because this meant dispensing with emotion, the setting of ultimate goals and application of moral criteria, all unavoidable human qualities.[24] This is why politicians perennially invoke moral arguments when seeking support for political programs, as political action necessarily involves both utopian and realistic elements. Where logic and sentiment meet varies by case, but Carr agrees with Niebuhr that combination between them cannot be severed and that 'to the end of history' power and morality will 'work out their tentative and uneasy compromises.'[25] Effective political analysis cannot be limited to objective factors but must take subjective concerns and relationships into account.[26]

Both Hitler and Mussolini made appeals to international morality, and Carr saw this as typical of both unsatisfied (the Axis) and satisfied powers (the Western democracies). For Carr, international morality was significant, because he believed a 'world community' existed, if only because the idea of it had been spoken into existence by world leaders. But this did not imply that the international community could command its constituents as states did their citizens, because members could not expect to receive equal treatment. Since Carr acknowledged that there were temporary instances when the world community might achieve collective benefits, he condemned great-power (the US, UK and Germany) claims to represent universal interests as 'fatal to any workable conception of international morality.'[27] Great powers bolster their status by charging recalcitrant lesser powers with infractions of international law. Carr saw that international law was inevitably a product of both power and morality and that moral claims of hegemonic states are partially accepted by weaker states out of a sense of fear. During periods of peak power, hegemonic states are apt to confuse the complicity of lesser powers with a harmony of interests instead of submission to implicit threat, but this condition cannot continue indefinitely. As lesser states gain power, they will challenge the existing order, and refusal to submit to laws that hamper their rise is to be expected. Moreover, in disputes involving international law, 'the fault often lies with those who seek to put it to uses for which it was never intended.'[28] Because neither power nor law is static and roughly expand and diminish together, powerful states must accommodate other states, especially as the dominant power weakens, in order to forestall greater challenges to their authority.[29]

Carr's influence derived from his prescient realization that supposedly universal and beneficent Wilsonian schemes to attain a lasting peace were instead parochial and something less than mutually beneficial. The League of Nations was operated by satisfied powers who attempted to cling to their supremacy by cloaking their actions in the language of broader morality. Articulating that power tempts a penchant for moralizing and dubious claims to objectivity was Carr's key contribution. However, Britain's power after the Second World War declined even more precipitously than after the First. US victory in 1945 assured American leadership of the West, and Americans looked inward for guidance during the immediate postwar years. American participation in World War II required

vastly larger numbers of Americans than ever before to go abroad, to consider the nature of international politics and to ponder the ramifications of America's role in the world. This time there was no possibility of American aloofness, and unconditional victory achieved through unprecedented technological and industrial prowess encouraged American confidence in ultimate answers to international problems in the postwar era.

Nevertheless, the most prominent American figure associated with both diplomacy and IR scholarship in the early Cold War period, George Kennan, author of the 'X article' and the policy of containment,[30] generally supported Carr's view of international politics.[31] Certainly, Kennan saw the United States as simultaneously possessing unparalleled strength in world politics but deficient in understanding the nature of power. He derided his country's discourse on foreign policy as self-absorbed and often counterproductive, offering a scathing criticism of the formulation of American foreign policy that identifies the key drawback of the New Diplomacy:

> [O]ne of the most consistent and incurable traits of American statesmanship [is] its neurotic self-consciousness and introversion, the tendency to make statements and take actions with regard not to their effect on the international scene to which they are ostensibly addressed but rather to their effect on those echelons of American opinion, congressional opinion first and foremost, to which the respective statesmen are anxious to appeal. The question, in these circumstances, became not: how effective is what I am doing in terms of the impact it makes on our world environment? But rather: how do I look, in the mirror of domestic American opinion, as I do it? Do I look shrewd, determined, defiantly patriotic, imbued with the necessary vigilance before the wiles of foreign governments? If so, this is what I do, even though it may prove meaningless, or even counterproductive, when applied to the realities of the external situation.[32]

Much like Carr, Kennan transitioned from diplomacy to scholarship after serving as a Foreign Service officer in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe from the late 1920s to the late 1940s, and a stint on the State Department's Policy Planning Staff. For most of the second half of the twentieth century, he was employed in professorships at Princeton, Harvard, Oxford, the University of Chicago and the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies in Washington, DC. Ironically, Kennan's two tours as ambassador, first to the Soviet Union in 1953, then to Yugoslavia in 1962–1963, ended problematically. Nevertheless, Kennan remained throughout his life an advocate of traditional diplomacy and the restraint of power, and a doubter of IR theories that claimed to hold the key to permanent progress.[33]

Also resembling Carr, Kennan dedicated the bulk of his writing to historical studies of the West's Cold War foe, Russia, holding that a reflexive understanding of America's chief foe was crucial. Because both men had initial careers in diplomacy and because the world was in crisis either at the close of or immediately following their diplomatic careers, they were in high demand for their intellectual

views on international politics, and so were given the opportunity to broadly influence both policy and scholarship. Carr, as the founding figure of the English School, and Kennan, a staunch classical realist, refused to separate analysis from the give and take of politics, and, as such, upheld traditional diplomacy as integral to international understanding and for achieving favorable international outcomes. However, the bipolarity, distance and strategy of the Cold War obscured their insights and provided an opportunity for the return of foreign policy and IR analysis increasingly divorced from diplomatic practice.

The ambiguous outcome of the Rockefeller Conference and eclipse of classical realism

The deepening of the Cold War compelled decision makers in the US government and IR scholars in the American academy to identify a general IR theory that would serve as a guide to successful American foreign policy in combating the global threat posed by the Soviet Union. The 1954 Rockefeller Foundation conference represented an attempt by the American elite to bring together policymakers and scholars for the purpose of stamping out any remnants of prewar 'idealism' and hammering out an agreement on an academically robust IR theory that guided the crafting of foreign policy. While there was general consensus among the major participants, which included Hans Morgenthau, Reinhold Niebuhr, Walter Lippmann, Arnold Wolfers, Kenneth Thompson and Dean Rusk, that the central aim of the conference was to establish a 'realist' IR theory rooted in an understanding of political power rather than concepts of international law and organization, there was division among them regarding the role of science in IR.

The goal of Morgenthau and other classical realists was to articulate an IR theory that preserved a role for prudence and the input of situation-specific information from experts and practitioners, as opposed to trying to promulgate overly specific general laws of action in international relations.[34] Morgenthau believed that structural theories had an inherently liberal bias that tempted both scholars and practitioners to overgeneralize and to believe that they had more control over foreign policy outcomes than they actually did.[35] Although Morgenthau employed the language of rational decision making and science, he refused to believe that 'behaviorist' enquiries and methodologies would actually produce guides to practical action; rather, these would blind policymakers, already led astray by overly optimistic popular opinion, to the true dynamics of political power, just as the Weimar government in the Germany of his youth had failed to foresee the advent of National Socialism.[36]

Morgenthau's distrust of both mass opinion and positivist theory was shared by Thompson, Niebuhr and Kennan (who did not attend the conference), but their views were challenged by the dominant trend in American postwar social sciences. This push to develop increasingly empirical measures and methods in all areas of social enquiry was represented by the development of the Yale School of International Studies and Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of International Affairs.[37] The failure of the conference to bring about a consensus on an effective

theory meant that traditionalists such as Morgenthau and Niebuhr could still wield major influence in the establishment of IR theory along the lines of classical realism but were increasingly marginalized by 'scientific' theories that privileged structural assumptions about state behavior over flexible guides to action that took both actor and situation into account.

Some form of realism remained the consensus answer for informing a policy-relevant theory, but positivist analysis that embraced American values as the basis for providing solutions in American dealings with the world increasingly dominated intellectual consideration of international politics during the remainder of the 1950s and throughout the 1960s.[38] Deterrence theory, derived from formal logic, served to inform policymakers' decisions about the prospects for success in a nuclear conflict with the USSR but did nothing to provoke the Kennedy or Johnson administrations to reflect on whether American actions had contributed to the Cold War or why countries such as Cuba sought Soviet support and protection. Instead of asking *why* the United States found itself in conflict with a growing list of countries in the Third World, IR theorists largely limited themselves to questions of *how* to militarily defeat the USSR and combat insurgencies in the Third World.

American IR scholarship during the 1960s was increasingly influenced by the behavioral revolution in the social sciences broadly and in political science specifically. The classical realism of Morgenthau and Kennan was not amenable to Easton's systems analysis approach to political science,[39] and many IR scholars opted to develop more systematic theories that drew on the sort of *a priori* assumptions that classical realism disdained. Although the failure in Vietnam was the most important event in American foreign policy in the 1970s, and surely evidence that social factors potentially have decisive influence in international politics, American IR theorists were not provoked to return to more reflective frames for understanding US actions abroad, and instead reformulated older theories along positivist lines. Keohane and Nye's *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (1977) represented the culmination of the Neoliberal Institutionalist School, asserting that international institutions would elicit cooperative behavior among states and, thus, help them realize their core interests.[40] Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1979) drew on previous balance of power theory associated with realism while shifting realist analysis exclusively to the level of the international system, leading to the theoretical phenomenon of 'Neorealism.'[41]

In essence, neoliberal institutionalism's answer to the Vietnam debacle was that finding opportunities for trade, reciprocity and cooperation would alleviate international conflict; neorealism's answer was that conflict was endemic to international politics but that small states weren't relevant to systemic analysis. Although these schools held widely divergent assumptions about human nature, they found common ground in elevating a single value of human nature as basis for analysis, as well as in discounting moral influences on politics. From an agent-structure perspective, the structure of the international system (anarchy) conditions agents (states) to respond to the quest for survival through increasing cooperation (neoliberal institutionalism) or continual military improvement and alliance seeking

(neorealism), in similar ways, as both schools assume that agent behavior will be remarkably constrained, and, hence, predictable, due to dominant structural influence. Factors such as culture, resentment and religion are discounted by both schools, for reasons not the least of which is that these are often more difficult to measure abstractly (but these could be potentially comprehended by perceptive diplomats). Once again, the reality of international politics confounded American analysis in both government and the academy in 1979, when Iran revolted against the American-backed Shah in the name of religion, eliciting a forlorn reaction from the United States that culminated in demonization (in essence, mirroring Khomeini's categorization of the US), long-term broken relations and increased US military involvement in broader Middle Eastern policy.

During the 1980s, democratic peace theory, drawing on the impressive empirical record of peace among democratic states since the Napoleonic Wars, posited that democratic governance at the domestic level correlated with international peace,[42] in effect reconstituting Wilson's concept of self-determination. In fact, both neoliberal institutionalists, who embraced the idea of peace and cooperation through organization, and democratic peace theorists drew on Kantian themes as ultimate solutions to the problems of world politics, in stark opposition to the historically contingent assumptions of classical realism. However, structural realism posed a similar incongruity, as both neo-theories assumed an ability to comprehend patterns and directions in human activity that could provide reliable guides to comprehending and, to some degree, controlling international politics.

The end of the Cold War and IR theory's failure to change

The end of the Cold War opened the way for a third major school of American IR theory, constructivism, which was articulated in the main by Alexander Wendt. At last, it seemed, the debate among American IR theorists had been joined by a new intellectual force that posited that agents could shape the structure of the international system. Wendt argued that the anarchical structure of the international system was conditioned by state behavior, as structural and agent influences influenced one another. However, upon closer examination, Wendt left the door open for a less pronounced but nevertheless dominant structural influence, as he claimed that states pursued similar *a priori* interests.

According to Sterling-Folker (2000), constructivists have not been true to the supposed 'historical indeterminacy' that constructivism seemingly suggests.[43] Instead of granting agents (states) unique identity, Wendt and other constructivists have assumed that 'functional institutional efficiency' shapes state identity, just as neoliberal institutionalists posit that international institutions provide states an opportunity to realize their most fundamental interests, and functionalists before them claimed that facilitating transactions among states was the paramount solution to the problems of international politics. Both functionalists and neoliberal institutionalists hypothesize that state leadership can be favorably socialized through regular interaction and that this will harmonize the goals of states, providing an avenue for increasing reciprocity in state relations. In other words, it is

assumed that increasing contact and discussion among leaders can produce shared understanding of collective interests beyond the scope of any single state and that maintaining this collective vision ultimately supersedes those interests which are merely national. This of course concedes that national identity is largely amenable to broader international interests and that leaders of states will eventually become more beholden to external influences and processes than the domestic priorities and dynamics that they had to originally navigate to reach positions of national leadership.[44]

Wendt is straightforward in accepting this assumption, claiming: 'For constructivism the problem is existing national identities, and the solution is not only the greater efficacy of collective identities but also successive acts of cooperation and engagement in discursive rhetoric which equate national-self and collective self as synonymous.'[45] While neoliberalism and constructivism may not exactly agree on timing, both agree that all leaders and states will eventually come around to a comprehension of their elemental common interests. Neoliberals argue that this is self-evident to properly functioning states; constructivists find that while it may not be initially manifest, sustained interaction will bring the universal interests of states to the fore. Sterling-Folker finds that while this overriding collective interest as defined by constructivists is usually initially associated with capitalist economics, this may not continue indefinitely, as there may be a crossover point where multilateralism becomes the dominant goal even if this means that some states do not continue to enjoy the material benefits of interaction. Thus, elite definitions of efficiency will evolve by a 'logic of appropriateness' according to commonly accepted universal practices at the expense of the prosperity of their domestic populations.

Sterling-Folker sees the evolution of constructivism in American IR as a natural outcome of the deep American predisposition towards universalistic, liberal perception of political interaction at all levels and argues that the constructivist turn towards an assumption that identifies individual state interest with adherence to collective international visions is particularly amenable to the post–Cold War American mindset.[46] Indeed, the American variant of constructivism that emerged after the demise of bipolarity became accepted as a valid paradigm precisely because it did not refute rationalist structuralist assumptions.[47] Moreover, Sterling-Folker critiques both neoliberal institutionalism and constructivism as being guilty of the same systemic error that characterizes neorealism, finding that all of them are more prescriptive than descriptive and that

> theorizing at the systemic level allows it to avoid having to explain ongoing, empirical anomalies. That is, it avoids having to explain why the identities, interests, and behaviors of policymakers continue to be informed by the parochial and myopic pulling and hauling of domestic politics and electoral cycles than by far-sighted practices required of international collective interests and practices.[48]

This is particularly pertinent to the enduring American policies of broken diplomatic relations with Cuba and Iran, as the Castro and Khomeini regimes embodied

an affront to liberal assumptions regarding the proper behavior of states, as in both cases these revolutionaries deposed leaders that had embraced cooperation with the United States. The traditional American response to untoward developments such as these has been better characterized by adopting a realist frame, that is, the use of military power to compel seemingly less powerful states to conform to Western conceptions of propriety.

However, contemporary realism has also largely been incapable of accounting for the American response to Cuba and Iran. Unlike classical realism, the structural realist emphasis on material measures of power to the exclusion of all other determinants renders political and geographical factors irrelevant to the workings of international politics. Although during the Cold War Castro's alliance with the Soviet Union could be understood in Waltzian terms as a clear case of balancing against the US hegemon, this provides no explanation for continued Cuban resistance to American concepts of correct governance and acceptable external behavior after the demise of the USSR, nor does it explain why the United States has failed to militarily coerce change in Cuba during the intervening quarter century.

The structural realist emphasis on systemic anarchy, self-help and great power dynamics assumes predictability for the foreign policies of small states.[49] The reasoning goes that great-power actions may be less predictable precisely because their margin for error is larger, as the power that strong states command affords them more options and, thus, an avenue for idiosyncratic behavior. Small states, on the other hand, are tightly constrained by systemic forces and are thus likely to 'bandwagon' with aggressive, stronger states to maintain their survival.[50] In this view, small state foreign policy behavior is predictable because attempting to realize unique ambitions (such as the displacement of leaders backed by a major power in favor of a regime based on indigenous sentiment) risks annihilation. Once again, the Cuban and Iranian cases are totally unexplained by this reasoning, as both continued to defy the US though possessing significantly inferior military and economic capabilities.

According to Barkin, whereas classical realism sees the world as 'messy, historically contingent, and political,'[51] structural realism assumes objectivity, transhistoricism and universality. Classical realists do not hold that agents are irrational but understand that all reasoning is conditioned. Structural realism's assumption that rational thought is unconditioned and unbiased, and that determining patterned behavior stemming from unconditioned rationality is raw material for effective political analysis, is contradictory to the core assumption of classical realism. In other words, the turn to science in American IR 'means that the systematic and rational realism that dominate the field now are, in many ways, built on an inherent contradiction.'[52]

This contradiction consists of attempting to establish systemic theory while simultaneously encouraging foreign policy decision makers to pursue a course of action that conforms to the assumptions of that theory. Mearsheimer's advocacy against the 2003 US invasion of Iraq is a representative case. His 'offensive realism,' a form of structural realism that assumes a great power always acts to maintain its hegemony and thus avoids frittering away its strength in wars against states that do not constitute a threat to the great power's hegemony,[53] indicates

that as a rational agent the United States would not attack Iraq in 2003 because Iraq was too weak to imperil US influence in the Middle East. However, when the George W. Bush administration began to move towards invasion, Mearsheimer took out an ad in *The New York Times* on September 26, 2002 pleading for the administration to refrain from going forward with Operation Iraqi Freedom.[54]

Oren (2009) points out that Mearsheimer's assumption that the US would not intervene in Iraq due to Iraqi inability to upset US influence in the Middle East transformed into *policy advocacy* against intervening once the Bush administration signaled that it would indeed proceed with plans to invade Iraq and that this violated a key assumption of positivist science. In seeking to persuade the administration to refrain from invading Iraq, Mearsheimer was attempting to influence the outcome of a policy that supposedly needed no influence other than that of systemic logic, and as such Mearsheimer's offensive realism 'ceases to be purely analytical, taking on a political, or utopian, dimension.'[55] Pointing out the folly of this type of academic activity, Barkin declares: 'The conflation of prediction (we will strive for hegemony) and goal (we should strive for hegemony) is a theoretical sleight-of-hand that puts us precisely in the sort of recursive situation that E. H. Carr warned about in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, in which our fears create their own reality.'[56] In their defense of classical realist insight both Barkin and Oren strongly assert that Carr, rather than being 'unscientific,' clearly recognized the dangers inherent in positivist analysis in social science and scholarly attempts to make policy conform to idealistic assumptions.

Barkin argues that structural theories provide inadequate assumptions for comprehending international political outcomes and encourage unfulfilled expectations because they do not allow for intersubjectivity, reflexivity and historical contingency. Intersubjectivity, the acknowledgment that meaning is derived from collective understanding, is relevant for understanding any political situation because it asserts that socially constructed meanings cannot be sufficiently grasped by a single actor involved in political interaction (which necessarily involves multiple actors).[57] Reflexivity is 'an awareness of the inherent limitations and ambiguities' of one's own frame for understanding.[58] Historical contingency, in opposition to the transhistoric assumption of structural theories, posits that international politics cannot be understood without reference to historical context.[59] Not coincidentally, these concepts are associated with an appreciation of unique characteristics and circumstances of social situations, something that diplomats are well situated to provide. Carr's discussion of the nature and understanding of power in international politics in the Locarno Pact elucidates these concepts.[60]

The Locarno Treaty was a multilateral agreement negotiated by European states in 1925 that addressed border disputes and alliance issues left over from World War I. France had occupied the Ruhr valley region of Germany in 1923 when Germany failed to make payment on its war indemnity to France, but this did little to advance broader French objectives and they withdrew a year later. By 1925, Britain favored a Franco-German border settlement while conspicuously avoiding

settlement proposals for border issues between Germany and her neighbors to the east. Although other agreements were concluded as part of the Locarno Pact, the principle treaty established borders among Germany, France and Belgium and demilitarized the Rhineland region of Germany. This agreement, although unsettling to Poland and Czechoslovakia, forged confidence in general European peace among the European powers that endured until the early 1930s. Then, the Weimar Republic's demise and accompanying rise of the Nazi regime in Germany in 1933 ended the 'Spirit of Locarno' and by 1936 Hitler had abrogated the pact and occupied the Rhineland.

Intersubjectivity categorizes the specific, intense and periodically violent relationship between France and Germany dating from the Franco-Prussian War. Prussian victory in 1871 paved the way for German statehood and established an existential threat to France, as the inescapable geographic contiguity of the two states locked them into an enduring struggle to best one another and gain ascendancy in Western Europe. That is, Locarno cannot be understood absent an appreciation of the long-term Franco-German relationship and the inherent hopes, fears, disappointments and grudges of both parties. The related concept of reflexivity, or lack of it, is also integral for understanding why each side acted as it did at key junctures. Weimar Germany originally approached France in 1922 with the goal of making a permanent border settlement. As related above, France instead sent troops into the Ruhr. French refusal to countenance German claims in the early 1920s, when French power was at its peak, represented a lack of reflexivity and a missed opportunity to build mutual confidence in a relationship fraught with mistrust. By 1925, the German economy was on a surer footing and a settlement was achieved. However, France's prior lack of reflexivity encouraged German vindictiveness later.

Finally, Locarno illustrated that international politics allows only proximate solutions (historical contingency). The pact held until the balance of power altered, then it unraveled. This along with abortive attempts to replicate Locarno elsewhere discomfited League proponents of collective security and provoked them to make the charge of treachery. Carr's condemnation of those who believed that Locarno was an outcome produced by a growing amity divorced from power calculation is typically trenchant: 'The history of Locarno is a classic instance of power politics. It remains incomprehensible to those who seek uniform *a priori* solutions of the problem of security, and regard power politics as an abnormal phenomenon visible only in periods of crisis.'[61] More adept diplomacy potentially could have provided decision makers with a deeper understanding of the subjective and dynamic elements of both power and morality, perhaps influencing an earlier agreement (and building future trust) or clarifying expectations regarding the endurance of the agreement. Greater theoretical appreciation of the broad possibilities in international politics but narrower range of possible outcomes in historically contingent situations could provide similar enhancement to foreign policy. That is, effective diplomacy and policy-relevant IR theory should both be able to provide prescription in foreign policy.

The long-running critique

Since the 1960s there has been a relatively unified critique of the American brand of IR theory that represents the scientific turn in the social sciences and, in winning the so-called Second Debate, overwhelmed Morgenthau's attempt to establish a field of enquiry relying on judgment informed by practitioner input and eschewing higher-level abstraction. This enduring minority viewpoint that disparages dominant American IR theories is rooted in the assumption that the US historical experience is qualitatively different and has disposed Americans to view the world from a unique but decidedly *not* universal perspective, and that this particular American frame has deep and enduring influences on both policy and theory. Smith (2002) has stated that there is something that 'marks out' American IR theory from IR theories conceived elsewhere and that American practitioners and analysts of international relations are united by common epistemology associated with the American experience.[62] This view has been articulated by others in different eras, and the following paragraphs will draw liberally on Stillman and Pfaff's characterization of American foreign policy and intellectual comprehension of international relations during the mid-1960s,[63] Stanley Hoffman's review of the state of the field of IR in the late 1970s,[64] as well as Smith's post-9/11 critique and Sterling-Folker's (2006) analysis of subjective pre-theory in American IR.[65]

According to Stillman and Pfaff (1966) and Hoffman (1977), this particular American way of understanding the world, and resolving its disputes and defects, is identified with an uncommon confidence in the prescriptions of the Enlightenment that remains undisturbed due to American separation from the harsher aspects of geopolitical reality. Simply put, Americans have long and increasingly believed that superior knowledge can be translated into successful action to address social problems, and that correct application of knowledge can bring about broad and steady progress in all areas of politics. Or, as Hoffman states, Americans have a unique belief in the operational deployment of social scientific knowledge as a kind of 'masterkey' to political practice.[66] Sterling-Folker concurs that American society is decidedly liberal and largely dominated by Enlightenment philosophy.[67]

Although elsewhere, due to divergent and often unpleasant experience, both intellectuals and mass publics have recognized that human affairs were not amenable to the same type of analysis and methodology employed in natural sciences, Americans have come to a different conclusion. Spared the destruction of their population, government and industry, Americans have remained optimistic that science could remake the world. Most Americans have had little personal familiarity with instances of failure of democracy, negative consequences of American actions abroad and even conscientiously conceived and meticulously planned policy that at times has gone devastatingly wrong. Conditioned by what has appeared to be (and so far as they could see, certainly was) successful governance, economic growth and military victory, there has been little reason to doubt the wisdom of American experience. Instead of asking what was particular

about the conditions that enabled American success, and whether these conditions existed elsewhere or were tenable over the longer term, Americans have assumed that conditions were a factor of marginal influence, if any. The advance of science brought with it ever-increasing sophistication of technique but no provocation to rethink excessively simplistic assumptions about human nature. Due to the universal scope of American responsibilities during the Cold War, it was somewhat inevitable that both the practice and study of foreign policy and rather rigid diplomatic practice coalesced around an abstract and monolithic understanding of the way the world functioned.

Furthermore, the immensity of the Cold War, and unprecedented sophistication, range and destructiveness of its weaponry, produced a penchant for scientific precision that did little to encourage the personalization of international politics from the American perspective. The overriding reality that the very destructiveness of nuclear warheads on intercontinental missiles rendered these weapons impotent in actual political conflict and of dubious value in addressing the challenges inherent in the political diversity of the world was overlooked in favor of esoteric lines of enquiry such as hemispheric deterrence and one-size-fits-all economic programs. As such, unifying but superficial symbolism was privileged over the complex nature of varying and distinct issues associated with human realities.[68]

This inattention to understanding the social and political complexity of the rest of the world characterizes both the policy and scholarly realm, and indeed connects them, as political parties in or out of power are linked to think tanks and universities to a degree unmatched outside the United States, combining their resources to reinforce abstract theories and doctrines that are ill-equipped to deal with specific problems.[69] The American practice of foreign policy and the prioritization of positivist IR theory parallel one another. Washington provides little scope for diplomats to play their natural role at understanding specific political dynamics and solving problems that require cultural comprehension and personal relationships; prominent US IR scholars maintain strict control of what counts as serious research. Without doubt, the American public largely accepts this hegemony, as Americans have historically viewed diplomacy as hierarchical, secretive, undemocratic and associated with the European foreign policy fiascos that preceded both World Wars, preferring instead to view the world in a 'with us or against us' fashion that is deeply rooted in American culture.[70] In this context, symbolic policies of severed diplomatic relations appear more appealing than real policies of diplomatic engagement.

Also, the reaction to policy failure and theoretical inability to anticipate major changes is similar. Instead of reconsidering foreign policy failures, American officials have tended to cling to an 'insistent optimism' while quietly directing 'a kind of puerile anger at the ingratitude and corruption of the world' for not embracing American wisdom and leadership.[71] Despite the almost total inability of dominant American IR theory to provide for the possibility of the end of the Cold War or the Arab Spring in advance,[72] there has been little effort to move towards a more flexible understanding of the world, despite the growth of the constructivist school in the years since the demise of superpower conflict. Rather, the tendency towards

rigidity that Hoffman discerned in the immediate post-Vietnam era continues, as American IR responds to its lack of success in comprehending the realities of international politics by uttering, as did Orwell's work horse in *Animal Farm*, 'I will work harder.'[73]

This is not meant to imply that American IR has had no policy relevance. From his standpoint in 1977, Hoffman clearly acknowledged that conceptual development of the international system, formal deterrence theory and economic interdependence literature were definitive contributions that enhanced general understanding of international politics and thus indirectly influenced policy. Three decades later, Frieden and Lake (2005) generally agreed with Hoffman that deterrence and interdependence theory were significant positive contributions, and added that democratic peace theory had advanced policymakers' understanding of factors that influenced international conflict.[74] However, referring to George W. Bush's employment of democratic peace analysis as justification for invading Iraq (Bush argued that making Iraq into a democracy would discourage later wars), Frieden and Lake cautioned that even exhaustively tested scientific theories of international politics could be marshalled to justify questionable foreign policies.[75] In this sense, Bush's invoking of democratic peace theory to rationalize pre-emptive war for the purpose of regime change fits squarely within the concept of American behavioralism, which Sterling-Folker posited was 'an implicit pre-theory grounded in culturally based explanations and licensed by a faith in our ability to control our social environments.[76]

The cost of these interlocking theoretical and policy frames is summed up by Smith, who brings up the fact that a significant portion of the world did not see it as bad that the United States was on the 'receiving end for a change' of terrorism but that IR theory has done little if anything to aid broader American understanding of why this perception is so strong outside of the US.[77] Policymakers and citizens who fail to reflect on the negative long-term consequences of American foreign policy cannot be enlightened by IR theory which does not encourage reflexivity.

Cuba, Iran and the reason for potential new direction

Postwar American power privileged both practice and analysis in ways that led to refusal to re-evaluate ingrained assumptions about international politics. Scholarly analysis of international politics did not aid practice when it was confounded by untoward developments, as Enlightenment ideas bolstered a sense of moral righteousness among policymakers and of objectivity among IR scholars. When other states deviated from American values, these were labeled as both inefficient and evil instead of as nations caught up in a historical process characterized by conflict of interest and changing circumstances. This phenomenon is exactly what Carr, Kennan and Morgenthau feared that a supposedly scientific analysis of international politics would produce, and goes a long way in explaining enduring US non-recognition/broken relations policies and scant academic consideration of them.

The shocks delivered by Castro in 1959 and Khomeini in 1979 were a culmination of social movements within Cuba and Iran that had built up over decades. With regard to policy, self-assurance blinded both administration officials in Washington and US diplomats in Havana and Tehran to the resentment that past US actions in these countries had provoked. (The US legation in Tehran was completely dependent on the Shah for information; two of the last three ambassadors to Havana were Republican businessmen who spoke no Spanish.) American IR theory's neglect of domestic influences on foreign policy and corresponding focus on system-wide analysis, great-power interaction and abstract measures of power largely neglected small states, and more specifically, the growth of reactionary movements in small states that were stimulated by undue American influence. Analysis of international politics rooted in the balance of material power or growing economic interdependence were in line with America's historic understanding of international relations and did not conflict with American self-perceptions, but these were unprepared to deal with the defection of erstwhile US allies, and hence could not assist practical understanding of and reaction to revolutions that were to a significant degree reactions to US policy.

For Washington, instead of re-evaluation, shock produced condemnation and the breaking of diplomatic relations. For IR scholars who in the main held assumptions of transhistoricity and strict rationality, the reaction to the Cuban and Iranian revolutions was either inattention or classification of these new regimes as inefficient and backward. Because both neorealism and neoliberal institutionalism increasingly rejected questions regarding conflicting moral claims, these theoretical lenses were not reflexive and were unsuited for understanding the moral dynamics associated with US policies in developing states and the resentment they incurred. There was no admonition to US policymakers to reflect on the limits of standard IR assumptions about harmony of interest in economic relations or balance of material power in the military sector. Nor was there a concern for intersubjectivity, which potentially could have urged the policy community to give consideration to the cumulative effects of policies towards Iran and Cuba during the twentieth century – Operation Ajax, CIA complicity with SAVAK's repression of the Iranian people, continued dominance of US and British oil interests, the Shah's White Revolution that advanced secularization in Iran with US support; dominant US economic interests in Cuba and almost total control of Cuban sugar production, the coddling of Batista even when he cancelled elections, US interventions associated with the Platt Amendment, the continuing US naval presence at Guantanamo Bay – and to conceive that it was not unreasonable for the Cuban and Iranian populations to rise up in support of revolutionary leaders who aimed to eliminate American influence in their countries.

In the area of diplomatic practice, American preference for the ideologically charged 'New Diplomacy' was detrimental to US comprehension of events in Cuba and Iran before relations were broken and made eventual restoration of relations more difficult. From the perspective of the New Diplomacy, international relations was about converting others to one's ideological faith. The prospects

for success in this endeavor were least favorable in states led by revolutionaries who had deposed US-backed leaders and set up new governments hostile to American influence. Thus, for Americans restoration of relations appeared futile, and perhaps symbolic benefits could be gained by ostracizing the new regimes and encouraging other states to do likewise. As American IR theory had largely avoided consideration of diplomacy as a significant factor in international politics, preferring mechanical explanations of interstate relations, it could do little to influence or alter these enduring policies of alienation that hardened over time, especially as these acquired aspects of a litmus test for politicians domestically, even extending beyond the Cold War.

The triumph of democracy in the Cold War encouraged US policymakers to double down on their policies against both states, culminating in the Helms–Burton Act of 1994, which removed executive power over the Cuban embargo and placed it under congressional control and sought to penalize foreign companies for doing business in Cuba, and the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act of 1996. Flush with victory over the ideological foe of communism, both President Clinton and the Republican-controlled Congress opted for estrangement over renewal of conversation, just as President George H. W. Bush had done in refusing to allow Iran to participate in the Madrid Conference in the aftermath of the Gulf War. The dominant IR frames of the early post–Cold War, such as Fukuyama's 'End of History' and associated democratic peace theory,[78] Huntington's Clash of Civilizations thesis[79] and nascent constructivism's logic of appropriateness, counseled that recalcitrant Cuba and Iran would either eventually see the light and reform, be swept aside due to their inability to come to grips with reality or have to be confronted with military force. US policy and IR theory buttressed one another in forestalling any serious consideration of restoring relations. The Castro regime's commitment to discredited socialism and Iran's embrace of Islam as a political force implied that these regimes could only have meaning as antagonists.

That extended severed relations may have been detrimental to US interests was given some consideration by former diplomats such as Flint Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett,[80] but US congressional leaders held firm against this idea, and IR theory contributed little to the debate. Certainly, in the case of Iran, a compelling argument can be made that renewed ties would have enhanced American foreign policy in the Middle East. An attempt to initiate energy transactions and other economic initiatives with Iran in the mid-1990s was quashed by Congress. US opposition to Iranian influence in central Asia led to limited American opposition, and possibly even marginal support, for Taliban ascendancy in Afghanistan. After the 9/11/2001 attacks, Iran contributed intelligence to the fight against the Taliban and al-Qaeda and sought to initiate conversations for the purpose of restoring diplomatic relations, but the George W. Bush administration rebuffed these Iranian offers. When the US commenced Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003 and the principal Iraqi resistance materialized in the form of insurgency, Iran assisted Shiite factions that attacked American forces. Furthermore, during the early 2000s, Iranian President Khatami adopted a more open stance towards the West than his predecessors, and many liberal candidates were elected to the *Majlis* (Iran's

parliament). As reformist attempts to find a way forward in relations with the West were repudiated by Bush, Iranian hardliners had an easy time of making a strong case that any attempt to parley with the West was futile and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a strident opponent of relaxing tensions with the United States, was elected Iranian president in 2005.

So why did President Obama move to restore diplomatic relations with Cuba in 2014 (official relations were re-established in the summer of 2015) and push for an agreement on Iran's nuclear program in the P5+1 talks in the spring of 2015? It was obviously not because either government renounced its revolutions and initiated liberal reforms, nor was it due to the influence of American IR theory on policy. However, historical contingency can offer something plausible in the way of an explanation. The other major instance of postwar US long-term broken relations, the American policy towards China from the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949 until the 1970s, is an instructive parallel. Much like Iran and Cuba, Mao Zedong's government in Beijing came to power on a wave of popular resentment towards the US-backed government of Nationalist General Chiang Kai-shek. US estrangement of China remained adamant, despite the Sino-Soviet split during the late 1950s, until the US became bogged down in Vietnam. After the Tet Offensive of 1968, it became increasingly clear that the US did not have the political will to sustain a war against the North Vietnamese communist regime, and the newly elected president Nixon and his administration began seeking alternatives to neutralize the increase of Hanoi's influence. As both China and the United States favored countering the prospect of Vietnamese hegemony in Southeast Asia, and now China feared Soviet aggression even more than the United States (contingencies not present during the early Cold War era), former enemies China and the US had sufficient reason to begin the process of normalization of diplomatic ties.

It is not coincidental, in the context of US failure to successfully conclude its military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, that the US reappraised policies of alienation towards longtime opponents. In other words, the simultaneous failure of US military power to achieve favorable results in two wars, the significant international opposition that these wars provoked and the weakening of American economic dominance due to the 2008 financial crisis contributed to a situation in which US power was diminishing and favorable diplomatic initiatives towards Cuba and Iran appeared as part of a plausible plan for maintaining American global influence. However, this does not imply that Obama's turn to diplomacy was either fore-ordained or identical to Nixon's opening to China. The contingencies of Sino-American relations in the early 1970s and US relations with Iran and Cuba today only overlap in the sense that they occurred in periods of temporary (?) American reversal. Other important and particular factors in each situation made them possible: for US-China relations, the recent experience of actual but limited military hostilities with the Soviet Union (1969 border clashes) and the internal conflict within the Chinese Communist Party at the time; for Cuba, the fact that an increasing number of Cuban Americans had no personal connection to Castro's repression and the growing importance of Latin American and Caribbean

states' views on the US role in hemispheric relations; for Iran, the growing threat of ISIS and the fact that Iran's nuclear ambitions were only likely to be checked if it was allowed to increase engagement with the West. In all cases, a number of conditions overlapped and this made renewed contact more likely. It is the recognition of these contingencies that is necessary for understanding why US policy changed, and IR theories that cannot accommodate this complexity are unlikely to tell us much about why foreign policy changes occur or aid practitioners in identifying potential policy changes that may best serve US interests.

Conclusion

All states view the world through the prism of their own experience. Recognizing this basic truth and understanding that it has ramifications for the conduct of foreign policy is the key insight of the English School and classical realism, and the key oversight in dominant American IR theory. The decades-long policies of US broken diplomatic relations with Cuba and Iran stemmed from the US response to unexpected events that might not have occurred had American statesmen and scholars been more reflective about the role of American power in the world, more open to questioning their own rectitude and objectivity and more aware of the nature of power. From a general standpoint, Obama's decisions to renew diplomatic ties with Cuba and cooperate with other major powers in brokering a deal to limit Iranian nuclear capabilities are best understood in the context of unsuccessful US interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan; declining power compelled re-evaluation of options that had previously been closed off. However, each situation was unique and policy change might not have occurred absent other particular dynamics in addition to the perception of declining US influence due to war failure.

Theories that provide for reflexivity, social context and historical contingency are better placed not only to facilitate understanding of issues related to diplomatic recognition and estrangement, but also to provide decision makers with an understanding of the possibilities inherent in a given situation while also allowing those knowledgeable about specific issues related to international politics (in many cases, diplomats) to contribute to the development of assumptions for analysis. Buzan and Waever's Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) potentially qualifies as a framework that could aid foreign policy decision making, as it accounts for regional power dynamics through applying a multisectoral (strategic, economic, political, societal, environmental) approach to analyzing power and takes historic relations among regional states and great power interventions in the specified region into account.[81] Instead of assuming a universal form of political behavior from a transhistorical, structural point of view, RSCT attempts to understand international politics in the post–Cold War world by evaluating the constitution of regional systems from the ground up. This flexible and dynamic approach is more closely connected to foreign policy practice because it assumes that international politics are neither static nor moving in a pre-determined direction and, thus, re-evaluation of analysis is encouraged.

A framework along the lines of RSCT might encourage American foreign policy practitioners to more regularly attempt to identify both the risks and opportunities in international politics, to facilitate comprehension that most risks (or threats) and opportunities are time limited and, to paraphrase Palmerson's dictum, to realize that the US 'has no permanent friends, only permanent interests.' Of course, this entails an awareness of history very much in line with the recommendations of Carr and Kennan, and points to Carr's other (besides *The Twenty Years' Crisis*) most widely read work, *What Is History*?, in which he cautions readers to be circumspect in extrapolating from history but that 'this does not mean that inferences drawn from history about the future are worthless, or that they do not possess a conditional validity which serves as both a guide to action and a key to our understanding of how things happen.'[82]

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3 The 'loss' of China as a definitive case in US policies of non-recognition

The American decision to refuse diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China following the Chinese Communist defeat of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists in 1949 and the US domestic debate that followed it was a watershed event in American foreign relations and initiated a dynamic in American politics that continues to the present day. While the United States eventually restored relations with China in the 1970s, the postwar situation in which the United States became a superpower yet was periodically unable to bring about favorable outcomes in international politics, resulting in intense episodes of domestic criticism, is ongoing. Although before World War II the United States had on occasion either severed diplomatic ties with other countries (particularly in Latin America) or refused to recognize new states (America did not extend diplomatic recognition to the USSR until the early 1930s), these instances were much less a concern for domestic politics, because the US role in the world was limited by geography, unfamiliarity and disinterest. Certainly, wars with foreign powers had garnered American public attention in the past, but this had been episodic rather than constant. This all changed after Pearl Harbor, and after four years of war that spanned the globe, as the American population was transformed into a significant force affecting US foreign policy in a way that had no precedent before the war. The average American, although unlikely to be well informed about events abroad, now understood that events in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere had implications for his or her own situation.

Victory in the war had initially seemed to give definition to the old American vision that 'by example and by unexplained forces in history our dream would become the regnant reality of history.'[1] The American experience with democracy had been a great success and ostensibly provided a political solution for all the world's nations. With American armies victorious in Europe and Asia, the US Navy having displaced Britain's Royal Navy as preeminent master of the seas, the only Air Force in the world capable of delivering atomic weapons, and the greatest industrial and technological power in history, Americans believed the future of the planet was evermore tied to the American future. However, whereas the war had provided Americans with a clearer idea of how America could fulfill its historic self-designated role, it had (at much greater human cost) done something similar for the Soviet Union. Soviet armies had rolled over Eastern Europe in the

final push against Hitler, and there they were to remain for the next four decades. Moscow also had a vision of itself as the 'Third Rome,' claiming that the ideological force of communism provided the means for solving the governmental problems of all nations, new and old. Thus, the American hope of fulfilling its self-conceived role in the world appeared to be simultaneously within reach and yet confronted by the evil of Soviet communism.

During the remainder of the 1940s, Americans increasingly came to perceive that the fruits of victory in war were slipping away due to communist deceit. The United States rapidly demobilized but the Russians maintained their massive ground forces, even as the first rumors of communist subversion within the United States, associated with the Alger Hiss trial, began to gain broad public attention. In 1949, the Soviets successfully detonated their first atomic weapon, years ahead of American expectations. And, perhaps most troubling, Asian countries that America had fought to liberate during the war and counted as allies began to drift towards communism. Due to the substantial American presence in Asia during the war against Japan, millions of Americans had experience in Asia, and postwar American ideas and sentiments regarding Asia largely conformed to the belief that Asia was increasingly important and that the United States had a duty to bring about Asian peace and prosperity, in contrast to the prewar role of European colonialism in Asia which had enriched the colonial powers but left Asian countries (except for Japan) divided and disorganized.[2] Therefore, Asia was an increasingly salient issue in American domestic politics, and, correspondingly, the fate of Asia could not be separated from the fight against international communism and would be an important issue for US political parties. Additionally, the late 1940s were a unique time in American politics, as the Democrats had held the executive branch since 1932. Congressional Republicans saw a clear opportunity to hold Truman and other Democrats responsible for all American foreign policy disappointments in Asia.

The Republican narrative began at the Yalta Conference in the spring of 1945, in which FDR had conceded to allow Soviet participation in the Pacific War once Germany was beaten. In August 1945 the Soviets had pushed back under-equipped and demoralized Japanese troops, overrunning parts of Manchuria and eventually the northern portion of the Korean peninsula. Thus, at war's end, Soviet forces not only occupied Eastern Europe but important areas of Northeast Asia. While still offering advice and diplomatic recognition to Chiang's Nationalist (Kuomintang [KMT]) government in China, the Soviets remained in Manchuria and set up Kim Il-Sung to preside over a communist regime in North Korea. However, as difficult as these developments were for Americans to accept, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) successes against the American-backed Nationalist regime in China during the late 1940s, culminating in ultimate victory in the Chinese Civil War and establishment of the People's Republic of China in October 1949, were viewed as a special aberration. Dating from the last quarter of the nineteenth century, American involvement in China had been both continuous and friendly, as it had been a key trade partner in Asia, had been the focus of American missionary efforts, and was governed

by a party that had substantial numbers of leaders who had studied in the United States.[3] The American alliance with Nationalist China against Japan during the recently concluded war only served to increase American interest in and attraction to China. Indeed, hadn't the deterioration of American relations with Japan that precipitated Pearl Harbor been provoked by the American desire to protect China?

While Americans had viewed the past 75 years of relations with China as a mutually beneficial relationship that served both parties well, Chinese and American views differed. After all, the United States entered China along with the other colonial powers, setting up its own concessions and treaty ports, alongside those of the British and French. That eventually this alternate interpretation of the relationship gained clear ascendancy in China was deeply discomforting to Americans and had crucial ramifications for American conceptions regarding the implications of a communist controlled China.[4] According to David Halberstam, the 'loss' of China affected American public opinion in a way that perhaps no other country could have done:

> To America, China was a special country, different from other countries. India could have fallen, or an African nation, and the reaction would not have been the same. . . . And so a myth had grown up, a myth not necessarily supported by the facts, of the very special U.S.-China relationship. We helped them and led them, and in turn they loved us. . . . [T]he fall of China was a shock. What had happened to the Chinese who loved us? It certified, as it were, an even harder peace, it necessitated the reorientation of our demonology (from the wartime of Good Russians, Bad Germans and Good Chinese, Bad Japanese to the postwar period of Good Germans, Bad Russians, Good Japanese, Bad Chinese). It caught this country psychologically unprepared. It was natural for a confused country to look for scapegoats and conspiracies; it was easier than admitting there were things outside your control and that the world was an imperfect place in which to live.[5]

Certainly, until the advent of US participation in the Vietnam conflict during the mid-1960s (and, as will be elaborated below, upon which it had substantial influence), the rancorous domestic debate, which intensified significantly due to Chinese intervention in the Korean War, over what was revealingly characterized as the 'loss of China' was the most difficult episode in postwar American politics.[6] For the American uproar over communist victory in China was a crystallization of all of the fears associated with American identity as a 'city on the hill' and the corresponding prerogatives of New Diplomacy. That experienced and knowledgeable American military officers and diplomats had accurately predicted that Chiang would lose to Mao's CCP was either ignored or categorized as traitorous and that attempts were made to normalize diplomatic relations with Beijing were equated with betrayal of the Nationalists.[7] The New Diplomacy assumes that because one has the right ideology, the right formula, all events can be understood and, potentially, controlled. When the opposite occurs, i.e., the

US 'loses' a country, it is an affront not only to American power but to American comprehension of the world. The 'loss of China' provoked rage and the search for scapegoats, but it also indicated that there was a need 'not to know,' a need to avoid information that contradicted the American view of the world and the US role in it. The choice not to establish or restore diplomatic relations is rooted not only in the idea of 'punishing' the country in question by alienating it from international society, but also in the protection of the American worldview from information that contradicts it. That this dynamic would play out in American domestic politics, as government leaders often ignored warnings from diplomats on the scene and instead engaged in contentious partisan debate over which party was responsible for American diplomatic setbacks, was an almost inevitable outcome of postwar American politics.

Of course, it takes a rarified form of hubris even to assume that one's country can 'lose' another country. That the United States has continued to replay the China affair with regard to the Cuban and Iranian cases of long-term non-recognition and/or broken diplomatic relations demonstrates an entrenched world view that has been supported by enough power to quickly recover comforting but ultimately naive visions about the nature of world politics. This does not mean that maintaining this view has not been expensive, as will be discussed in the final section of this chapter. In sum, American self-absorption and partisan 'gotcha' games have repeatedly marginalized informed analysis, making undesirable but inevitable foreign policy outcomes worse while also needlessly exacerbating domestic political conflict.

Tsou's pattern and Sino-American relations

For the purpose of elucidating the circumstances and dynamics that ultimately led to the US policy of long-term non-recognition of the PRC, this study will rely heavily on Tang Tsou's analysis of Sino-US relations in *America's Failure in China: 1941–1950* (1963). Tsou identifies six steps in US relations with China from the time of the Boxer Rebellion until the early 1950s that culminated in the long-term American policy of non-recognition and/or broken diplomatic relations. These steps and related historical information will be discussed in this section, and this pattern will be used to analyze and compare the cases of US-Cuba and US-Iran relations in the subsequent chapters. Tsou composed this study at the request of University of Chicago colleague Hans Morgenthau, who commented in his foreword to the book that Tsou's rendering of US-China relations during the 1940s was broadly useful in that it identified a pattern in US foreign policy (as referred to in Chapter 1). China scholar Stuart Schram qualifies that this pattern was not arrested during the twentieth century, as he commented in his obituary of Tsou in 1999 that 'it is hard to deny that these tendencies have frequently been visible in the domain of United States foreign policy in the 49 years since the collapse of MacArthur's adventure in Korea.'[8] The present study will seek to build on these ideas and demonstrate, at least with regard to present US policy towards Iran, that the unfortunate pattern remains in place.

Contradictory policy

The first phase to be considered is an American policy towards China over many decades that was beset by contradictions.[9] From the late Qing era, the US claimed to want a united and democratic China but refused to consider the deep political divisions in China that spurred the Chinese revolution and the difficulty of channeling these forces towards cooperation. Much of this was due to the American tendency to see China as America wanted to see it, thus supporting the Nationalist party due to its role in the 1911 Revolution and the close relationships that developed between Nationalist politicians and Americans who had lived in China, among them prominent individuals such as Henry Luce, publisher of *Time* and *Life* magazines, who grew up in China as the child of missionary parents.[10]

The Nationalist government, especially after 1925 under Chiang Kai-shek, pursued favorable relations with the United States while neglecting the Chinese population. This led to an overly simplistic, incomplete American view of China and tended to disregard the broad segment of the Chinese population that opposed the semi-colonial status of American commercial, diplomatic and military interests in China during the first half of the twentieth century. Americans, along with the European colonial powers and the Japanese, inhabited the foreign settlements in coastal cities (which prohibited entrance of the majority of the Chinese population) and patrolled Chinese rivers with US Navy gunboats. Although Americans happily overlooked this contradiction, it was difficult for the Chinese masses to see how it was compatible in any way with democratic principles.

During the war, the United States had sought to include Nationalist China and Chiang Kai-shek among the great powers, privileging China's international status far in excess of actual Nationalist contribution to the war effort against Japan. That Chiang's wife, Soong Mei-ling, had been educated in the United States and was a Christian did much to bolster the American view of stable and friendly relations between the two countries. General 'Vinegar Joe' Stilwell, commander of all US forces in China and for a time Chiang's chief of staff, knew otherwise, realizing that 'so long as Chiang was at the helm . . . there would be no progress towards unity or even working coalition. By backing the reactionary Chungking Government, America was getting a black eye in China and associating herself with the old colonial system.'[11] This was the case with many other American officials of lesser rank stationed in the Nationalist capital during the war, who took a 'jaundiced view' of Chiang and his regime, even as American politicians, relying on the rosy assessments of Nationalist Chinese diplomats posted to Washington, disregarded US diplomatic and military reporting on the ground.[12]

Indeed, despite the Roosevelt administration's position that China was a stalwart ally in the war against Japan, Chiang viewed Chinese Communist opposition, with whom he had been fighting an on and off civil war since 1927, as the primary political foe, not the Japanese. Chiang relied on the US to win the war against Japan, eventually forcing the removal of Stilwell in 1944 precisely because the American general was attempting to better employ Chinese military forces, both Nationalist and Communist, in the fight against Japan. (Stilwell's

attempts to facilitate Chinese Communist military action against Japan were viewed as a threat by Chiang, who feared losing control of allocation of American aid to the communists.)[13] Ultimately, FDR simply hoped to keep China in the war for postwar political reasons, a strategy which worked out fine in the short run, as US military power in the Pacific war was independently capable of finishing off the Japanese. However, Roosevelt's interpretation of events maintained the image of Nationalist China in American eyes as a viable, stable government that emerged from the war in a position of strength, and thus further deluded American public opinion about the true state of affairs in China.

US attempts at war's end and during the immediate postwar period, exemplified by the diplomatic missions of General Patrick Hurley and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General George Marshall, to alleviate differences between Nationalist and Communist Chinese through the establishment of a coalition government ended in failure and civil war resumed in 1946. The CCP initially held the territory it had occupied during the war against Japan, and the Nationalists undertook major military offensives to destroy the CCP. As in previous episodes during the civil war, the communists eventually decided to yield ground and then counterattack to regain the initiative. This was remarkably successful and the CCP was clearly winning the civil war by early 1947. Given this turn of events, US policy evolved towards outright support of Chiang against the CCP.

Despite significant American economic aid to Chiang, the Nationalists were also failing in their management of the Chinese economy. The United States had provided the Nationalists with nearly $1.5 billion in Lend-Lease Aid and loans during the war, and then another $2 billion in the years following the war until the Nationalist defeat.[14] This economic aid did little if anything to stabilize Chiang's crumbling regime, as rapidly mounting Nationalist military defeats, often accompanied by wholesale defection of Nationalist troops to the communist People's Liberation Army (PLA), destroyed economic confidence and brought on massive inflation. American economic aid continued unabated, as did formalized agreements allowing greater US involvement in the Chinese economy, such as the Sino-American Treaty of Commerce and Navigation. Rather than shoring up the Chinese economy by advancing the economic prospects of average Chinese,

> America's economic inroads, especially the 1946 treaty, blocked the expansion projects of the Chinese bourgeoisie, except for the compradores and others who directly benefitted from American aid. In 1948, therefore, a large portion of this bourgeoisie was pushed towards political collaboration with the Communists.[15]

As momentum swung towards the PLA in 1947, the US response was to abandon attempts to bring about a coalition government between the warring parties and to step up military aid to Chiang in the form of the China Aid Act. This measure amounted to a 'compromise' of traditional US ideas regarding a disdain for intervention (represented by General Marshall) and a desire to maintain and advance American interests without the employment of direct American military

force.[16] The Act provided the Nationalists with vast quantities of weapons, and as with US economic aid, brought about unforeseen and unwelcome results. As Nationalist desertions to the PLA continued, 'Nationalist weapons often wound up in Communist hands, being abandoned in the field or sold. In the last three months of 1948 about 60 percent of all American military supplies were captured intact by the Communists.'[17] Once again, this policy was understandable in terms of traditional American foreign policy tendencies, but it was completely unrealistic in addressing the actual situation in China. Chiang's armies were collapsing and no amount of aid, short of direct American military intervention (and even this is in doubt), could reverse the course of events.

Misunderstanding/discounting revolution

The second phase in the pattern is the American inability to appreciate the gravity of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) role in the continuing Chinese revolution.[18] Although the CCP and its armed forces, the PLA, were on the brink of annihilation several times, most significantly during the mid-1930s, the very fact that the CCP was able to continue to survive and re-establish itself was ample evidence that it was a potentially significant force for the future of Chinese politics. After its establishment in 1921, the CCP had entered into an alliance with the Nationalist Party (KMT) in a cooperative effort to subdue the warlords who controlled various parts of China. During 1926, under the direction of Chiang, the CCP participated in the 'Great Northern Campaign' to wrest control of coastal areas from the warlords, moving northward from Guangdong Province adjacent to Hong Kong. However, when Chiang attempted to take Shanghai in 1927, he simultaneously double-crossed the CCP, eviscerating its ranks in the urban fighting to conquer the city.

Thereafter, remaining remnants of the CCP retreated to Jiangxi Province and established a base. From 1931 to 1934, with guidance from German advisers, the Nationalist army engaged in multiple campaigns to wipe out all CCP resistance. This ultimately provoked the seminal event that confirmed the staying power of the CCP, the 6,000-mile 'Long March' that reached Yenan in north central China in 1935, despite CCP casualties of 90 percent of its original 100,000-strong force. In 1936, the CCP kidnapped Chiang and compelled him to call a temporary truce for the purpose of forming a KMT-CCP common front against Japan, which had invaded Manchuria five years earlier. Although the truce held during the war, it did not produce a true coalition, as the CCP maintained its principal base in Yenan while Chiang and the KMT retreated to the central Chinese city of Chongqing (Chungking) and set up their capital, and KMT and PLA military forces operated independently of one another. While offering much more substantial support to Chiang, US diplomatic and military personnel also went to Yenan to offer assistance to the communists during the war. Despite evidence of communist military success in the war and political success in gaining favor with the local population, Washington maintained that the CCP was not a serious force. That the PLA was a guerilla style 'people's army' without the ability to produce its own heavy

weapons or aircraft contributed to the American misperception. Although the US had faced a lengthy guerilla style insurgency in the Philippines after the Spanish-American War, participation in the largely conventional conflicts of both world wars had influenced Americans to discount unconventional military forces.

Not only did most American decision makers devalue the fighting potential of the PLA, but they also believed that Mao and other CCP leaders were 'agrarian reformers' who would be adaptable to American style democracy, despite CCP statements to the contrary. The reason Washington continued to believe that the CCP was militarily weak but politically amenable to American influence derives from American perspectives and plans that failed to countenance Chinese realities. According to Tsou:

> This American political tradition also led to a lack of interest in political theory and an ignorance about communism, which in turn contributed to the spread of the misconception. But the optimistic expectations of postwar Soviet co-operation, the naïve view about the nature of Chinese communism, and the hope for establishment of a coalition government in China had no basis in reality. Actions taken in accordance with these miscalculations could only bring about frustration or create situations inimical to American interests.[19]

Integral to the American perception that the CCP could be co-opted was the corresponding belief that Chiang could effectively govern and that both the KMT and CCP wanted a democratic China. While Chiang paid lip service to commencing democratic reform, he had no intention to carry this through, as doing so would have been politically untenable for the Nationalists, due to the fact that the CCP had a much higher level of public approval.[20] Perhaps not surprisingly, Mao was open to American proposals regarding a democratic China, but he absolutely refused to integrate the PLA into the Nationalist military forces until a constitutional democratic government was in place. In other words, Mao supported democracy under circumstances that favored his own party. Chiang's failure to develop a broad base of popular support meant that he would not favor democracy and was 'solely reliant on his armed forces to crush a popular revolution.'[21] Much like Batista in Cuba and the Shah of Iran in ensuing decades, Chiang simply did not have the popular support to sustain his regime in the face of a serious challenge.

Failure to perceive threat

A third step in this pattern is the American failure to see China as a potential threat to American interests.[22] The American belief that China was a friend of the United States was greatly buttressed by the common Sino-American effort against Japanese aggression during World War II. In 1945 China was perceived as an American ally possessing weak military potential that was far away. Within half a decade all of these assumptions would be demonstrated to be false. The

unforeseen combination of the onset of the Cold War, successful Soviet atomic tests in 1949 and the CCP victory and establishment of the PRC later that year placed Sino-American relations in an entirely new context. American commitments to the defense of Japan and South Korea meant that the US had to be wary of combined Soviet and Chinese attempts to threaten these East Asian allies with communist subversion and direct military attack. Although the US had no firm commitments to the defense of Southeast Asian states at the end of World War II, due to the global nature of the competition between the Western democratic powers and the Soviet-led communist bloc, the potential Chinese threat to these small countries within the traditional sphere of Chinese influence also became apparent. This was especially the case with French Indochina, where Ho Chi Minh's communist Viet Minh were engaged in a war for national liberation against the French. The simultaneous rise of the communist threat with postwar decolonization and the inception of anti-Western nationalism in Asia only served to add greater significance to the new China threat.

Once the CCP had finished routing the Nationalists and pushing them off the mainland, the United States decided to maintain relations with the Nationalist government in Taipei. However, the dynamic continued of American diplomats with significant experience in China until 1949 delivering warnings regarding Beijing's reaction to US policies in Asia and these warnings in turn being ignored by American decision makers. Obviously, the Korean War is the outstanding instance that demonstrated this pattern. When the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) invaded South Korea in the summer of 1950, President Truman and his advisers first interpreted this thrust as part of a global communist strategy. US/UN forces were initially driven back to the Pusan, but in September General MacArthur reversed the course of the war with his daring amphibious operation at Inchon. Seoul was quickly retaken, and then a decision had to be made regarding whether to pursue the North Korean army across the 38th parallel, the original demarcation between the Koreas, or to simply stop there, having fulfilled the stated goal of the UN operation to preserve the sovereignty of South Korea. Up to this point, neither the Russians nor the Chinese had intervened in the conflict. Truman feared that pushing north could trigger Chinese intervention, but he was reassured by MacArthur that Beijing could not muster a military threat to ongoing UN operations, so UN forces (composed mainly of US Army and Marine Corps personnel) continued to advance northward.

The administration eventually came to the belief that Beijing would not be so truculent as to risk conflict with the US military, especially given overwhelming US air superiority.[23] However, this view ignored what seems in retrospect to be reasonable considerations on the part of Beijing. In the first place, during China's most recent interstate war, Japan had advanced along the same route prior to its invasion of Manchuria. Also, the United States had already provoked the PRC by sending the US 7th Fleet through the Taiwan Strait soon after Korean hostilities commenced, in an effort to protect the Nationalist government on Taiwan from a potential communist invasion occurring in tandem with the North Korean thrust into South Korea.[24] Taken together, it is clearly understandable that Beijing

viewed the US drive towards the Yalu River (the PRC/DPRK border) as a serious threat to which it must respond. US diplomats who had served in China prior to 1949 realized this and attempted to get their views across, but their warnings only earned them further scorn. Describing this episode in the context of Senator Joe McCarthy's demagogic search for communists within the US government which dramatically distorted and accentuated all issues related to US anti-communism, Halberstam laments:

> His timing could not have been better; in four months the Korean War began, and because the China experts were already in disrepute, the State Department did not heed their warnings on what American moves might bring the Chinese into the war. The warnings unheeded, the Chinese entered, and the anti-Communist passions against the China experts mounted. It was a Greek thing.[25]

Insufficient 'milpower/willpower' to coerce desired outcome and initial break

A fourth development in the overall pattern is the American inability or lack of will to use military force to address the previously inconceivable threat that China presented after the establishment of the PRC.[26] During the four years between the end of the Pacific War and the establishment of the Beijing regime, even if the American public had been clearly aware of the direction in which China was heading, there was no real likelihood of direct American military intervention in China. To even stand a possibility of success in breaking the PLA, the US would need to have sent as many as several dozen army divisions, an action that would have run counter to the postwar demobilization process already under way and which was strongly welcomed by the majority of Americans.[27] In 1947, when he returned from his diplomatic mission to China to assume the job of Secretary of State, General Marshall believed that Chiang had no chance of defeating the communists without direct American military support, but also that the United States should by no means commit that support.[28]

Although Marshall was keenly aware of what was about to take place, clearly many Americans who did not have his experience were not. In plain terms, there was a total disconnect between means and desired ends. In the American mind, the US had won World War II and had the strongest military forces in the world; ergo: American power should be evident to the rest of the world and would-be foes should not provoke the United States. However, the dominant American view was based on a superficial understanding of international relations and conflict, very much conditioned by American faith in its own righteousness and oblivious to the actual factors that animated revolutionary forces in the developing world. While military power can be measured in material terms and military forces can be ranked accordingly, a purely 'on paper' assessment of military capabilities is an insufficient guide to understanding the potentialities of military conflict. Factors of distance, terrain, popular will and military

morale cannot be removed from the calculus. Unfortunately for an important and vocal segment of Americans, they refused to consider this and were caught unawares by the Chinese Communist victory in the midst of what was purported to be (and, of course, in many ways actually was) a new era of American military dominance. In the view of more informed observers, American intervention would not have mattered in any case, as the KMT had already 'spent its mandate' and was due to be replaced.[29]

In the fall of 1950, the American decision to pursue North Korean forces across the 38th parallel after the success of the amphibious invasion at Inchon seemed to initially indicate an American willingness to challenge Beijing militarily, but the dramatic Chinese entry into the Korean War in late November 1950 and the ensuing tug of war on the Korean peninsula that ended in stalemate dissuaded American public opinion and prudent policymakers from engaging China in a broader conflict. Undoubtedly the Chinese alliance with an increasingly nuclear-capable Soviet Union was a significant factor in this decision. Although the wisdom of not seeking conflict on the Asian mainland with a guerilla army was made evident by the American debacle in Vietnam some twenty years later, this did not prevent some in US foreign policy circles during the 1950s from decrying the American failure to reverse the outcome of the Chinese civil war and supporting a Nationalist return to the mainland, if not an all-out American military effort to oust the communist regime in Beijing.[30] According to George Kennan, this entire mindset rested on the

> false belief that we were a strong power on the mainland of Asia, whereas in reality we are a weak one. Only the very strong can take high and lofty moral positions and ignore the possibilities of balance among opposing forces. The very weak must accept realities and exploit those realities to their advantage as best they can.[31]

Obviously, in Kennan's view the United States was not 'exploiting realities to their best advantage' regarding US relations with China. The balance of public opinion in the United States was too shaken by collapse of the American image of a friendly China and the inefficacy of the American military threat to Beijing to consider the advantages of trying to reconstruct a lesser relationship with the communist regime. In October of 1950, prior to PLA intervention in Korea in late November, Secretary of State Acheson had elaborated the criteria for granting US diplomatic recognition – regime control of the territory it claimed, regime adherence to international obligations it had committed to and approval of the regime by its citizens.[32] But any serious attempt to consider these criteria went by the wayside when the PLA crossed the Yalu in force and began routing overstretched and undersupplied American forces. The primary influence on US-China policy was the American sense of shock and disappointment that would not ebb for another two decades when the imbroglio of Vietnam forced Americans to reconsider relations with Beijing.

Domestic politics, partisan plays

This leads directly into the fifth phase of the account of Sino-American relations (or lack thereof) during and after the Korean War. As the US maintained diplomatic relations with the Nationalist regime under Chiang Kai-shek before and after it retreated to Taiwan, the 'Who Lost China' debate became a partisan political issue in the United States, with congressional Republicans accusing the Truman administration of weakness and continuing to hold the issue of an indecisive outcome regarding Korea and China as a trump card in charging the Democrats as weak on foreign policy throughout the 1950s and the early 1960s. The charged nature of the China issue meant that any attempt to renew relations with the PRC or admit the PRC into the United Nations (Chiang's Republic of China government in Taipei held the China UN General Assembly and Security Council seats) was political poison. Additionally, long-serving American diplomats in China (including John Paton Davies) were branded as security risks and driven out of government service, leaving the State Department with a dearth of experience and knowledge regarding China and other East Asian mainland countries.[33]

The Labour government in Britain made the decision to offer recognition to the PRC in February of 1950, with even opposition leader Winston Churchill conceding, 'One has to recognize lots of things and people in this world of sin and woe that one does not like. The reason for having diplomatic relations is not to confer a compliment but to secure a convenience.'[34] In the early months of 1950, before the Korean War broke out, it remained possible that the US might follow suit. Initially, there was an attempt by Secretary Acheson, supported by important voices within the State Department, to move towards recognizing the PRC and abandoning the KMT, and, moreover, conceding Taiwan to communist occupation. This had been elaborated in National Security Council memorandum 48/2, which advocated relations with the PRC along the lines of US relations with communist but non-aligned Yugoslavia, as well as in a public speech by Acheson.[35] PRC Foreign Minister Zhou En-lai offered a cautious yet positive response, but fearing any accommodation with Beijing would hurt his domestic political prospects, President Truman quashed any move towards recognition, chiding Acheson: 'We can't make a deal with the Commies.'[36]

According to George Kennan (who had supported Acheson's attempt to move towards recognition), then serving on the State Department's Policy Planning staff, he was instructed that US recognition of the Beijing regime would 'confuse American public opinion and weaken support for the President's program looking towards strengthening our defenses,' and was thus untenable.[37] Kennan was taken aback by this admonition, for he realized its implications. In sum, what it all meant was that the US government could not propose foreign and defense policy 'without working our people up into an emotional state' which would in turn 'be the determinant of our action,' and thus an 'emotional anticommunism' would eliminate the possibility of seeking 'the value to ourselves of a possible balance between existing forces on the Asian continent.'[38]

These sentiments were strongly advanced by Truman's Republican opposition, who in tandem with Chiang's American supporters, collectively known as the 'China Lobby,'[39] attempted to associate the president with everything that had gone wrong for the US in Asia since World War II. This cabal of far-right supporters of the KMT professed that Chiang could have been preserved on the mainland if only Truman had done more.[40] Under the leadership of Senator William Knowland, the China Lobby raised this invective to a fever pitch after Chinese intervention in Korea. With US forces retreating south of the 38th parallel and Seoul once again in communist hands, Republicans who had been deprived of the White House for two decades saw an issue to take down the Democrats. In January 1951, as if to make a formal demonstration of the broad anger among Americans against China (and by implication, anyone in the US government that had previously supported recognizing Beijing), the Senate held its first vote on a resolution recommending barring the PRC from UN membership, which passed unanimously.[41] (Both Houses of Congress would unanimously pass similar resolutions in 1953, 1954, and 1956.) Ironically, had Beijing possessed the China seat in the UN (held by the Nationalists), it is possible that Chinese intervention might have been averted due to direct contact between Chinese representatives and the United States, as China had not made a definite decision to intervene in Korea until October of 1950.[42]

By the spring of 1951, General MacArthur, the American military officer probably associated above all others with victory in the Pacific in World War II, and the darling of the Republican right, was in deep trouble. As commander of US and UN forces in Korea, he had refused to countenance intelligence reports the previous fall that indicated Chinese intervention was likely. Now, MacArthur wanted to widen the war by launching massive air raids against industrial cities within China. President Truman balked at this advice, seeking to limit the Korean War to the Korean peninsula. At this point Republican congressman Joseph Martin initiated a correspondence with MacArthur, who reacted by excoriating Truman for not doing enough to defeat communism in Asia. When Martin eventually read MacArthur's letter on the House floor on April 6, 1951, Truman reacted swiftly and fired MacArthur. This further stoked anti-communist passions, as MacArthur was greeted upon his return to the United States with ticker-tape parades, given the opportunity to address a joint session of the US Congress, and urged by some Republicans to seek the Republican nomination for President in 1952.

Senator McCarthy responded to Truman's firing of MacArthur by demanding Truman's impeachment. For many Americans, the loss of China, the stalemate in Korea and McCarthy's charges of domestic communist subversion coalesced. During the 1952 campaign, 'The Republican platform argued that Allied morale was crumbling because Russia's "Asia first" policy contrasted so markedly with American policy of "Asia last." '[43] Republican Dwight Eisenhower's victory over Democratic nominee Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson seemingly confirmed that Americans held the Democrats responsible for the reversal of American fortunes

in Asia. According to Halberstam, this had a continuing influence on both domestic politics and US foreign policy:

> The Democrats, in the wake of the relentless sustained attacks on Truman and Acheson over their policies in Asia, came to believe that they had lost the White House when they lost China. Long after McCarthy himself was gone, the fear of being accused of being soft on Communism lingered among the Democratic leaders. The Republicans had, of course, offered no alternative policy on China (the last thing they had wanted to do was to suggest sending American boys to fight for China) and indeed there was no policy to offer, for China was never ours, events there were well outside our control, and our feudal proxies had been swept away by the forces of history. But in the political darkness of the time it had been easy to blame the Democrats for the ebb and flow of history.[44]

Having used the China issue successfully in the 1952 campaign, Republicans continued to do so while holding the White House. President Eisenhower had largely avoided partisan accusations in the campaign, but even he was not immune to using the China issue to make domestic political points. In his first State of the Union Address in February 1953, Eisenhower spoke of 'unleashing' the Nationalists on Taiwan against Red China, even though Taipei had nowhere near the capability to return to the mainland and take on the PLA. Upon hearing the speech, former ambassador to Russia Averell Harriman was 'aghast' that Eisenhower had also succumbed to the cheap tactic of distorting international realities for political gain.[45] Of course, it was not Eisenhower himself who was most identified with the China Lobby and the right wing, as new Secretary of State John Foster Dulles far outdistanced his boss on this score. China Lobby member and congressman Walter H. Judd had recommended Dulles to Eisenhower, and once appointed and confirmed as Secretary, Dulles duly reassured his sponsors in the China Lobby that the United States would eventually 'roll back' the Chinese Communists and deliver the mainland to Chiang Kai-shek, while offering no specifics on how this outcome could be achieved.[46]

Long-term non-recognition and/or broken diplomatic relations

The sixth and final phase of this pattern is the long-term policy of non-recognition. Throughout the 1950s, 1960s and part of the 1970s the US had no official relations with the Chinese government in Beijing, which during this period maintained the tenuous allegiance of a Chinese population that increased towards one billion, as the US chose instead to maintain relations with the Taipei regime that governed no more than twenty million. According to Tsou, in this instance, 'non-recognition as a policy was born of the contradiction between the nation's reluctance to forsake an objective and her incapacity to achieve it by the purposeful use of military power.'[47] This, however, had not been the original intent of either Secretary

Acheson or Secretary Dulles, but both, due either to pressure from political superiors or to personal political calculation, augmented their views on recognition. Prior to the Korean War, Acheson had argued for not making the divide between East and West a 'hard and fast' line, but instead the United States should negotiate with both the Russians and the Chinese, who might eventually become enemies as long as 'American hubris' didn't get in the way.[48] Kennan, at that time serving as Acheson's subordinate at State, had fully supported this view, believing that China and Russia would eventually have a falling out if the United States didn't proceed to make an enemy out of China.[49]

In *War, Peace and Change* (1939), Dulles had written that withholding recognition from a government in power was an abortive gesture, and in his 1950 book *War or Peace*, posited that if the Beijing regime did not encounter serious domestic resistance, it should be considered for diplomatic recognition.[50] However, sensing the evolution of the domestic political climate in the wake of Korea and McCarthyism, he subsequently changed his views on recognition. He realized that his constituency – those who could support his bid to become Eisenhower's Secretary of State, could maintain him in that position and, inversely, could remove him – was composed of 'archconservatives, the residual McCarthyites, the China Lobby.'[51] Thus, throughout his tenure he consistently maintained that recognition of the Beijing regime was not an option.

However, there were factors beyond domestic ideological considerations that favored the maintenance of non-recognition. The USSR, North Korea and the PRC represented a continuing threat to South Korea and Japan. The French debacle at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 had demonstrated the military and political strength of Ho Chi Minh's communist Viet Minh in Indochina. Therefore, the US sought to construct and maintain alliance structures that would contain communist expansion in Asia, either through bilateral defense treaties or through collective defense organizations such as the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). Any shift in US policy towards potential recognition of Beijing would be an affront to the KMT regime on Taiwan that also fit into this alliance structure, and this would send a message to other Asian allies that American support was weakening. In short, the US could not reconsider its relations with Beijing because this could disturb relations with American friends in Asia, or so the logic went.[52]

Although a minority in American foreign policy circles supporting a change in US-China policy did emerge by the mid-1950s, this view never gained enough traction to compel the Eisenhower administration to reconsider its policy. However, Chiang's KMT did take note of this development, because if it portended a US policy change, the very existence of Chiang's KMT regime on Taiwan would be jeopardized. In May 1957, Taipei was rocked by rioters supposedly enraged over Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) issues concerning the inability of Taiwan authorities to prosecute a US Army sergeant who had shot a Chinese burglar. Coming close on the heels of the KMT ambassador to Washington's complaints about potential US appeasement of Red China, some question the real reason for the riot, which involved the breaching of the US embassy in Taipei and non-lethal injuries to 13 American personnel, even as Taiwan's police refused to intervene.

Foreign diplomats in Taipei, who believed that nothing 'spontaneous' ever occurred under Chiang's rigid regime, 'concluded that the riot was a calculated show of Chiang's displeasure with his Washington ally for permitting a dangerous drift in American opinion.'[53]

Reacting to these events, Dulles made a speech on June 28 in San Francisco, declaring that there had been no change of direction in policy towards the PRC or Taiwan, chiding those who questioned the current policy and restating that the US could not revise its stances prohibiting 'recognition, trade, and cultural relations' with the PRC because this would 'enhance their ability to hurt us and our friends' and concluding that 'if communism is stubborn for the wrong let us be steadfast for the right.'[54] In seeking to undermine any development of opinions questioning the current policy, Dulles made a dubious appeal to reason, claiming that Beijing had 'not completed their conquest of the country,' apparently referring to Taiwan, which the United States was actively involved in defending from any PRC invasion.[55]

The rationale advanced by those that supported maintaining non-recognition went something like this. Withholding US trade, aid and recognition from China would make China increasingly dependent on Russia, to the point where China (dependent on Russia for agricultural goods) would become a bad investment for the USSR. So non-recognition of China undermined the Soviets. However, perhaps Mao would also wake up to the fact that the US could better provide for his people when Russian aid decreased due to a falling out between the PRC and USSR. At this juncture, the US could open discussions regarding the possibility of establishing normal diplomatic relations. Those holding this view 'claimed that the Red Chinese were already in the arms of the Russians and there was nothing to lose.'[56]

Of course, by 1957, the Soviet and Chinese communist parties were moving in opposite directions, as Khrushchev's 1956 speech denouncing Stalin had marked a new direction for the Soviet Union and provoked disenchantment in Beijing. By 1959, in the midst of Mao's 'Great Leap Forward,' the Soviet Union removed all of its technical advisers from China. Whereas, at least by the early 1960s, American allies in Europe acknowledged the reality of the Sino-Soviet split, US policy towards China remained unchanged. This was so in spite of the fact that the CIA's Sino-Soviet Studies Group (SSSG) had determined, in a series of analytical reports entitled 'Esau Studies' (referring to the USSR as the older socialist brother, 'Esau', and casting China as the younger socialist brother, 'Jacob,' who usurped his older brother) that by 1961 Beijing and Moscow were indeed in a state of deep disagreement.[57] Additionally, Averell Harriman, on a diplomatic mission for the Kennedy administration in Asia to settle tensions over Laos in 1961, reported to the State Department that rumors of a parting of the ways between the PRC and USSR were indeed true, but according to Harriman regarding State's receptivity to this information, 'they didn't believe us. . . . [T]hey thought we were dupes.'[58] The 'China Hands,' those Foreign Service officers who had served in China before 1949, had almost all been discredited and driven out of government, precisely because they had correctly predicted the outcome of the Chinese civil war and

were thus the bearers of bad news. A little more than a decade later, the men who ran the State Department, appointed in the wake of the dismissal of the China Hands, were not about to risk their domestic credibility by admitting the possibility that the Domino Theory might be unfounded and it was time to reconsider recognizing the PRC.

In 1954, American and Chinese delegations had participated in the Geneva Conference that produced a settlement of war between France and Ho Chi Minh's communists in North Vietnam. At the close of these meetings, the US and PRC had decided to conduct unofficial relations through consular officers in Geneva and Poland. Between 1955 and 1971, Chinese and American diplomats, sometimes including the ambassadors from both countries, held 136 meetings, usually in Warsaw. These meetings produced only one important accord, allowing for repatriation of mainland Chinese in Taiwan in exchange for Taiwanese citizens on the mainland being allowed to do the same, in 1955.[59] The central issue that the countries could not agree on was the fate of Taiwan. The PRC claimed it as a 'renegade province' that should eventually be reunited with the motherland, implying that Taiwan was under Beijing's sovereignty and the US had no business interfering in China's domestic affairs. Regarding Taiwan and elsewhere, the United States set a condition for opening negotiations to restore relations that China renounce the use of force in its international dealings. In other words, US policy was in effect demanding that Beijing concede a major foreign policy tool, the threat or use of military measures. According to Henry Kissinger, this was a unique and extreme stance, as 'American foreign policy towards no other country had ever been submitted to such a stringent precondition for negotiation as a blanket renunciation of the use of force.'[60]

Thus, no movement seemed possible and the US and the PRC remained estranged. Was there a period in the 1950s when relations might have thawed? According to Townsend Hoopes, the Eisenhower administration could not have approached China in 1954 and 1955 due to anticommunist feeling in the US associated with communist victory over the French in Indochina and PRC shelling of Taiwan-held islands (Qemoy and Matsu) near the mainland coast. The PRC again mounted artillery attacks on these offshore islands in 1958, precipitating another crisis. However, after Eisenhower's re-election in late 1956 and early 1957, coinciding with a quiet period over the offshore islands, Hoopes believes that if Eisenhower had argued, 'out of his long military experience he had learned the vital importance of never losing contact with an enemy, and that diplomatic recognition was akin to establishing an outpost, it is probable he would have readily carried the day.'[61] Obviously, it cannot be known whether Mao would have been receptive had Eisenhower made this offer, but as it would have coincided with the initial loosening of Sino-Soviet relations in the aftermath of Khrushchev's speech denouncing Stalin, this period was one in which both sides were more amenable to accommodation. Instead, even without having to face another election, Eisenhower decided not to provoke an American majority that viewed diplomatic recognition of China as appeasement. Eisenhower's

successor, John F. Kennedy, privately acknowledged the Sino-Soviet split and its implications, and he was urged by some in the Democratic Party to make a significant diplomatic move towards China, but Kennedy's reaction to these exhortations was, in the paraphrasing of Halberstam, to 'smile and agree and say yes, it was a stupid policy, but would all have to wait. Until the second term. It could not be changed now.'[62]

Domestic perceptions, politics and frozen policies

What emerges from this review of the US inability to grant recognition to and establish diplomatic relations with the PRC is an episode in which domestic politics and the maintenance of alliances with other Asian states were privileged over attempts to truly comprehend what was occurring in China. The New Diplomacy which the United States has favored in the postwar era puts a premium on ideological considerations, holding that advancing democracy is in the national interest of the United States, even while turning a blind eye to the many instances where American policy has supported undemocratic regimes for the purpose of advancing more traditional national interests (economic gain, increased military power, avoidance of war). Because China had essentially defected from American friendship through communist victory in the civil war, a majority of Americans were susceptible to a narrative that identified the new China as an undemocratic, evil actor on the international scene that could not be dealt with via rational means. This view is squarely rooted in Wilsonian (Kantian) ideas regarding a harmony of interests among nations, and in opposition to the traditional diplomatic concept that states will always have competing interests that can only be resolved, managed, or prevented from increasing to dangerous proportions through regular diplomatic interaction. Instead of conceiving diplomacy as conferring approval, traditional diplomacy regards diplomatic recognition as a necessary activity for ameliorating an inevitable clash of national interests.

That Americans had much less experience in dealing with valid competitors, as opposed to the European states, who since 1648 had constructed an international society based upon traditional diplomacy and the balance of power, is a given. The unique American experience of dominating the Western hemisphere and, until Pearl Harbor, primarily engaging in interstate wars of choice constrained American ideas regarding the necessity of conducting diplomacy for the purpose of gaining provisional but nevertheless *crucial* benefits. That the US asked for unconditional surrender from its foes in the recently concluded Second World War did nothing to confuse the historic American view of its role in the world or the assumptions of the New Diplomacy. This was compounded by the American experience with democracy that seemed to give universal validation to that form of government. Taken together, these ideas predisposed Americans to misinterpret the Chinese revolution and Chinese communism's role in that revolution.[63] That this is a continuing phenomenon generally, and particularly in regard to US

relations with Iran and Cuba, is demonstrated by Tsou's summation of the American failure in China:

> At a time when the United States was highly confident of her political strength and influence, American confrontation with revolutionary movements and regimes did not alert Americans to contrast between the revolutionaries' seriousness of purpose and their own insufficient awareness of a national aim.[64]

Although the United States does not currently possess the proportion of economic power that it did in the immediate postwar era, it has remained, however tenuously, a superpower. This dominance is derived not only from American military and economic prowess, but also from the global popularity of democracy. For Americans, positive outcomes regarding democratization in other countries have been counted as evidence of a growing consensus that democratic governance is the only possible solution to successful political action, and contingent details regarding particular cases of democratization are discounted. Nor do Americans give much attention to the contingent details of cases in which revolutions removed US-backed leaders, preferring to classify regimes that adopt democracy 'on the right side of history' and condemning revolutions that establish authoritarian governments as recalcitrant. US support for undemocratic regimes out of strategic necessity is disregarded; revolutionary movements that attempt to overthrow those regimes are classified as enemies, regardless of the movements' rationale.

This tends to produce a pattern in diplomacy in which domestic mood is given priority and the possibilities and pitfalls associated with not having diplomatic relations are given short shrift. Regarding the decision not to establish relations with the PRC, but also generally applicable to US decisions regarding Cuba in 1961 and Iran in 1980, Tsou states that this was decided 'primarily for reasons of domestic politics and imprudent, as the record shows and as officials subsequently stressed, from the standpoint of American prestige and immediate interests.'[65] In sum, prioritizing domestic venting in the diplomatic decision process has drawbacks.

Costs

The misperceptions that influenced American actions in both the Korean and Vietnam Wars were among these costs. According to Allen Whiting in his account of the Chinese decision to enter the Korean War, while no one dominant factor stands out in provoking the clash between US and Chinese forces in Korea, the conflict provides 'an instructive warning concerning the dangers of failure in communications in a limited-war situation.'[66] The communication failure resulting from the lack of diplomatic presence in Beijing and American-influenced actions that prevented the PRC from taking the China seat in the UN Security Council meant that Beijing was constrained in its capability to communicate (Beijing attempted to inform the US of its intentions through the Indian ambassador to Beijing) how

it would respond to a US presence on the Korean border with China. Had the US sought greater diplomatic contact with the PRC, perhaps the Truman administration would have been quicker to overrule MacArthur's orders to push towards the Yalu and thus avoided provoking Chinese entrance into the war.

With regard to Vietnam, the Domino Theory and its foundational assumption that the world communist movement was a monolithic force, not influenced by local interests but instead under the sway of Soviet decision making, compelled Americans to refuse to acknowledge the growing divide between Moscow and Beijing that began in the late 1950s. If the US had believed that the two communist giants were at odds, the Domino Theory might have been questioned and the decision to put American resources and credibility on the line in Vietnam would have been less likely. Even without a diplomatic presence in Beijing, there were some seasoned American diplomats who recognized the reality and implications of the Sino-Soviet split, as Averell Harriman attempted to convince the State Department of its true nature, but he was rebuffed. If the United States had maintained relations with Beijing, perhaps Harriman's argument would have been strengthened and American policy would have been made on sounder footing. According to Hoopes:

> [H]ad this been achieved, there is nothing to suggest that harmonious relations would have ensued, but the somber American tragedy in Vietnam during the 1960s would very probably have been mitigated, and perhaps even averted, by the fact that direct diplomatic association would have produced a better mutual understanding of Chinese and American purposes.[67]

Moreover, the Americans who were best qualified to analyze developments in Asian politics were the Foreign Service officers who had been forced out of government at the height of the McCarthyist purges. If they had been retained, it is possible that a more realistic and balanced interpretation of events in Asia would have been advanced, potentially curbing American involvement in Southeast Asia in the 1960s.[68]

The most important consideration concerning the costs associated with non-recognition of the PRC is that analysis normally conducted by experts became politicized, undermining prospects for an optimal policy towards China. The contamination of the China policy had negative consequences for both US foreign and domestic politics, as American foreign policy was built on mischaracterization of the outside world, which in turn led to misconceptions in domestic partisan politics. Halberstam relates a prime example of this with regard to Vietnam, as in 1965, President Johnson, in conversation with his advisers, would bring up 'how Truman lost China and then the Congress and the White House, and how, by God, Johnson was not going to be the President who lost Vietnam and the Congress and then the White House.'[69] Of course, in the end, that is exactly what Johnson did, and primarily because his analysis of what was happening in Asia was distorted due to how Americans felt about the issue rather than what was actually taking place in Asia.

The China case as a model for Cuba and Iran

While there are obvious and important differences between the US failure to offer diplomatic recognition to the PRC from 1949 until the opening of initial negotiations towards normalization of relations in 1972 (process not completed until 1979) and US broken diplomatic relations with Cuba from 1961 to 2015 and Iran 1980 to the present, there are many broad and important similarities. Regarding the differences, the fact that the US maintained recognition of the Nationalist Republic of China government on Taiwan, regarding it as the legitimate sovereign of all China from 1949 to 1979, stands out, as the US offered no recognition to alternative governments of Cuba and Iran. (US proposals to offer recognition to both the PRC and the Republic of China on Taiwan were strenuously opposed by both Beijing and Taipei.[70]) However, in all cases, citizens of these states that lost the battle to stem the tide of revolution had important influences on American political perceptions, as thousands of anti-Castro Cubans immigrated to the United States (to Florida in particular), as did significant numbers of Iranians in the wake of the Islamic Revolution. Just as the China Lobby hoped to support Chiang's return to the mainland, the US supported Cuban exile efforts to overthrow Castro, culminating in the doomed Bay of Pigs invasion, and has in recent years cooperated with Iranian exile groups such as the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) in efforts to undermine the Islamic Republic of Iran. In each situation, American attitudes towards the state in question have been shaped not by normal diplomatic relations but by the losers of the state's revolution.

Also, the costs of not recognizing China were arguably much greater. The absence of regular diplomatic communication between the US and China was a contributing factor to the eventual military confrontation in Korea, and influenced American denial of the Sino-Soviet split and its ramifications for the validity of the Domino Theory that rationalized US involvement in Vietnam. However, the lack of diplomatic communication with Cuba might have produced exorbitant costs during the Cuban Missile Crisis, as will be elaborated in the following chapter. Additionally, American refusal to entertain Iranian overtures regarding the re-establishment of relations likely contributed to strengthening hardline elements in Iran, potentially influencing greater Iranian opposition to the US Operation Iraqi Freedom as well as facilitating the victory of Ahmadinejad in the 2005 presidential election.

From a general standpoint, however, Tsou's description of the US failure in China has validity in characterizing a pattern in US foreign policy related to non-recognition and broken diplomatic relations. In each case the US pursued contradictory policies towards the state in question prior to its revolution, backing authoritarian leaders who favored American interests but neglecting the welfare of their populations. The US failed to understand the nature and determination of the revolutionary movements in all cases and, correspondingly, the implications of government change in each case for broader US foreign policy. In all cases, the United States became militarily involved at some level against the new regime (the Korean War against the PRC, Operation Eagle Claw and Operation Praying Mantis against Iran, the Bay of Pigs and Operation Mongoose against

Cuba) shortly after the revolution, and these limited actions failed to dislodge the new government and often strengthened its popular support. Perhaps most significantly, American domestic politics misperceived and distorted what was actually happening in China, Cuba and Iran during the crucial period when the revolution was mounting and the breaking of diplomatic relations was under consideration, and these nurtured delusions that gained widespread credibility and made discussion of re-opening negotiations taboo. The following table summarizes these similarities:

Table 3.1 Tsou's Pattern of US Relations with PRC, Cuba and Iran

PATTERN – US liberal universalism blinds US government to realistic possibilities in bilateral relations; monism, solidarism leads to policy failure	**PRC** – significant costs include Korean & Vietnam Wars, delayed potential to join PRC in countering Soviet threat until 1970s	**Cuba –** costs include Helms–Burton, negative impact on relations with other L. American states, opportunity costs, Cold War strategic risks, lost trade	**Iran** – costs include lost trade and threats to ME stability, possible missed agreement to limit nuclear program (balance with maintenance of Israel ties)
1 Pursuit of contradictory policies & commitment to ends not possible of achievement with means employed	Support for corrupt Nationalist/Chiang regime and unequal treaties while also calling for Chinese self-determination	Support for Batista, maintaining US economic dominance of Cuba while also calling for Cuban self-determination	Operation Ajax, maintenance of US strategic objectives by keeping Shah in power at expense of majority of Iranians
2 Inability to perceive strength and determination of revolutionary forces	Mao and Chinese Communist Party	Castro and peasant guerillas	Khomeini and clerics, general potential of religion as a force in politics
3 Pre-revolutionary country threat considered negligible; blindness to country's potential to oppose US interests in new international context	Sino-Soviet bloc and resulting potential communist threat to rest of Asia	Cuba as a base for Soviet strategic weapons and rallying point for communism in W. hemisphere	Iran as an anti-Israel force in ME; support for Hezbollah, Hamas, Syria; undermining pro-West ME governments
4 Use of force at level incapable of achieving desired results, generally resulting in increased support for new regime	Threatening Chinese border after Inchon success, precipitating Chinese entry into Korean War; CIA operations in Tibet	Bay of Pigs, Operation Mongoose	Operation Eagle Claw, Tanker War, Airbus shoot down, support for Iraq in Iran-Iraq War

(*Continued*)

Table 3.1 (Continued)

5	US Congress and public opinion make renewal of ties difficult if not impossible	McCarthyism, 'Who Lost China' Debate	Helms–Burton; importance of Cuban exile vote in presidential elections	Sanctions, Iran Contra, current congressional effort to constrain nuclear negotiations
6	Long-term policy of non-recognition born of contradictions between reluctance to forsake objective and incapacity to gain it by purposeful use of military force	Inability to stimulate greater division between USSR and PRC; broad misperception of Asian communism; prevention of PRC UN membership led to PRC seeking other international venues to spread influence	Cold War invasion impossible due to Cuba-USSR alliance; post–Cold War due to broader regional and int'l opinion	Military strike costly due to location and geopolitical implications related to Iraq, Global War on Terrorism, maintaining oil flow, and potential Russian involvement

Thus, while the China case stands out due to the fact that it was closely followed by a major war, and Cuba is unique because of its proximity to the United States and the potential catastrophe associated with the missile crisis, and the breaking of relations with Iran occurred in tandem with the hostage crisis, all three cases conform to a broad pattern. The following chapters will apply this pattern to the Cuba and Iran cases.

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27 Ferrell, *American Diplomacy*, 473.
28 Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China*, 530.
29 Ibid., 530.
30 In the final chapter of *The Red China Lobby* (New York: Fleet, 1963), Forrest Davis and Robert A. Hunter's polemic against considering diplomatic recognition of the PRC, the authors call for a liberation policy entailing US air and naval support for KMT and SEATO airborne, amphibious and cross border assaults on the PRC, North Korea and Vietnam. This would supposedly stimulate a popular uprising against communist leadership. Although there were extreme economic difficulties in China at the time due to catastrophic consequences of the Great Leap Forward, it is more likely that a US backed invasion would have provoked a guerilla resistance similar to what was to take place in Vietnam, only on a vastly larger scale. This type of scheme failed utterly at the Bay of Pigs, and in some ways approximates the twenty-first century efforts to install favorable regimes in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya. It is indicative that the foreword of this volume was written by a former chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Arthur Radford, who had argued for preventive war against China during his tenure as chairman. The key takeaway for the purpose of this study is that regime change advocates often take a dim view of diplomatic recognition of and relations with states at odds with the US, and also often seriously underestimate the costs of regime change attempts.
31 Kennan, George. *Memoirs, 1925–1950* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), 495.
32 Tsou, *America's Failure in China*, 616.
33 These Foreign Service officers (FSOs) who had served long tenures in China prior to 1949 were among the victims of McCarthy inspired witch hunts. Prominent FSOs John Paton Davies, John Carter Vincent, John S. Service and Edmund O. Clubb, among others, were forced to submit to security investigations, of which all were found innocent, but then forced out of the Foreign Service in any case. Attempts to restore their security clearances were rebuffed until the late 1960s, as Presidents Kennedy and Johnson believed it was politically disadvantageous. Essentially, these individuals lost their positions and status for providing correct but unwelcome analysis of trends in Chinese politics. Academics, including Owen Lattimore and John King Fairbank, and journalists, including Theodore White and Edgar Snow, also were publicly condemned and their reputations suffered. Most were exonerated during the 1970s as the Nixon

administration sought restoration of relations with Beijing. For a detailed account of both the accomplishment and political persecution of these FSOs, see: Kahn, E. J., Jr. *The China Hands* (New York: Viking, 1975).
34 Davis and Hunter, *The Red China Lobby*, 136.
35 Kissinger, *On China*, 119–120.
36 Isaacson, Walter and Evan Thomas. *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 476.
37 Kennan, *Memoirs 1925–1950*, 495.
38 Ibid., 495.
39 The China Lobby was a conglomeration of American public officials and private citizens who supported Chiang Kai-shek. Ostensibly established by wealthy New York importer Alfred Kohlberg in the mid-1940s, it included prominent Senators Knowland, Taft, and Nixon, former President Hoover, Henry and Clare Booth Luce and Pearl. S. Buck. Through dominance of the press, prominently including Luce's *Time* and *Life* magazines but not limited to these, the China Lobby exerted a strong influence on US opinion and policies regarding China during the 1950s. Recent comparison has been made between the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) influence on current US Middle East policy and China Lobby influence on US Asia policy during the mid-twentieth century.
40 Mayer, David. *George Kennan and the Dilemmas of US Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 177.
41 Davis and Hunter, *The Red China Lobby*, 71.
42 Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu*, 126.
43 Ferrell, *American Diplomacy*, 499.
44 Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, xvii–xviii.
45 Mosley, Leonard. *Dulles: A Biography of Eleanor, Allen and John Foster Dulles and Their Family Network* (New York: The Dial Press/James Wade, 1978), 505.
46 Mosely, *Dulles: A Biography*, 290–292.
47 Tsou, *America's Failure in China*, 548.
48 Isaacson and Thomas, *The Wise Men*, 470.
49 Ibid., 477.
50 Hoopes, Townsend. *The Devil and John Foster Dulles* (Boston: Atlantic-Little, Brown, 1973), 419. (*War, Peace and Change*, Harper & Brothers, 1939; *War or Peace*, Macmillan, 1950).
51 Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles*, 404.
52 Kissinger, *On China*, 158–159.
53 Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles*, 418.
54 Ibid., 419.
55 Ibid., 420–421.
56 Ferrell, *American Diplomacy*, 483.
57 Ford, Harold P. 'Calling the Sino-Soviet Split,' *Center for the Study of Intelligence*, Winter, 1998–1999. Accessed at: www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/winter98_99/art05.html
58 Isaacson and Thomas, *The Wise Men*, 616–617.
59 Kissinger, *On China*, 160.
60 Ibid., 160.
61 Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles*, 422–423.
62 Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, 102.
63 Tsou, *America's Failure in China*, 225.
64 Ibid., 221.
65 Ibid., 513.
66 Whiting, *China Crosses the Yalu*, 172.
67 Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles*, 422.
68 Kahn, Jr., *The China Hands*, 8.
69 Halberstam, David. *The Fifties* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1993), 53.
70 Kissinger, *On China*, 151.

4 The 'loss' of Cuba

Despite the fact that the China case fell exclusively within the Cold War and broken US diplomatic relations with Cuba bridged the Cold War and post–Cold War eras, the five decades of estrangement between the US and Cuba conform to a similar pattern as the China case, and Tsou's pattern will be used to analyze it. From the late nineteenth century until the revolution of 1959, the US pursued contradictory policies towards Cuba which invited a revolutionary response that initially was misunderstood and underappreciated by Washington. As Cuba had been acquiescent to American prerogatives for six decades, American foreign policy makers failed to realize Cuba's potential impact as an enemy of the United States in a Cold War dynamic influenced by virulent anti-Americanism and the capabilities of ballistic missile technology during the early 1960s. As with the PRC during the Korean War, the United States reacted to the new threat with an ill-conceived and insufficient military response that contributed to the legitimacy of the Castro regime rather than undermining it, setting the stage for an unprecedented military threat to the United States.

The rigidity of the Cold War assured a strong American consensus against considering a move towards normalization of ties with Cuba, and this was further certified by Castro's inflammatory anti-American rhetoric. Fractious domestic debate within the United States over Cuba did not occur until the post–Cold War, as attempts to review the frozen policy of broken relations were eschewed by Republicans ascendant in the US Congress after 1994 and anti-Castro Cuban Americans. The restoration of relations in 2015 was made possible by a shift in attitudes in the Cuban American community, intensifying pressure on the US from Latin American states to restore relations with Cuba, and the contingent situation wherein a second-term president was free to restore relations and face no penalty in another election. However, as President Clinton yielded to Congress in 1995 and signed the US economic embargo with Cuba into law (which only a congressional vote can change), constrained economic relations with Cuba may continue.

Contradictory policy

American involvement in Cuba began with the Spanish-American War in 1898. Although the US narrative of events centered on liberating Cubans from Spanish

imperialism, Cubans claim that they would have defeated the Spaniards without American assistance, and that the US effort 'was directed as much against Cubans as it was against Spaniards, a means by which to neutralize the two competing claims of sovereignty and establish by force of arms a third one.'[1] Cuba had chafed under Spanish occupation for nearly four centuries, and now it seemed that the US had replaced Spain. An American occupation force remained in Cuba until 1902, when the US Congress passed the Platt Amendment, reserving the right of American intervention for the purpose of maintaining Cuban individual rights and national independence until Cubans could carry out these responsibilities in their own right. Cuban acceptance of this measure was secured by threatening to maintain the military occupation if Cubans rejected it. The Platt Amendment represented the prevailing American notion at the time as rendered in the Roosevelt Corollary, which was based on the assumption that if Latin American states did not possess the ability to adequately govern themselves, the United States should intervene in these lesser advantaged states to render assistance. During the next two decades, the US intervened in Cuba periodically, in 1906 (US troops remained until 1908) and in 1917 to quell protests over rigged elections, and in 1912 to put down a budding rebellion over racial strife, demonstrating an outsized influence on Cuban governmental and economic affairs. Additionally, the US Navy has occupied Guantanamo Bay Naval Base on the southern coast of Cuba since the end of the Spanish-American War.

Although the Platt Amendment was abrogated in 1934, it established a pattern of contradiction which was to characterize US-Cuban relations thereafter. While the United States proclaimed that it desired lesser developed states to move towards self-government, there is general agreement that whatever the moral content of US intentions, American interference in Cuban affairs prevented Cubans from controlling areas of decision making considered integral to sovereignty.[2] With regard to Guantanamo, the US has maintained that the naval base is sovereign territory of Cuba but that the United States could use the facility in perpetuity by paying a rental fee of $4,000 per year. In essence, American policy simultaneously demanded stability (which only the US could provide) for the maintenance of dominant US economic interests in Cuba, and also change, namely Cuban progress towards managing its own affairs.[3]

In 1934 the Roosevelt administration adopted the Good Neighbor Policy as its overarching guidance for relations with Latin America. This followed close on the heels of a revolutionary overthrow of the Cuban government which was reeling from the collapse of sugar prices, the principle source of Cuban income, due to the worldwide depression. American relations with the eventual leader of the Cuban government, former army sergeant Fulgencio Batista, who remained in power until 1944, were representative of a pattern of Cuban leaders maintaining power by advancing American prerogatives at the expense of the majority of the Cuban population. As this dynamic not only placed American interests above Cuban interests but also often involved illegitimate regimes that brazenly violated the Cuban constitution, in hindsight it is clear that American influence in Cuba

fueled underlying resentment, even while bringing temporary economic gains to Cubans. This was lost on US policymakers. Instead,

> Washington never fully understood Cuban nationalism. It was treated as an atavistic phenomenon that would abate as accumulating U.S. influence led to a mature society. The State Department did realize that opposition to U.S. policy often served as an outlet for an emotional Cuban patriotism. It did not, however, consider the possibility that the U.S. presence in Cuba was the principle source of such nationalism. By inextricably mixing its rewards and punishments and by continually requiring Cuban society to recast itself, the United States assured that the question of Cuban independence – both in its practical and ideal forms – would never stray far from its original focus on North American power over the island's affairs.[4]

Despite Batista's support of Allied aims against fascism during the war, reversion to constitutional government in 1944 and the economic boom associated with both World War II and the Korean War, the latent resistance to undue American influence in Cuba did not disappear. After Batista again seized power by undemocratic means in 1952, US policy prioritized protecting American economic interests in Cuba, primarily related to sugar, instead of criticizing the Cuban retreat from democracy.[5] American private businesses also controlled the majority of public utilities, railroads, oil exploration and nickel mines, and were significantly involved in retail, manufacturing, construction materials and 'vice'-related industries such as gambling and prostitution. Batista's corrupt administration favored all of these while simultaneously imposing harsh penalties on dissent, including the murder of many who actively protested his regime. While supporting American business interests and actively seeking to destroy the opposition benefited Batista in the short run, it did nothing to ingratiate him to the majority of the Cuban population. As he had no natural constituency and no party base, his actions created a seemingly inevitable opportunity for a significant opposition movement.

Misunderstanding/discounting revolution

Fidel Castro had spent most of his adult life actively opposing the Batista regime, first leading an abortive attack on a Cuban military barracks in 1953 (he was sentenced to a fifteen-year prison term but was released in a general amnesty for political prisoners in 1955), going to Mexico to organize resistance forces, returning to Cuba in 1956 to mount a guerilla effort against Batista and then setting up a secret broadcasting station in the Sierra Maestra mountains to spread anti-Batista propaganda. In these crucial years as Batista's hold on power significantly diminished and Castro gathered support, American inattention to the serious ramifications of Cuban revolution was demonstrated by the fact that successive US ambassadors appointed to Cuba during the late 1950s were not Foreign Service officers (FSOs) aware of the island and its political currents, but instead Republican businessmen

who had supported Eisenhower's campaigns and spoke no Spanish.[6] The second of these, Earl T. Smith, was unreserved in his support for Batista and would not approve reporting by lower-level FSOs in Havana that was critical of Batista.[7]

While Castro and his guerilla force were by no means the only opposition to Batista, and despite the fact that up until the final phase of the revolutionary struggle against Batista they numbered less than 500, Castro's charisma and ability to draw on widespread resentment towards the regime were integral factors in swaying a significant portion of the Cuban population to back his cause. By 1958 Batista's dwindling popularity and brutal measures against anti-regime forces provoked the United States to impose an arms embargo on Cuba. However, this did not entail a re-evaluation of the American role in Cuba or recognition of the possibility that the privileged position of American interests in Cuba was a primary source of anti-Americanism and potentially substantial provocation for the revolutionary cause that would topple Batista. Instead, the dominant American viewpoint remained that the US played a benign and constructive role in Cuba as an 'upholder of self-determination against communist aggression and domination,' and furthermore demonstrated blindness to the possibility that levying the arms embargo on the Batista regime might signal the growing anti-Batista forces rapidly coalescing around Castro that Batista had lost US support.[8] Thus, while Batista's demise was not totally unforeseen by responsible officials in the US, American comprehension of Castro's victory on January 8, 1959, his elevation to the premiership in February 1959 and its implications for the future of US-Cuban relations was significantly deficient. The essential reality, that the United States was responsible for conditions that not only allowed Castro's rise but also generated the wider goals of the revolution itself, went unacknowledged.[9]

While Castro had attracted communist support within Cuba during the final stages of the revolution, he had not declared himself a communist and drew endorsement from a broad coalition of economic classes and ideological positions. This, coupled with the traditional unreflective American frame of benign US involvement abroad, led Washington to conclude that Castro might be amenable to favorable relations with the United States. The implication was that things might continue as they had been and the US did not need to fundamentally rethink its Cuba policy and potential consequences for American interests in Cuba. According to Perez Jr., and approximating the American view of China a decade earlier, by the time of 1959 revolution:

> The propriety of North American privilege in Cuba had assumed such utter commonplace normality as to acquire the appearance of the natural order of things, hardly noticed at all except as confirmation that all was right in the world. That Cubans called attention to this condition as an anomaly in their lives, as wrong and improper, drew responses of blank incredulity from the Americans: how to comprehend Cuban dissatisfaction with a relationship that most Americans – if they thought about it at all – were certain had been entirely ideal and had presumed always to be in the best interest of Cubans.[10]

Thus, the US moved quickly to extend diplomatic recognition to Castro's government while continuing to hope that it would be as amenable to American economic interests as previous Cuban regimes. The newly arrived (as of January 1959) American ambassador, Phillip Bonsal, a career Foreign Service officer who spoke Spanish and had previously served as ambassador to Bolivia and Colombia, was fully supportive of recognizing Castro's government but was left in the awkward position of attempting to maintain American economic predominance in Cuba while realizing the new regime was not likely to accommodate this request.

In April 1959, just two months after seizing power, Castro visited Washington. He was not afforded an audience with President Eisenhower (who left town to play golf in Georgia), instead being granted an interview with Vice-President Nixon, again underlining the lack of seriousness of what was at stake. Castro also met with the Senate Foreign Relations committee and assured its members that US properties in Cuba would be protected by the new government. According to some accounts Castro did not ask for American aid nor was it proffered, although at this point where positions had yet to solidify, Castro might have accepted US aid if it were offered, and the US might have given it if Castro had asked.[11] Alternatively, it is claimed that Castro refused 'tentative' pledges of American aid, but what is clear is at this point Castro did not claim to be a communist and declared his support for the Western democracies in the ideological conflict with the Soviet Union.[12]

However, in May Castro introduced a collectivist agricultural and land reform program known as the Agrarian Reform Law. This elicited major protests from US sugar firms in Cuba who correctly anticipated that the revolutionary government would confiscate large land holdings, thus representing a problem for US economic interests in Cuba and provoking Senator William Fulbright to conclude that the possibility of negotiating a policy of cooperation with Castro was now impossible.[13] Although US policy did not oppose land reform in the abstract, and even supported it in many cases (Chiang's KMT government on Taiwan is a notable example), in this particular instance land reform presented an acute threat to America's perceived overriding interest in Cuba. Following the announcement of the Agrarian Reform Law, Ambassador Bonsal attempted unsuccessfully to persuade the Castro government to soften the law for US companies in Cuba. Bonsal also sought to determine at this point whether Cuba was moving towards outright communism, but found very little evidence of communist activity within the government, stating in a memorandum to Washington:

> I strongly recommend that for present we continue policy of friendliness towards Castro and GOC, using our influence in every way to guide him towards sounder economic ground, and that we give no encouragement of any kind to movements aimed at overthrowing Castro. Latter is very strong as of now reflecting as he does hopes and aspirations of majority of Cubans rather than any foreign ideology.[14]

During the summer of 1959 Castro altered the composition of his cabinet and the Cuban government generally, dismissing those who did not embrace his ideas and programs and filling their former positions with ideological allies. One reason Castro sought to bolster the unity, ideological purity and personal loyalty of the government was that some elements of domestic opposition remained and these might facilitate foreign supported challenges to the new Cuban regime. At this point Castro, likely due not only to his legitimate fears of a US threat but also to his hopes to increase his stature as a global revolutionary figure, began to more openly discuss a communist vision for Cuba. In November he hosted a Soviet trade delegation in Havana. Already stung by the impact of Castro's Agrarian Reform Law, the perception of Soviet influence now increasingly colored American interpretation of the direction of events. Castro increasingly realized that the surest way to deepen support for the revolution was to cast himself as the defender of Cuba against Yankee interventionism, as this granted the new Cuban regime a degree of 'moral credibility' that unified the Cuban population in a way that was 'previously unimaginable and perhaps unattainable by any other means.'[15]

Ambassador Bonsal continued to advocate seeking accommodation with Castro because he saw no other option, but he was dismissed in October 1959. In retrospect, it appears that by the fall of 1959 the Eisenhower administration was increasingly doubtful that a diplomatic solution existed and believed that diplomats such as Bonsal 'who posed legal and moral questions about clandestine operations were considered naïve.'[16] Bonsal was aware that Castro enjoyed the Cuban population's strong approval, that the privileging of US economic interests in Cuba in the past was unfair to Cubans as well as unsustainable and that Castro might be a better or worse neighbor to the United States depending on US actions going forward. Regime change advocates marginalized his assessments and instead pushed for an ultimate solution to the Cuba problem.

Failure to perceive the threat

When a former Cuban air force pilot took off from Florida in October 1959 to drop anti-Castro leaflets over Havana, and errant anti-aircraft rounds aimed at destroying the pilot's aircraft instead fell and killed Cuban civilians, Castro could not resist the opportunity to claim the civilians were killed by an American air raid. However, within several months Castro had less need to misrepresent events, because although official US policy still claimed to desire better relations with Castro at the beginning of 1960, the CIA began conducting covert operations against Cuban economic targets early that year. Castro claimed that US air raids had burned up 225,000 tons of sugar, which the US initially contested, but US complicity in these raids became impossible to deny when an American plane flown by an American pilot and loaded with incendiaries went down over a sugar mill near Havana in February.[17]

Fearing that a broader communist threat from Cuba could spread to other Caribbean states, the US increasingly distanced itself from Castro as he moved Cuba towards stronger relations with the Soviet Union, completing a major trade

agreement in February 1960 that authorized the exchange of Cuban sugar for Soviet oil. In March, the French cargo ship *La Coubre* blew up in Havana harbor after unloading weapons purchased by the Cuban government. Although CIA complicity in the explosion was suspected but never proven, this incident contributed further to increasing tensions. In June the Castro government expelled two American diplomats for allegedly supporting counterrevolutionary activity, and in July began the process of expropriating US property and nationalizing American businesses. The US Congress responded by passing a bill authorizing President Eisenhower to eliminate quotas for the purchase of foreign sugar. At this point little doubt remained about the direction of Cuba's government. Castro's affiliation with the Soviet Union was on display at the September session of the UN General Assembly in New York. Castro and his contingent stayed in Harlem, and Khrushchev, also attending the session, was chauffeured up to Harlem to meet Castro, giving him a bear hug. Khrushchev and Castro had dinner the next day, and the Cuban government extended diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China and North Korea the same week (Cuba was the first country in the Western hemisphere to normalize relations with Pyongyang).

In October the US enacted an embargo on exports to Cuba and Castro reacted by nationalizing all remaining US business interests in Cuba. Throughout 1960 the Castro government arrested, imprisoned and executed suspected enemies of the revolution (many of them former allies in the revolution), and this had the effect of increasing the outflow of Cubans who opposed the new government, which reached 100,000 by year's end. At this juncture there seemed to be no area for agreement between the US and Cuba. On January 2, the Cuban government staged a massive military parade in Havana that featured newly received Soviet tanks and artillery, and Castro called for limiting the number of US diplomats in Havana to eleven, the same number of Cuban diplomats in Washington. In response, Eisenhower recalled the US ambassador and broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba on January 3, 1961.

According to the dictates of the New Diplomacy that the United States embraced, once Castro moved Cuba unambiguously into the Soviet camp, his government was by definition illegitimate and the requisite American response was to break relations. The events that soon followed, most crucially the failed Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis, took place without regular diplomatic contact between the United States and Cuba. These events might have been avoided or their impact lessened if Washington had chosen to accept the Castro regime as a legitimate manifestation of Cuban political expression in spite of the fact that it was not the product of a sustained democratic process. By late 1960, although it was undeniable that Cuba had embraced communism and was aligning itself with the Soviet bloc, the US might have avoided future crises or reduced their severity if it had made every attempt to maintain diplomatic relations.

Instead, by demonizing Castro, the US arguably set in motion a self-fulfilling prophecy that culminated in an unprecedented security threat. American policy ostensibly aimed at maintaining American economic rights in Cuba and preventing Cuban adoption of communism and alliance with the Soviet Union. The

actual policy measures taken by the US to secure these goals were self-defeating. Increasing American threats and military activity resulted in pushing Castro into a deepening alliance with the Soviets and eliminating the possibility of any continuing US economic activity in Cuba. Moreover, unrelenting American provocative behavior towards Cuba did much to provoke a worst case outcome, the establishment of a Soviet base with nuclear weapons less than one hundred miles from the United States.

The context of the relative difference in the US and Soviet missile capabilities in the early 1960s is key to understanding the significance of this development. The supposed 'missile gap' that Kennedy had campaigned on had been exposed as incorrect by CIA intelligence collection. The US National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) in September 1961 (following the Bay of Pigs but a year before the missile crisis) estimated that the Soviets had only between 10 and 25 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), down from earlier estimates of 140 to 200.[18] ICBMs with nuclear warheads launched from the Soviet Union had sufficient range to strike the United States, but the US had far more ICBMs (which could be fired from the US and hit the USSR), and thus had a strong advantage in any nuclear confrontation. The US also had shorter-range ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads based in Turkey. Taken together, this meant that the US had a much greater chance of retaining a second strike capability in any nuclear exchange with the Soviets, who at this point stood to have their ICBM capability potentially wiped out if the US struck first.

However, the Soviets had a large number of nuclear-capable medium-range and intermediate-range ballistic missiles (MRBMs and IRBMs) but no allies near the United States who would allow Soviet nuclear missile bases, until the Cuban revolution. These missiles were of no use for directly striking the United States from Russia due to their short range, but the possibility of basing these missiles in Cuba dramatically increased their value and potentially eliminated the overall American advantage in nuclear capability.[19] Had the United States taken the combination of the true level of support for Castro within Cuba and the capability level of the Soviet nuclear arsenal into account, perhaps US policies would have placed greater emphasis on achieving an accommodation with Castro and reassuring him that Cuba was not under eminent threat from the United States, instead of constantly seeking to overthrow his regime.

Insufficient 'milpower/willpower' to coerce desired outcome and initial break

A key American development in the Cold War was the capability of the intelligence agency to conduct special operations for the purpose of provoking and supporting revolutions and counter-revolutions against Third World regimes that opposed US interests. From a broad standpoint, the possibility of success in these operations tempted US foreign policy makers to place lesser importance on diplomatic relations, as there was limited value in normalizing relations with a regime that might be toppled in the near term. Why not just wait and extend recognition

to a new regime more favorable to US interests, especially if the CIA had installed the new government in power? While more will be discussed on this topic with regard to the CIA's Operation Ajax in Iran, confidence in US special operations capability was undoubtedly a relevant factor in US policy calculations regarding Cuba.

The success of Operation Ajax, and, of greater relevance for Cuba, the CIA's Operation PBSUCCESS in Guatemala which toppled the Arbenz regime in 1954 influenced the Eisenhower administration to believe that special operations involving irregular US forces and revolutionary elements within the country in question were a viable means for addressing unresolved issues in American foreign policy. However, in retrospect what stands out regarding these operations is that they often miscalculated the level of opposition among the populations of the countries that the US was targeting. Although Arbenz had been removed, a majority of Guatemalans supported him, and abortive attempts at regime change in Albania and Indonesia during the 1950s also pointed to the fact that US ability to co-opt and/or provoke popular uprisings was seriously in doubt.[20] Moreover, while both Guatemala and Cuba were Latin American states within the natural US sphere of influence, this also worked against American prospects, as proximity allowed for Latin American revolutionaries who participated in multiple revolutions to develop and apply lessons learned. Eventual Castro lieutenant Ernesto 'Che' Guevara had been in Guatemala in 1954 and determined that cultivating popular support against the US and 'purging' the national military of officers loyal to the US were integral to defeating CIA regime change operations in the future. Che would impart these lessons to Castro during the latter half of the decade.[21]

Allen Dulles, CIA director under Eisenhower, was fully aware that Batista was rapidly losing control by 1958 and that Castro's support was growing. However, Dulles, along with Vice-President Nixon (who according to Bay of Pigs chronicler Peter Wyden had begun considering a CIA takedown of Castro after his April 1959 meeting with him[22]), hoped to identify a third option for Cuba that had both Cuban support and protected US interests. Castro's victory in January 1959 provoked many Cuban elites who had prospered under Batista to immigrate to the US, and thus in a way fostered the potential counterrevolutionary force that Dulles desired. In August 1960 Eisenhower, adamant that US forces should not be used to overturn Castro but also claiming that he would not allow a communist Cuba, secretly gave final authorization (CIA preparations for a Cuba contingency had been going on since March) to Dulles to begin training and equipping Cuban exiles for an insurgency operation against the new Cuban government. The combination of Castro's increasing relations with the Soviet Union and election pledges from both presidential candidates Nixon and Kennedy to remove communism from the hemisphere contributed to a political context that would have made it difficult for any new president to cancel the CIA operation, which was well advanced by inauguration day in January 1961.

Of course, Kennedy, though somewhat dubious about the operation, eventually signed off and the Bay of Pigs amphibious landing by Cuban exiles from CIA-operated ships went forward and ended disastrously, with most of the invasion

force either killed or captured, in April 1961. The CIA and Joint Chiefs of Staff were taken aback that Kennedy had not ordered open US military involvement to save the initial beachhead taken by the exile forces, as Castro's marginal air force dominated the skies while a US Navy aircraft carrier steamed within easy striking distance. However, just as Eisenhower asserted that the US could not become openly involved in the overthrow of Castro, Kennedy refused to give the order to send US naval aircraft into action over Cuba. In sum, the American conviction of US legitimacy in intervening abroad to curb communism, certainty in its military dominance and confidence in the rationality of its decision-making processes, produced a mindset that obscured important, and indeed decisive, aspects of the political and military situation in Cuba.

Regarding the Bay of Pigs, one can at least conclude that if the United States had regular diplomatic relations with Cuba through the spring of 1961, Kennedy might have had a more realistic understanding of the level of Cuban popular support for Castro. As the invasion force only consisted of 1400 Cuban exiles, a key assumption was that Cuban support for Castro was tepid and might be reversed by a show of force, with a significant portion of Cubans rallying to the cause of overturning Castro. On-the-ground and up-to-the-minute analysis by American Foreign Service officers in Havana could have been a determining factor in challenging the 'groupthink' that permeated Kennedy, the CIA, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and White House aides, who mistakenly assumed that a small invasion by a guerilla force could set events in motion that would topple Castro.[23]

As Cuba now represented an important front in the Cold War, the failed bid by the new administration, barely in office two months, to conceive and successfully execute the operation had global ramifications, leading to fears that now the Soviets might challenge the US in Berlin, Laos and elsewhere due to the shaken confidence of Western allies in the young president. Commenting on European perceptions of Kennedy's handling of the Bay of Pigs, former Secretary of State Acheson articulated that the attitude of European leaders was similar 'to the sort of unbelieving attitude that somebody might have as he watched a gifted amateur practicing with a boomerang and suddenly knocking himself cold. They were amazed that so inexperienced a person should play with so lethal a weapon.'[24] Moreover, both the intelligence and operational failure associated with the Bay of Pigs operation provoked Kennedy to remove the top three CIA officers responsible, Director Allen Dulles, Deputy Director General Charles Cabell (USAF) and Deputy Director of Plans Richard Bissell, leading to acrimony between the president and the agency for the remainder of his administration.

The embarrassment and recriminations associated with the Bay of Pigs meant that any future large-scale US attempt to remove Castro would have to wait until the furor died down, the reorganized CIA got up to speed and better plans could be developed. However, the Kennedy administration refused to completely abandon coercive efforts to remove Castro. The new CIA director, John McCone, authorized Operation Mongoose, to orchestrate covert warfare against the communist regime. McCone brought in Air Force Brigadier General Edward Lansdale, who had built a reputation as an effective counterinsurgency operator in the Philippines

during the 1950s, to oversee this effort.[25] The ostensible goal of Mongoose was to undermine Castro by degrading the Cuban economy with sabotage operations. However, Cuban trade with the Soviet Union and even American allies in Europe was more than adequate and Mongoose was ineffectual in bringing about major economic distress in Cuba. Mongoose potentially would have been effective if it had been undertaken in tandem with broad economic sanctions, but the United States was unsuccessful at even persuading enduring allies such at Britain and Canada to consider economic sanctions against Castro's Cuba.[26]

The CIA also continued to consider attempts against Castro via CIA operation ZR/RIFLE, which developed covert assassination plans, some of which involved contacts with members of American organized crime. This produced a confounding situation for Attorney General Robert Kennedy, who intensely sought any means of removing Castro but was also prosecuting organized crime figures, as mobster Sam Giancana had temporary immunity from prosecution during the early 1960s due to his cooperation with the CIA in anti-Castro plots. In short, US policy towards Cuba in the wake of the Bay of Pigs refused to countenance developing a normalized relationship with the Castro regime and instead undertook an array of dubious and futile efforts at regime change that entailed unanticipated costs and complications.

The combined effect of these actions was, not surprisingly, to stoke Cuban fears of an inexorable American threat to Cuba. US Navy and Marine Corps exercises in the Caribbean in April of 1962, which included amphibious landings, did nothing to lessen this impression. The USSR shared this interpretation of events, and Soviet Premier Khrushchev began discussions with Castro regarding the establishment of a Soviet base in Cuba, despite earlier (January 1962) Castro assertions that he desired no foreign bases in Cuba. In May, Castro yielded and an agreement was reached, including SA-2 surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), MiG-21 fighter aircraft, Ilyushin (IL)-28 medium bombers, coastal defense cruise missiles (CDCMs), infantry, armored vehicles and, most significantly, SS-4 MRBMs and SS-5 IRBMs. These ballistic missiles were capable of carrying nuclear warheads. Additionally, tactical nuclear weapons (either as bombs carried by IL-28s or as warheads for the CDCMs) were also sent. Furthermore, plans for a submarine base that could service submarines capable of firing submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) were also included.

Would Castro have allowed the Soviets to install this massive military capability in Cuba if the United States had accepted Castro's government as the legitimate governing authority of Cuba and ceased trying to overthrow it? There can be no definitive answer to this question, but it is not difficult to advance a rational argument that continuous US attempts at regime change backed Castro into a corner and left him with no other option than to accept Soviet assistance in deterring the US. Essentially, the United States viewed the Cuban revolution as a threat to US economic interests and once these had been jeopardized and eliminated, regime change seemed the only way to restore them. That Castro had exposed the gap between American rhetoric of democracy and self-determination and the Cuban reality of having to prioritize US economic interests above the welfare

of the Cuban population was an affront to American ideals and a narrative that Americans were unwilling to consider. The US instead continued to seek a means to restore the relations it enjoyed with Cuba until Castro came to power. By the late summer of 1962, the US decision to disregard the new reality in Cuba produced exorbitant risks to American security.

American attempts to remove Castro with military force put both Castro and his Soviet ally on notice that they should waste no time in preparing for another US attempt, but the United States did not immediately recognize this. The appearance of Soviet air defense forces and SAM systems on the island, detected by CIA U-2 reconnaissance aircraft in late August, was not in itself surprising. SAMs are defensive weapons and did not represent by themselves a threat to the United States. For President Kennedy and his national security staff, as increasing photographic intelligence of Soviet shipments to Cuba mounted, the question was whether offensive missiles were also included. Soviet technicians with MRBMs carrying nuclear warheads arrived in Cuba in September 1962.[27] Kennedy and his aides ultimately became aware of the MRBMs through aerial reconnaissance from U-2 flights over Cuba on October 9, and over the next two weeks the world anxiously awaited while the US and USSR risked nuclear confrontation before Kennedy ultimately decided for a naval blockade to prevent additional Soviet weapons shipments from arriving in Cuba. This opened the way to defusing the crisis and securing removal of the Soviet missiles.

Of course, it can never be known whether the absence of US diplomats in Havana made the crisis more likely, diminished the timeliness and accuracy of intelligence reporting on the presence of the missiles or could have ameliorated tensions sooner once the missiles were discovered. Certainly, the maintenance of diplomatic channels with Moscow was a necessary factor in the ultimately successful negotiations that brought the crisis to a peaceful conclusion. However, what can be reasonably assumed is that in a crisis of this magnitude, any means of obtaining better, quicker intelligence and enhancing negotiation channels is to be desired. Among the options that Kennedy's executive committee considered in addressing the threat was making a secret approach to Castro in an effort to get him to break with the Soviets.[28] No matter the likelihood of success, it is undoubtedly true that had regular diplomatic channels been in place, this option would have been more likely to succeed than without normal diplomatic relations. This is all the more likely given the time-sensitive nature of the crisis.

Additionally, there was some disagreement between the Soviet and Cuban governments regarding whether or not to publicly reveal the existence of nuclear weapons in Cuba. Whereas the Soviet government proclaimed on September 11 that it would not send nuclear weapons to any other country, two weeks later (September 29) the Cuban government claimed that it had a sovereign right to base weapons of any sort in Cuba. The Castro government, quite correctly believing it was existentially threatened by US policies, was ready to be forthright in declaring to the US that it would use all means at its disposal to counter the American threat but that it would prefer the US abandon its truculent posture. Later Castro reflected that the Soviets had made 'major mistakes' in initially claiming that they

hadn't sent nuclear weapons to Cuba and then subsequently denying their existence.[29] In short, there was space between the Cuban and Soviet positions. Had American diplomats been in Havana at the time, it is possible that through direct conversations with Cubans, they would have become aware of the gravity of the situation earlier, giving Kennedy's executive committee more time to come to a decision about how to address the crisis.

Long-term broken relations

Throughout the rest of the 1960s and into the 1970s, US relations with Cuba remained tense, but the threat of general military confrontation abated. As the United States refused to consider restoring diplomatic relations, the preferred policy for confronting Cuba was one of alienation, regime change and assassination. The US used its dominant influence in the Western hemisphere to expel Cuba from the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1962, and then compelled all members except Mexico and Canada to break diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1964 over Cuban support for guerilla insurgents in Venezuela. Cuba's relative estrangement continued until the early 1970s, when Chile, Argentina and Peru re-established diplomatic relations with Cuba. This initiated a trend among OAS members to persuade the United States to end its policy of ostracism towards Cuba.

Even before the Bay of Pigs, the CIA attempted small-scale plots employing Cuban exiles to drug Castro either for the purpose of causing him to slur his speech during public proclamations or to make his beard fall out. Later, outright CIA assassination plots, involving exiles and American organized crime figures attempting to poison Castro's drinks and cigars, were undertaken.[30] CIA harassment operations in Cuba, associated with Operation Mongoose, continued after the missile crisis but provoked only greater entrenchment of Castro's regime without escalating the threat of war. Newly sworn in President Lyndon Johnson halted major CIA sabotage efforts after CIA-sponsored Cuban exiles destroyed boats and killed personnel at a Cuban naval base in December 1963. Even so, the Cuban exile groups that carried out these attacks and assassination attempts were not disbanded or discouraged by the CIA, and anti-Castro Cubans continued to be involved in illegal activities in Cuba, elsewhere in Latin America and in the United States, including terrorism against Cubans, illicit drug deals and money laundering.[31] Most Americans only became aware of continuing and pervasive Cuban exile presence in the murky world of covert operations when several were arrested after participating in the Watergate break-in in 1972.[32]

The most notorious of the exile organizations, Alpha 66, conducted periodic raids on the Cuban coastline and assassination attempts against pro-Castro Cubans in Florida and elsewhere during the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Alpha 66 members have largely escaped prosecution, inciting criticism that the US anti-Castro Cuban exiles have been given a free pass while the US upbraided other countries for coddling terrorists. In the 1970s Cuban exiles established new organizations, such as the Comando de Organizaciones Revolucionarios Unidos (CORU) and Omega 7,

which were involved in terrorist attacks on Cubans in the United States and Latin America who supported Castro, including the bombing of Cubana Airlines Flight 455 that killed 73 passengers in October 1976. Although the US government did not order these activities, it is likely the CIA and FBI were involved at some level, and state and local governments in New York, New Jersey and Florida accommodated Cuban exile groups and did not investigate incidents associated with them.[33]

American understanding of potentially relevant strategic events in Cuba continued to be constrained due to a lack of information, as was demonstrated by the Nixon administration's overreaction to the construction of a perceived Soviet submarine base at Cienfuegos in 1970. National Security Adviser Kissinger incorrectly concluded from satellite photographs of the Cienfuegos shoreline that the Soviet Union was seeking to significantly upgrade its nuclear missile capabilities in the Western hemisphere.[34] Although this incident did not lead to a major crisis akin to the one in 1962, once again, if American diplomats had been in Havana they could have potentially sought to verify the information and this 'false crisis' would have been avoided.

In the context of détente and reconsideration of US foreign policy in the wake of US withdrawal and defeat in Vietnam, the US did make several attempts at opening discussions with Cuba about the possibility of restoring relations during the 1970s. However, Cuban participation in 'hot' wars in Africa squelched these US initiatives. The Ford administration, under pressure from other OAS members, began negotiations with Cuba in 1975 but abandoned these efforts in response to significant Cuban military involvement in Angola. Cuban participation in the Ogaden War, between Somalia and Ethiopia in the late 1970s, also complicated occasional US initiatives that reconsidered the US policy of broken relations.

From 1961 until 1977, the Swiss embassy in Havana assumed responsibility for handling all outstanding diplomatic issues between Cuba and the United States. Upon his election in 1976, President Carter sought to ease tensions and increase relations with Cuba by opening an interest section in Havana, ending the travel ban on US travel to Cuba, and by gaining the release of political prisoners. The following year the interest section took up residence in the old US embassy building, built in 1953 and maintained by the Swiss delegation during the years since 1961. During this 16-year period, the Cuban government had made several attempts to take over the embassy property but were thwarted by the overworked but resourceful Swiss delegation.[35]

This limited rapprochement ended when the USSR invaded Afghanistan in 1979 and Cuba refused to join the majority of states in the UN General Assembly that voted to censure Moscow over the invasion. The Mariel Boat Lift during the summer of 1980, in which Castro allowed over 100,000 Cuban emigrants to embark from the port of Mariel for Florida over a six-month period, also lessened Carter's impetus towards further improving ties with Cuba. As détente came to a close, Cuba closed ranks with communist regimes in Nicaragua and Grenada, and Ronald Reagan was elected in 1980, reinstating the US travel ban to Cuba. Not until the demise of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s did another opportunity

for reappraisal of US relations with Cuba present itself. Soviet collapse meant that Havana lost its most significant source of external economic aid and its role as leader of ideological opposition to the United States within the Western hemisphere.

Domestic politics, partisan plays

Just as the successful communist revolution in China impacted domestic political dynamics in the United States, so did the Cuban revolution. However, this was more so after the Cold War than during. The embargo levied by President Kennedy in 1962 against Cuba had broad support, but this changed after the end of the Cold War. In 1992 Congress passed the Cuba Democracy Act, which strengthened the embargo with the goal of fostering Cuban economic collapse. Although candidate Bill Clinton supported maintaining the embargo during his 1992 presidential campaign, he later changed his mind and sought to develop support for ending it. However, in 1995, after Cuban MiG-29s shot down two aircraft piloted by exile Cubans taking off from Florida, Clinton decided to reverse his position again and signed a Republican bill to strengthen the embargo. The Cuban Liberty and Solidarity Act (also known as the Helms–Burton Act), sought to increase pressure on the Castro regime and presumably hasten its downfall by prohibiting American aid to Cuba until regime change occurred. It also levied sanctions on foreign companies that engaged in business transactions with Cuban entities that utilized property confiscated from American citizens when Castro came to power.

As US firms controlled a major portion of the Cuban economy before 1959 and numerous fixed assets, the potential adverse impact on American business relations with foreign companies was not insignificant. Passage of the bill led to widespread international condemnation, including accusations that the US was in violation of World Trade Organization and NAFTA statutes.[36] Finally, it elevated the embargo to the status of law, passing authority over the embargo from the executive to the legislative branch. Clinton later admitted that the Helms–Burton Act simply strengthened an already failed policy but that it secured Florida for him in the 1996 election.[37] This points to the peculiar combination of geography, Cuban immigrant settlement and American constitutional politics, in which the concentration of anti-Castro Cuban immigrants in Miami has had an outsized effect on American politics generally and presidential elections specifically.

Just as the China Lobby constrained US policy towards China during the 1950s and 1960s, significantly contributing to long-term severed relations, so the 'Cuba Lobby' did so for Cuba during the period between the early 1980s and early 2000s. Despite the difference in the composition of the two groups, as the China Lobby was composed mainly of powerful white Americans who had experience in China and the Cuba Lobby of Cuban Americans who fled Castro's regime (many of whom had settled in Miami), both exerted significant effect on American foreign policy. The Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) and its political action committee, the Free Cuba PAC, made significant campaign contributions

to candidates who favored a hostile posture towards Castro and refused to consider any new diplomatic initiatives towards Havana. CANF's influence over US policy only grew during the post–Cold War era, because the collapse of the Soviet Union and the global communist threat meant that Cuba was no longer a salient issue for US foreign policy in a broader sense. Thus, the Cuba Lobby dominated any discussion of reappraisal of US broken relations. Instead of influencing the executive branch to reconsider relations with Havana, limited State Department advocacy for restoration of relations was completely marginalized by a domestic interest group that bore a long-standing grudge.[38]

Florida's importance as a key state in presidential elections, and Miami's crucial percentage of the Florida vote, meant that it was unwise for any presidential candidate from either party to disregard the Cuba Lobby's strong stance on continued estrangement of the Castro regime. Doing so would alienate a key interest group in a crucial state, potentially costing the candidate the election. The 2000 election presents a stark example of the importance of the Miami vote, and it has been alleged that Cuban American efforts to prevent a recount secured George W. Bush's victory.[39] Thus, all Republican candidates and most Democratic ones refused to risk electoral defeat over challenging a policy that only seemed to matter to Cuban Americans. However, the power of the Cuba Lobby started to wane as its older members began to pass from the scene. As Florida International University's 2014 poll demonstrates,[40] Cuban Americans living in Miami who left Cuba before 1980 have, by a small majority, continued to oppose restoring diplomatic ties with Havana, but a strong majority of Miami Cubans who arrived after 1981 supported restoration of diplomatic relations. In 2014, overall Cuban émigré support for normalization was 68 percent.

In addition to the aging of the Cuban émigré population, another incident provoked reassessment of the Miami Cuban American community's rigid stance against recognition. In the fall of 1999, Elian Gonzalez, five-year-old son of a Cuban mother who had drowned in an attempt to reach Miami, was found alive drifting in Florida's coastal waters. Elian's father in Cuba demanded that the boy be returned to him in Cuba, but Miami Cuban Americans insisted that Elian be allowed to stay with relatives in Miami. The Miami Cubans' effort to prevent Elian's return to Cuba was at odds with international law, and after a tense seven-month stand-off, including a raid by US federal agents on the relatives' home in Little Havana to remove Elian, he was returned to Cuba on June 28, 2000. The Miami Cubans had intended to make the Castro government look weak, but instead their efforts to keep Elian in the US only provoked widespread condemnation from the broader US population, as it appeared that they had 'turned a traumatized child into a political football.'[41] Upon reflecting on how the Elian incident had severely damaged their standing, Miami Cuban American leaders began to moderate their position towards Castro and pursue a more flexible strategy in dealing with the Castro government.

This evolution of views was well under way by 2008, and despite its continued clout, the Cuba Lobby's influence began to ebb. Candidates John McCain and Hillary Clinton campaigned on maintaining the long-standing policy, but eventual

victor Barack Obama pledged to engage Cuba instead of continuing to isolate it. Obama won 35 percent of the Cuban American vote in Florida, surpassing the traditional 30 percent threshold that it was assumed a Democrat had to obtain to have a chance at winning the state.[42] This pointed the way towards Obama's eventual move to restore diplomatic relations. This does not mean that the Cuba Lobby has disappeared. When President Obama removed Cuba from the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism in 2015, Republican legislators and/or presidential candidates, including Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz and John Boehner, condemned the move and made a bid for the continued support of the Cuba Lobby. However, the failure of Republican candidates opposing restoration likely spells the end of major Cuba Lobby influence.

Costs

Without question President Obama's decision to restart relations with Cuba is a momentous step forward. However, the fact remains that due to the Helms–Burton Act, American economic relations with Cuba will continue to be constrained. By yielding control of a crucial area of policy to the legislative branch, the executive branch and the diplomats that are its agents will be prevented from fully exerting their expert influence to bring about a full restoration of economic ties. This invites the question, what costs has the United States incurred by waiting so long to re-establish relations and what potential future costs remain? Unlike the current situation with Iran or Cuba itself during the Cold War, the strategic implications of American relations with Cuba do not include the possibility of direct military conflict. Also, the small size of the Cuban economy means that the benefits of reclaiming a strong economic relationship with Cuba are limited. However, US policy towards Cuba since the end of the Cold War has carried indirect negative effects for the United States, and this will continue to be the case if broad relations are not restored.

Certainly, the US decision to maintain an economic embargo against Cuba has hampered relations with the rest of Latin America. Despite the large-scale transition of Latin American states to democratic governance and free market economics during the 1990s, these states favor 'pragmatism rather than ideology' in dealing with Cuba and reject Washington's conditions for ending the embargo.[43] The successful American-sponsored initiative to eject Cuba from the OAS in 1962 lost support among many Latin American states long before the Cold War ended, and US policies of alienation towards Cuba have long been condemned by majorities in the UN General Assembly. Much of the acrimony at the yearly meetings (the Summit of the Americas) of the 35-member OAS, which seeks to promote increased hemispheric cooperation and trade, is attributed to the US's uncompromising position on Cuba.[44] The presidents of Nicaragua (Daniel Ortega) and Ecuador (Rafael Correa) spurned invitation to the 2012 Summit because Cuba was not invited, and Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff and Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos stated that they would not attend the 2015 summit if Cuba was excluded. These protests by Latin American leaders played an

important part in influencing Obama's initiative to normalize relations with Cuba, fostering warmer relations among all OAS members. However, the US economic embargo is still in place and continues to be a substantive issue. Indeed, although due to Obama's recent move to renew relations with Cuba, President Raul Castro attended the 2015 Summit, the brunt of his speech addressed the injustice of the embargo. While tensions between the United States and its Latin American neighbors have fluctuated for many decades, it remains true that the US policy of excluding Cuba from the Inter-American community continues to pose the threat of making Cuba a point of focus for left-wing forces in the region that oppose American influence.[45]

US refusal to engage Cuba has also hampered relations with the broader developing world, traditional allies in Europe and Canada and even competitors like China. The legacy of Cuban resistance to American intervention during the Cold War now manifests itself as a potential symbol for developing states in the post–Cold War era. Instead of neutralizing Cuba as a global (albeit a small one) actor that is antithetical to American interests, continued American demands for wholesale Cuban repudiation of Castro's revolution potentially threaten to provoke increased unity among developing states in opposition to US global influence.[46] As Helms–Burton stipulations applied to third countries seeking trade and investment with Cuba, both EU states and Canada opposed it. Continued American intransigence on renewing economic ties with Cuba risks making traditional US allies question the US commitment to free trade. In addition, Cuba's economic relationship with China has grown significantly in the twenty-first century, and renewed American economic engagement with Cuba could advance American economic interests in competition with Beijing and also open the way for American collaboration with Chinese companies now developing projects in Cuba.[47]

Finally, if it is the goal of American policy towards Cuba to bring about regime change, the long-running isolation of Cuba carried the obvious opportunity cost of a failed policy. More than fifty years of isolation did little if anything to encourage Cubans to overthrow the Castro regime. The record indicates that maintaining policies aimed at changing Cuba's government has utterly failed. Therefore, while there is no guarantee that engaging Cuba broadly will bring a transition to democracy and openness, it is not unreasonable to give this a chance.

President Obama was able to normalize relations with Cuba due to the evolution of 'structural factors' that had frozen US-Cuban estrangement for more than five decades. These factors include the totally diminished Cuban military threat to the United States, the aging and corresponding passing of the influence of the Cuban exile lobby within the US, the sustained pressure that Latin American governments put on the US to restore relations with Cuba and changes in Cuban policy after Fidel Castro stepped down from the presidency in favor of his brother Raul in 2008.[48] All of these but the last has been discussed previously and will not be addressed again here. The final reason, Raul Castro's policy changes, included a relaxing of regulations that allowed the Cuban people increased personal economic and travel freedom, the release of political prisoners after Raul entered into a sustained dialogue with the Catholic Church and, perhaps most important,

the transition of the traditional socialist economic system towards 'market socialism' similar to that of the PRC.[49] As most Cuban Americans favored the change, and Cuba was now encouraging foreign, including American, investment, time was certainly ripe for rapprochement. It remains to be seen how quickly the US Congress will maintain the economic embargo, curbing US investment, but the resumption of airline and ocean liner travel to Cuba likely presages greater economic relations.

Nevertheless, 54 years is a long time. While from a certain perspective it is conceivable that the US should not have attempted normalization until after the Cold War, even this is highly questionable. Cuban ties to the Soviet Union and participation in African civil wars only qualify as reasons for broken relations if one accepts the assumptions of the New Diplomacy. And these assumptions, supposedly rooted in ideology, upon deeper examination are very much influenced by economic considerations and issues related to political dominance, as opposed to unfettered democratic process. The US had dominated Cuba for more than 60 years when Castro launched his revolution. The reality of the US presence in Cuba had more often than not denied political and economic freedom to the Cuban people, but Americans refused to acknowledge this reality. The ingrained resentment that Cubans held towards the United States was a tremendous latent political force just waiting to be unleashed, and for the man that seized this opportunity, no amount of American evidence regarding Castro's authoritarian and megalomaniacal tendencies was enough to dispel it.[50]

Because the US was incapable of conceiving of a Cuba possessing genuine sovereignty, with authority to make its own decisions regarding its government and economic relations, it adopted a dubious policy of regime change that due to the nature of the Cold War increased US military vulnerability. It is likely, given Castro's personality, the deep suspicion and historical anger of Cubans regarding the US, the level of global ideological conflict and the rapidly increasing range and destructiveness of nuclear weapons after 1945, that Cuba would have allied itself with the Soviet Union in any case. However, because the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations failed to understand the limits of American military power in the context of these factors, they overconfidently gambled on regime change and made the situation much worse. Essentially, the same hubris that led to American misreading of events in Korea, when MacArthur crossed the 38th parallel and drove towards the Yalu River, exhibited itself at the Bay of Pigs. Military mistakes of this significance, carrying with them previously unappreciated political costs, are difficult to acknowledge, particularly for a superpower. It is more reassuring to estrange the enemy afterward than to reflect on one's errors and then seek engagement with an enemy that benefited from those errors. Nevertheless, this is what any state should do. The very nature of international politics – dynamic and prone to important changes – demands that states make every effort to know and understand their fellow states. Maintaining broken relations doubles down on an already failed policy. Had US officials looked at Cuba with clear eyes in 1960, perhaps a safer, albeit still contentious relationship with Cuba might have been realized.

Notes

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25 Some believe Lansdale was the model for US intelligence operative Alden Pyle in Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* (1956) and for Col. Edward Hillendale in Eugene Burdick and William Lederer's *The Ugly American* (1958). While there is some question whether Lansdale was the model for either fictional character, the widespread notion that he was points to the popular fascination and resulting legitimacy of US involvement (within the US) in Third World insurgency/counterinsurgency operations as a solution to the dilemmas of US foreign policy. Fictional character Pyle's efforts to find a 'third force' in Indochina and Lansdale's hopes of finding anti-Batista Cubans who also opposed Castro are not dissimilar. Despite significant historic failures, such as Vietnam, and continued US efforts to find a 'third force' in countries of current interest to US foreign policy, such as Syria, these attempts at regime change have typically ended in failure because, according to Halberstam, 'The problem with the third

force . . . was the Americans could not readily invent one at the last minute. The role of leader had to be earned and the only person earning the title, the respect, and the love of his fellow Cubans was Fidel Castro' (*The Fifties*, 719).

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5 The 'loss' of Iran

Whereas US policies of extended US broken diplomatic relations with China and Cuba were inseparable from the ideological context of the Cold War, the US severing of relations with Iran, which occurred in 1980 and continues to the present, has been motivated by a more enduring social factor, religion. Throughout its history, Iran has been religiously distinct from its neighbors, and often in confrontation with them. Although the US was not as intimately involved with Iran as it was with China or Cuba, American decision makers had constructed a similar false image of Iran and were caught completely unprepared when the Islamic revolution triumphed in Iran in 1979. Americans saw a world that was gradually becoming more like America itself, and refused to consider the possibility of revival of traditional identity in Iran (or anywhere else). Just as with China in 1949 and Cuba in 1959, the United States was faced with a previously inconceivable turn of events in Iran in 1979 and responded in similar fashion, by breaking diplomatic relations and attempting to alienate Iran from international society. In this sense, the difference between communism and Shia Islam was insignificant, for in the American view both were in complete opposition to America's self-perceived role in the world, the direction of history and, not unrelatedly, American economic interests. Therefore, Tsou's categorical stages, that is, contradictory policies, misunderstood revolution, inability to perceive threat, misapplication of military power, intense domestic debate and long-term broken relations, are well disposed to characterize US relations with Iran over the past seven decades.

Contradictory policy

During the decades leading up to World War I, Iran, then known as Persia, was under intense pressure from the contending British and Russian empires. The Russians in the north and the British in the south both sought to check the influence of their rival and this consideration superseded Persia's integrity and independence. Nevertheless, the Bolshevik revolution temporarily arrested the Russian threat and Britain attempted to conclude the Anglo-Persian Agreement of August 9, 1919, which allowed Britain to oversee Persian financial re-organization and collection of customs duties in exchange for British construction of a Persian national railway network. Although the agreement did not come to fruition due to

the refusal of the Persian parliament, the *Majlis*, to ratify it, the relatively small British army contingent in Persia still sought to increase British influence in Iran by securing the allegiance of a Persian military force formerly led by czarist Russian officers. The British commanding general appointed Reza Khan Pahlavi to lead the Persian military force and then encouraged him to undertake a coup d'etat and assume power in February 1921.[1] Within a week, Reza Khan's new government repudiated the Anglo-Persian Agreement and signed a treaty with the Soviet government in Moscow that included language opposing imperialism. This episode foreshadowed a pattern of events to come, as it involved an imperial power first manipulating events in Iran which did little to serve broad Iranian interests and then being caught unawares when the Iranian people moved to eliminate the empire's influence to the greatest extent possible.

After negotiating a Treaty of Commerce and Friendship with Persia in 1856, the United States first established diplomatic relations with Persia in 1883, and then provided financial advice in an effort to re-organize state finances during the years before World War I. Despite satisfactory relations, American influence in Persia was limited both before and after the war. During the interwar period, Britain and Soviet Russia continued to exert influence on Reza Khan as he attempted to modernize Persia, which officially became known as Iran in 1935. During World War II, the British and Russians occupied the southern and northern halves of Iran, respectively, and deposed Reza Khan in favor of his son, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, due to Allied fears that Reza Khan might side with Germany and provide the Axis powers access to Iranian oil. US personnel then entered Iran to maintain the flow of wartime material aid to the Soviet Union, and soon after war's end the Truman administration successfully applied diplomatic pressure on the Soviet Union to withdraw all forces from Iran. As Iran had been threatened by Russian influence, both czarist and communist for more than a century, the young Shah sought American assistance against the Soviet Union and supported the Western cause during the Cold War. Also, friendly American relations with Iran dovetailed with US support of the newly established state of Israel, as Israel and Iran found common cause (although they did not have formal diplomatic relations) in resisting the pan-Arabism movement coming into vogue in newly independent Arab states.

The Truman administration viewed postwar British involvement in Iran, which was strongly influenced by the British-dominated Anglo-Iran Oil Company (AIOC), from an anti-colonialist perspective, and Iranian leaders continued to believe that the US could serve as a hedge against British pressure. However, Churchill's Conservative government in Britain argued that Western involvement in Iran was necessary to prevent Iran from falling under Soviet influence. The Iranian prime minister, Mohammad Mossadegh, although democratically elected, maintained his power through a coalition that included the Tudeh, a socialist party. This set the stage for Western views of Iran to coalesce through the lens of anti-communism. When Mossadegh, as leader of the *Majlis*, decided to nationalize AIOC assets in Iran, Britain attempted to gain support for an international boycott of Iranian exports. As the Cold War atmosphere deepened, incoming President

Eisenhower reversed US policy and backed British plans to drive Mossadegh from power. In a combined operation during August 1953, the CIA and British MI6 fostered coup attempts involving opposition clerics and military officers to remove Mossadegh and put the young Shah, who had temporarily fled the country (first to Iraq and then to Italy) back in power.[2] Although recent writings have disputed the efficacy of American involvement in the ouster of Mossadegh,[3] from the Iranian perspective, the success of Operation Ajax was the most important event in provoking enduring Iranian suspicion of the United States thereafter.[4]

With Mossadegh successfully deposed, the Shah rewarded his new benefactor, the United States, granting oil concessions to US firms. Also, the Soviet threat provided the Shah with a reason to request American military aid and training for his intelligence service, SAVAK. For the US, the Shah represented an adequate solution in containing Soviet expansion in the Middle East, fulfilling American energy needs and bolstering the defense of Israel, which participated in training SAVAK personnel and maintaining informal relations with the Shah through SAVAK.[5] While this relationship served the purposes of the US, Israel and the Shah, it did little to benefit the majority of the Iranian population, as the Shah used SAVAK to terrorize those who opposed him. In the view of the Iranian public, just as the Shah was inseparable from SAVAK, due to its establishment in the wake of Operation Ajax and cooperation with the CIA, so was SAVAK closely associated with US intervention in Iranian domestic matters.[6] Therefore, despite sustained effort at public diplomacy and continuous flow of American aid to Iran via the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that brought about advances in public health, education and agriculture, Washington's policies towards Iran were broadly characterized by contradiction as successive US presidential administrations paid lip service to fostering progress in Iran but refused to support genuine reforms.[7]

As the Shah used SAVAK to aggressively intimidate Iranians who resisted his authority, he also launched social and economic reforms under the banner of the 'White Revolution' to Westernize Iran during the early 1960s. Secular reforms brought greater opportunities for women, increased the economic prospects of the middle class and advanced cooperation with the United States. However, these reforms also provoked growing resentment from Shiite clerics and the landed aristocracy, two significant forces in Iranian society that became increasingly united in their aims against the Shah. Furthermore, in 1964 the US influenced the Shah to agree to a status of forces agreement (SOFA) for US military personnel in Iran, essentially granting immunity from prosecution by the Iranian government if they violated Iranian laws. From the American point of view the SOFA with Iran seemed like standard business, but for average Iranians it evoked memories of past great-power intrusions and diminution of Iranian sovereignty.[8]

Moreover, official passage of the SOFA by the *Majlis* (at the Shah's urging) occurred on the same day that the Shah received a $200 million loan from the US, provoking some Iranians to suspect a quid pro quo.[9] In the midst of these developments, Shiite clerical opposition to the Shah increased, with Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini emerging as its leader. Khomeini appealed to both religious

and patriotic sensibilities. Seizing on nationalistic strains dating back to Alexander's campaign against Persia two and half millennia before, Khomeini railed against the Shah, his White Revolution and associated Western secularist policies. The Shah's detention of Khomeini in 1963 only fueled protests, and Khomeini was eventually exiled to Iraq. American diplomats then in Tehran paid little attention to the rise of Khomeini, and although one Foreign Service officer (FSO) did attempt to produce a report analyzing the potential for religious impact on Iran, the US ambassador quashed the report and chided the junior diplomat who wrote it.[10] Also during this period, a US congressional investigation of aid to Iran identified more than 5,000 incomplete USAID projects in Iran, pointing to corruption and a general unwillingness of the Shah's government to commit to social reform.[11] In 1962, a separate investigation conducted at the behest of a British-educated Iranian businessman indicated that the Shah had placed $29 million in his own family charitable fund, the Pahlavi Foundation, which was then to be used to bribe American officials, including the US ambassador to Iran, the director of the CIA and David Rockefeller.[12]

Although American aid to Iran during the 1950s and 1960s had not been well managed, the Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson administrations were reluctant to indulge many of the Shah's requests for increased military aid and advanced weapons systems. Iran was a US ally, but US foreign policy prioritized Europe and Asia, and the British still played an important role in maintaining stability in the Middle East, particularly in the Persian Gulf. While regarding Iran as a necessary partner in containment, American and British leaders did not necessarily take the Shah seriously, as they had installed him (twice) and he appeared to be dependent on them. However, by the late 1960s, this situation began to change. Britain had been in economic decline since the Second World War, the British Empire steadily shrinking. In 1968 London announced its intention to withdraw British military forces in 1971 from the Persian Gulf, where Britain maintained protectorates of Qatar, Bahrain and the Trucial States (Oman and the United Arab Emirates). The conclusion of the British military presence in the Gulf coincided with increasing Western dependence on Middle Eastern oil. This meant that Iran's role in maintaining regional stability was increasingly important. As Arab-Israeli tensions escalated prior to the October War of 1973 (alternatively known as the Yom Kippur War or Ramadan War), the Shah exerted his influence within OPEC to increase oil prices. The combination of flush economic times and strategic circumstance meant that the Shah had the means to buy modern weapons and a persuasive rationale for being allowed to buy them.

During the Nixon administration, arms sales to Iran significantly increased, as during Nixon's first term the Shah bought roughly $10 billion worth of US weapons. This represented another instance of the Shah and the United States consorting to help one another while ignoring the needs of the broad Iranian populace, as ultimately National Security Adviser (later Secretary of State) Kissinger urged American diplomats and arms sellers that 'the Shah was to be given anything he wanted.'[13] By the mid-1970s, the US was selling its most capable and modern weapons systems to the Shah, including F-14 fighter planes, advanced radar

systems and guided missile destroyers, all systems that enhanced Iran's status as a regional military power but were useless in putting down a revolution. In 1974, the US took the first steps to provide enriched uranium to Iran, and by 1977, Iran was the leading state buyer of American-made weapons.[14] According to George Ball, an Undersecretary of State in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, whom President Carter asked to review the records of past US administrations' relations with Iran, the dramatic expansion of arms sales to Iran by Nixon and Kissinger was a key factor in blinding the Shah to the dangers of revolution and 'encouraged the megalomania that ultimately contributed to the Shah's downfall.'[15]

Just as with pre-revolutionary China and Cuba, US policy in Iran from the 1950s until the Islamic revolution prioritized US economic and strategic interests over the welfare of the average Iranian. This is only normal. The problem was that US policymakers refused to consider the possibility that Iranian domestic discontent could reach a tipping point. US rhetoric in support of democracy and human rights was also contradicted by unstinting American support for the Shah, until it became apparent that his hold on power could not continue. Furthermore, while earlier US presidents had argued that the Shah should curb SAVAK and permit vocal opposition to the regime, Nixon had told the Shah to brook no dissent, and then Carter again reversed the tone of US policy towards Iran by strongly advocating for greater human rights. The Shah was responsible for the failure of his regime, but contradictory US policies towards Iran did not facilitate solutions to the Shah's problems. When it was all over, the Shah was sure that his overreliance on the US had led to his downfall. During the period of his exile when he was in Panama, the Shah characterized American demands on him as being 'contradictory,' claiming that he should have made no conciliatory moves and completely crushed the revolution at its outset.[16]

Misunderstanding revolution

From the centuries before Christ, when the Achaemenid Empire established unity through Zoroastrianism, defeated Babylon and clashed with Alexander, or during the last 1,400 years, when Shia Islam has been ascendant, a key element of Persian identity has been religious uniqueness. During the Safavid and Qajar dynasties that preceded the establishment of constitutional government in Persia, Shia clerics became increasingly involved in the processes of government. However, as with other non-Western nations, overt religious expression and influence were suppressed in Iran as European economic and military pressure compelled governmental reform during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was in this era that traditional Persia transformed into modern Iran.

During the years after World War II, Iran and other historically Islamic states in the broader Middle East focused on state identity and state building, marginalizing traditional religious influence. But the Arab military failure to destroy the state of Israel, culminating in 1967 with the crushing defeat of Egyptian-led Arab forces in the Six-Day War, fostered the return of increased religious influence throughout the Islamic world. Iran, a covert ally of Israel in the shared concern

of stemming pan-Arabism, would be affected by the renaissance of religion as much as any other Middle Eastern state. Many factors contributed to the growing discontent of the Iranian population – corruption, income inequality, undue American influence – but it was the Shia clerics, due to their historic involvement in governance and traditional role in educating the poor and the middle class, who were able to harness these factors and articulate a religious vision of justice as the driving force of the revolution. This was not without precedent in Iranian history, as, especially after the coming of Islam to Iran, social movements periodically rose up against inequality and injustice.[17]

Amid the Shah's grandiose military buildup, popular support for his regime was crumbling, and his relationship with the United States contributed both to his further alienation from the Iranian people and his ignorance of this dangerous trend. During the 1970s, the student population of Iranian universities grew rapidly, but instead of viewing American support of the Shah as fostering economic opportunity in Iran, students instead linked American backing of the Shah to support for SAVAK. Some of the better informed US FSOs stationed in Tehran were aware of increasing domestic tension in Iran, but the State Department decided not to broach this sensitive topic in the briefing paper for President Nixon's visit to Iran in May 1972.[18] During the presidential visit several protest incidents occurred, including students throwing rocks at Nixon's motorcade (even though it had been re-routed away from supposedly hazardous areas), an attack on a US Air Force general stationed in Iran, a dynamite explosion near the US Information Service and the bombing of Reza Shah's tomb less than an hour before Nixon was to visit it.

After oil prices had precipitously dropped in the mid-1970s, conditions for most Iranians worsened considerably. Despite the Shah's White Revolution, 60 percent of Iranians were still illiterate, land prices were rising, tens of thousands of rural peasants were being forcibly moved for multinational agribusiness projects (all of which failed), and there were regular power outages in Tehran. The Shah was increasingly detached from it all, refusing to curb the massive corruption among his family and court and enacting bizarre schemes such as adapting the Iranian calendar from its historic basis in Islam and the travels of the prophet Muhammad to that of the ancient Persian emperor Cyrus. SAVAK had placed informants in all sectors and levels of the Iranian population, regularly engaged in torturing detainees, and most Iranians who had college degrees knew at least one person who had 'disappeared.'[19] President Carter's visit to Tehran in 1977, after his campaign commitment to an ethical foreign policy that duly considered human rights, was viewed as duplicitous by Iranians suffering under SAVAK's repression.[20] As the Shah forbade American diplomats to converse with common Iranian citizens and opposition elements, the majority of US personnel in the Tehran embassy were uninformed about the true state of affairs in Iran. The CIA and the US diplomatic corps in Tehran, viewing events through a progressive frame and appraisals by the Shah's courtiers, failed to understand the rising potential of political Islam and reported in 1978 that Iran was in neither a 'revolutionary' nor a 'pre-revolutionary situation.'[21]

This CIA assessment was made as Iran was sliding into chaos, as from the beginning of the year, following a newspaper article by the Shah accusing the long-banished Khomeini of youthful indiscretions, a series of student protests and corresponding police and army crackdowns had spread from the city of Qom across the whole of Iran. After declaring martial law in September in the face of a nationwide strike, the Shah then demonstrated his indecisiveness by making a conciliatory televised speech in November. President Carter responded to the Shah's pleas for help in a televised speech of his own in December, stating that the US would not intervene and the fate of Iran was in the hands of Iranians. By the end of 1978, millions of protesters filled the streets of Tehran, finally forcing the Shah to flee Iran on January 16, 1979. Although the Shah originally intended to go to the United States, where his four children already were, he decided to accept an invitation to visit Anwar Sadat in Egypt and then stayed for a time in Marrakesh with King Hassan of Morocco. The Shah had initially hoped that the United States would restore him to the Peacock throne and that at the very least he would be granted expeditious entrance into the United States. He was to be disappointed on both counts.

Three days after the Shah's departure, the Ayatollah Khomeini triumphantly returned to Tehran from exile in Paris and assumed control of the revolution, leaving an interim Iranian government under Prime Minister Barzagan in tenuous control. In February 1979 Iranian students for the first time breached the US embassy and briefly occupied it before being ordered out by Khomeini. The interim government's hold on power continued to deteriorate through 1979, as Khomeini in May established the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a paramilitary force loyal to the revolution. In August, elections were held and likely manipulated by Khomeini. His clerical allies and other supporters of the Islamic revolution won most of the seats in the new constituent assembly. The Shah, who had been compelled to leave Morocco by international pressure and then took up temporary residence in the Bahamas, finally arrived in the United States for medical treatment in October, provoking Iranian revolutionaries to even greater conviction in the complicity of the United States in opposing the revolution. For them, it seemed that a replay of Operation Ajax and US restoration of the Shah to power might again be in the works.

After Iranian students had temporarily occupied the US embassy in February, US Ambassador to Iran William Sullivan had reported that if the United States allowed the Shah to come to the US, the Tehran embassy would likely be overrun and occupied by revolutionaries again, but that it was unlikely that there would be an easy resolution this time.[22] President Carter took this warning seriously, but eventually pressure from the Shah's influential friends in the United States, David Rockefeller and Henry Kissinger, and the fact that the Shah genuinely was in need of expert medical attention, swayed key cabinet members and eventually Carter himself. In November, when students again overran the US embassy, Khomeini refused to order them out, precipitating what was to be a 444-day siege. Prior to the embassy seizure and resulting hostage crisis, the US attempted to maintain relations with the interim government. Once it was apparent that there was no

near-term solution to the crisis, President Carter, quite correctly, given the fact that Iranian revolutionaries were detaining the American diplomatic contingent, broke relations with Iran on April 7, 1980. In January 1981, Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Iranian Prime Minister Barzagan met in Algiers to conclude the Algiers Accords, which established procedures for addressing outstanding issues between the US and Iranian governments. By the end of the month the US hostages had been released, Ronald Reagan was inaugurated as US President, and Barzagan was forced to resign. Khomeini and the Shia clerics thereafter officially ruled the government of the Islamic Republic.

From the American perspective, the Islamic revolution in Iran was viewed in much the same way as the communist revolution in Cuba two decades before. Washington perceived that Iran's revolution was simply a 'temper tantrum' that would eventually pass, but this view 'owed more to sentimentality than objective assessment and reflected a Republican contempt for the outgoing administration,' which was blamed 'for the "loss of Iran." '[23] Just as China became a partisan political issue used by Republicans against Democrats generally and the outgoing Truman administration in particular, so did the Reagan campaign seize the Iran issue as a political weapon against Carter. Iran has been a partisan issue ever since. Of course, by violating international law and occupying the Tehran embassy, the leaders of the Islamic revolution demonstrated their own flagrant disdain for the practice of diplomacy and contributed mightily to the politicization of the Iran issue in the United States. In essence, the hostage crisis provoked a retreat from international society by both Iran and the United States, and just as the Islamic revolution was primarily understood by its supporters as a cause of righteousness, so were American efforts in opposition to the revolution from the time of the hostage crisis up to the present.[24] Certainly, that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan occurred concurrently with the Iranian revolution only served to intensify American fears and seemingly justify an unbending and truculent response.

Insufficient milpower/willpower

In a pattern roughly similar to US actions against Cuba following the revolution, successive US presidents undertook various military operations against Iran that were inadequate and counterproductive. In April 1980 President Carter, under tremendous pressure during an election year to resolve the hostage crisis, authorized a military mission (Operation Desert Claw) from a US aircraft carrier in the Persian Gulf to attempt a rescue of the American hostages in the Tehran embassy. The aircraft undertaking the operation never reached Tehran, and eight American military personnel were killed in a refueling accident in the Iranian desert (provoking the decision to abort the mission). Instead of bringing the hostage crisis to a conclusion, the operation simply increased Iranian resentment towards the United States.[25] This failure obviously did not enhance Carter's re-election prospect. Soon after his victory in the 1980 election, President Reagan gave material support to Iraq in its war against Iran (which began in September 1980) and, in

violation of the Algiers Accords, initiated programs involving CIA funding of Iranian exile groups that sought regime change.[26]

As the Reagan administration searched for opportunities to counter the new regime in Tehran, Khomeini attempted to export the Islamic revolution abroad, setting up the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) and the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain and sending IRGC fighters to assist Hezbollah in Lebanon, who participated in the truck bombing that killed 258 Americans in October 1983. Iranian support for Shiite groups and even Sunni Islamist groups outside Iran has waxed and waned in the decades since the revolution, and there is little doubt that IRGC personnel have participated in multiple terrorist attacks and military operations against US military forces. Iran and its affiliates also continued to participate in kidnapping and holding American hostages, the most prominent of whom was the CIA station chief in Beirut, William Buckley, in 1984.[27]

One of the reasons that the US attempted to secretly supply arms to Iran during the mid-1980s was for the purpose of persuading Iran to release these hostages. However, at several junctures, particularly in the early 1990s during the presidency of Hashemi-Rafsanjani (and coinciding with Khomeini's death in 1989) and during Khatami's presidency during the early 2000s, Iran attempted to pursue a more pragmatic foreign policy and made overtures towards the United States. While at various junctures the US briefly considered initiating talks with Iran, these gestures didn't occur simultaneously with Iranian attempts to resume diplomacy, and a pattern of missed opportunities and increasing mistrust resulted. The US often ignored these Iranian attempts, empowering hardliners within Iran and, correspondingly, enabling greater scope for Iranian-backed military operations against Americans. US support for Iraq in the 1980–1988 war with Iran unquestionably hardened Iranian attitudes against the US.

Several incidents related to US involvement in the Iran-Iraq War were particularly important in influencing even Iranians who resisted the Islamic regime that the United States was as evil as Khomeini claimed. Throughout much of the war, the US was complicit in allowing Iraqi usage of chemical weapons and even provided necessary chemicals to Saddam Hussein's military (the Department of Commerce approved sales by private US businesses to Iraq of 'dual-use' technologies).[28] In 1986, even while supposedly attempting to engage in international diplomacy to strengthen the 1925 Geneva Accords ban on chemical weapons, the US largely ignored a definitive United Nations Security Council (UNSC) investigation that concluded that Iraq was using mustard gas and nerve agents against Iran on a regular basis.[29] That the use of chemical weapons was in violation of international law and that Iraqi forces employed them to kill tens of thousands of Iranians and Kurds did not dissuade the Reagan administration from facilitating Iraqi use of these weapons because the US prioritized the defeat of Iran, if not outright regime change. Within a few years, after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, this became a major continuing concern for Reagan's successors in the Oval Office, as the fear of Iraqi chemical weapons bedeviled the planning of US operations against Iraq. This is yet another instance suggesting that the diplomatic process

should be privileged over military solutions in US policy towards unfriendly regimes, as there is no guarantee of continued loyalty of those states or groups carrying out military operations at the behest of the US government.

As the Sunni Arab Gulf states gave financial support to Iraq in its war against Shiite Iran, Iran attempted to intercept Arab oil tankers in the Persian Gulf. President Reagan offered US naval support to keep Persian Gulf sea lines of communication traversable in April 1987 as part of Operation Earnest Will. The following month, an Iraqi fighter aircraft fired two anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs) into the frigate *USS Stark*, nearly sinking the US naval vessel and killing 37 American sailors. The Iraqi government apologized for the 'mistake' and President Reagan claimed that Iran was the real 'villain' and the *Stark* never would have been attacked if Iran hadn't threatened commercial shipping in the Gulf.[30] In July 1988, the guided missile cruiser *USS Vincennes* shot down a commercial Iranian airliner, killing all of its 290 passengers and crew. Neither the *Vincennes*' captain nor his crew received disciplinary action for this egregious mistake. While the US claimed that Iran bore some responsibility for the incident, as US naval vessels would not have been in the area if not for reason of protecting civilian maritime traffic from Iranian harassment, the international community's failure to condemn neither the shoot down nor Iraq's use of chemical weapons against Iran led Iranians to conclude that 'when it comes to Iran, no one would hesitate to break international law and codes of conduct in their aim to destroy the country.'[31]

The so-called Tanker War included the most significant military engagement between United States and Iran, and the most extensive naval combat that the US had engaged in since World War II. In October of 1987, US Navy SEALs destroyed two Iranian oil platforms in the Persian Gulf. And in April 1988, in retaliation for an Iranian attack on the frigate *USS Samuel B. Roberts*, the US Navy targeted Iranian naval vessels, sinking one Iranian frigate and severely damaging another, as well as sinking several smaller Iranian craft. The US lost one helicopter and its three-man crew. This engagement, Operation Praying Mantis, was an overwhelming tactical victory for the US Navy and likely played a part in encouraging the Iranian government to participate in peace negotiations with Iraq later that year. However, US military actions against Iran did not dissuade the Iranian population from supporting the Islamic Republic, and may have persuaded Saddam Hussein that he had unconditional support from the United States.

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the US/UN response in 1990 temporarily marginalized US interest in Iran. However, after the war the US avoided Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's diplomatic feelers and anti-US elements regained the upper hand in Iranian foreign policy. Iran stepped up its support for terrorist activities abroad and was possibly complicit in the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers housing complex in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 US airmen. During the remainder of the decade, the IRGC continued to support the Shiite Hezbollah in Lebanon and began supporting Hamas, a Sunni group, in Palestine, but Hashemi-Rafsanjani and other moderates sought to restrain Hezbollah and achieved some success, symbolized by a Hezbollah–Israel cease-fire agreement in 1996. Although Iran remained an issue for US foreign policy during the 1990s,

there were no military encounters, as the US military was preoccupied with maintaining no-fly zones in southern and northern Iraq.

In addition to US involvement in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan from late 2001 and the buildup towards Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) throughout much of 2002, US concerns regarding Iran's nuclear program also increased during 2002. An Iranian opposition group, the *Mujahideen-e-Khalq*, or MEK, reported that Iran was enriching uranium at a secret facility. The MEK already had contacts with the Mossad, the Israeli intelligence service, and after the fall of Baghdad began to receive intelligence support, weapons and training from US Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) to carry out operations in Iran, even traveling to Nevada for training in the mid-2000s. According to Seymour Hersh, MEK members, financed and trained by the Mossad and provided intelligence by the US special operations community, were involved in assassinations of Iranian nuclear scientists.[32] US assistance to the MEK took place despite the fact that the organization was on the State Department's list of terrorist organizations.

Beyond the violence that the United States and Iran perpetrated upon one another through proxies involved in espionage, terrorism and black operations, US and IRGC forces engaged in limited combat during OIF. As the majority (60 percent) of the Iranian population is Shia, and Iran had been training Iraqi Shia organizations since the end of the Iran-Iraq War, it is not surprising that the IRGC assisted Shiite militias, such as Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi militia (currently renamed *Suraya al-Salam*), in fighting against US forces in Iraq. It is alleged that the IRGC had particular expertise in constructing improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that were responsible for a large portion of American casualties. However, the rise of ISIS has to some extent reversed this situation, as both the US and Iran have given support to the Iraqi military, which employs Shiite militias, in the fight against ISIS.

Long-term broken relations

Soon after breaking relations with Iran, the Carter administration imposed a ban on Iranian oil imports, froze Iranian assets in the US and then ordered the prohibition of all US trade with and travel to Iran. Although the ban on trade was lifted when the hostages were released, these measures initiated a long-term pattern in relations between the US and the Islamic Republic of Iran. President Reagan ordered the State Department to put Iran on its list of State Sponsors of Terrorism in 1984, entailing that the US would attempt to prohibit international financial assistance to Iran as well as prevent Iranian attempts to export military hardware. In 1987, as the Tanker War heated up, Reagan re-imposed the embargo on Iranian imports and banned the sale of dual-use goods to Iran.

Although the US officially sided with Iraq in its war with Iran and provided significant support to Iraq, the US sought to contain both countries while also selling weapons to them. As many Iranian weapon systems were of US origin, President Reagan saw an opportunity to balance Iraqi power by allowing secret weapons sales (anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles) to Iran in exchange for Iranian

pressure on Hezbollah to release American hostages in Lebanon, despite the State Department's labeling of Iran as a sponsor of terrorism. This potential arrangement was further complicated by funneling the proceeds from the arms sales to rebels fighting against socialist regimes in Latin America. In 1986, a plane carrying one of the rebels, known as 'contras,' and a shipment of weapons crashed in Nicaragua, and the 'Iran-Contra affair' became public knowledge. As Reagan had publicly stated he would not make deals with terrorists, and both selling arms to Iran and funding the Contras were at odds with US law, his belated claim that he was initiating a process to restore relations with Iran was a non-starter. Reagan's recently retired National Security Adviser, Richard McFarlane, had made secret trips to Iran in an attempt to maintain channels of communication among the US, Israel (the state that made the initial weapons transfers) and Iranian moderates, but most of the hostages remained in Hezbollah hands. McFarlane, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, new National Security Adviser Admiral John Poindexter, Lt. Col. Oliver North and others were indicted but eventually pardoned by President George H. W. Bush. A key Iranian figure in the transactions, Mehdi Hashemi, was executed in Iran in 1987 (for supposedly unrelated crimes). US allies whom Reagan had admonished for negotiating with terrorists saw the US as hypocritical; potential hostage takers were reassured of the viability of their enterprise. Once again, US actions vis-à-vis Iran outside of established channels failed and ultimately undermined any near-term possibility of building support for re-engaging Iran among Congress and the US population at large.

The quick succession of the demise of Soviet control of Eastern European satellites, Soviet domestic instability ultimately resulting in collapse and the US-led coalition victory over Iraq in the Gulf War led to sweeping change in the geopolitical situation in the Middle East. Whereas Israel was a key US ally in the region during the Cold War, dissipation of the Soviet threat removed some US motivation for close ties with and support for Israel. At almost the same time, a key potential threat to Israel, Saddam Hussein's Iraq, had been effectively neutralized for the time being, perhaps for good, due not only to its loss in the Gulf War but also to the grinding, near-decade-long war with Iran during the 1980s. The end of the Cold War and removal of the Iraqi threat transformed the regional strategic landscape. The Ayatollah Khomeini's death in June 1989 and his succession by former Iranian President Ali Khamenei as Supreme Leader, who in turn was succeeded by the more liberal Hashemi-Rafsanjani as President, also pointed to the possibility of dimming revolutionary fervor in Iran.

The US, Israel and Iran all sought new policies in light of this transformation. With the US the only remaining superpower, it could attempt to recast the Middle East according to its prerogatives. Accordingly, the Bush administration set up the Madrid Conference in October 1991 to advance the long-running Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process and address broader regional issues. Iranian leaders, who had opted for a neutral stance during the Gulf War that had the practical effect of supporting the American-led coalition,[33] saw the conference as an opportunity to demonstrate Iran's regional influence. Instead, the United States, continuing its policy of isolation, failed to invite Iran despite including all other major

regional countries in the conference dialogue and negotiations. At this juncture a new relationship between the US and Iran could have been initiated, but the US assumed that its new position of unquestioned global dominance implied no reconsideration of Iran. The US decision to exclude Iran from Madrid, instead of weakening Iranian anti-Americanism, strengthened hardline elements within Iran and provoked Iran to embark on regional initiatives that 'sabotaged' US interests and policies.[34]

In April 1992, the US Congress passed the Iraq-Iran Arms Non-Proliferation Act, applying the same sanctions to Iran that the US had imposed on Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait. During the summer of 1996, both houses of the US Congress unanimously passed the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, and President Clinton signed it into law in August. This legislation prevented US companies from doing business with Iran and attempted to deter foreign companies, particularly those of US allies who did not support tightening sanctions on Iran, from exporting energy sector technology to Iran. (The US did not strenuously attempt to sanction foreign firms doing business with Iran. The legislation was updated in 2006 and renamed the Iran Sanctions Act, as Libya was not then a source of US concern.) Even with US imposition of new sanctions and continued Iranian support of anti-US interests in the Middle East, occasional opportunities for rapprochement presented themselves. Perhaps the most significant opportunity to initiate discussions aimed towards restarting relations was missed in the fall of 2000, when US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was supposed to meet the Iranian foreign minister during the UN General Assembly Session in New York. Apparently, while Hashemi-Rafsanjani supported the meeting, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei did not, and he urged the foreign minister to skip it.[35]

Although not of the same magnitude, the US decision to alienate Iran brought negative consequences for American interests in the Middle East resembling the US difficulties in East Asia following US refusal to recognize the PRC in 1949. In reaction to being excluded from the Madrid Conference, Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei asked the leader of Hezbollah, to which Iran had reduced financial support the year before, to set up a regional conference rivaling Madrid. This led to increased Iranian support not only for Shiite groups like Hezbollah, but also for Sunni Palestinian groups who refused to participate in negotiations with Israel.[36] Moreover, Iran attempted to reach out to broader publics in pro-Western Arab states with the intention of making the governments of these states appear not sufficiently anti-Israel in the eyes of their domestic populations. All of this had the effect of constraining, postponing or cancelling continuing attempts to negotiate a two-state solution in Palestine.[37] In sum, the US decision to maintain a policy of severed diplomatic relations towards Iran provoked Iranian opposition that manifested itself in Iranian recruitment and support for anti-American allies throughout the region.

In response, the US continued to support regional actors that opposed Iran, by the late 1990s favoring Taliban control of Afghanistan rather than increased Iranian influence.[38] American distaste for the Islamic regime in Tehran fostered blindness to the negative potential posed by the Taliban, which was providing a

safe haven for al-Qaeda. These factors, in addition to the growth of Iran's nuclear program (begun under the Shah with American aid), represent crucial areas that the US failed to consider as the initial break in diplomatic relations drifted towards a long-term policy with broad support.

In the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, a new opportunity to restart relations between the United States and Iran presented itself. As the al-Qaeda leadership and many of its insurgent fighters were operating inside Afghanistan and received refuge from the Taliban, Iran represented a potential counterforce against al-Qaeda right next door. What is more, Iran had supported the assorted Afghan elements fighting against the Taliban, the so-called Northern Alliance, since the early 1990s. As the Northern Alliance essentially functioned as the key US ally on the ground in Afghanistan during the opening phase of Operation Enduring Freedom, the potential for downgrading whatever threat Iran posed towards the United States and Western interests more broadly in favor of building a significant local coalition against al-Qaeda and the Taliban appeared strong. When American, Afghan and Iranian diplomats met at the Bonn Conference in December 2001, the Iranian delegation played an essential role in maintaining the negotiations and securing a pledge from the Northern Alliance representatives to agree to constitutional power sharing within Afghanistan once the Taliban was defeated.

The Iranian delegation saw this as a significant area where it had aided the US in its efforts and believed that it could bring about American reconsideration of policies related to Iran. Additionally, Iran offered to conduct search and rescue missions for US air crews that went down in Afghanistan.[39] However, despite US State Department efforts to pursue this opening, senior George W. Bush administration officials sided with neoconservatives in the Department of Defense who believed that preponderant American military power implied no reason to reappraise relations with Iran. When Bush categorized Iran as a member of the 'Axis of Evil' in his January 2002 State of the Union Address, any possibility of cooperation with Iran in the war in Afghanistan seemed to evaporate, and those Iranians favoring a new dialogue with the United States suffered accordingly at the hands of hardliners in Iran.

However, the fact that the United States had demonstrated significant initial military success in Afghanistan and was poised to invade Iraq, thus potentially flanking the eastern and western borders of Iran, compelled some Iranian leaders to attempt one more try at finding a way forward. As Iran had significant relations with Shiite groups inside Iraq who had been persecuted by Saddam Hussein, and because Iran had useful intelligence on the Iraqi military garnered during the Iran-Iraq War, Iranian leaders believed that they had something valuable to offer. The lightning success of General Franks's invasion of Iraq in March 2003 only served to heighten Iranian anxiety, as the survivability of the Islamic Republic now seemed in question. High-level figures in Iran, including Supreme Leader Khamenei, favored proposing a 'grand bargain' to secure agreement on all issues of contention between Iran and the US, including support for disarming Hezbollah, signing an additional protocol to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty,

pledging broad cooperation against al-Qaeda, establishing a democratic, secular Iraq and offering recognition of the two-state solution for Israel and Palestine in exchange for the removal of US sanctions, an end to the 'Axis of Evil' categorization, acknowledgment of legitimate Iranian nuclear programs and regional interests and handover of Iranian terrorists in US custody (for which Iran would trade al-Qaeda operatives it had apprehended).[40] This offer met with a similar response, as the Bush administration decided to discontinue all talks with Iran in May 2003, refusing to participate in ultimately fruitless nuclear negotiations between Iran and the EU. The failure of the US to capitalize on opportunities to re-engage Iran undoubtedly did little to help pro-US engagement forces in Iran, thereby assisting hardliner Ahmadinejad's election to the Iranian presidency in 2005 and 2009.

Instead of attempting to resume diplomatic relations with Iran during OIF, the US established a US diplomatic mission in Dubai for the purpose of trying to increase US awareness of Iran in 2006. Lying just across the southern Persian Gulf from Iran, Dubai is an international business hub, and several hundred thousand Iranians either live in Dubai or regularly travel there on business. US diplomats posted to the Dubai mission attempt to engage Iranians in conversation and thereby update US comprehension of current developments in Iran. However, the offices of this diplomatic presence have been compared to US Cold War 'listening stations' (diplomatic and intelligence installations just across the border from communist countries) and Iran has referred to the US mission in Dubai as the 'regime change office.'[41] Although this mission does potentially present an opportunity to gain updated intelligence, this advantage may be offset by the suspicion it provokes in Iran.

In 2010, the Obama administration pursued further measures to inhibit international investment and trade with Iran. The Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act (CISADA) sought to dissuade foreign oil companies from selling gasoline to Iran, which is reliant on gasoline imports despite its oil supply due to a notorious lack of oil refining capability, by threatening to disallow these companies from obtaining financing from US banks. The following year the administration levied sanctions on Venezuela's national oil company, initiated new sanctions against specific entities of the Iranian government (the IRGC and the Basij militia force), and passed measures permitting the US to refuse transactions with any foreign firm that had business relations with the Iranian central bank. These sanctions were in addition to international sanctions on Iran imposed by the UN and the EU. In 2010 the UN Security Council, updating sanction measures from 2006 and 2007 over noncompliance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, essentially tightened these earlier measures to the level of CISADA.

Domestic politics, partisan plays

American shock and dismay regarding the Iranian revolution was very much in the pattern of US reaction to the Chinese and Cuban revolutions, but it was influenced by several unique factors. Even before the hostage crisis, which strongly

colored American perceptions of Iran forever afterward, the revolution produced deep mutual suspicion between Americans and Iranians. Khomeini regularly demonized the United States in his speeches and sermons; the US Congress passed resolutions condemning Iran in May 1979. Iranian oil production, no more immune to the effects of the revolution than other economic sectors, severely decreased, provoking another oil crisis. In July 1979, President Carter, addressing the decade-long pattern of periodic oil price hikes associated with Middle East instability, asked Americans in his famous 'malaise' speech to reconsider their understanding of freedom and conserve energy, making the country less dependent on imported oil. Although initial response to the speech was positive, eventually most Americans came to condemn the speech, and candidate Ronald Reagan later seized on this issue. In effect, Carter was accused of 'losing Iran' and then attempting to make Americans sacrifice their material prosperity to offset the resulting oil crisis. Thus, American domestic perceptions of Iran, related to a direct impact on fuel prices, were likely to be very negative even if the ensuing hostage crisis had not occurred.

When Iranian students overran the US embassy in Tehran in late 1979, existing American disaffection towards the Iranian revolution rapidly moved towards vitriol. If Iranians never really forgave the US for Operation Ajax, many Americans felt similarly about the hostage crisis. Because the crisis took place during a presidential campaign year, the likelihood of Iran becoming an issue for US domestic politics was enhanced. During the early 1980s, Reagan and the Republicans reaped the benefits of blaming what had gone wrong in Iran on Jimmy Carter. During the second half of the 1980s, the negative fallout from Iran-Contra and the increased military hostility that followed it associated with the Tanker War ensured that there would be little if any domestic US political support for reassessing the US relationship with Iran.[42]

A key development that further influenced negative American perceptions of Iran was the Israeli Labour government decision in 1993 to abandon what was known as the 'periphery doctrine' in Israeli foreign policy. Israel's first president, David Ben-Gurion, had sought strong (although unofficial) relations with Iran for the purpose of countering pan-Arab predations against non-Arab states. This doctrine was a logical response to the Egyptian-led threat during the decades prior to the Camp David Accords and to the Iraqi threat in the 1980s. However, the degradation of the Iraqi military threat by the US and UN coalition during the 1990–1991 Gulf War meant that Iran was now the only remaining potential significant military threat to Israel in the region. Accordingly, Israel labeled Iran as the 'new arch-enemy,' and in the United States, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) proceeded to push for additional funding to the CIA for regime change in Iran and a ban on US investment.[43] AIPAC influence was a significant factor in President Clinton's decision to issue an executive order blocking an Iranian oil contract with Conoco, an American oil company, in 1995. However, this was perceived as insufficient and AIPAC lobbied Congress to follow up with the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act.

Although there are other Jewish American interest groups that support Israel and adhere closely to foreign policy positions of the Israeli government, AIPAC is by far the most powerful. In fact, AIPAC has been ranked as the second most powerful of all interest groups in the United States in several studies, its influence superseded by only AARP (the American Association of Retired Persons).[44] However, while many Jewish Americans do not prioritize foreign policy issues related to Israel, AIPAC has made common cause with important non–Jewish American groups. American evangelical Christians whose interpretation of scripture posits that the twentieth-century re-appearance of the state of Israel fulfills biblical prophecy, the so-called Christian Zionists, have entered into a close alliance with AIPAC. And both AIPAC and Christian Zionists have extended their influence through the support and staffing of prominent neoconservative think tanks, such as the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), the Heritage Foundation and the Hudson Institute. Taken together, AIPAC, the Christian Zionists and the neoconservative think tanks compose what has been referred to as the 'Israel Lobby.' Although this lobby had little to say about Iran before the early 1990s, it has since consistently supported Israeli foreign policy (particularly that of the conservative Likud Party). Mearsheimer and Walt, in their 2006 critique of the Israeli Lobby, conclude that 'Iran and the United States would hardly be allies if the lobby did not exist, but U.S. policy would be more temperate, Iran's past overtures might well have been welcomed and pursued and preventive war would not be a serious option.'[45]

Costs

The costs of not recognizing Iran have been substantial. These include: (1) uncoordinated efforts against common enemies such as al-Qaeda, ISIS and other affiliated Sunni terror groups until the successful conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) last year; (2) inability to limit Iran's nuclear program to peaceful purposes without risking military conflict; (3) unrealized potential regional security in the Middle East; (4) provoking Iran to destabilize efforts to bring about a two-state solution regarding Israel and the Palestinian Authority; (5) jeopardizing the stable flow of petroleum from the region; and (6) depriving US companies of doing business in a strategically situated country with a population of 77 billion potential customers.

As a Sunni group attempting a reconstituted Islamic caliphate in western Iraq, eastern Syria, and perhaps beyond, ISIS not only has seized substantial territory formerly under the sovereign control of the Iraq government in Bagdad, but also threatens Shia populations in Iraq, Syria and Iran. Whatever the long-term US relationship with Iran is to become, cooperating against this common enemy is not an unreasonable proposition, especially since the Shia-dominated government in Baghdad is as beholden to Iran as it is to the United States. Diplomatic relations between the US and Iran would certainly improve the prospect of such a temporary alliance, potentially providing greater stability for the Iraqi government in the

face of the ISIS threat as well as regarding the potential fate of the Kurdish region of Iraq, which borders northwestern Iran.

What is reasonable to assume regarding ISIS also is pertinent to al-Qaeda and its affiliates. Iran has no interest in seeing a resurgence of al-Qaeda in Iraq, Afghanistan or Yemen, to name but three areas where al-Qaeda has operated and continues to do so. If intelligence is critical to pre-empting al-Qaeda attacks, re-establishing official channels of communication between the US and Iran may provide both with a crucial enhancement of intelligence resources regarding al-Qaeda operations, personnel and weapons acquisition. The fact that Iranian intelligence on Taliban resistance in Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002 aided US military efforts demonstrates that this had been true in the past. That the George W. Bush administration's decision to discontinue contacts with Iran likely contributed to gaps in intelligence associated with US misperceptions of the strength of the Sunni insurgency in Iraq after the fall of Baghdad demonstrates the downside of ignoring Iranian intelligence.

It now seems increasingly clear that had Iran made having nuclear weapons its top priority, Tehran would have possessed this capability by now. However, it appears that Iran emphasized a return to greater regional influence and economic development instead, perceiving that going nuclear would likely spark a regional arms race that would ultimately negatively impact Iranian interests. If the US had normal relations with Iran, it is more likely that the US would have been better informed regarding Iranian priorities, and perhaps the international tensions that developed over Iran's nuclear program could have been lessened or avoided. That Iran likely could have produced a weapon is evidenced by its constant increase in capacity to enrich nuclear material during the 2000s. During the 2003–2005 EU talks with Iran, Iranian negotiators (including current president Rouhani) offered to cap Iran's number of centrifuges that produce nuclear fuel at 3,000. The EU participants could not reach an agreement, and the US refused to be a party to the negotiations, because the Western powers believed that the Iranian proposal would give Tehran enough fuel for a weapon.

When the current negotiations began in 2013, despite a decade of sanctions and temporary difficulties in producing nuclear material due to the US-Israeli Stuxnet computer virus that curtailed Iranian nuclear activity for a limited time, Iran had 20,000 centrifuges.[46] This has prompted Graham Allison to conclude that the only barrier to Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon is the Iranian decision to not weaponize, as Iran had mastered the technical knowledge and enriched enough uranium to construct a nuclear weapon by 2008.[47] Gary Sick, President Carter's White House aide for Iran during the hostage crisis, argues that Iran has had the ability to produce a nuclear weapon since at least 2005 and that the most interesting aspect of the Iranian nuclear issue regards the Iranian delay in making the decision to produce a weapon while agreeing to invasive and continuing international inspections in hopes of achieving an agreement.[48]

A third area of concern that might have been ameliorated is the general level of conflict in the region. Both the EU and the US have an interest in stemming violence throughout the region, particularly the Syrian civil war. As many of the active and latent conflicts in the Middle East involve tensions between Sunni and

Shia Muslims, the continued successful implementation of the JCPOA agreement with Shiite Iran *could* open the door for discussion of broader issues related to Syria, Hezbollah and Yemen, in addition to confronting the Islamic State, as mentioned above. Any failure to maintain the JCPOA going forward, due to either Iranian breeching or American abrogation of the agreement, will likely indicate that the long-running feud between the US and Iran, and hence Iran and the West, will continue and that the possibility of concerted action by the West and Iran to alleviate various growing regional conflicts has been foreclosed.[49] Fourth, as both the US and Israel have an interest in finally bringing about a two-state solution regarding the West Bank (and Gaza), engaging Iran could potentially bring benefits here also. As Iran supports Hezbollah and has sold weapons to Hamas, it may influence both groups and their allies in negotiations. Failure to engage Iran means that the US had less leverage over a key potential supporter of those Palestinians who use violence against Israel, further aggravating long-simmering tensions that are a significant barrier to an ultimate plan for two states.

A fifth cost of the absence of formal ties with Iran is the jeopardizing of the flow of petroleum from the Sunni Gulf states through the Strait of Hormuz. During periodic tensions, Iran has claimed that should the US take military action against Iran, Iran will react by blockading the 17-mile channel from the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman with submarines, fast attack craft and anti-ship cruise missiles. Iran has yet to make good on this threat, but the potentiality of it has influenced oil prices during times of increased tensions. While this is less of a concern during the current period of increased US domestic oil production, over the long term, improved relations with Iran, and especially American diplomatic presence in Tehran, could alleviate tensions that might play havoc (even for only a short duration) with global markets.

Finally, if diplomatic relations can be re-established, it would encourage the US and EU to re-establish business relationships with Iran largely abandoned in the wake of the Islamic Revolution. Iran's transportation and communication infrastructure is in disrepair and decades behind that of the West. As the United States was responsible for constructing it during the years before the revolution, normalization of relations could provide American companies the chance to resume involvement in the modernization of Iran's infrastructure, an opportunity that European and Asian companies are already planning to exploit.[50] What is more, Iran lies at the heart of a region that has significant oil and natural gas deposits. During the 1990s, American petroleum companies sought to build a pipeline from Azerbaijan through Iran that would carry natural gas to Europe. The possibility of renewed economic opportunities in Iran elicited interest from US companies in other sectors, such as Coca-Cola, Microsoft and Boeing, which had prospects of providing replacements for Iran's aging passenger aircraft fleet. Instead, Congress passed the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, penalizing not just American companies but foreign firms investing in Iran. American 'principle' won out over substantial economic opportunity; for Europeans and Canadians the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act represented an 'irrational expression of an American obsession.'[51] Now, as China and other countries move towards increased investment in Iran, the US stands to lose out on another opportunity to penetrate new markets.

JCPOA and the way forward

Regarding Iran's nuclear program, the P5+1 negotiations with Iran that produced the JCPOA in July 2015 are a major step forward in US-Iranian relations. It is probable that US attempts to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons would have been much in doubt if the P5+1 talks had failed to reach a final agreement. Though Iran may not have prioritized nuclear weapons acquisition, if the negotiations had failed, Iran might have re-evaluated priorities, believing that going nuclear might be the only means of deterring a US pre-emptive strike. Certainly, this might have backfired, but it is better that an agreement was reached and further crisis avoided. Instead of international fears about Iran sprinting to achieve a nuclear deterrent, there is a process in place that reassures the international community that Iran has forfeited capability to do so in exchange for sanctions removal and unfreezing of its assets.

While JCPOA is not an ideal agreement for the United States and is limited to issues related to Iran's nuclear capabilities only, it establishes significant restrictions on Iranian nuclear activity, institutes a broad and thorough inspections regime and provides for quick re-establishment of sanctions should Iran violate the agreement. With regard to limiting Iran's ability to produce nuclear weapons, Iran has been compelled to carry out significant reductions in enriched uranium and centrifuges used in the enrichment process, to substantially limit tests on remaining centrifuges, to ship spent fuel from its Arak plutonium reactor out of the country and to augment its nuclear reactor at the Arak facility so that it cannot produce weapons-grade material. The effect of these measures is that it would take Iran roughly one year to develop one uranium bomb for at least the next 10 years and eliminates Iranian ability to produce a plutonium bomb for the next 15 years. All declared Iranian nuclear facilities are subject to continuous and pervasive advanced verification methods.

Should the International Atomic Energy Agency detect a violation on Iran's part, Iran must grant access to the facility in question, whether it is a declared facility or not, within 24 days or the UN Security Council will resume economic sanctions suspended under JCPOA. Should a dispute over inspections arise, the JCPOA mechanism for dispute resolution does not call for a typical UNSC vote (which allows any of the permanent five members to veto the measure), but instead allows for a majority decision among the eight-member JCPOA joint commission (US, UK, France, Germany, EU, Russia, PRC, Iran), meaning that neither Russia nor the PRC can block a move to investigate a violation if the US has the support of its Western counterparts.[52] Current sanctions will remain in place until Iran begins meeting JCPOA obligations, and as sanctions are removed for Iranian compliance, they can be re-imposed by the US should Iran stop continuing to meet JCPOA stipulations. In the so-called snap-back procedure, sanctions will be restored immediately, with the only possible means of preventing the snap-back being a new UNSC resolution (which the US, as a permanent member, could veto).

So far Iran has fulfilled its JCPOA obligations. In December 2015, Iran loaded 11,000 kg of low enriched uranium on a ship bound for Russia, where the uranium will be stored. By May 2016, Iran cut its stock of low enriched uranium by 98 percent, disconnected 66 percent of its centrifuges, ceased enrichment of uranium at the Fordow nuclear facility, and inserted cement into the Arak heavy water reactor core. There have been disputes between Iran and the US, and the UN, over continued Iranian development of ballistic missile technology which could be used to deliver nuclear weapons. The US sponsored a separate resolution imposing a conventional weapons embargo on Iran that included restrictions on ballistic missile technology for the next eight years. Iran has stated that it will not be bound by this restriction. However, ballistic missiles are not exclusively employed for the delivery of nuclear warheads, as conventional warheads can also be mounted on them. Also, while the JCPOA does not address Iranian delivery of weapons and related technology to such groups as Hezbollah and the Houthi rebels in Yemen, other UN sanctions cover these transactions.

All in all, the JCPOA agreement has been successful up to this point in achieving what it set out to accomplish: limiting Iran's capacity to develop nuclear weapons. It is not surprising that Iran has continued to develop and transfer certain conventional weapons technologies, as these were not part of the JCPOA agreement, nor is it surprising that the US has continued to object to these actions. The US and Iran will always have conflicting interests. What is important is that the two countries find ways to control and neutralize their most dangerous areas of disagreement. This is what JCPOA does. A year after the completion of the agreement, former US-Iran Negotiating Team member (2009–2013) Robert Einhorn's assessment still holds true that 'achieving a deal that would be as strong a barrier to a nuclear-armed Iran as the one currently on the table, especially without the powerful sanctions leverage that made JCPOA possible, would be next to impossible.'[53]

The possibility that JCPOA will produce additional opportunities for US-Iranian cooperation was illustrated by the January 2016 Iranian release of four detained Americans in exchange for the US dropping charges against seven Iranians convicted for violating sanctions. The context of this prisoner exchange provides added evidence that there is increased flexibility in US relations with Iran. The Obama administration had decided to impose new sanctions on Iran (unrelated to JCPOA) for ballistic missile tests, and these sanctions were originally to be announced on December 30, 2015 by the Treasury Department. However, following a conversation with the Iranian foreign minister, Secretary of State Kerry urged the Treasury Department to delay the sanctions announcement for two weeks, until after the prisoner exchange had been completed. The Iranian foreign minister had told Kerry that a sanctions announcement prior to the deal would prevent its completion. The announcement was postponed and the prisoner exchange was transacted, despite partisan criticism in the US (those critical of the sanctions delay were unaware of the prisoner swap negotiations) that the administration was again 'indulging' Iran.[54]

That significant domestic opposition to any movement towards restoring relations with Iran remains was evidenced by the efforts of congressional Republicans to scuttle the JCPOA negotiations. In a unique act of public relations and question constitutionality, Speaker of the House John Boehner invited Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to address a joint session of Congress on March 3, 2015, at which Netanyahu warned that the nuclear deal was a 'win-win' for Iran only. The following week, 47 Republican senators endorsed a letter written by newly elected Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas to Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei, informing Khamenei that President Obama did not have the authority to conclude an international agreement over Iran's nuclear program. While these congressional ploys failed to derail negotiations, they drew even greater attention to the issue and prompted the Senate Foreign Relations committee to unanimously demand that Congress be able to review the final agreement. On September 10, the Senate voted 58–42 in favor of a resolution condemning the JCPOA, but the resolution needed 60 votes to pass. Had it passed, the House of Representatives would have been given a chance to vote on the resolution, likely requiring President Obama to veto the resolution. In sum, Republican attempts to characterize any negotiation with Iran as 'appeasement' and to block a final agreement failed. Nevertheless, determined opposition to JCPOA by some congressional members remains, as demonstrated by the comments of Senators Rubio and Cruz before and after they exited the 2016 Republican presidential primaries, and by Speaker of the House of Representatives Paul Ryan. While it is largely agreed that Iran could develop a nuclear weapon at some point after 2025, it is difficult to know whether Iran would proceed towards weapons development in the future, or, more broadly, what the state of US relations with Iran will be in a decade.

Despite the fact that both sides have kept their JCPOA pledges so far, and criticism of the deal from Israel has noticeably lessened, there remains a significant trust deficit for many Americans and Iranians regarding the possibility of moving relations forward. While Republicans have complained about returning unfrozen assets to Iran, Iranians have opined that they are not receiving the funds quickly enough. The House of Representatives passed measures to block a $17.6 billion Boeing aircraft transaction with Iran in July 2016. Despite large-scale Iranian disdain for the MEK (which actually fought on the Iraqi side against Iran in the Iran-Iraq War), high-profile Americans, both Republican and Democrat, continue to support it, as former Senator Robert Torricelli, former NYC mayor Rudy Giuliani, former US Ambassadors to the UN Bill Richardson and John Bolton, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and retired US generals attended a MEK rally in Paris entitled 'Free Iran' in July 2016. And neither of the presumptive party nominees for president has given clear signals that he or she will make a strong effort to maintain positive momentum in relations with Iran. Donald Trump has vocally denounced the Iran deal. While stating qualified support for JCPOA, Hillary Clinton, as Secretary of State, removed the MEK from the State Department list of terrorist organizations.

The continuing Syrian civil war will likely provide an opportunity for the next president to either move forward or backward regarding the possibility of

re-establishing diplomatic relations with Iran. Strong Iranian and Russian support of the Assad regime in Syria undoubtedly complicates the prospect of a breakthrough, with regard either to US restoration of diplomatic ties to Iran or to ending the civil war in Syria. However, normal diplomatic ties might facilitate negotiations purposed towards finding a way to end this now half-decade-long conflict. A key question is whether the US president after Obama will prioritize regime change in Syria over simply attempting to find a way to bring about cessation of hostilities. Although the Obama administration originally advanced this goal, and continued to pay occasional lip service to it, it is clear that Obama did not choose to make the removal of the Assad regime a key priority before his term ended. Should the next president put regime change in Syria higher on the US foreign policy agenda, this will likely prevent any positive movement towards Iran on other issues and may provoke increasing support for the Assad regime from not only Iran and Russia, but also China.

Notes

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6 The long decline of traditional diplomacy and State Department influence on US foreign policy

It is important to remember that American actions in the three cases of US nonrecognition and/or long-term broken diplomatic relations analyzed in the preceding chapters were very much influenced by the historical contingencies of the post–World War II era. Each superpower emphasized protecting allies' borders from the predations of the other, and this was necessary because both the US and the USSR routinely sought to undermine the sovereignty of ideologically objectionable states. This produced an international political milieu in which sovereignty was more uncertain and less worthy of respect. The proliferation of intrastate wars during the era of decolonization in the second half of the twentieth century was increasingly characterized by insurgency and asymmetric warfare, and both superpowers readily, if not always officially, intervened in these conflicts for the purpose of bringing states into their respective ideological camps. Consequently, adherence to previously agreed-upon conventions in state-to-state relations deteriorated and the potential for constructing an inclusive and vibrant international society suffered. Therefore, it is not surprising that the US devalued the importance of maintaining diplomatic relations and instead opted for nonrecognition and sustained broken relations for the purpose of demonstrating ideological fortitude. Purity was prized over empathy; righteousness over flexibility. And the possession of formidable military power, especially in the post–Cold War period, did nothing to discourage this American predilection in interacting with the rest of the world.

Indeed, more than six decades after the conclusion of World War II, despite ever-increasing rancor and disagreement in American politics, two things that major party presidential candidates could agree on was supremacy of democracy and confidence in the purposeful use of military power that had been made so evident in the defeat of fascism in 1945. Regarding the US penchant for military solutions, according to Andrew Bacevich in his study of US military involvement in the Middle East, while Barack Obama and John McCain frequently derided each other's foreign policy judgment during the 2008 presidential campaign, neither candidate offered an alternative to the strong preference for military solutions which characterized US postwar foreign policy, and this 'affirms an implicit consensus' that overarches any competing ideas regarding the orientation of American foreign policy.[1] This deeply held faith, in spite of a growing list of unfulfilled

and disappointing US military ventures, with almost no clear-cut political success associated with them, continues to dominate American thinking to the present. Instead of re-assessment, Washington habitually resorts to military and information campaigns for the purpose of overwhelming (or undermining) nations that oppose American interests and ideals. The American preference for the New Diplomacy has launched US foreign policy on a progression that borders on the pathological.

US intervention in World War I for the purpose of making the world 'safe for democracy' and the Bolshevik victory in the Russian Revolution put the two emerging superpowers on a collision course of competing utopian visions, ensuring that ideological fervor would be increasingly prioritized over traditional diplomatic practice. With the benefit of hindsight, it can be argued that the era of traditional diplomacy was abetted by unique historical, cultural and geographic factors that are difficult to reproduce. During the nineteenth century, Europe was home to all of the major powers, their royal houses were connected via marriage, the balance of power and monarchical systems encouraged notions of sovereign equality and the rest of the world provided a venue for competition among the continental powers and Britain while rarely threatening a state's sovereign territory. The demise of the traditional European powers after the world wars, resulting in decolonization, combined with seemingly inexorable increase in communications and transportation capability, diminished prospects for previous concepts of sovereignty and diplomacy while fostering a global environment in which the superpowers faced each other down in a winner-take-all struggle. Although the US and USSR periodically engaged as diplomatic equals because of the 'balance of terror,' each viewed itself as possessing the formula for global prosperity while simultaneously being confronted with a mortal threat. Under these circumstances, the end justifies the means, and procedural rules are bound to be marginalized. Furthermore, the geographical position and historical experience of both the United States and Russia inferred that they would deal with smaller states as less than equals.

Essentially, the United States has conducted a foreign policy since World War II without making a significant attempt to understand its enemies and potential enemies, instead framing them as recalcitrant lesser entities that are too ignorant to accept the wisdom of US leadership. While containment of the Soviet Union and the global communist movement served as a grand strategy during the Cold War, US foreign policy viewed the communist movement as monolithic and its member states as devoid of individual characteristics that could ostensibly affect US foreign policy outcomes. Once again, this reflects the US commitment to the New Diplomacy in which ideological considerations are elevated above other attributes. Instead of trying to understand and exploit specific dynamics inherent in historically contingent situations, the US has chosen to rely on superior military force and broad declarations of support for global democracy as a means of achieving foreign policy objectives. Traditional diplomatic reporting and relationships could have been leveraged to inform these efforts but in most cases were not.

This chapter will discuss the general decline of US diplomacy, and more specifically, the US State Department during the post–World War II era while also exploring the potential positive possibilities of maintaining relations with ideological foes. The advantage of maintaining diplomatic contact with politically opposing states was illustrated by the maintenance of diplomatic relations with the fascist French Vichy regime in World War II, but during the Cold War and after, in keeping with the dictates of the New Diplomacy, traditional diplomacy has been subordinated to the support of both overt and covert military operations and public diplomacy campaigns, rather than the other way around. The role of the State Department and US Foreign Service has correspondingly diminished. While there is no disagreement regarding US victory in the Cold War, it can reasonably be argued that the US could have achieved this outcome with lesser costs and that the continued neglect of traditional diplomacy in the post–Cold War era poses substantial risks for the United States.

World War II and after: the apex of State Department influence on US foreign policy

Although the United States has never prioritized traditional diplomacy in the way that Europeans have, American involvement in World War II demanded that the US State Department expand its Foreign Service if for no other reason than to keep up with its allies in working to identify political solutions that could facilitate military victory. As World War II was a conventional war conducted by sovereign states, all of which made explicit declarations of war, there was never any question of traditional diplomatic practice for this purpose, nor was there any doubt that successful diplomacy could facilitate military operations and was indispensable for translating battlefield victory into political advantage. The vital necessity of sound diplomacy was apparent in every theater of the war, but there is perhaps no better example of it than in the first foray of US ground forces against European fascism, Operation Torch in the fall of 1942.

In May of 1940 the German blitzkrieg had rolled over France, forcing the Third Republic to capitulate and dividing the country into north and south areas of governmental responsibility. The Germans installed a military governor and occupation force in northern France, headquartered in Paris. The southern area was administrated by the puppet fascist regime of Marshal Petain, an aging World War I hero, from the Mediterranean resort city of Vichy. Had the United States decided to adhere to the New Diplomacy, President Roosevelt would have recalled the American ambassador and broken relations with Vichy upon its inception or, failing that, after US entry into the war in December 1941. Instead, Roosevelt decided to maintain relations with Vichy (as well as fascist Spain), which administered French territories in North Africa, with the hope of influencing a positive outcome for US strategy in the European theater. Roosevelt sent his close aide, Admiral Leahy (who was later to become his White House Chief of Staff), to Vichy as US ambassador and began to consider the possibility of a potential US invasion of North Africa should the US enter the war.

This potentiality assumed increasing relevance when Petain sent his Defense Minister, General Weygand, with whom US diplomats had cultivated good relations, to become Delegate-General of North Africa and take charge of all French army forces there. Admiral Darlan, commander of all French forces in North Africa and of the French Fleet (which had fled French ports and was now largely stationed in North African ports), had promised the British he would not use the French navy to attack Royal Navy or British commercial shipping. He maintained this pledge despite Royal Navy raids on French naval vessels in the North African ports of Mers-el-Kebir and Oran, resulting in the killing or wounding of some 2,000 French sailors, and despite Churchill's decision to recognize General Charles de Gaulle's Free France government instead of Vichy. However, British relations with Vichy were obviously tenuous, and this posed a unique opportunity for US Foreign Service officers in Vichy and North Africa to sustain relations with the Vichy leadership in hopes of gaining their complicity in not resisting a future Allied landing in Morocco.

Robert Murphy, an American Foreign Service officer (FSO) previously assigned to both Berlin and Paris, and stationed in Algiers after the fall of France, toured all of French-held North Africa and established a relationship with General Weygand in late 1940. Through his travels and contacts, Murphy realized that the populations of French North Africa, both French and Arab, were facing dire economic circumstances and that this was an opportunity for the US to secure a potential ally if and when the US entered the war on the side of the Allies. Along with Weygand, he devised a scheme to encourage this possibility. President Roosevelt, whom Murphy had met with after his tour of the region, authorized what became known as the Murphy-Weygand Accord to provide medicines, textiles and fuels to French North Africa in April 1941. In describing his initial message to President Roosevelt regarding the situation in North Africa, Murphy recounts:

> My report pointed out that "abandonment of the French population by their ally Britain and their oldest friend the United States would compel the French to consider making new friends. If the winter is severe [it turned out to be the coldest in 90 years] and the situation desperate, they will turn to Germany or anywhere. . . . Whoever wins the war, the United States will be blamed if callous indifference to French needs persists." My report concluded: "I am convinced that relaxation of the present British blockade to permit minimum food imports has no bearing in the present military situation."[2]

What stands out is Murphy's ability to integrate information regarding economic, climatological, cultural and military aspects of the overall situation in making his recommendation. Roosevelt approved Murphy's recommendation in spite of criticism from major US media organizations which advocated that the US should break relations with Vichy and recognize de Gaulle's regime, and furthermore that American aid to Vichy was being turned over to the Germans.[3] Murphy had taken a precaution against this by employing US intelligence officers from the army, navy and Office of Strategic Services (OSS) to serve as 'vice-consuls' in

receiving and distributing the aid shipments. As Murphy's precautionary measure was secret and not known to the general public, both the US and the British media remained critical of US recognition of Vichy and economic aid to North Africa throughout 1941 and beyond, as the US finally became an official participant in the war after Pearl Harbor.

Despite Roosevelt's pledge to initially focus the war effort on destroying fascist Germany and Italy before defeating Japan, the majority of the fighting during early 1942 was at sea, which meant that most of the early headline victories and losses by US forces were in the Pacific. Although the Battle of the Atlantic was shifting, the Allies had yet to overcome the U-boat menace that hampered any significant Allied effort to project power onto the European continent or its near abroad. However, the British believed that the Allies could successfully land in North Africa for the purpose of establishing a base of operations for subsequent efforts to strike at southern Europe. Through meetings between Roosevelt and Churchill and their Combined Chiefs of Staff, a decision was made to mount the first Allied amphibious assault in the Atlantic theater against Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia in late 1942, despite strenuous objections from some US military leaders,[4] for the purpose of getting a foothold on the southern coast of the Mediterranean and bringing the majority of French forces in Africa over to the Allied side. One of the most relevant Allied concerns was whether the French would actually agree not to oppose the Allied landings.

According to the commander of the expedition, designated Operation Torch, General Dwight Eisenhower, in his initial conception of operations, the amphibious landing in Morocco was 'too risky to justify on purely military grounds' and its fate hung on 'such political factors as correct estimates of French and Spanish reactions to our landings.'[5] The key individual involved in ascertaining French views was Robert Murphy. He regularly met with Admiral Darlan's son, also a naval officer, and Darlan's deputy in Algiers, Admiral Fernard, during the months prior to Torch to maintain situational awareness and continually worked to persuade the French to allow Allied landings unopposed. Murphy also maintained contacts with German diplomats in French North Africa to determine whether they were aware of a possible Allied landing and what measures they might take to prevent it.

In October, Murphy accompanied US Army Lt. General Mark Clark on a secret mission (aboard a British submarine) to the Algerian town of Cherchell to meet with French officials to discuss the involvement of French forces in Torch. This meeting proved successful enough, as when Allied forces landed in early November, Darlan had arranged local cease-fires and initial opposition (although some French contingents did offer resistance) was only sporadic. Eventually Darlan persuaded General Nogues, who had held out and sent French troops to combat the Allies during the week after landings, to also desist. Despite some operational difficulties, Torch was a resounding victory and Murphy and other US FSOs played an integral role in contributing to this outcome.

According to naval historian Samuel Elliot Morison,[6] US efforts to maintain diplomatic relations with Vichy, in large degree attributable to US FSOs, were

crucial to the success of Torch, declaring that on them 'depended the ultimate success of the operation. We might fight our way ashore against the French opposition, but could hardly hope to win Tunisia without their active cooperation.'[7] What is more, Morison claims that the US diplomatic mission to General Franco's fascist regime in Madrid, led by Ambassador Carleton J. H. Hayes, 'expertly applied' diplomacy in making sure that Franco did not allow the Nazis to transit through Spain and take Gibraltar or grant German military access to Spanish Morocco (which would have taken five US army divisions to hold), as 'Franco continued to be a "nonbelligerent" ally of the Axis, but he gave them the shell and us the oyster. Here, again, was a so-called appeasement that paid dividends.'[8] Had US diplomats not cultivated the social landscape, a seemingly easy and important success might have not come to fruition. According to Murphy, 'If French armed forces should resist us strongly, our risky operations would be jeopardized, and the Spanish and German and Italians might be encouraged to leap into the battle while it hung in the balance.'[9] As it was, the US and its allies were now poised to defeat remaining German and Italian forces in North Africa and begin concentrating on invading Europe itself.

Thus, the first US amphibious operation in the Atlantic theater in World War II represents an instance in which the State Department worked to shape broader US foreign policy and then functioned throughout the execution of Operation Torch to assist the military in achieving success. Although Robert Murphy did not always operate through normal channels, as he met with and often took orders directly from President Roosevelt, here is an example of an FSO that drew on all his experience and ability to influence the president's prosecution of the war and then identified ways to achieve the goals set out in the policy. Had Murphy not pushed for the deliverance of US non-military aid to North Africa, both French elites and the general population might have been less amenable to accommodating the eventual deployment of Allied military forces on their soil. Once the plan for Torch was set, Murphy and his colleagues acted to significantly diminish French resistance.

In contrast to much of postwar US foreign policy, State Department personnel were allowed to influence a major US foreign policy decision by holistically assessing the political possibilities in North Africa with regard to US interests and then playing an active part in tandem with US military leaders to see those interests realized. From a Clauswitzean standpoint, military decisions were subordinated to political priorities, or put more colloquially, 'the horse was put before the cart,' as diplomacy informed executive decision making for the purpose of establishing strategy and then assisted the military in implementing strategic objectives. Although the State Department's role in Operation Torch was more clearly discernible than in other US wartime operations, it is somewhat representative of the relationship between US diplomacy and general foreign policy during the war and its immediate aftermath.

All of the major participants realized that, despite the unconditional surrender demanded by the Allies, many substantive issues related to concluding the war were yet to be decided. The US State Department represented President Truman

in these negotiations, which continued in one form or another for years after the war's conclusion. US Secretaries of State during the war and its aftermath, including Cordell Hull, Edward Stettinius, James Byrnes, General George Marshall and Dean Acheson, had significant influence and relied on highly intelligent and effective FSOs like George Kennan for diplomatic reporting, diagnosis of emerging problems, and proposals for making American foreign policy more effective. During the war and especially in the immediate period following it, the State Department accomplished much in establishing and implementing policies that guided US global interaction during the Cold War. But this era of State Department impact on US foreign policy was short-lived, as it represented the 'high water mark of the institution' and in retrospect appears to be 'an anomaly in the long sweep of American history.'[10]

The long decline of US State Department influence

Other issues related to the war's outcome began to denigrate the role of the State Department in US foreign policy decision making. As already extensively noted, the extreme ideological nature of the Cold War increasingly fostered a preference for the New Diplomacy. The combination of bipolar confrontation, increasingly destructive weaponry delivered from ever greater range, and revelations of potential Soviet espionage within the United States provoked fear and distrust. The Soviet decision to maintain control of Eastern Europe and not to demobilize its military was interpreted as an existential threat to Western Europe. Even as the likes of Marshall, Kennan and Acheson were devising strategies to blunt the Soviet threat, strategies that attempted to take military, economic, cultural and political factors into account, the United States re-organized its foreign policy bureaucracy to the detriment of the State Department.

The National Security Act of 1947 established the Department of Defense (DOD), the CIA and the National Security Council (NSC), as well as separating the old Army Air Corps from US Army control, designating it as a distinct military service, the US Air Force. The newly created position of Secretary of Defense, who now had authority over the Departments of Army, Navy (including the Marine Corps) and Air Force, along with a none too small civilian DOD contingent, had a budget at his disposal many times greater than that of the Secretary of State. The CIA, a replacement for the defunct Office of Strategic Services (which had been shut down two years earlier at war's end), eroded State Department influence in two ways. First, the CIA was responsible for worldwide intelligence reporting, formally the undisputed role of the State Department in peacetime, with Army and Navy Intelligence playing secondary roles. (Moreover, with the creation of the Air Force, another military service intelligence arose to compete with State.) Secondly, the growing militarization of US foreign policy enhanced the CIA's position vis-à-vis the State Department because the CIA became increasingly authorized to conduct covert paramilitary operations. As the NSC, and its leadership, the newly created National Security Adviser, were bureaucratically positioned more directly within the Executive Branch, it had more convenient

and routine access to the president himself. In sum, the National Security Act of 1947 codified an interpretation of foreign policy that strongly emphasized the material characteristics of conflict over social considerations, prioritized military solutions, and favored a confrontational diplomatic style that was at odds with the traditional concept of diplomacy practiced in nineteenth century Europe and which was also ostensibly the purview of the State Department.

While this piece of legislation automatically reduced State's influence in foreign policy decision making and implementation, subsequent developments further marginalized State Department impact. As discussed in Chapter 3, the rapid succession of events from the summer of 1949 until the spring of 1951, including the successful Soviet atomic test, the establishment of the communist PRC in Beijing, the North Korean invasion of South Korea, Beijing's intervention in the Korean War and related US domestic reaction to Truman's firing of MacArthur and Senator McCarthy's accusations of Soviet subversion, all seemed to add up to one conclusion: negotiating with communists amounts to appeasement. Thus, US Secretaries of State henceforth would have to advocate a tougher military line, at times appearing to be cheerleaders for the Department of Defense and the US military. John Foster Dulles, upon taking charge of the State Department in 1953, seemed to embody this stance. From driving the China Hands out of the Foreign Service to advocating the 'roll back' of Soviet control of Eastern Europe, Dulles consistently derided traditional diplomatic solutions, such as seeking accommodation with Beijing, and regularly engaged in saber-rattling.

At the 1954 Geneva Conference, which included representatives from the UK, Russia, France, Indochina, the PRC and the US (for the purpose of establishing a settlement to the French war in Indochina), Dulles famously refused to shake hands with Chinese Foreign Minister Zhou En-lai, blatantly turning his back on him when Zhou approached. According to US diplomat U. Alexis Johnson, who was a member of the US delegation, Dulles conducted this brusque maneuver for the purpose of demonstrating to the US domestic audience that he refused to acknowledge the Beijing regime, preferring confrontation and silence over even the slightest nominal conciliatory gesture.[11] Dulles' spurning of Zhou En-lai was representative of the State Department's gradual abandonment of the more traditional diplomacy that the US had conducted during World War II and its immediate aftermath.

As the might and influence of the traditional European powers waned in relation to the US, European sway over the conduct of US diplomacy correspondingly ebbed. The US was now the unquestioned leader of the democratic West, and it was reverting to the more simplistic, combative method of interacting with other states that had characterized most of American history. Here again, broader technological and ideological factors during the 1950s encouraged this tendency. US and Soviet development of the hydrogen bomb, vastly more destructive than the atomic weapons of the 1940s, seemed to diminish the significance of territorial borders. The momentum of decolonization increased, revolutionary movements abounded and world maps were regularly amended to reflect the addition of new states, all combining to create an international milieu of constant transition that

worked against the maintenance of older concepts of sovereignty and diplomacy. With Marxism providing a cohesive ideology for many nationalist movements in the developing world, and Mao's insurgent, guerilla-style warfare the military model for winning national power, the concept of official, accredited diplomats devising solutions to international problems guided by time-honored procedures seemed old fashioned, quaint and, perhaps, irrelevant.

In this atmosphere, the US moved to match insurgency with counterinsurgency and to destabilize communist or communist-leaning regimes with military power in undeclared wars. The CIA took the lead in this activity, sometimes assisted by the State Department. This development was accommodated by John Foster Dulles' truculent approach as Secretary of State during the 1950s, and the not irrelevant happenstance that his brother, Allen Dulles, happened to be the director of the CIA. Instead of relying on traditional diplomacy to devise updated international norms that accepted new states into the international order, the State Department largely abandoned the field to the CIA, which conducted operations that undermined national sovereignty and international stability for the purpose of overthrowing ideological enemies. As the concept of sovereignty became more contestable, the idea of traditional diplomacy became increasingly discredited, as, according to former US FSO Lawrence Pope, 'Some sovereigns are obviously more equal than others in a power sense, but diplomacy and sovereignty are inseparable. Without sovereign states, there is no diplomacy.'[12] Counterinsurgency and black operations seemed to offer an expedient method of navigating the postwar international order and were in line with assumptions of the New Diplomacy that disparaged traditional conceptions of sovereignty and diplomacy, as these operations were ostensibly conducted for the purpose of establishing anticommunist governments that would be, by definition (according to the New Diplomacy's understanding of international politics), US allies. However, the historical record demonstrates that most, if not all, of these paramilitary schemes failed to secure long-term political advantages for the United States and in many cases eventually undercut US global influence.

In his 1996 study of US covert operations since World War II, John Prados outlines eight negative potentialities associated with so-called black operations. First, CIA attempts to facilitate insurgencies in states that oppose US interests are wrought with 'political liabilities,' as supporting these groups often involves drug trafficking for purposes of financing the insurgents (Indonesia, Thailand and Burma during the 1950s and 1960s; Nicaragua in the 1980s)[13] and sustaining insurgents requires a considerable percentage of US financial resources dedicated to regime change in that country, whether or not the insurgents are effective.[14] Responsible US authorities face the possibility of pouring resources into a regime change attempt and achieving nothing more than fostering the survival of an anti-regime group which has little chance of actually replacing the existing government. Also, an inevitable difficulty exists when the US attempts to create a new national government via support for an insurgency while simultaneously degrading the effectiveness of the current regime, as destroying the organizational systems and resources

of the existing regime lessens the potential for any future regime to govern successfully. A third problem is that any paramilitary operation is likely to suffer from 'serious operational difficulties' that can bring significant negative political consequences, as the Bay of Pigs so obviously demonstrated.[15] Furthermore, because covert operations must be disassociated from formal US government policies and authority, there is an existential possibility that CIA or US military personnel on the scene will act beyond their orders, refusing to restrict themselves to merely supporting insurgent operations and instead participating in combat, as took place in CIA operations in China and Cuba, among others.[16] A similar problem can occur when a US officer goes native and attempts to take on the culture and customs of the group he is assisting, as approximated in the fictional character of Col. Kurtz in the film *Apocalypse Now*.

Two additional problems associated with black operations are that because by definition their success requires secrecy, they may be jeopardized by either foreign espionage efforts (as with Kim Philby's exposure of CIA agent networks in the USSR and Albania in the early 1950s, whose members were subsequently executed) or leaks to US and other friendly country press organizations. According to Prados regarding the latter potentiality, 'The paradigm case is the Bay of Pigs, where there were so many leaks and invasion scares in Cuba that Castro's forces were given repeated opportunities to practice mobilizing against the CIA armed exiles.'[17] Finally, because black operations are directed against an existing national government, it is possible that they can be militarily successful but ultimately undermine emerging larger foreign policy goals, as evidenced by the relatively effective CIA effort to promote Tibetan resistance to the communist government of the PRC during the 1960s. This ostensible success proved to be an obstacle, though not an insurmountable one, to the Nixon administration's decision to seek rapprochement with Beijing during the early 1970s. A further problem (in addition to the eight listed above) that Prados mentions is that US support for insurgent groups may later lead to US weapons being used against US forces, as happened with Islamist group and IRGC employment of shoulder-fired SAMs against US aircraft that had originally been supplied to the Mujahedeen.[18]

Even CIA supported-black operations that supposedly succeeded, such as Ajax in Iran in 1953 and PBSUCCESS in Guatemala the following year, triggered substantial 'blowback' in ensuing decades. The connection between Ajax and the Islamic revolution was substantially covered in Chapter 5, and Guatemala experienced decades of civil war after PBSUCCESS, contributing to the flow of Latin American illegal immigration across the US southern border. Moreover, at the time of Prados' writing in 1996, he quotes George H. W. Bush's CIA director, Robert Gates (later Secretary of Defense under George W. Bush and Barack Obama), in his confirmation hearings as claiming that he 'would have grave doubts about the efficacy of covert operations were it not for Afghanistan.'[19] Obviously, given the subsequent course of history there, including the rise of the Taliban and al-Qaeda, any assessment of CIA operations in Afghanistan must be revised in a negative direction.

The New diplomacy and the US pivot to the Middle East

Although the role of the State Department was sublimated to military-led counterinsurgency and regime change operations for much of the postwar era, the US was forced by the weight of events to briefly reconsider the value of traditional diplomacy during the early 1970s. The failure of the US State Department and US diplomacy generally in the wake of the establishment of the PRC that contributed to the American military fiasco in Vietnam during the 1960s and early 1970s was discussed in Chapter 3. Essentially, the American worldview refused to distinguish between international communism and post-colonial nationalism, holding that these were indivisible and that assumptions to the contrary were necessarily motivated by notions of appeasement. The degree of US commitment and resulting failure in Vietnam demanded a temporary departure from this interpretation of the nature of world politics. President Nixon and his National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, grasped the obvious and important fact that if the Soviets and Chinese were actually involved in military hostilities (in 1969, over contested islands in the Amur River), the communist world was not a monolith, the domino theory was flawed, and a US modus vivendi with Beijing would threaten Moscow. These in turn meant that the relevance of Vietnam was greatly circumscribed, so Nixon moved to begin the process of restoring relations with Beijing and simultaneously negotiating a US withdrawal from Southeast Asia.

This ploy was conducted by high-level members of the executive branch instead of being driven by State Department influence, but it did represent another temporary victory for traditional diplomacy. However, the fact that Secretary of State William Rogers was effectively marginalized from participating throughout the process of initiating rapprochement with Beijing demonstrated State's continued declining role in US foreign policy. When Kissinger himself assumed the job of Secretary of State during the mid-1970s, he moved to promote senior FSOs to high-level positions (except for those with significant experience in the Arab world) and 'under his firm control they ran virtually every foreign policy operation of consequence.'[20] Nevertheless, this short-term revival of State Department and Foreign Service impact likely had more to do with Kissinger's personal power, prestige and unique interest in traditional diplomacy than a structural shift within the foreign policy making community.[21]

In fact, during the 1970s, as the US moved to restore relations with China and thus eventually put US relations with all mainland Asian states on a sounder footing, US presidents simultaneously began supplying the Shah of Iran with enormous amounts of weaponry, setting the stage for the Iranian revolution that blindsided the US in 1979 (as discussed in Chapter 5). Although the US had normal diplomatic relations with Tehran prior to the revolution, this was a case where the functioning of traditional diplomacy was clearly downgraded by the Shah's ability to restrict US FSO contact with the Iranian public and his voracious desire for more and better military hardware, which US presidents were glad to provide.[22] US diplomats failed to correctly assess political dynamics in Iran because high-level relations between the US and Iran obscured what was actually

occurring in Iranian society. The ensuing hostage crisis angered and embittered the US, but instead of reflecting on the key lessons of the US failure in Iran – that the Shah was viewed as an American stooge by his people and the US needed to attain greater awareness of the attitudes of Middle Eastern publics – US executive branch decision makers and foreign policy elites chose to maintain their commitment to the New Diplomacy. This was a crucial juncture, for just as US policies towards Asia became more stable and the US enjoyed improved relations with Asian countries during the last quarter of the twentieth century, the focus of American foreign policy was migrating towards the Middle East.

Several trends in US foreign policy making that had originated during the early postwar era, and that ran counter to traditional diplomacy and State Department influence on policy, began to increasingly manifest themselves during the 1970s as the focus of US foreign policy moved to the Middle East in the wake of the oil shocks and the Iranian revolution, and especially after the fall of the Soviet Union. These trends included an increasing perception of American exceptionalism, an unstinting confidence in military dominance for the purpose of achieving foreign policy goals (and, as such, a separation of military affairs from political analysis), an ever-growing percentage of political appointees in influential foreign policy decision-making positions, and a penchant for engaging in undeclared wars. All of these are consistent with the assumptions of the New Diplomacy, as expertise and norms are sacrificed for ideological fervor and advocacy unconstrained by broadly accepted standards of interaction.

During the Reagan administration the US increasingly resorted to the use of military force in the Middle East, with Reagan and his foreign policy advisers laboring under the assumption that American ability to coerce its enemies would be enough to secure and advance US interests in the region. Traditional diplomacy's ability to provide political context for military operations was dismissed as irrelevant, and declarations of war were considered to be a time-consuming, inefficient mechanism. Bacevich details these episodes in his *America's War for the Greater Middle East*, finding that the Marine Corps deployment to Beirut from 1982 to 1984, US airstrikes against Libya in 1986 and the US naval victory over Iran in 1988 provided no significant lasting benefits to US interests in the region, and the resounding military victory over Saddam Hussein in the 1990–1991 Persian Gulf War only served to delude the United States that military power alone could actually transform the Middle East.

According to Bacevich, the real issues that the US had to grapple with, 'the vacuum left by the eclipse of British imperial power; intractable economic backwardness and political illegitimacy, divisions within Islam compounded by the Rise of Arab nationalism, the founding of Israel; and the advent of the Iranian revolution,'[23] were marginalized by an American vision of military dominance that might simply be able to intimidate recalcitrant Middle Eastern states (and, later, non-state groups) into acquiescing to American demands. This naïve and overly simplified solution to the problems of the Middle East, essentially ignoring political, economic, religious, and cultural issues of the post-colonial Islamic world, was squarely rooted in an ideological self-righteousness disinclined to countenance

millennia-old civilizational differences. As such, diplomacy was conceived as a process that facilitated untrammeled use of military force, and attempts to provide broader context to debates about the use of force were discouraged.

Throughout the 1990s, the US military was regularly engaged in combat operations, or peacekeeping missions that evolved into combat, in Iraq, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia. The election of Democrat Bill Clinton to the presidency did nothing to reverse the US trend of employing force in the Islamic world begun under Reagan, as many appointed Democratic foreign policy consultants began to embrace neoconservative ideas and cast 'themselves as "liberal interventionists," sharing the neocons' affinity for military force but justifying the killing on "humanitarian" grounds.'[24] Although it can plausibly be argued that in the face of Western European aversion to involvement in former Yugoslavia, US military power was necessary to pacify frictions there, this was interpreted by neoconservatives as proof of the indispensability of using force to (somewhat contradictorily) foster a more peaceful and liberal world. With the disappearance of the USSR, Democrats were just as susceptible as Republicans to ideologically rooted 'end of history' and 'right side of history' narratives, surmising that American military power could speed the evolution of world politics along to its final utopian destination. That the US campaign to destroy Serb domination of Kosovo unintentionally empowered Kosovar Muslims and the Islamic foreign fighters who supported them, who migrated to Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East to fight *against* US forces in the next decade, went largely unacknowledged by the growing numbers of American foreign policy elites who advocated unconsidered military solutions.[25]

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, the George W. Bush administration dramatically increased the scope and depth of military intervention in the Middle East, employing both overt and covert coercive action to supposedly maintain US security and advance US interests. Although the United States continued to conduct black operations, these were in a sense more acceptable, as they were carried out after the 9/11 2001 terrorist attacks and were thus part of the 'Global War on Terror' (GWOT). From 2001 until the present, there has been increasingly less restraint on the US use of military force and continued decline in the practice of traditional diplomacy. Even decades before the advent of the GWOT, George Kennan was acutely aware of the tendency of democracies to overdramatize their military conflicts, to strip away context and contingency and to elevate limited conflicts to wars for national survival. Writing in 1961, Kennan postulated:

> There is, let me assure you, nothing in nature more egocentrical than the embattled democracy. It soon becomes the victim of its own war propaganda. It then tends to attach to its own cause an absolute value which distorts its own vision on everything else. *Its* enemy becomes the embodiment of evil. *Its* own side, on the other hand, is the center of all virtue. The contest comes to be viewed as having a final, apocalyptic quality. If *we* lose, all is lost; life will no longer be worth living; there will be nothing salvaged. If we win, then

> everything will be possible; all our problems will become soluble; the one great source of evil – *our* enemy – will have been crushed; the forces of good will then sweep forward unimpeded; all worthy aspirations will be satisfied.[26]

In an era of continuous and far flung military activity, often rationalized as essential for the defense of civilization itself, this tendency is increasingly evident, and provokes further rationalizations regarding the value of tactical successes. Despite the inability of Presidents Bush and Obama to translate massive military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, and lesser ones in Libya, Yemen, Pakistan and elsewhere into concrete political success, and in the face of waning public confidence in the efficacy of using American military power for the purpose of regime change, there is too little discussion of reverting to a more conservative traditional style of diplomacy that puts a premium on achieving foreign policy goals without the use of force.

Instead, administration officials from both parties continue to highly publicize successful military operations of limited scope that failed to achieve permanent political results. This was nowhere more evident than in the George W. Bush administration's proclamations of the significance of the 'surge' in Iraq during 2007 and 2008 under the leadership of General David Petraeus. Certainly, the surge neutralized Sunni militia activities against the US for a time, and even tamped down Shiite resistance, pushing the Iraq War off the front page of US newspapers, but this short-lived tactical success was hailed as a major strategic accomplishment. In actuality, the 'surge' provided even greater evidence of American delusion regarding the efficacy of military power and increasing American susceptibility for confusing 'pseudo-event' for genuine success.[27] The obvious liability in regularly engaging in these military forays for the purpose of boosting presidential public approval ratings is that they nurture self-deception that blinds decision makers to the long-term costs of heedless use of military power and the eventual possibility of military defeat. Increased focus on diplomatic ability to resolve conflicts without resorting to the use of force could blunt this potentiality, but that would require a bold change in the conception of US foreign policy that might not be initially acceptable to US voters, even with their growing wariness of US military intervention.

The failure of US public diplomacy in the twenty-first century

Another area of diplomatic interaction that proceeds from the assumptions of the New Diplomacy is public diplomacy, which in contrast to traditional diplomacy's attempt to identify solutions to foreign policy problems by employing qualified experts to form relationships with their opposite numbers in foreign countries, instead seeks to 'communicate directly with the *people* of other nations.'[28] During the twentieth century, the primary goals of US public diplomacy were: (1) 'to develop a positive image for the United States' (2) 'to create an understanding of American life and institutions with people in other countries' and (3) 'to establish

and maintain good relationships with people abroad.'[29] This was believed to be plausibly achievable due to the American perception that US interests were harmonious with the interests of the rest of the world's people and, correspondingly, because foreign leaders who opposed US interests were by definition harming their own populations.

During the Cold War, US public diplomacy had been reasonably successful due to the global salience of the democratic ideological narrative in countering the appeal of Soviet communism. The State Department was not responsible for public diplomacy, as President Eisenhower created the US Information Agency (USIA) in 1953 for the expressed purpose of producing literature and radio broadcasts (via Voice of America) that communicated a positive message about US policies and American values. USIA operated in 175 countries, and such notable broadcasting luminaries as Edward R. Murrow and John Chancellor contributed valuable service to the agency during its heyday in the 1960s. However, with the end of the Cold War, the ideological battle presumably won, the Clinton Administration shut down USIA in 1999. Upon its dissolution, the Department of State took over responsibility for US public diplomacy.

This meant that in the crucial period after September 11, 2001 the State Department had to effectively craft an American message to the world's population for the purpose of gaining global support for the GWOT. State Department efforts particularly focused on creating a positive view of the United States in the Middle East, where US military forces were rapidly deployed to Afghanistan in late 2001 for Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and then to Iraq in 2003. This effort involved radio broadcasts in Arabic and various other Middle Eastern languages and sought to emphasize 'shared values' between Muslims and Americans.[30] Even before the Bush administration launched Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in March 2003, it was clear that the State Department had failed to successfully cultivate favorable Middle Eastern disposition towards the United States. Less than a month prior to the commencement of OIF, the undersecretary of state in charge of public diplomacy testified before the Senate Foreign Relations committee, declaring that the gap between American comprehension of the US role in the world and the way others understood it was 'frighteningly wide' and that rather than narrowing this gap in perceptions, in the Middle East 'a young generation of terrorists is being created.'[31] Within a week, the undersecretary resigned, not only confirming the failure of the first GWOT public diplomacy effort but also possibly suggesting that US senators responsible for overseeing it had no desire to hear about it.

In assessing the efficacy of US public diplomacy since the dissolution of USIA, by 2003 thirty-three different investigations were unanimous in their findings: the State Department had systematically failed.[32] A succeeding assessment in 2008 found little improvement, as the State Department neither adequately resourced nor implemented public diplomacy.[33] Certainly, the fact that OIF, unlike OEF in Afghanistan, was a largely unprovoked US intervention did nothing to enhance Middle Eastern opinion of the US, but it is important to remember that US public diplomacy was failing prior to US military action in Iraq. A key reason for this is that the State Department made little effort to take cultural differences

between Middle Easterners and Americans into account, as US public diplomacy 'very much reflects a uniquely American style of communication. . . . While the American republic responded positively to the style, the Arab and Middle Eastern publics . . . responded negatively or not at all.'[34]

This failure is attributable to both the means of communication and the style of language employed in the State Department campaign. While Americans are comfortable with messages communicated via broadcasting and find personal communication for the purpose of persuading a large number of people to be laborious and cumbersome, Arabs are less likely to trust mass media and believe that personal communication is more reliable. Furthermore, the direct language employed in US public diplomacy towards the inhabitants of the Middle East after 9/11 contrasted with Osama bin Laden's allusions to the Koran, which were much more convincing to Muslims.[35] Perhaps the State Department's public diplomacy operation would have been more successful if it had been conducted in tandem with traditional diplomatic efforts by culturally competent US Foreign Service officers in the Middle East, as they could have developed personal relationships with elites for the purpose of influencing Middle Eastern public opinion as well as providing informed advice in crafting culturally compatible public diplomacy messages.

However, Foreign Service officers with the background to engage Middle Eastern elites and publics in this type of process were in short supply, as their numbers began dwindling in the 1990s due to the rising influence of neoconservatives who were mistrustful of US diplomats specifically trained to develop cultural competence in the Arab world.[36] It is little wonder that R. S. Zaharna, in his diagnosis of the shortcomings inherent in the State Department's post-9/11 public diplomacy, recommended that improvement would be dependent on 'more field-driven initiatives that work well abroad.'[37] The glaring problem is that the arm of government seemingly capable of doing this, the State Department, has become so taken with the notions of the New Diplomacy that it is not sufficiently qualified to attain the culturally relevant perspective necessary for improving US public diplomacy in the Middle East.

The impoverished state of US diplomacy today

In his 2014 assessment of US diplomacy, former FSO Lawrence Pope claims that although the US has a bureaucratic structure dedicated to foreign relations that is similar to that of all other states, 'Unlike other states, it does not take them seriously.'[38] This is the lamentable but reasonable conclusion to the trend that has been described in preceding sections. All of the dynamics that have been previously discussed have contributed to this current state of affairs: American exceptionalism, the separation of military strategy from political analysis, the erosion of Foreign Service influence in favor of political appointees and the continuous prosecution of undeclared wars. These overlap to buttress one another to not only denigrate the role of the State Department in US foreign policy, but also to undercut the effectiveness of US relations with the rest of the world.

That many of the expectations that guide US foreign policy are 'steered by unexamined assumptions'[39] is not unique to the United States, as every country's foreign policy is conditioned by its historical experience. However, the American predilection for seeing the world as an arena for confirming the universality of Western values demonstrates a singular tendency from which other states in the twenty-first century are not similarly afflicted. Properly functioning diplomacy, as it attempts to determine where US values overlap with those of other (particularly non-Western) states for the purpose of finding provisional agreement on issues of mutual interest, can potentially counter this national self-absorption that bedevils the United States. However, American exceptionalism has instead worn down the ability of the US State Department to play this role. This dynamic is exhibited in both the US inability to perceive the objectionable quality of Western values in some regions of the non-Western world as well as in the manner that these values are communicated. During the current era of sustained US international intervention and increasing US domestic demand for new forms of civil rights, American efforts to coerce consensus abroad on these values is an extreme attempt at self-validation, despite the 'ever-evolving' nature of these rights and the fact that in some cases they have been interpreted as 'empty at best and blasphemous at worst.'[40] This continues to be clearly evident in continuing US interventions in the Middle East.

American faith in technology and US government preference for employing the most updated forms of technology in communicating with the rest of the world also is a form of American exceptionalism that is in line with the New Diplomacy and counter to more reliable forms of cross-cultural communication. As the State Department role in conducting traditional diplomacy has been greatly circumscribed, it has attempted to sustain US relationships with allies and persuade enemies by adopting broad usage of social media. This is problematic because it is often hard to convey context in social media messaging and may lead to confusion about whether messages are personal or political in communications between parties who have no prior relationship or insufficient understanding of one another's cultural backgrounds.[41] Acknowledgment of the failure of US public diplomacy in the Middle East during the first years after 9/11 has done little to dent this trend. This was demonstrated during Hillary Clinton's tenure as Secretary of State, as the two major conclusions of the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Defense Review (QDDR) that she oversaw found that American diplomacy would become more effective through technological 'networking' and that US interventions would be more successful if US government agencies devised better forms of cooperation (the Foreign Service hardly received mention).[42] Rather than considering whether the US had badly misconceived global receptivity to sustained attempts at regime change via military force and public diplomacy, the QDDR advised that tinkering with technology and bureaucratic reform would correct the deficiencies of American foreign policy. At a juncture when it was abundantly clear that US military adventures in the Middle East had failed, the best solution that Clinton's State Department could manage was to recommend entrenchment of processes stemming from American exceptionalism.

The blindness associated with American exceptionalism has done much to encourage continuing separation of informed political analysis of foreign affairs from the conception of military strategy and conduct of military operations. National conceit combined with perceived global military dominance has produced an American mindset that assumes proclamations of righteousness and demonstrations of coercion will be sufficient to advance US interests. Instead, according to former FSO Charles W. Freeman, 'our habit of failing to define specific political objectives for our military' creates a situation where US use of military force becomes 'a brutally direct way of punishing our foes linked to no clear conception of how they might take aboard the lessons we imagine they should draw from the drubbing we give them.'[43] This prevailing mindset has further hamstrung US ability to successfully employ favored Cold War stratagems such as sanctions and deterrence, because these require reassuring our enemies about the limits of our objectives and the precise measures that enemies can take to alleviate the situation.[44] Here again, the importance of maintaining diplomatic relations with perceived foes is underlined and it becomes obvious that 'insisting on substantive concessions as the price for a meeting is self-defeating' because:

> Diplomatic contact is not a concession to an adversary but a means to gaining intelligence about its thinking and intentions, understanding and seeking to reshape how it sees its interests, looking for openings in its policy positions that can be exploited, conveying accurate messages and explanations of one's own reasoning, manipulating its appreciation of its circumstances, and facilitating concessions by it.[45]

Of course, all of these skills require sufficient training, experience and expertise in communicating with the rest of the world. However, the FSOs that have developed these capabilities have been increasingly marginalized within the leadership of the State Department.

From 1975 until 2012, even as the number of high-level leadership positions within the Department (deputy secretaries, undersecretaries, assistant secretaries) grew from 18 to 33, the percentage of these positions held by FSOs fell from 61 percent to 24 percent.[46] This was no more evident than in Secretary Clinton's decision to appoint academic Anne Marie Slaughter as the chief of the State Department's policy planning office (once led by George Kennan), and its subsequent decline into little more than a 'speechwriting shop.'[47] However, the depreciation of the Foreign Service in favor of political appointees is consistent with the assumptions of the New Diplomacy in that the key function of diplomacy is making ideological arguments. The paucity of FSOs involved in planning and directing State Department operations fosters a policymaking milieu in which decisions are made without enough consideration of specific characteristics of other states or non-state groups and perhaps too much consideration of short-term US domestic political factors.

All of these trends, in addition to the continuing effort to expand US special operations capabilities and the evolution of drone technology, strengthen the

entrenched US practice of initiating military campaigns with limited congressional involvement in determining whether or not to use force. Although some US military interventions have been undertaken after limited congressional approval in the form of Authorized Use of Military Force (AUMF) resolutions (for OEF and OIF), the US has not actually declared war per the constitutional process since 1941. These precipitous executive branch decisions to use force have not only minimized initial domestic deliberation but also diminished involvement of informed diplomatic opinion. Unfortunately, this has often meant that while US attempts to quickly commence coercive action have been facilitated, there has been too little consideration of how to conclude these campaigns, what third and fourth order effects they may produce, and whether they may be self-defeating in the longer term.[48] Moreover, even if complications do not ensue and US military operations produce potential political conditions advantageous to long-term US interests, diplomatic expertise is required to formulate and negotiate provisions that sustain these conditions and grant them broad acknowledgment.[49]

In sum, American preference for ideologically charged diplomacy that disdains expertise, precision and significant awareness of both self and other is largely responsible for alienating potential partners, missing opportunities to maximize American interests and sowing the seeds for future difficulties. The cases reviewed in the preceding chapters represent a natural and inevitable outcome of this diplomatic style, as US maintenance of relations with second-tier states that neither could be swayed by ideological offensives nor possessed sufficient military power to be an acute threat were deemed unworthy of conversation. The continuing US policy of broken diplomatic relations with Iran is only the most pronounced current example of American contempt for traditional diplomacy's assumption that the world will always be inhabited by states with competing interests. In refusing to acknowledge this reality, American foreign policy decision makers have conceded to do without a potential significant source of information (and, possibly, cooperation) regarding political dynamics in *other* states near Iran.

While US diplomats in Tehran might not have any success in persuading Iranians to abandon the *veleyat-e faqih* (which legitimizes Islamic governance of Iran), it is certainly plausible that they might learn more about Iran's activities and intentions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and elsewhere. Just as long-term alienation of Cuba aggravated US relations with other states in the Western hemisphere, and, more significantly, US refusal to acknowledge the communist regime in Beijing meant forgoing a significant source of information about relations within the communist world during the early Cold War, continuing estrangement of Tehran may carry significant potential costs. The US could realize this too late if it continues to promote military pseudo-events as having enduring positive political effects, setting itself up for the type of scenario that Carr warned about in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, as proponents of ideologically freighted foreign policies promote impossible goals and thus create their own worst case scenarios when reality fails to meet expectations.

Notes

1 Bacevich, Andrew. *America's War for the Greater Middle East* (New York: Random House, 2016), 298.
2 Murphy, Robert. *Diplomat Among Warriors: The Unique World of a Foreign Service Expert* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1964), 64.
3 Ibid., 93.
4 Atkinson, Rick. *An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942–1943* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002), 16–17.
5 Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 104.
6 Morison, a historian at Harvard at war's outbreak, was commissioned as a US naval commander for the purpose of overseeing the official history of US naval operations during the war. He and his small staff shipped on US naval vessels in both the Atlantic and the Pacific theaters from 1942 to 1945, observing major naval and amphibious campaigns and often experiencing enemy air and submarine attacks, and compiled the notes for what would eventually become the 15-volume official naval record. Morison rose to the rank of Rear Admiral in the naval reserve.
7 Morison, Samuel Elliot. *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, Volume II: Operations in North African Waters, October 1942–June 1943* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1984 [1947]), 65.
8 Ibid., 187–188.
9 Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, 124.
10 Pope, Lawrence. *The Demilitarization of American Diplomacy: Two Cheers for Striped Pants* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 17.
11 Mosley, Leonard. *Dulles: A Biography of Eleanor, Allen, and John Foster Dulles and Their Family Network* (New York: The Dial Press/James Wade, 1978), 360.
12 Pope, *The Demilitarization of American Diplomacy*, 11.
13 Scott, Peter Dale, *American War Machine: Deep Politics, the CIA Global Drug Connection and the Road to Afghanistan* (Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014) asserts that CIA support for Nationalist Chinese military contingents in Burma and Thailand after 1949 contributed to the 'Golden Triangle' in Southeast Asia becoming the leading opium-producing region of the world. He further posits that after the fall of Saigon in 1975, the CIA soon began focusing its efforts on Afghanistan and support for the Mujahedeen against Soviet intervention, and that the 'Golden Crescent' in central Asia became the global leader in opium production during the 1980s. This continued until Operation Enduring Freedom in 2002, and after a short interval due to US military efforts to suppress poppy cultivation, Afghanistan again became the most prolific opium producer by the latter part of the decade. If Scott is correct, CIA involvement in illicit drug operations for the financing of US-supported regime change efforts has been a consistent feature of American foreign policy since 1945, further eroding confidence in the moral rectitude of US leadership, undermining support for international law, significantly contributing to heroin addiction worldwide and degrading foreign trust in US diplomacy.
14 Prados, John. *President's Secret Wars: CIA and Pentagon Covert Operations From World War II Through the Persian Gulf* (Revised and Expanded edition) (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee/Elephant Paperbacks, 1996), 469–470.
15 Ibid., 470.
16 Ibid., 470.
17 Ibid., 471.
18 Ibid., 481.
19 Ibid., 480.
20 Pope, *The Demilitarization of American Diplomacy*, 18.
21 Kissinger was trained as a political scientist at Harvard and the subject of his dissertation was the traditional diplomacy among the European powers after the Napoleonic wars that re-established the balance of power system prevalent prior to the French

Revolution and the rise of Napoleon. Kissinger's dissertation became the basis for *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812–1822*, published in 1957.

22 According to William Shawcross in *The Shah's Last Ride* (New York: Touchstone/Simon & Schuster, 1988), the Nixon and Ford administrations' decision to 'order the national security bureaucracy to accept the demands and judgments of a foreign leader on arms transfers' (p168) was unprecedented.
23 Bacevich, *America's War for the Greater Middle East*, 134.
24 Parry, Robert. 'The State Department's Collective Madness,' *Consortium News*, June 17, 2016. Accessed at: https://consortiumnews.com/2016/06/17/the-state-departments-collective-madness/?print=print
25 Bacevich, *America's War for the Greater Middle East*, 199–200.
26 Kennan, George. *Russia and the West Under Lenin and Stalin* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1961), 5–6.
27 Bacevich claims that Petraeus had 'acquired mastery of . . . the pseudo-event' (*America's War for the Greater Middle East*, 283) and that this made him an ideal choice for temporarily stabilizing Iraq without achieving long-term stability. The term 'pseudo-event' was coined by historian Daniel Boorstin in *The Image, or What Happened to the American Dream* (1962).
28 Fitzpatrick, Kathy R. 'The Collapse of American Public Diplomacy,' *Public Diplomacy Alumni Association*, 2008. Accessed at: www.publicdiplomacy.org/94.htm
29 Ibid.
30 Zaharna, R. S. 'The Unintended Consequences of Crisis Public Diplomacy: American Public Diplomacy in the Arab World,' *FPIF.org*, John Gershman, ed., September 30, 2005. Accessed at: http://fpif.org/the_unintended_consequences_of_crisis_public_diplomacy_american_public_diplomacy_in_the_arab_world/
31 Zaharna, 'The Unintended Consequences of Crisis Public Diplomacy.'
32 Kiehl, William P. 'Humpty Dumpty Redux: Saving Public Diplomacy,' *American Diplomacy: Foreign Service Despatches and Periodic Reports on U.S. Foreign Policy*, March 2008. Accessed at: www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/item/2008/0103/kieh/kiehl_humpty.html
33 Fitzpatrick, 'The Collapse of American Public Diplomacy.'
34 Zaharna, 'The Unintended Consequences of Crisis Public Diplomacy.'
35 Ibid.
36 Neff, Donald. 'The Marginalization of U.S. Mideast Experts,' *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, October/November 1995, 80–83. Accessed at: www.wrmea.org/1995-october-november/the-marginalization-of-u.s.-mideast-experts.html
37 Zaharna, 'The Unintended Consequences of Crisis Public Diplomacy.'
38 Pope, *The Demilitarization of American Diplomacy*, 8.
39 Freeman, Chas. 'America's Diplomatic Crisis,' *The American Conservative*, June 16, 2015. Accessed at: www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/americas-diplomatic-crisis/
40 Bacevich, *America's War for the Greater Middle East*, 199.
41 Pope, *The Demilitarization of American Diplomacy*, 27–28.
42 Ibid., 40–49.
43 Freeman, 'America's Diplomatic Crisis.'
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
46 Johnson, Susan R., Ronald E. Neumann and Thomas R. Pickering. 'Presidents Are Breaking the U.S. Foreign Service,' *The Washington Post*, April 11, 2013. Accessed at: www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/presidents-are-breaking-the-us-foreign-service/2013/04/11/4efb5afe-a235-11e2-82bc-511538ae90a4_story.html?utm_term=.5e80aefae26e
47 Pope, *The Demilitarization of American Diplomacy*, 39.
48 Tierney, Dominic. *The Right Way to Lose a War: America in an Age of Unwinnable Conflicts* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2015), 302–303.
49 Freeman, 'America's Diplomatic Crisis.'

7 Conclusion

> The final wisdom of life requires, not an annulment of incongruity but the achievement of serenity within and above it.
>
> —Reinhold Niebuhr[1]

The preceding bit of advice, offered by Niebuhr during the early Cold War period in *The Irony of American History* (1952), in which he remonstrated with Americans to realize that power and innocence could not long co-exist and that the costs of attempting to establish perpetual US primacy would be significant, has gone sadly unheeded. Victory in World War II transformed the American self-conception of itself as a 'city on the hill' example to the rest of the world into that of a superpower actively responsible for defending the 'free' countries of the world from Soviet designs. Of course, even prior to the Second World War, American intervention in the Western hemisphere had demonstrated that the United States had not confined its international role to that of a mere model for other states to pattern themselves. The organic conditions that abetted the initial establishment and eventual enlargement of the republic also encouraged an already idealistic American people to trust that their country was meant for great things, and a myth was nurtured that it was America's mission to combat the corruption of the old world and the savagery of the new. This high-minded perspective viewed European diplomacy as uncaring, cynical, and if engaged, possibly contaminating. This was certainly Wilson's interpretation when he sailed for France at the end of the First World War in hopes of abolishing Europe's 'Old Diplomacy' and establishing a new system of international relations.

Although Wilson's system, manifested in the creation of new states on the basis of self-determination and the establishment of the League of Nations, failed to prevent a second world war, this was viewed from America as another European failure for which the United States had no culpability. The term 'appeasement' became forever associated with the failure of the Western European democracies to stand up to aggression. During the war and its immediate aftermath, the United States was compelled by circumstances to implement a style of diplomacy that resembled that of pre-1914 Europe, temporarily cooperating with ideological foes for the purpose of securing survival and advancing national interests. As might be

anticipated given the gravity of international events, practitioners of traditional diplomacy that disparaged gratuitous ideological influence on the exercise of diplomacy became briefly influential in both policymaking and academic analysis of it. But latent belief in American exceptionalism curbed any possibility of wartime diplomatic practice maintaining a long-term influence. The US was the supreme victor of history's greatest war, a war fought in the name of democracy, and victory indicated to Americans that the world increasingly wanted American democracy. Thus, it was a severe disenchantment when the United States was unable to persuade or compel the world to conform to American postwar expectations of an acceptable international order. The key diplomatic juncture in this progression of events was the establishment of the communist regime in Beijing, revealingly framed from the United States as the 'loss of China.'

The rancor and hysteria that this event provoked in the United States is difficult to fathom absent an adequate comprehension of the American self-conception of its global destiny. This elastic viewpoint allowed Americans to maintain their own innocence and count non-democratic allies as being in the camp of the righteous while condemning non-democratic (usually communist) enemies as unstintingly malevolent. Thus, when the CCP won its victory over Chiang's Nationalists, Americans assumed that something had gone dreadfully wrong and treachery was afoot. American diplomats, military leaders, academics and journalists who had lived in China and were actually aware of China's internal and external political dynamics challenged the 'who lost China' proposition and were labeled appeasers who supported Chinese and international communism. As was iterated in the introduction chapter of this study, the American reaction to Mao's victory was rooted in an unspoken fear that perhaps the US system of government and its corresponding ideology did not offer a universal solution to all political predicaments. Chiang had never complied with American suggestions that he transform China's political system into a democracy, but he paid lip service to these suggestions and was a friend of the United States fighting communism, while Mao (although he received almost no aid from the USSR until the civil war was practically won) promised to remove Western influence from China. Instead of viewing Mao as the man who finally brought an end to China's 'century of humiliation' at the hands of the West, as the majority of Chinese initially did, Americans saw him as an agent of the Kremlin.

This interpretation of events facilitated the American decision not to offer diplomatic recognition to the Beijing regime. Americans reasoned that communism was evil and must be resolutely opposed, but why deliberate with a mere proxy who was at Moscow's beck and call? This superficial understanding guided American policy and provided persuasive rhetoric in US domestic politics. However, it essentially ignored historic fundamental contradictions of American behavior towards China and other developing states, as the US vocally called for freedom and self-determination in countries emerging from colonialism while simultaneously attempting to maintain undue influence over these countries' leaders for the purpose of advancing American economic and security interests. China's resentment at Western intervention dating from the early nineteenth century, in which

the United States did not initially take part but then increasingly did so during the twentieth century, was the real animus for the communist revolution in China.

The same mode of thinking that conditioned American comprehension of US relations with China before 1949 colored American understanding of relations with pre-revolutionary Cuba and Iran. Self-delusion regarding American beneficence in dealing with these countries gave way to shock when American-backed leaders were overthrown. This was compounded by postwar dynamics in international politics that granted the new regimes in these states significant strategic importance. Soviet possession of nuclear weapons implied that overt US attempts at regime change in Beijing and Havana carried too great a risk, and further destabilizing Iran after its revolution might also invite a Soviet advance southward. These factors, along with an understandably strong dissonance among the American public for drawn-out wars in faraway places, precluded American employment of comprehensive military power for the purpose of eliminating these adversative revolutionary governments.

However, in each case the US endeavored to apply military half-measures in hopes of undermining the revolutionary governments in China, Cuba and Iran, and in all cases this only increased support for the new regimes. While in the China case, the US refused to offer diplomatic recognition to the communist government, and in the Cuba and Iran cases the US severed diplomatic relations, in all three instances the US chose to cope with untoward developments by refusing to acknowledge or communicate with the victorious revolutionaries. In all cases, continued support for the US policy of non-recognition/severed relations became a sort of American 'loyalty test' for decades, with few US politicians openly questioning the policy and those that did paying a political price. The naïve assumption that US refusal to negotiate with malevolent revolutionary governments (other than the mighty USSR) would not really cost the US anything, as the revolutionary leaders were conceived to be Soviet pawns, was rapidly demonstrated as incorrect.

Had the US maintained some form of official communication with Beijing, it is possible that American led UN forces would have realized the folly of pushing to the Yalu in the fall of 1950, drawing the PLA into the conflict, and vastly increasing the cost and length of the Korean War. Certainly, the US was unaware of this at the time due to the prevailing belief that Moscow was calling the shots. During the mid-1950s, the US had a chance to re-evaluate its China policy but instead reaffirmed it, presaging US refusal to accept the reality of the Sino-Soviet split, and in turn fostering devastating decisions regarding US involvement in Vietnam in the 1960s. Although extended severed relations with Cuba and Iran did not prove as costly, there was greater potentiality for catastrophe due to the absence of communications with the Castro government during the early 1960s, and continuing broken relations with Iran have entailed that the US passed up opportunities to gain more information about Iran's neighbors, including Iraq and Afghanistan, where the US has yet to fully disengage itself, which could have better informed American strategy in the region. The evidence strongly indicates that estranging second-tier foes (or those who simply see the world differently) via the silent treatment does indeed bear significant costs.

So why has this evidence been ignored? Perhaps it is because Americans cannot bear consideration that their system is merely a good system for governing at *some* times and in *some* places. The founding of the United States was nurtured by a belief that Americans were a chosen people tasked with remaking the world. Just as Chinese, Iranians and Cubans did, Americans attempted to validate their revolution by exporting it. There is little question that Americans were significantly more successful in this endeavor, but this does not necessarily validate that the American system, not even in existence for 250 years, embodies a transhistorical solution to world governance. Nor does it mean, whatever good the United States has done in its international relations, that the US is perpetually beneficent in its dealings with other states. These precarious assumptions have been protected by America's uniquely favorable geographic and historic circumstances but were repudiated by the Chinese, Cuban and Iranian revolutions. American faith in its historical calling strongly influenced decisions to alienate these new regimes from international society, and these judgments bore substantial penalties. This begs a further question; how will the United States adjust to an era of international politics that is characterized by increasing multipolarity?

Looking ahead: why the US shouldn't double down on the New Diplomacy

Although a significant portion of American foreign policy operators, thinkers and commentators, broadly classified as neoconservatives, continue to argue that the only means to ensuring global order and advancing American interests is a vigilant *pax Americana*, there are strong voices from the US and abroad that contend that the US 'unipolar moment' has concluded and American foreign policy must become accommodated to this new state of affairs. While those maintaining this view are not in absolute agreement on the nature and current course of international politics, they can be broadly characterized as subscribing to multipolarity, as they endorse neither neoconservative military dominance nor neoliberal-inspired universalized institutions as the solution to the future of US foreign policy. Among these is Kissinger, who posits that the future of international relations will be 'not simply a multipolarity' but 'a world of increasingly contradictory realities.'[2] He argues that while the US must, for the sake of its own identity, continue to advocate universal ideals, it cannot elude acknowledgment of other civilizational traditions, and must contribute to 'a concept of order that transcends the perspective and ideals of any one region or nation.'[3]

He concludes this because of the realization that the United States is in relative decline, and continued American crusades for the purpose of upholding US global supremacy and spreading democracy are futile and wasteful, in the final analysis serving only to dissipate American power. Ian Bremmer, president of the prestigious Eurasia Group international consulting firm, broadly concurs with Kissinger, arguing that America can only preserve its power by refraining from brazen foreign policy adventures and instead must devise general guiding principles for US foreign policy that give due consideration to the potential *costs* of

any specific policy.[4] Regarding the issue of costs, Kishore Mahbubani, Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at National University of Singapore, observed in 2009 that American intervention in Afghanistan over the previous several decades was 'a systematic failure of American society' and demonstrates 'how the abuse of American power has created many of the problems the United States now confronts abroad.'[5] While Mahbubani refers to the metamorphosis of the CIA-fostered Mujahedeen into al-Qaeda, the US foray into Iraq has shaped a similar outcome there, as Operation Iraqi Freedom provided the conditions for the rise of ISIS, as did the NATO intervention in Libya that in part stimulated the massive Middle East refugee crisis that has swamped Europe.

The preponderant solution to finding a means of avoiding these self-imposed fiascos is to desist from advocating an overly ideological approach to foreign policy and instead consult a wider array of information for the purpose of guiding policy. Bremmer claims that the United States will only continue to degrade its international position if it persists with a 'doctrinaire,' ideologically misconceived approach to its external relations.[6] Amitav Acharya, a Canadian scholar of Indian birth now holding the UNESCO Chair in Transnational Challenges and Governance at American University's School of International Service, argues that rather than attempting to maintain global supremacy, the US must 'regionalize its grand strategy, encouraging middle powers, regional powers and regional organizations . . . supporting and working through inclusive regional institutions, such as ASEAN and the African Union.' with the goal of achieving a more informed and reflexive US influence on non-Western areas of the world.[7] This will necessitate that the US alter its engrained tendency to marginalize and undermine smaller states with which it has ideological contretemps, as the future will increasingly demand cooperation with varying coalitions of states on different issues.[8] In other words, the US will have to adopt a diplomatic posture that more resembles traditional diplomacy, conceiving no other states as either perpetual friends or eternal enemies.

Kissinger advises that the central task of our era is to arrive at a 'conception of the future' that supersedes narrow national and civilizational constructs for the purpose of informing a means to establishing and maintaining international order.[9] If this is the case, then American international relations (IR) scholars should direct their efforts to aiding in the formation of this conception. To offer any significant guidance, however, American academics need to become better informed about IR theory outside the US. Barry Buzan, retired IR professor from the London School of Economics, proposes a conception of the international future with which US scholars would do well to familiarize themselves. In 'A World Order Without Superpowers: Decentred Globalism,' Buzan declares that while US power is in decline, it will not be replaced by another state as the dominant global force. Rather, international politics will revert to a global balance of power system similar to the one that was in place prior to the ascent of Western dominance in the seventeenth century, while maintaining a much greater degree of interconnectedness due to global technological advance. Owing to the effects of the global financial crisis of 2008, the liberal model has lost some of its appeal,

and thus the prospects for the US effort to sustain a universal ideological vision for the world are much less than they were during the Cold War and the immediate post–Cold War period. This and the rise of non-Western states due to technology transfers has encouraged a broader global anti-hegemonism movement that is suspicious of US rationalization of its attempts to define international society from an American perspective. Given this set of emerging circumstances, Buzan recommends that the Western powers, particularly the US,

> can take some satisfaction from having imposed much of their political, economic, and social form onto the rest of the world, and so substantially shaped the direction in which the future will unfold. Now, however, they have to both acknowledge that not all of this was either good or well done, and let the rest of the world experiment on how best to accommodate its various cultural and historical characteristics to the Western legacy.[10]

This will also require a significant departure from settled American inclination. Dominant American IR theories, to include neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism and democratic peace theory, have done little to influence the successful conduct of US foreign policy, as basic assumptions that states are either inherently combative, ubiquitously desirous of interdependence or desperately in need of democracy are contrived from an inadequate and superficial understanding of what animates state behavior. All of these assumptions are too rooted in American norms to offer useful explanations in specific foreign policy dilemmas. More directly, while all of these theories explicitly refrain from discussions of morality, they all implicitly assume US innocence in its interactions with the world. For Mahbubani, this is a seminal reason for miscarriage in American foreign policy, as

> virtually all analysis by American intellectuals rests on the assumption that problems come from outside America and America provides only solutions. Yet the rest of the world can see clearly that American power has created many of the world's major problems. American thinkers and policymakers cannot see this because they are engaged in an incestuous, self-referential, and self-congratulatory discourse. They have lost the ability to listen to other voices on the planet because they cannot conceive of the possibility that they are not already listening. But until they begin to open their ears, America's problems with the world will continue.[11]

Mahbubani claims that one reason this pathology lingers unchecked is that it benefits special interests within the United States. According to former FSO Charles Freeman, the penultimate special interest network, the military industrial complex, has overwhelmingly influenced American think tanks and academia in devising novel arguments for the use of force and means for employing it, while almost completely ignoring the search for less bellicose solutions for US foreign relations, such as instituting updated diplomatic guidelines for the State Department.[12]

The negative potential of continuing US military dominant foreign policy

What is more, the United States may be able to ill afford continuing a policy of sustained military involvement in the Middle East and elsewhere. An era of renewed multipolarity could foster a dynamic strategic environment in which the US must concentrate more on military competition from peer level state competitors rather than primarily conducting extended actions against insurgencies and non-state groups, as it has during the last decade and a half. Along with the obvious financial and human toll that the United States has accrued due to long-term military involvement in the Middle East, there are two other conspicuous costs that have ramifications for the future of US foreign policy. First, because the US has failed to successfully conclude any of its twenty-first-century conflicts in the Middle East, by way of bringing about a diplomatic settlement acceptable to all influential parties to a conflict that actually ends hostilities, no process of renewal of relationships has commenced. Instead, the US continues to employ manned aircraft strikes, drone strikes and special forces' raids from North Africa to Pakistan, ostensibly laboring under the misconception that these will somehow alter the long-term trajectory of events. The hard reality of that trajectory is that these US actions are simply increasing anger at, suspicion of and resistance to US intervention across the Islamic world. Instead of eliminating terrorism, consistent US military action, largely unguided by an appreciation of long-term strategic context, is doing little to ameliorate that threat, and possibly is increasing it. According to a 2014 Pew Research Center study, two thirds of the residents of all other regions of the world have a favorable view of the US, while less than one third of those in the Middle East view the US favorably.[13]

Additionally, continuous US military action has degraded both human and material resources needed to successfully conduct future wars against state-level enemies. For at least ten years the US military, particularly the US Army, has concentrated its training on counterinsurgency operations and largely abandoned preparation for fighting conventional battles against traditional state competitors (which is more demanding and protracted), while simultaneously shortening the lifespan of US aircraft, tanks and other military vehicles and depleting stocks of ordnance.[14] Taken together, this means that the net effect of American military adventurism since 2001 has been to potentially increase hostility from non-state, unconventional actors and to leave the US less capable of successfully fighting against a conventional state-level actor such as Russia or China. The quest for regime change and re-making the world in America's image via coercion, against enemies that pose only marginal, if any, threat to core US interests, could do real harm to American military prospects in a contingency when the US must deal with enemies that actually possess the power to defeat the United States in military confrontation. This ironic outcome of America's military-centric foreign policy can only be assuaged by adopting a more contextual strategic approach that distinguishes between wars of choice and wars of necessity and attempts to

understand the possible unintended and indirect consequences of military action, tasks that an empowered State Department would be ideally fitted to undertake.

One of the reasons that ongoing US military interventions have been so prolonged and ineffective is that not only has there been too little traditional diplomatic guidance in discerning where and when to intervene, but also too little State Department direction of occupation and reconstruction efforts after initial military operations have been concluded. While generals have routinely complained that they are forced to assume these missions due to the State Department's inability to carry out pacification and reconstruction assignments, the current US military system of unified commands for geographic areas of responsibility (AORs) is 'genetically engineered to fill the void left by the State Department's retreat, and there should be no surprise in the fact that this is exactly what they have done.'[15] It is reasonable to assume that military leaders trained for fighting are not ideally suited for overseeing nation-building operations, but historical American preference for military solutions to foreign policy problems, as evidenced by US laws from the National Security Act of 1947 to the Defense Re-Organization Act of 1986 (which established the unified command system of AORs led by military commanders) has so debilitated the State Department that it is incapable of completing missions historically suited to it. US military distaste for responsibility in directing occupation and nation building missions has, not unexpectedly, met with little success, as demonstrated by the instance of massive corruption in the US military mission in Afghanistan from 2001 to the present.

Continuous combat in wars of choice against non-state enemies that do not pose an existential threat to the United States has increased the number of potential US enemies, weakened American military capability, and dissipated US public appetite for war. But what if the US finds itself in a position where it actually *must* use military force against a genuine threat? It is consideration of this contingency that should be the core concern of American foreign policy decision makers. This means it is imperative that:

> Washington must ensure the U.S. military is ready for modern war, and then employ this tool with greater discretion. Put simply, we're too quick to seize the sword. . . . The answer is greater restraint, or setting a higher bar for the use of force. This is not an excuse for inaction or a retreat into isolation. American leadership helps underpin the global order. It does mean casting aside chimerical nightmares, like the fall of Vietnam triggering a domino effect of Communist gains across East Asia. And it means discarding alluring dreams, like regime change in Iraq causing a cascade of freedom in the Middle East.[16]

Simply put, American foreign policy decision makers must be more selective in decisions related to initiating coercion. How can this be achieved? One place to start is to consider empowering the US State Department to practice a more traditional diplomacy. No organization is more ideally situated to offer crucial advice in this area than a re-invigorated State Department, with a Foreign Service whose

members have served abroad in countries that are on good terms with the United States *and those countries which are not*. For they should have a more informed perspective regarding the potentialities inherent in the commitment of US military force due to their exposure to opinion of leaders and publics who may either be on the receiving end of American coercion or are sympathetic to the United States but believe the US is frittering away its power without sufficient reason.

Instead of publicly imploring the President to launch air strikes against the Syrian government, as some 50 State Department personnel did during the summer of 2016, a renewed State Department should be preparing studies of contingencies regarding what possible force could actually replace the current Syrian regime in governing Syria and whether this would be at all more favorable to the US than the Assad family. Rather than jumping on the regime change bandwagon, a fully functioning State Department should be analyzing the possibilities for cooperation with Russia, Iran and China while remaining cognizant of the fact these states' interests will never completely overlap with those of the United States. A revitalized State Department should be posting members of the Foreign Service to as many other countries as possible, not just for the purpose of maintaining the most informed understanding of current international politics as possible, but also for developing future leaders and thinkers who can advise on how best to engage emerging twenty-first century issues such as cyberwarfare.[17] For the betterment of the United States, there is no substitute for a fully functional State Department in uncertain years ahead, for as former ambassador Freeman declares, 'We are entering an era of strategic fluidity in which there are no fixed lines for Cold War–style diplomacy to defend, there is declining deference to our leadership, and there are ever more challenges that cannot be solved by military means.'[18]

Notes

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17 Pope, *The Demilitarization of American Diplomacy*, 55.
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