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**The Virtual FPE:
A Counterfactual Analysis of Operation Iraq Freedom**

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Declaration of Authorship

1. The author hereby declares that he compiled this thesis independently, using only the listed resources and literature.
2. The author hereby declares that all the sources and literature used have been properly cited.
3. The author hereby declares that the thesis has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

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Abstract

This thesis will create a counterfactual where the United States of America (USA) conducts Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in early 2003. However, USA will deploy 300,000 troops towards preventing a worst-case scenario of an Iraqi insurgency conducting asymmetric warfare against its coalition. The antecedent of a change in troop levels in May 2003 is analyzed for its effect on a specific consequent, the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) weapons system. The consequent is perceived as the effect of contingency planning for securing weapons depots across Iraq to prevent the use of the IED weapons system after conventional military operations end. The foreign policy executive (FPE) is the independent variable whose manipulation will change the dependent variable, USA's geostrategy after 9/11.

Ferguson's *Virtual History* (1997), Lebow's *Forbidden Fruit* (2010), and Harvey's *Explaining the Iraq War* (2012) will give rules to identify how this counterfactual is a plausible break from reality. The framework of neoclassical realism clarifies the ultimate decision unit of the State, the foreign policy executive (FPE) as responsible for war-making. Geopolitics will connect the FPE, which is the independent variable, to USA's geostrategy, the dependent variable, to understand the historic context for the war in 2003.

The theory application begins with a historic analysis of US geopolitics after the Cold War. Contextualizing how unipolarity was understood by the FPE before 9/11 will explain why OIF occurred. Regardless of who was the President of the USA on 9/11, this counterfactual theorizes how different assumptions about modern warfare by the FPE could have motivated it to send additional troops for post-conflict operations towards disarming a potential insurgency of asymmetric potential. A combination of Cohen's net assessment and Quigley's weapons system provide a geopolitical theory that is the basis for a plausible counterfactual to have occurred. In conclusions, the present reality of a post-unipolar world will be considered from a geopolitical perspective.

Keywords:

Counterfactual, Foreign Policy Executive, Geostrategy, Net Assessment, Weapons Systems

Acknowledgements:

To my Mother and Father.

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Introduction

All you need in this life is ignorance and confidence, then success is sure.
-Mark Twain¹

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), the war launched by the United States of America (USA) and its coalition to disarm Iraq of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and change its regime, began 3/19/2003, 553 days after the terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001 (9/11).² USA ended its occupation of Iraq on 12/31/2011 with 4,505 US military personnel killed, 32,292 wounded, and at least 500,000 Iraqis killed.³ From a US geopolitical perspective, OIF is one of the most important variable towards explaining the relative change occurring among the Great Powers. Preventing the reemergence of a competing power or coalition ‘in any region critical to our interests’ was a core tenet of US strategy after the Cold War.⁴ The preponderance of power personified in President HW Bush’s ‘New World Order’ speech in 1990 has narrowed precipitously since USA left Iraq in 2011.⁵ Whether bipolar, tripolar, or simply multipolar, the international system is now inescapably *post-unipolar*. [emphasis mine]

This thesis will develop a counterfactual which could have produced a different outcome for US geostrategy after 9/11. In reality, President Bush declared an end to combat operations on 5/1/2003 with almost 170,000 total US and coalition troops occupying Iraq.⁶ This moment in time is **X** and represents the antecedent factor which will be changed. In the counterfactual scenario, **X1**, on or about 5/1/2003, the President explains to the American people and the world 300,000 US troops will occupy Iraq through August 2004. Instead of the movie-

¹ Mark Twain, *The Los Angeles Times*, <https://www.newspapers.com/article/55822232/the-los-angeles-times/3/16/1930>.

² To avoid confusion, OIF will cover the entire war between 3/19/2003 to 12/31/2011. It will not include US military operations in Iraq prior to 3/19/2003 or after 12/31/2003. This thesis will use the abbreviations ‘USA’ for ‘The United States of America’ and ‘US’ for ‘American’ respectively. All dates will utilize MM/DD/YYYY format, except for 9/11.

³ Department of Defense, *Casualty Status*. <https://www.defense.gov/casualty.pdf> (September 11, 2023); Amy Hagopian, et al., “Mortality in Iraq Associated with the 2003-2011 War and Occupation: Findings from a National Cluster Sample Survey by the University Collaborative Iraq Mortality Study,” *PLoS Medicine*, (October 10, 2013), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3797136/>; <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-deaths-survey/iraq-conflict-has-killed-a-million-iraqis-survey-idUSL3048857920080130>.

⁴ Paul Wolfowitz, *Defense Planning Guidance, FY 1994-1999*, Department of Defense, <https://www.archives.gov/files/declassification/iscap/pdf/2008-003-docs1-12.pdf> (April 16, 1992).

⁵ George H.W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit,” Washington, D.C. (September 11, 1990).

⁶ U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, *The Cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Other Global War on Terror Operations Since 9/11*, by Amy Belasco, RL33110 (December 8, 2014), p. 82; Donald P. Wright and Timothy R. Reese, *ON POINT II: Transition to the New Campaign*, (Combat Studies Institute Press: Kansas, 2008), pp. 169-170.

like setting of a jet landing on an aircraft carrier with a banner declaring MISSION ACCOMPLISHED in the background, it is a subdued scene at Arlington National Cemetery with Washington, D.C. and the western wall of the Pentagon alit behind the President.⁷ The President will ask the American people for a collective sacrifice in blood and treasure to simultaneously rebuild Iraq and fight the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). If USA is the ‘indispensable nation’ and war against Saddam’s regime is necessary to its national security, then it must be fought with the total commitment of the **State**.⁸

The deployment of 300,000 US troops in Iraq would change the geopolitical environment in the immediate aftermath of Saddam’s overthrow.⁹ The purpose of X1 is focused upon the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) weapons system, represented as Y. IED utilized by anti-coalition forces produced most casualties for the coalition so IED’s potential mitigation would have dramatic effect, represented as Y1.¹⁰ Quickly securing Saddam’s stores of conventional munitions is part of post-conflict planning along with winning the hearts and minds of Iraqis and preventing the spread of potential WMD.¹¹ A net assessment will conjure up a worst-case scenario of a planned insurgency by regime loyalists who utilize asymmetric tactics against coalition forces. This counterfactual imagines the deployment of 300,000 US troops in 2003, the effect on IED as a weapons system of an insurgency, and the geostrategic consequences for USA, Iraq, and beyond.

For a State to conduct preventive warfare against another State is a breach of sovereignty and, according to international law, illegal.¹² If international politics is understood as an anarchic hierarchy, a great power will

⁷ The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. *9/11 Report*. (July 22, 2004). <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/GPO-911REPORT/>, p. 314.

⁸ Albright, Madeline K. By Matt Lauer. NBC-TV “*The Today Show*”. (February 19, 1998). <https://1997-2001.state.gov/statements/1998/980219a.html>. When the word ‘State’ is capitalized in this thesis, it is being used as a synonym for ‘country’ or ‘nation-state.’

⁹ *The U.S. Army In The Iraq War: Volume 1 (Invasion, Insurgency, Civil War 2003-2006)*. ed. Joel D. Rayburn and Frank K. Sobchak (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College Press, 2019), p. 36. <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/386/>.

¹⁰ Anthony H. Cordesman, Charles Loi, Vivek Kocharlakota, *IED Metrics for Iraq: June 2003 – September 2010*. (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2010). https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/publication/101110_ied_metrics_combined.pdf.

¹¹ Condoleezza Rice, *Iraq: Goals, Objectives, Strategy*. <http://library.rumsfeld.com/doclib/sp/4136/2002-10-29%20From%20Condoleezza%20Rice%20re%20Principals%27%20Committee%20Review%20of%20Iraq%20Policy%20Paper.pdf> (October 29, 2002).

¹² Robert Jackson, “Sovereignty in World Politics: A Glance at the Conceptual and Historical Landscape”, *Political Studies* Vol. 47, Issue 3 (1999), pp. 431-456. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9248.00211>; Jeffery Record, "The Bush Doctrine and War with Iraq," *Parameters* 33, no. 1 (2003), p. 7. <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2135&context=parameters>.

practice self-restraint or utilize the Melian Dialogue as it suits them.¹³ 9/11 is a ‘situational variable’ which produced fear and the opportunity to utilize the State power of USA to revise the international system.¹⁴ Through the international relations ‘theory’ of neoclassical realism, the Foreign Policy Executive (**FPE**) is utilized as the independent variable which effects the dependent variable of **geostrategy** – ‘the strategic management of geopolitical interests.’¹⁵ Geopolitics will then manipulate the FPE, resulting in a different geostrategy after 9/11. This is counterfactualized as deploying 300,000 US troops to monopolize violence and create the time and space for an Iraqi political, economic, and security architecture which benefits US national interests going into political-party nomination conventions for the 2004 US Presidential election.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND OUTLINE

Chapter 1. Theory development

1.1-A counterfactual requires terminology with precise definitions for separating the unit of analysis from a particular moment in time and creating a plausibly different outcome. Ferguson’s *Virtual History* begins with a history of counterfactual thinking which introduces determinism and contingency; terms vital for understanding human and organizational activity.¹⁶ Lebow’s *Forbidden Fruit: Counterfactual Analysis and International Relations* follows with guidelines for structuring the terms which identify the antecedent in relation to the consequent.¹⁷ It is used as a guide to establish references for arguing falsifiability in accordance with the social sciences. It builds on Lebow’s earlier critique of Ferguson to transmit contingency and determinism along to the setting of the historical analysis.¹⁸ Harvey’s *Explaining the Iraq War: Counterfactual Theory, Logic, and Evidence* argues a Gore-FPE would have made the same decision to go to war with Iraq after 9/11.¹⁹ It creates a counterfactual where the Bush-FPE (**V**) is replaced by a

¹³ Thucydides, *The Complete Writings of Thucydides: The Peloponnesian War*. Translated by John H. Finley, Jr. (New York: Random House, 1951), pp. 330-337.

¹⁴ Charles F. Hermann, “International Crisis as a Situational Variable” in *International Politics and Foreign Policy* 2 ed. James N. Rosenau (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 410.

¹⁵ The statement on NCR not being a theory is from Frank P. Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War: Counterfactual Theory, Logic and Evidence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 288; Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), p. 30.

¹⁶ Niall Ferguson, *Virtual History* ((1997) New York: Basic Books, 1999).

¹⁷ Richard N. Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit: Counterfactuals and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

¹⁸ Richard N. Lebow, “What’s So Different about a Counterfactual?” *World Politics* vol. 52, No. 4 (Jul., 2000), pp. 550-585, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25054129>.

¹⁹ Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*.

Gore-FPE (V1) who, after 9/11 (W), are led to similar conclusions on the threat posed by Saddam's regime to produce OIF (X1).

1.2 *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* is the primary source for understanding this thesis'

International Relations discourse.²⁰ The foreign policy model of neoclassical realism (NCR) is utilized to trace the process from the independent to dependent variable.²¹ This counterfactual argues the FPE, the independent variable, is the unit of analysis which modifies geostrategy and produces outcomes observable through geopolitics. *Geopolitics in Principle and Practice* defines geopolitics and political geography with a pre-Atomic Age clarity that inspires the perspective of this thesis.²² Geopolitics influences neoclassical realism for geostrategy, the dependent variable, to be understood as the result of the FPE. Because of the influence of geopolitical thinking throughout history, it is vital to include Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* to shape how geopolitics will be utilized in this thesis.²³

1.3 The FPE is applied to the methodology developed from *Forbidden Fruit* and is then overlaid upon the counterfactual narrative of *Explaining the Iraq War*. The plausibility of the counterfactual is the result of applying rules where in response to the primary conditional, 9/11, it is rational for the reader to believe X1 is a "close-call" counterfactual.²⁴ This potentiality is based on a logical path that goes from explaining counterfactualism, the FPE, geostrategy, and the mechanism through which their interaction is observed, geopolitics.

Chapter 2. Historical Analysis and Theory Application

2.1 This section is a historical analysis of the period of time between the end of the Cold War and 9/11. This purpose of this section is to provide evidence for (U) which represents the background for how the USA-FPE would react to 9/11. The turning point for this thesis occurs within U whereby V is replaced by V1. The events of 9/11 in this thesis follow the authoritative discourse produced by *The 9/11 Report*. It will

²⁰ Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

²¹ See Figure 1, p. 15

²² Russell H. Fifield and G. Etzel Percy, *Geopolitics in Principle and Practice* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1944).

²³ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, ((1948) New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978).

²⁴ Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit*, p. 24.

assume the bureaucratic intransience which contributed to a ‘failure of imagination’ will exist in a Gore-FPE as it did in the Bush-FPE.²⁵

2.2 It is in the planning to disarm Iraq of WMD and remove Saddam’s regime that a worst-case scenario for OIF will be conceived. This results from conducting a net assessment, the appraisal of military balances, whose primary source is Cohen’s *Net Assessment: An American Approach*.²⁶ The theory behind this worst-case scenario is from Quigley’s *Weapons Systems and Political Stability*.²⁷ Weapons systems is the theoretical foundation for a plausible-world counterfactual, **X1**, where USA invades Iraq on or about 553 days after 9/11, overthrows Saddam’s regime, and occupies Iraq with 300,000 US troops. The most cogent argument in favor of OIF that aligns with this counterfactual is Pollack’s *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq*.²⁸ Pollack makes consistent arguments for overthrowing Saddam’s regime and doing so with an overwhelming ground force prepared to stabilize Iraq after the war.

2.3 This section will apply Lebow’s criteria to judge if this is a plausible or miracle counterfactual.

Chapter 3. Conclusions

Units of Analysis:

A → B

FPE (Independent Variable) → Geostrategy (Dependent Variable)

Reality and Counterfactual Timelines:

V/V1 (Bush/Gore) → W (9/11) → X/X1 (OIF) → Y/Y1 (IED)

V → W → X → Y

Bush elected 2000 → 9/11 → 145,000 US troops in Iraq → Effect on IED aspect of war.

V1 → W → X1 → Y1

Gore elected 2000 → 9/11 → 300,000 US troops in Iraq → Effect on IED aspect of war.

²⁵ *The 9/11 Report*, p. 336.

²⁶ Eliot A. Cohen, “Net Assessment: An American Approach,” *Institute for National Security Studies*, JCSS Memorandum no. 29, (April 1990), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep08961>.

²⁷ Carroll Quigley, *Weapons Systems and Political Stability*, (Lanham: University Press of America Inc., 1983; Reprint, Orlando, Dauphin Publications Inc., 2013). Note: Quigley died in 1977 and the manuscript was published without change, p. vi.

²⁸ Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq*, (New York: Random House, 2002).

Chapter One: Theory Development

Consequences today – for states, corporations, and individuals – imply causes yesterday.
-Susan Strange²⁹

The first chapter will introduce counterfactualism and neoclassical realism as theoretical frameworks to examine the FPE of USA and its responsibility for the planning, execution, and consequences of OIF. It begins with guidelines for constructing a counterfactual to meet the requisites of the social sciences. It then identifies the FPE as the unit of analysis and how, utilizing geopolitics, it creates the conditions for the proposed counterfactual. The geostrategy of State represents the dependent variable effected by manipulating its creator, the FPE. The final section combines neoclassical realism and geopolitics for the plausible-world counterfactual to occur. For this chapter to achieve its goals, the reader needs a clear understanding of the counterfactual's methodology and the unit of analysis must be identified as the antecedent whose modification will cause a change in the consequent.

1.1 Counterfactualism

A counterfactual creates a parallel reality, a 'counterfeit world,' where a historical fact is manipulated towards an alleged outcome.³⁰ It utilizes a cause-and-effect relationship formulated as $X \rightarrow Y$, whereby without X there cannot be Y.³¹ X is the independent variable which is changed and Y is the dependent variable where a different outcome is hypothesized based on the change in X, which will be considered X1.³² In this thesis, $X \rightarrow Y$ represents what did occur in reality and $X1 \rightarrow Y1$ represents the counterfactual. In both reality and in the counterfactual, the independent variable (X/X1) is the antecedent factor which causes the dependent variable (Y/Y1), representing the consequent.³³

While Lebow (2010) and Harvey (2011) are the core to the counterfactual argument within, Ferguson (1999) introduces this theory. *Virtual History* begins with an extensive history on what has been previously stated

²⁹ Susan Strange, *States and Markets* ((1988) London: Bloomsburg Publishing, 2015), p. 19.

³⁰ Philip K. Dick, "If You Find This World Bad, You Should See Some of the Others," recorded at Metz, France, September 1977, 22:48, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkaQUZFbJjE&t=4s>; Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit*, p. 30.

³¹ James D. Fearon, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science," *World Politics*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (Jan., 1991), p. 169, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2010470>.

³² Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit*, p. 30.

³³ Nelson Goodman, "The Problem of Counterfactual Conditionals," *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 44, No. 5 (Feb. 27, 1947), p. 116, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2019988>.

about counterfactual thought.³⁴ Historians have agreed to disagree on the explanatory power of the concepts of determinism and contingency.³⁵ Carr defined determinism ‘as the belief that everything that happens has a cause or causes, and could not have happened differently unless something in the cause or causes had also been different.’³⁶ This is followed by ‘Determinism is a problem not of history, but *of all human behavior*.’³⁷ [emphasis added] This thesis views determinism as the vast forces which control fate, but it is still for individuals and their organizations to decide its relevance. Carr’s opinion on counterfactualism is well known, but his vocabulary remains ‘plastic’ to the pursuit of theory.³⁸

Depending on the shape of one’s variables in a counterfactual, Popper’s ‘plastic control’ is a relatable definition for contingency.³⁹ For this counterfactual, contingency represents ‘the evolution of new means for problem-solving, by new kinds of trials, and by new methods of error-elimination; that is to say, new methods for controlling the trials.’⁴⁰ The evaluation for plausibility is based on accounting for the different factors of X and X1 and if their change is more likely to produce Y or Y1. The net assessment will produce a hypothesis of a worst-case scenario which can be compared to other theories.⁴¹ This should, in theory, allow for the most realistic hypothesis to be used in prosecuting the war.⁴²

The purpose of combining Carr and Popper through *Virtual History* is:

‘In short, by narrowing down the historical alternatives we consider to those which are *plausible* - and hence by replacing the enigma of ‘chance’ with the calculation of *probabilities* - we solve the dilemma of choosing between a single deterministic past and an unmanageably infinite number of possible pasts. The counterfactual factual scenarios we therefore need to construct are not mere fantasy: they are simulations based on calculations about the relative probability of plausible outcomes in a chaotic world (hence ‘virtual history’).’⁴³ [emphasis original]

Contingency can then represent the individual factor effecting history through human agency. And determinism is an interpretation of history based on individual and group perceptions of their environment. The purpose of determinism and contingency is to recognize limitations on the agency of actors in the past without it

³⁴ Ferguson, *Virtual History*, pp. 1-90.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁶ E.H. Carr, *What is History?* ((1961) London: Penguin Books, 1987), p. 93.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

³⁹ Karl R. Popper, “Of Clouds and Clocks” in *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach* (Second Edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) p. 232.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 240.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 247.

⁴³ Ferguson, *Virtual History*, p. 85.

constraining our imagination about that past and what can be done in the future. Ferguson states ‘We should consider as plausible or probable *only those alternatives which we can show on the basis of contemporary evidence that contemporaries actually considered.*’⁴⁴ [emphasis original] If, following Ferguson, we assume past actors theorized multiple outcomes to their actions, then constructing a “virtual history” of one’s own should be as falsifiable as we wish.⁴⁵ In considering ‘*how it actually wasn’t,*’ this counterfactual scenario will show the level of contingency that existed in its antecedent which could have resulted in a different outcome.⁴⁶ [emphasis original]

While the criticism of *Virtual History* is legion, one review requires attention. Lebow (2000) gives a penetrating critique with its approach to counterfactualism.⁴⁷ The attempt towards falsifiability is based on “facts” which are being changed to fit a ‘social construction.’⁴⁸ [emphasis original] The ‘only claim to privilege’ of history, real or counterfactual, is based on its utility to the reader.⁴⁹ The creator constructs a “plausible” or “miracle” counterfactual based on the ‘key variables’ which make up the antecedent and their effect on the consequent.⁵⁰ [emphasis original] They make an argument that if X1 instead of X, the consequences would have created the conditions for a different outcome. This is why one accounts for ‘what was technologically, culturally, temporally, or otherwise possible’ if attempting a ‘plausible-world counterfactual.’⁵¹

After distinguishing between miracle and plausible counterfactuals, Lebow (2000) considers Ferguson (1999). As is customary in studies of counterfactualism, Lebow and Ferguson both cite Max Weber.⁵² To Lebow, Ferguson does not explain properly the rules for ‘counterfactual experiments.’⁵³ Ferguson (1999) merely places Weber in time where Lebow (2000) cites Weber and the necessity of “minimal rewrites” of history.⁵⁴ Ferguson requires citable evidence of what past actors thought could be outcomes, but this seems contradictory when he

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 86.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 85.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Lebow, “What’s So Different about a Counterfactual?”

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 556.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 557.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 562.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 565.

⁵² Max Weber, “Objective Possibility and Adequate Causation in Historical Explanation” in *On the Methodology of the Social Sciences*, Translated by Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch, ((1905) Glencoe: The Free Press, 1949) pp. 164-188.

⁵³ Lebow, “What’s So Different About a Counterfactual?” p. 567.

⁵⁴ Ferguson, *Virtual History*, pp. 55-57; Lebow, “What’s So Different About a Counterfactual?” p. 568.

laments Earth being ‘condemned to increasing disorder by entropy.’⁵⁵ If citations are all that is needed, we are assuming we now have and will continue to have in the future perfect access to information.⁵⁶ This will not be the issue in this thesis, however, as the counterfactual’s antecedent was argued strenuously prior to OIF.⁵⁷

Lebow (2000) notes three broad essentials for counterfactuals: First is how a particular outcome has a number of counterfactuals in relation to its cause. Identifying all ‘enabling counterfactuals’ should incentivize minimizing the amount of time between your antecedent and consequent.⁵⁸ Next is the fact that any ‘rewrites of history’ may cause such a systemic change going forward that its Y1 may be unimaginable.⁵⁹ A good example is a counterfactual of Vice-President Nixon elected President in 1960, supporting the anti-government forces at the Bay of Pigs with military force, and the Cuban Missile Crisis never happening.⁶⁰ The final possibility is of history eventually returning to normal and on small counterfactuals that create great ‘long-term effects.’⁶¹ For instance, if X1 of President Nixon in 1960 and Y1 of no Cuban Missile Crisis because Fidel Castro was overthrown, why not a consequent of a change in Soviet geostrategic behavior?⁶²

Forbidden Fruit provides a methodology for constructing counterfactuals to satisfy social scientific principles. Lebow, following Tetlock and Belkin, differentiates between “miracle world” and “plausible-world” counterfactuals based on rules for establishing an antecedent whose consequent is its outcome.⁶³ [emphasis original] The path to a plausible-world counterfactual is to use “minimal rewrites” where fewer changes are made, few steps exist between the antecedent and consequent, and their temporal distance is minimized.⁶⁴ This should result in a “close-call” counterfactual where the antecedent is recognized for its realistic possibility and the consequent as a logical result.⁶⁵

⁵⁵ Ferguson, *Virtual History*, p. 88.

⁵⁶ Lebow, “What’s So Different About a Counterfactual?” p. 568.

⁵⁷ Pollack, *The Threatening Storm*.

⁵⁸ Lebow, “What’s So Different About a Counterfactual?” p. 575.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 576.

⁶² Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit*, p. 50.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 40-44; Philip E. Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, “Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics: Logical, Methodological, and Psychological Perspectives” in *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics*, ed. Philip E. Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 5.

⁶⁴ Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit*, p. 48.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 24.

Lebow (2010) identifies nine criteria necessary for developing a counterfactual with internal validity.⁶⁶ First is **realism** where the context is understood in relation to the ‘compelling mechanisms’ which brought it about.⁶⁷ Ferguson’s dictum on citations is located here as it relates to what Lebow calls “factuals.”⁶⁸ Second is **clarity** where the argument for the consequent and what caused its outcome, the antecedent, is made explicit.⁶⁹ This means the specific conditions that give rise to the antecedent must be understood as well as the ‘chain of logic’ which links it to the consequent.⁷⁰ Third is **logical consistency or cotenability** where the antecedent does not render the consequent unrealistic.⁷¹ Fourth is **enabling counterfactuals should not undercut the antecedent.**⁷² A counterfactual may require other counterfactuals to make them possible and those counterfactuals must remain realistic. Fifth is **historical consistency** where the nature of the changes is more important than the number of changes.⁷³ One big change can make the counterfactual less plausible as opposed to many small changes. Sixth is **theoretical consistency** whereby one’s principles and assumptions are understood by the reader.⁷⁴ This rule is crucial for how the FPE and geostrategy, through geopolitics, will create a plausible-world counterfactual.

The seventh rule is to **avoid the conjunction fallacy** where the consequent is ‘overdetermined.’⁷⁵ This requires stating if one’s counterfactual will produce a specific world, a set of worlds with particular characteristics, or any world other than the one that actually came to pass.⁷⁶ Eighth is **recognize the interconnectedness of causes and outcomes** where other changes caused by the hypothesized antecedent are considered and how this change influences the probability of the consequent.⁷⁷ Ninth is **consider second order counterfactuals.** The potential exists for equifinality ‘to return history more or less to the course from which it was initially diverted by the antecedent.’⁷⁸ A plausible-world counterfactual must then argue how its consequent is clearly linked to the

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 59.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 54.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 35.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 54.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., p. 55.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 56.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 57.

proposed antecedent. It is inevitable that third, fourth, fifth, etc. -order counterfactuals that can shift history back to reality will persist, unless of course history were to end.

These guidelines in Lebow (2010) are an update on social scientific rules to create a counterfactual that is different from a miracle-world counterfactual.⁷⁹ This is followed by six questions that are posed to the counterfactual to determine if its changes to reality can be considered plausible.⁸⁰ Harvey (2012) contains a counterfactual which interrogates the belief that if Gore were elected President in 2000 and 9/11 still occurred, USA would not have conducted preventive warfare to disarm Saddam of WMD and overthrow his regime in 2003. Lebow (2010) and Harvey (2012) are complimentary in building a ‘turning point’ for this thesis’ counterfactual to deviate from the reality of X.⁸¹ But before applying *Forbidden Fruit’s* guidelines to *Explaining the Iraq War’s* counterfactual, the units of analysis is identified.

1.2 Neoclassical Realism and Geopolitics

1.2.1 Neoclassical Realism

What appears to be the first use of the phrase “Foreign Policy Executive” defines it as:

‘... the sole authoritative maker of foreign policy and the only national actor mandated to preserve and enhance the position of the nation-state within the anarchic and competitive international system. It is charged, in other words, with husbanding the nation-state’s wealth and power given the interests and actions of other countries.’⁸²

It will be assumed that a State, or any other large organization, only precipitates war because it believes it is insecure. But when it is not at war with others, there still exists ‘...the relative ability of the State to extract or mobilize resources from domestic society as determined by the institutions of the State, as well as by nationalism and ideology’ that NCR describes as State power.⁸³ Neoclassical realists argue a State’s foreign policy is the result

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 54.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 59.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 58.

⁸² David A. Lake, “Structure, the State, and Trade Strategy” in *Power, Protection, and Free Trade: International Sources of U.S. Commercial Strategy, 1887-1939* ((1988), Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 70-71.

⁸³ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, “State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State,” *Security Studies*, 15 no. 3, (2006), pp. 464-495, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09636410601028370>. Taliaferro does not capitalize State for state power. It will be capitalized in this thesis so the reader understands State power is in reference to the State.

of its perceived place in the international system based on its relative material power resources.⁸⁴ The ability of a State to extract resources depends upon State institutions, nationalism, and ideology.⁸⁵ State institutions are comprehended as the ‘politico-military institutions of the State’ and so they can be considered the most geopolitical organizations within the State.⁸⁶

In *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, the FPE is defined as:

‘...the individuals who are responsible for making the foreign policy choices, usually including the head of government and ministers—such as the minister of foreign affairs and the minister of defense—charged with foreign policy issue areas. In addition, the FPE may also include other individuals who are members of ministerial, subcommittee, or subcabinet sessions on foreign security policy, and therefore have some determinative influence over foreign policy choices.’⁸⁷

In theory, the FPE are those most capable of perceiving the political, economic, and security dimensions of the international system and so they are responsible for translating it into a coherent national interest.⁸⁸ They are ‘charged with external defense and the conduct of diplomacy’ and thereby control the foreign, defense, and intelligence bureaucracy (FDIB) of a State.⁸⁹ The FPE approaches international situations through levels of threat, length of decision time, and knowledge of the problem.⁹⁰ Crisis in all its forms works as a stimulus which causes an agent to act in fear or opportunity which, if properly conceptualized, ‘the researcher can adjust towards a specific change in behavior.’⁹¹ For the counterfactual in this thesis, 9/11 meets Hermann’s definition of a crisis situation because of its effect on the international system due to how the USA-FPE choose to react.⁹²

The focus upon the organizations of State over nationalism and ideology is to combine them into a geopolitical perspective using FPE as its unit of analysis. Geopolitics is utilized to meet Harvey’s critique of NCR on finding the ‘context’ of the domestic factors which influence the understanding behind a state’s international

⁸⁴ Gideon Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,” *World Politics*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (1998), pp.144-172, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25054068>.

⁸⁵ Taliaferro, “State Building for Future Wars,” pp. 487-491.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, p. 124.

⁸⁸ Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro, “Introduction: Neoclassical realism, the state, and foreign policy,” in *Neoclassical Realism, The State, and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) p. 25.

⁸⁹ Taliaferro, “State Building for Future Wars” p. 470; Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, pp. 124-125.

⁹⁰ Hermann, “International Crisis as a Situational Variable,” p. 415.

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 413-414.

⁹² Ibid.

actions.⁹³ The FPE is intended to satisfy the domestic factors in personifying the ‘ultimate/authoritative decision unit’ of a State as those:

‘...actors who have both (a) the ability to commit or withhold the resources of the government in foreign affairs and (b) the power or authority to prevent other entities within the government from overtly reversing their position without significant costs (costs which these other entities are normally unwilling to pay).’⁹⁴

This further description of the USA-FPE is to make it amenable with Mills’ theory of the power elite in order to identify war-making powers in domestic politics and to meet the NCR model’s first layer of leader images, strategic culture, state-society relations, and domestic institutions.⁹⁵ The reader will be expected to believe the USA-FPE would have had the ability to foster the necessary State power which it did in X, and to expand it exponentially for at least fifteen months as will be necessary for X1. The FPE need will need support from the public in a democratic system if sacrifice of such magnitude is necessary to perpetuate the unipolar world order.

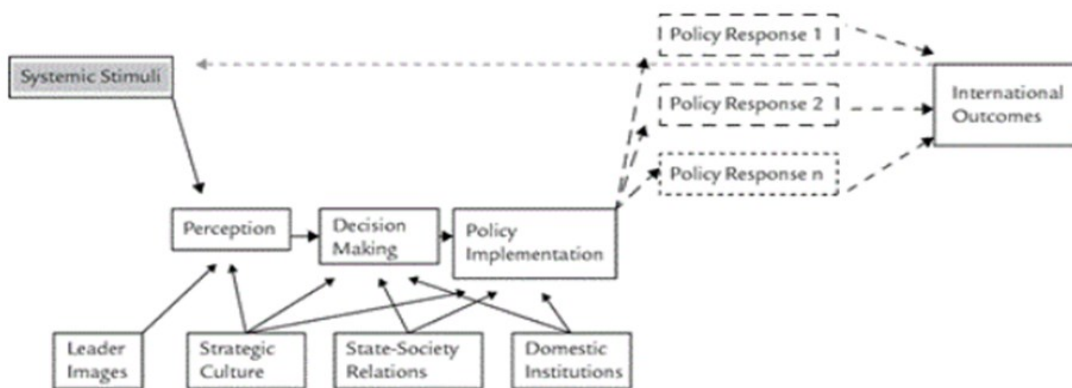


Figure 1.⁹⁶

⁹³ Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*, p. 288.

⁹⁴ Margaret G. Hermann and Charles F. Hermann, “Who Makes Foreign Policy Decisions and How: An Empirical Inquiry,” *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (1989), p. 363. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2600518>; Margaret G. Hermann, “How Decision Units Shape Foreign Policy: A Theoretical Framework,” *International Studies Review*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (Summer 2001), pp. 48, 56. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3186565>.

⁹⁵ Previous research on Mills. Aaron Smith, “The Power Elite, the CIA, and the National Interest,” (essay, Charles University, 2019); See Figure 1, p. 15, from Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, p. 34.

⁹⁶ Type III Neoclassical Realist Model. Adapted from Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, p. 34.

1.2.2 Geopolitics

Measuring the differences of State reactions to crisis and how they affect the total system is done through applying *Geopolitics in Principle and Practice*. There is a seeming contradiction where foreign policy advice is unquestionably individual while geopolitics can only be ‘scientific’ if it ‘seeks to study the geographical aspects of the State in an objective manner.’⁹⁷ It states:

‘Political geography considers the state in its material environment from the viewpoint of an objective analysis; geopolitics considers the state in its physical setting from the viewpoint of its needs on the field of foreign policy.’⁹⁸

Thus the natural environment is perceived an arbiter on how a State can act due to limitations of the physical world as was considered by Mackinder in 1904.⁹⁹ The context of that moment was Earth had entered the ‘post-Columbian age’ as an increasingly quantifiable closed-system.¹⁰⁰ Mackinder would agree that technology was consequential in that ‘the geopolitical interpretation of the present is based on the history of the past, while the geopolitical events of the future arise from the conditions of the present.’¹⁰¹ According to Fifield and Pearcey (1944), the four primary sources of geopolitics are ‘the academic subjects of political geography and history, and the specialized studies on imperialism and military, naval, and air strategy.’¹⁰² Using these, one can process a narrative whereby Mackinder’s Heartland is transformed between 1904 to 1944 as a result of the progressive nature of the Industrial Revolution.¹⁰³ The spread of industrial techniques throughout Eurasia was the primary concern of Mackinder and preventing trans-continental integration remained an Anglo-American geostrategic objective.¹⁰⁴

Fifield and Pearcey see ‘location, size and shape, climate and climatic energy, population and manpower, natural resources and industrial capacity, and social and political organizations’ as ‘the elements forming the basis of the world power of a State.’¹⁰⁵ Regardless of the form of government in a State, a FPE oversees the

⁹⁷ Fifield and Pearcey, *Geopolitics in Principle*, p. 5.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁰⁰ Halford Mackinder, “The Geographical Pivot of History” *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 4, (April 1904), pp. 298-321, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1775498>.

¹⁰¹ Fifield and Pearcey, *Geopolitics in Principle*, p. 7.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 12-14.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 191.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 25.

consolidation of these elements with its interpretation of history to form strategic culture. Snyder's definition still applies:

“Strategic culture can be defined as the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other with regard to nuclear strategy.”¹⁰⁶

Fifield and Pearcey (1943) focuses on great powers because of their relative ability to change the international system compared to other states. Of particular importance to the status-quo and revisionist powers in 1944 was the distribution of strategic materials “essential to the national defense for the supply of which in war dependence must be placed in whole or in part on sources outside the continental limits of the United States, and for which strict conservation and distribution-control measures will be necessary.”¹⁰⁷ If a State has a ‘rational’ strategic culture, then it stands to reason that this State has a clear understanding of the limits and possibilities provided by its share of the elements of world power. If it can then guarantee its own access to what are considered strategic materials, then this State meets the relative criteria of a great power.

The use of geopolitics, ‘political geography *applied* to national power politics’ is to explain the NCR model’s dependent variables of policy responses and international outcomes (Figure 1).¹⁰⁸ Systemic stimuli represents the independent variable whose effect is transmitted through the model’s intervening variables of images and perception, strategic culture, state-society relations, and decision making which are condensed into policy implementation. This transitions into the dependent variables of policy responses and international outcomes (Figure 1).¹⁰⁹ Based on the definitions of FPE and the ultimate decision unit, there are no groups within the State legally able to contest the FPE’s sovereignty of foreign policy, especially in an emergency.¹¹⁰ Using the NCR model, the FPE creates the perceptions of the systemic stimuli, it decides on a course of action, and then it implements policy by utilizing State power.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Jack L. Snyder, “The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations,” *RAND*, (September 1977), p. 8, <https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/reports/2005/R2154.pdf>.

¹⁰⁷ Fifield and Pearcey, *Geopolitics in Practice*, p. 40.

¹⁰⁸ Hans W. Weigert, *Generals and Geographers: The Twilight of Geopolitics*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 14.

¹⁰⁹ Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, p. 59.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-31.

It is through Fifield and Pearcey (1944) that the FPE is the primary geopolitical actor of a State. Because of its uncontested ability to utilize State power towards a particular outcome such as war, the FPE is held responsible for the dependent variable in the NCR model, international outcomes.¹¹² For this thesis, geostrategy is then the combination of policy responses and international outcomes that represent the dependent variable which is affected by the independent variable, the FPE. The dependent and independent variables can be combined with the NCR model as follows. 9/11 is a situational variable approximate to systemic stimuli and it can be considered a crisis situation.¹¹³ The perceptions of the USA-FPE were influenced by the international system and US strategic culture as of September 2001. The decision-making process and policy implementation occur through US strategic culture, state-society relations, and domestic institutions to create a policy response of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) (Figure 1). This is why in this thesis geopolitics precedes the FPE and follows geostrategy. It is constantly influencing the independent variable, the intervening variables, and the dependent variable.

The purpose of using Fifield and Pearcey (1943) as a key text is to meditate upon Morgenthau's observation of geopolitics being a pseudoscience.¹¹⁴ This classical realist was correct in recognizing how Mackinder's Heartland thesis was foundational to the development of German geostrategy in World War II.¹¹⁵ Morgenthau is critical of Mackinder for a hyperfocus on one element of national/State power, geography, that was deformed 'into a kind of political metaphysics to be used as an ideological weapon in the national aspirations of Germany.'¹¹⁶ Morgenthau identifies geopolitics along with nationalism and militarism as singular factors whose occurrence helps explain how States can fail to understand the limits of their power.¹¹⁷

Morgenthau's perspective on how States commit egregious strategic failures of their own volition connects to the counterfactual through contingency and determinism. The FPE of a State may become so infatuated with itself in a particular moment that it assumes its State power remains absolute over time in comparison with others.¹¹⁸ This is contingent on a State's ability, or lack thereof, to evaluate itself in relation to competitors who

¹¹² Ibid., p. 81.

¹¹³ Hermann, "International Crisis as a Situational Variable," pp. 416-417.

¹¹⁴ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p. 164.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 165.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 165-166.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 164.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 160.

may work to undermine its geostrategy.¹¹⁹ If a State were to gain great power advantage over others, it may think 'history had come to a standstill' or perhaps ended altogether.¹²⁰ A devotion to the permanence of a circumstance is determinism where the human factor is removed from foreign policy and its mechanisms become inhumanly automated. It is contingent upon individuals and their groups lacking empathy for others. But because power remains so difficult to define, it should be assumed how it is expressed between large organizations will remain unstable.

The 'contingencies, ambiguities, and uncertainties of the international situation' are to be understood through geography and history.¹²¹ Geography not as the parochial isolationism in USA which *Geopolitics in Principle* was trying to overcome, but understanding Earth's natural systems and how they influence human behavior. History could be a story of the horrors of nationalism and militarism covered in its analyses of German and Japanese geopolitics during World War II.¹²² This discourse is to be held in balance with the FPE utilizing state power towards achieving its geostrategy. Fifield and Percy (1944) and Morgenthau (1948) recognize the indispensability of self-restraint for great powers in the application of geopolitics.¹²³ As stated in the original definition of the FPE, to expand the 'wealth and power of the State' without causing resentment and hedging by others is the definition of statecraft from this realist perspective.¹²⁴

1.3 Synthesis

With the unit of analysis understood through geopolitics, the methodology of counterfactualism is applied. *Explaining the Iraq War* will be analyzed through *Forbidden Fruit's* guidelines utilizing the FPE as the independent variable. This serves two purposes in this chapter. The first is understanding Lebow's guidelines by examining Harvey's counterfactual for plausibility. It is not possible to account for every conceivable variable that could occur, as this would make for 'infinite regress' and an unfinishable thesis.¹²⁵ But if an argument for a specific

¹¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 161-162.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 163.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 164.

¹²² Fifield and Percy, *Geopolitics in Practice*, pp. 22-24.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 191.

¹²⁴ Taliaferro, "State Building for Future Wars."

¹²⁵ Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit*, p. 57.

change is realistic, its plausibility should be comparable to other possibilities. It fulfills the second purpose of historically grounding the counterfactual for the reader to comprehend when and how X1 will break from reality.

		<u>Causal Variable (neocon/unilateralist agenda)</u>	
		Absent (Gore admin)	Present (Bush admin)
I r a q W a r M o m e n t u m	Absent	<p>A</p> <p><i>Gore-peace</i></p> <p>(expect to find most evidence here) (confirms neoconism)</p>	<p>B</p> <p><i>Bush-peace</i></p> <p>(expect to find no evidence here) (anomalous -- e.g., no neocon war against credible North Korea or Iran WMD threat)</p>
	Present	<p><u>C</u></p> <p><i>Gore-war</i></p> <p>(expect to find no evidence here) (disconfirms neoconism)</p>	<p>D</p> <p><i>Bush-war</i></p> <p>(expect to find evidence here) (confirms neoconism)</p>

Figure 2.¹²⁶

Harvey (2012) questions the validity of arguments made after OIF that if Bush lost in 2000 but 9/11 had still occurred, a President Gore would not have gone to war over Iraq’s WMD program.¹²⁷ Harvey develops a comparative counterfactual analysis table and calls this particular argument *Gore-peace* (Figure 2).¹²⁸ The other three possibilities are *Bush-peace*, *Bush-war* (X), and *Gore-war* (X1). Harvey identifies ‘neoconism’ as the idea found in many counterfactuals which he deconstructs for the hyperfocus on the individuals in the Bush-FPE known as neoconservatives.¹²⁹ Using the NCR model, *Gore-peace* arguments place neoconism with the intervening variable ‘leader images.’ (Figure 1) Their particular ideology and presence in the Bush-FPE are, according to these

¹²⁶ Neoconism. Adapted from Frank P. Harvey, “President Al Gore and the 2003 Iraq War: A Counterfactual Test of Conventional “W”isdom,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 45, Issue 1, (March 2012), p. 6, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423911000904>, (p. 29 in *Explaining the Iraq War*).

¹²⁷ Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*, pp. 2-3.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 29.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 2.

narratives, the primary cause of OIF.¹³⁰ For Harvey, this ignores other factors that influenced the war.¹³¹ By applying *Forbidden Fruit to Explaining the Iraq War*, the nine criteria will overlay the counterfactual towards understanding the FPE after 9/11.

Finding **realism** in Harvey's argument means to identify a minimal rewrite that results in a President Gore (V1). Harvey (2012) notes several factors whose alteration would have precluded the election of President Bush (V). The absence of a third-party candidate, the Elian Gonzalez saga, and Florida's archaic voting system could each have turned out differently to change the result.¹³² Perhaps the most plausible minimal rewrite resulting in a Gore victory in 2000 would be for Albert Gore to win the electoral support of his home state which he had represented in the US Congress and Senate for sixteen years before being elected Vice-President in 1992 and reelected in 1996.¹³³ The neoconservative presence in the Bush-FPE is considered singularly vital to OIF; therefore, they represent the independent variable to *Gore-peace*.¹³⁴ Counterfactually, this means the absence of the neoconservatives should result in the absence of Harvey's dependent variable, 'Iraq War Momentum.'¹³⁵ To **clarify** Harvey's argument, if V is replaced by V1 (Bush loses to Gore), followed by W (9/11), the absence of the independent variable (neoconservatives) should mean the absence of the dependent variable (Iraq War Momentum). This is the implication of the counterfactual *Gore-peace*. (Figure 2)¹³⁶

Pursuing **cotenability** between the antecedent and consequent is a minimal rewrite with the election of Gore and events remaining the same. Here is where the *Gore-peace* counterfactuals in Harvey (2012) approach implausibility. The 'connecting principles' from the Gore-FPE to *Gore-peace* are inconsistent with Gore's history as Vice-President as well as those who would have been a part of his FPE.¹³⁷ As a US Senator, Gore may have given an unsure vote in favor of US military action against Iraq in 1991, but he was quick to admonish the H.W. Bush-FPE for leaving Saddam in power.¹³⁸ The choice of Senator Gore as Governor Clinton's running mate in 1992

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 5.

¹³² Ibid., p. 25.

¹³³ <https://algor.com/about> (accessed 11/13/2023)

¹³⁴ Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*, p. 27.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 29.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Tetlock and Belkin, "Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics," pp. 21-23.

¹³⁸ Paul Kengor, "The Foreign Policy Role of Vice President Al Gore," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 1, (Winter 1997), p. 17-18, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2657899>.

was due to Gore's experience in foreign policy matters.¹³⁹ As Vice-President, Gore had a reputation for being a 'hawk' who would recommend both multilateral and unilateral military action for the Clinton-FPE.¹⁴⁰ A Gore-FPE would have a President after 9/11 who believed Saddam still sought WMD and was adamant that this was a threat to US national security.¹⁴¹ For President Gore to transform into a 'dove' on foreign policy after 9/11 would disrupt the plausibility of the antecedent in a *Gore-peace* counterfactual. It is difficult to consider this when Gore, along with other high-profile Democrats, supported President Bush's 2002 "Axis of Evil" speech.¹⁴²

Explaining the Iraq War paints a picture of agreement between the two political parties on US geostrategy towards Iraq that is inconsistent with the argument a Gore-FPE would have responded differently.¹⁴³ For *Gore-peace* to be plausible, it would require **enabling counterfactuals** that could overcome the twenty 'leadership, domestic political, and structural conditions' which make up Iraq War Momentum.¹⁴⁴ The speeches by Gore in 2002 that were critical of the Bush-FPE were for, at the time, their unilateralist approach.¹⁴⁵ Gore supported regime change in Iraq, but he wanted USA to take an 'assertive multilateralism' approach that included other countries and was approved by the US Congress.¹⁴⁶ These stipulations would be met with the US Congress passing the 'Iraq War Resolution' on 10/16/2002 and the United Nations Security Council passing Resolution 1441 on 11/8/2002.¹⁴⁷ As Harvey explains the timeline, the neoconservatives in fact lost the argument for unilateral action as the Bush-FPE received Congressional and international support for confronting Iraq.¹⁴⁸

A Gore-FPE would come to power with perceptions made up of leader images and a strategic culture that were similar to the Bush-FPE.¹⁴⁹ The 'relevant history' from 1998 when the US Congress passed the Iraqi Liberation Act and weapons inspectors were forced out of Iraq onward is one of support for regime change and fear of Saddam's known capabilities and unknown intentions.¹⁵⁰ The momentum of events from 9/11 to early 2003 and

¹³⁹ Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*, pp. 47-50.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 52-53.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 266, 268.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-75.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁴⁷ US Congress, *Authorization For Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002*, Public Law 107-243, Washington, D.C., 2002; United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 1441*, New York City, 2002.

¹⁴⁸ Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*, p. 272.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-106.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

their analysis through process-tracing presents a difficult argument for the Gore-FPE not confronting Iraq's WMD program. After 9/11, the Gore-FPE would require a contingency that replaces Iraq as a target following the overthrow of the Taliban in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). For **historical consistency** to not be rendered unrealistic, an argument for *Gore-peace* would need to explain possible factuals which could plausibly replace USA's post-9/11 attention upon Iraq's WMD program.

The **theory** behind *Gore-peace* is with the absence of the neoconservatives, the motivation towards regime change in Iraq would not exist. Put simply, it posits a different FPE would have different results. This means the replacement of Vice-President Cheney and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld should produce evidence which overcomes Iraq War Momentum. The Gore-FPE would have a Vice-President Lieberman and would probably choose a 'centrist' for Secretary of Defense.¹⁵¹ In analyzing Lieberman's record before and after 9/11, it is clear he was just as supportive of using military force and regime change in Iraq as any neoconservative.¹⁵² Among the potential members of a Gore-FPE, none can plausibly be considered outside the mainstream of US foreign policy thought pre-9/11.¹⁵³ There would be no dissention from a policy of 'assertive multilateralism' to confront Iraq's WMD program and it is difficult to conceive Iraq would be 'put on the back burner.'¹⁵⁴ Without the return of weapons inspectors, the goal of UNSC 1441, there is no way to change USA's 'beliefs and perceptions' about Saddam's intentions.¹⁵⁵ In effect, *Explaining the Iraq War* shows how unilateralism, a key tenet of neoconservatism, was defeated by a multilateral process exemplified by Iraq War Momentum.¹⁵⁶

The *Gore-peace* would produce 'a world other than the one that came to pass,' but no counterfactual making this argument has **avoided the conjunction fallacy**.¹⁵⁷ These counterfactuals that imagine *Gore-peace* do not identify the enabling counterfactuals that could produce an outcome such as the return of weapons inspectors to Iraq. *Gore-war* produces a 'specific world' that suffers from equifinality due to Saddam's intransience and USA concluding that there were no other options that would prevent Iraq from developing WMD.¹⁵⁸ Counterfactuals that

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 91.

¹⁵² Ibid., pp. 15, 40, 47-48, 53.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 92.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 54.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 218.

¹⁵⁷ Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit*, p. 56.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.; Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*, pp. 63-64.

would seek to undo 9/11 and therefore continue USA's Iraq policy of containment make the assumption that a Gore-FPE would have acted upon intelligence the Bush-FPE overlooked, but this assumes the Gore-FPE would react differently to intelligence on possible terrorist attacks than its predecessor, the Clinton-FPE.¹⁵⁹

The problem for *Gore-peace* counterfactuals is in disrupting Iraq War Momentum as the **interconnectedness of causes and outcomes** in the 553 days between 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq on 3/19/2003. Without weapons inspectors in Iraq then there is no smoking gun which can change the belief that Iraq was developing WMD and that post-9/11 something new had to be done about this situation. The pressure on President Gore after 9/11 would be incredible because having been Vice President for the last eight years, he would be uniquely criticized for the failures of US national security.¹⁶⁰ This pressure would also be on the US Congress to support action which would give President Gore the tools necessary to achieve international backing to coerce Iraq on its WMD program.¹⁶¹ And because Saddam was considered an autocrat who could not be trusted, it is difficult to see how the Gore-FPE could believe Saddam was practicing 'strategic ambiguity' with his WMD program.¹⁶² How could the Gore-FPE conclude that from Saddam's perspective, Iran was the greatest threat to his regime?¹⁶³

Equifinality means that history would return to normal and the proposed change in the antecedent, through **second order counterfactuals**, eventually result in the original consequent. The *Gore-peace* counterfactuals would require very specific second order counterfactuals to prevent history from returning to OIF. For those quoted in *Explaining the Iraq War* who believe a Gore-FPE would not go to war with Iraq, their evidence is wanting. For example, Former US Secretary of State Madeline Albright believes the Gore-FPE would perceive 'intelligence information about his activities differently' and not be fooled by Saddam's deception.¹⁶⁴ For these opinions to have counterfactual relevance, they would need to explain exactly how intelligence could be understood differently, in addition to how a Gore-FPE would handle the domestic pressure to confront Saddam. A Democratic administration would face intense criticism from the US Congress and media that the threat could not be dealt with using the pre-9/11 tools of containment and sanction. If the Bush-FPE received strong support from Congress to confront

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 69.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 109.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 244.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 249.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 11, 18.

Saddam, why would a Gore-FPE be any different?¹⁶⁵ And if Saddam remains unmoved by coercive diplomacy, what options would remain besides military action?

It must be noted that Lebow (2010) briefly considered this counterfactual and Lebow believes a Gore victory followed by 9/11 ‘almost certainly would have prevented the invasion of Iraq.’¹⁶⁶ Lebow considered the causes behind OIF in 2006 and again in his *A Cultural Theory of International Relations* in 2008.¹⁶⁷ In a chapter provocatively titled ‘Hitler to Bush and Beyond’ Lebow argues unique aspects of the Bush *administration* can explain ‘the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq.’¹⁶⁸ Further down the page in *Forbidden Fruit* from where Lebow posits a President Gore ‘almost certainly would have prevented the invasion of Iraq,’ he makes an important statement when differentiating between miracle and plausible world counterfactuals.¹⁶⁹ Lebow seems to imply USA ‘quickly and successfully restoring order to Iraq after its 2003 invasion’ is a miracle world counterfactual.¹⁷⁰ To describe this potentiality as inconceivable is peculiar considering Lebow had previously identified the most contingent factors which contributed to the chaos in Iraq following Saddam’s overthrow.¹⁷¹

In a back-and-forth discussion between Lebow and Harvey following the publishing of *Explaining the Iraq War*, Lebow makes several critiques which Harvey responds with points made in the text.¹⁷² What Lebow realizes in his further response is Harvey has made an argument for ‘equifinality’ whereby the turning point of Gore elected in 2000 cannot overcome the momentum to war caused by 9/11.¹⁷³ Lebow then states:

What would the Bush and Gore administrations have done in the absence of 9/11? I think a good argument could be made that Bush, but not Gore, would still have invaded Iraq. There is evidence that the Bush administration was just waiting for a pretext and would have been likely to exploit some other provocation – as the Johnson administration did in Vietnam – to mobilize public support for intervention. *To make his argument about Gore more convincing, Harvey should discuss what minimal rewrites might have discouraged Gore’s administration for attacking Iraq.* Would any of these counterfactuals have had a similar effect on Bush? This exercise could tell us

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 142-146.

¹⁶⁶ Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit*, p. 45.

¹⁶⁷ Michael Fitzgerald and Richard N. Lebow, “Iraq: The Mother of all Intelligence Failures,” *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 21, No. 5, (October 2006), pp. 884-909. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684520600957811>; Richard N. Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

¹⁶⁸ Lebow, *A Cultural Theory of International Relations*, p. 459.

¹⁶⁹ Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit*, p. 45.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Fitzgerald and Lebow, “Iraq: The Mother of all Intelligence Failures,” p. 885.

¹⁷² Richard N. Lebow, “Review essay on Frank P. Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*,” (September 7, 2012), <https://issforum.org/ISSF/PDF/RE11.pdf>; Frank P. Harvey, “Author’s response to Review essay by Richard N. Lebow,” (September 28, 2012), <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/ISSF/PDF/RE11-Response.pdf>.

¹⁷³ Richard N. Lebow, “Reply to Frank P. Harvey’s Response to Richard Ned Lebow’s Review Essay on Frank P. Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*,” (October 2, 2012), <https://issforum.org/essays/11-lebow-response>.

something about the differences, as well as the similarities, between the two administrations and more about the degree to which the Iraq invasion was overdetermined.¹⁷⁴ [emphasis added]

It is easy to understand, based on Lebow (2006, 2008), why Lebow thinks the Bush-FPE was obsessed with confronting Iraq prior to 9/11. There appear to be at least four plausible minimal rewrites which could have ‘discouraged Gore’s administration for attacking Iraq.’¹⁷⁵ The first two occur prior to 9/11 and are named for individuals that likely would have served in a Gore-FPE; they are called ‘The Holder Counterfactual’ and ‘The Clarke Counterfactual.’ The other two occur after 9/11 and are named for the capitol cities where changes in their foreign policy could have altered Iraq War Momentum. The first of these, which occurs about one month after 9/11, is called ‘The Paris Counterfactual.’ The second, which occurs no more than two weeks before OIF, is called ‘The Moscow Counterfactual.’

The Holder Counterfactual is named for Eric Holder, who in reality (V), was Deputy Attorney General of USA and then acting Attorney General until being replaced by John Ashcroft.¹⁷⁶ The Attorney General is the head of the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is its principal investigative arm.¹⁷⁷ The Holder Counterfactual argues that if Gore is elected President in 2000, Deputy Attorney General Holder would have been nominated for Attorney General and confirmed in 2001. This proposed minimal rewrite then asks if this individual change would have caused the domestic law enforcement agencies of USA to be more receptive to the terrorism threat prior to 9/11.¹⁷⁸ Allegedly, Attorney General Ashcroft was uninterested in threats of terrorism so it is possible an Attorney General Holder, receiving similar warnings in July 2001, would have reacted differently and adjusted resources accordingly.¹⁷⁹

However, such change is perhaps unreasonable due to the ‘failure of imagination, policy, capabilities, and management’ the *9/11 Report* blames for the government’s failure.¹⁸⁰ Would the organizational issues that

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ CBS News, “Ashcroft Settles In,” (February 2, 2001), <https://web.archive.org/web/20020602011838/http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2001/01/29/politics/main267937.shtml>.

¹⁷⁷ Congressional Quarterly, Inc., *Cabinets and Counselors: The President and The Executive Branch*, (Congressional Quarterly: Washington, D.C., 1997), p. 123.

¹⁷⁸ *9/11 Report*, p. 265.

¹⁷⁹ Philip Shenon and Lowell Bergman, “9/11 Panel Is Said to Offer Harsh Review of Ashcroft,” *New York Times*, (April 13, 2004), <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/13/politics/911-panel-is-said-to-offer-harsh-review-of-ashcroft.html>; *9/11 Report*, p. 255, 265.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 339.

prevented the Phoenix Memo, which warned of ‘...the possibility of a coordinated effort by USAMA BIN LADEN (UBL) to send students to the United States to attend civil aviation universities and colleges’ from being disseminated change with a different Attorney General?¹⁸¹ Vested bureaucratic interests between the FBI, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and Department of State (DOS) prior to 9/11 make the possibility of institutional cooperation difficult to imagine. The plausibility for the Holder Counterfactual rests upon a different Attorney General reacting to intelligence differently to create an enabling counterfactual where scarce resources are reallocated towards domestic counterterrorism operations.

The Clarke Counterfactual is in reference to Richard Clarke, a long-time US government employee who was the Counterterrorism Czar from 1998 to 2003.¹⁸² This counterfactual’s turning point for a Gore-FPE would have Clarke’s position not be demoted as it was in the Bush-FPE in early 2001.¹⁸³ If the distance between the President and the Counterterrorism Czar had fewer bureaucratic layers, it is possible the intelligence reports with ominous titles as “Bin Laden Determined To Strike in US” could have galvanized the Gore-FPE to overcome the organizational impediments which the *9/11 Report* identified as responsible for the US government’s failure to stop 9/11.¹⁸⁴ Clarke, who was described as being obsessive about the threat of terrorism to USA, would have been in a position close enough to the President to articulate the threat and to then pressure the bureaucracies towards identifying and apprehending Al-Qaeda’s operatives in USA.¹⁸⁵

Serious issues for the Clarke Counterfactual’s plausibility in the months prior to 9/11 of a Gore-FPE are the failures by the Clinton-FPE to effectively confront Al-Qaeda.¹⁸⁶ The threat posed by its ideology was made spectacularly obvious a little over one month into the Clinton FPE’s tenure with the World Trade Center (WTC)

¹⁸¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, “ZAKARIA MUSTAPHA SOUBRA,” Drafted by Kenneth J. Williams, (7/10/2001), <https://28pagesdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2018/07/2001-7-10-fbi-williams-aq-civil-aviation-arizona.pdf>; Office of the Inspector General, “Chapter Three: The FBI’s Handling of the Phoenix Electronic Communication and Other Information Relating to Use of Airplanes in Terrorists Attacks,” in *A Review of the FBI’s Handling of Intelligence Information Prior to the September 11 Attacks*, (November 2004, June 2005), <https://oig.justice.gov/sites/default/files/archive/special/0506/chapter3.htm>.

¹⁸² Richard A. Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America’s War on Terror*, (New York: Free Press, 2004).

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Presidential Daily Brief, “Bin Ladin Determined To Strike in US,” (August 8, 2001), <https://irp.fas.org/product/pdb080601.pdf>.

¹⁸⁵ Clarke, *Against All Enemies*; Fred Kaplan, “Richard Clarke KOs the Bushies,” *Slate* (March 2004), <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2004/03/richard-clarke-kos-the-bushies.html>.

¹⁸⁶ Matthew Continetti, “Scheuer v. Clarke,” *Washington Examiner*, (November 22, 2004), <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/weekly-standard/scheuer-v-clarke>.

bombings on 2/26/1993.¹⁸⁷ Attacks against US and allied interests worldwide would continue through the new millennium while the responses were never able defeat the ideology or the support structures spread across the World Island.¹⁸⁸ The history of the Clinton-FPE appears to show there were several opportunities to take direct action against bin Laden but they were never acted upon.¹⁸⁹ In addition, the diplomatic opportunity to acquire vital intelligence on bin Laden and his associates when he was in Sudan was denied and sources which speak on this occurrence lay blame upon Clarke and others in the Clinton-FPE.¹⁹⁰ In this instance, it appears the USA-FPE's preconceived notions about the Sudanese government prevented statecraft from being utilized in the national interest.

The most glaring problem in the plausibility of the Holder and Clarke Counterfactuals is an issue the *9/11 Report* points to but never explicitly states. Throughout its 567 pages, it identifies the lack of '...political will, authority over personnel and budget, vision and understanding towards military operations, and language skills' to stop 9/11; in addition to the lack of 'standard operating procedures and radios capable of enabling multiple commands to respond in unified fashion to an incident at the WTC.'¹⁹¹ The failure to stop 9/11 and the problems identified in the response are both attributable to *a lack of resources*.¹⁹² That the Gore-FPE would have corrected the mistakes of its predecessor in the months prior to 9/11 may not have been enough to stop the attacks. Perhaps then the only plausible enabling counterfactual that would have prevented 9/11 is if the cockpit door in an airplane was reinforced to prevent hijackers access to an airplane's controls. The 'White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security Final Report to President Clinton' from 2/12/1997 made several recommendations to enhance security but lamented at the inability of government and industry overcome parochial interests.¹⁹³ The fact that Vice

¹⁸⁷ *The 9/11 Report*, p. 71.

¹⁸⁸ RUSI, "Could 11 September have been Prevented?" *RUSI*, (November 13, 2007), <https://www.rusi.org/publication/could-11-september-have-been-prevented>.

¹⁸⁹ David Rose, "The Osama Files," *Vanity Fair*, (June 4, 2007), <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2002/01/osama200201?currentPage=1>.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*.

¹⁹¹ *The 9/11 Report*, pp. 76, 104, 136, 189; 320-321

¹⁹² Ned Zeman, David Wise, David Rose, Bryan Burrough, and John Ortved, "The Path to 9/11: Lost Warnings and Fatal Errors," *Vanity Fair*, (November 2004), <https://archive.vanityfair.com/article/2004/11/the-path-to-911-lost-warnings-and-fatal-errors>.

¹⁹³ Al Gore, "White House Commission On Aviation Safety and Security Final Report To President Clinton," *Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association*, (February 12, 1997), <https://www.aopa.org/advocacy/advocacy-briefs/gore-commission-final-report>.

President Al Gore was the Chairman of this Commission adds to the monumental pressure that would have been placed on the Gore-FPE after 9/11.¹⁹⁴

The Paris Counterfactual asks if it were possible for France to support USA in its quest to confront Iraq and the effect this would have on Saddam Hussein. It is related to Lebow's original critique of *Explaining the Iraq War* where he asks how 'a different strategy' in the invasion of Afghanistan *could* have 'changed the context of Iraq.'¹⁹⁵ [emphasis mine] The turning point for the Paris Counterfactual occurs after 9/11 as USA attacked Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. This assumes the Taliban is just as uncooperative for the Gore-FPE as it was for the Bush-FPE. The Bush-FPE was initially hesitant to involve NATO as an alliance in OEF because this could supposedly limit USA's freedom of action to pursue al Qaeda.¹⁹⁶ It is unclear if by deploying more troops to pursue bin Laden and his compatriots along the Afghan-Pakistan border in late 2001 USA could have killed or captured al Qaeda's leadership.¹⁹⁷

Putting aside the counterfactual of a change in US troop levels in Afghanistan, the Paris Counterfactual's turning point is a Gore-FPE including allies in planning and executing the GWOT.¹⁹⁸ If traditional allies in 'old' Europe had been more involved in Afghanistan in 2001, is it possible that this could change the dynamic for diplomatic efforts to confront Iraq in 2002? If France's role in the GWOT was greater, could this change Paris's views on the most effective means for coercing Saddam on his WMD program?¹⁹⁹ The point of the Paris Counterfactual is whether or not France could be incentivized to side with USA and Great Britain at the UN. In the event of France siding with its traditional allies, would Russia and China remain the only permanent members of the Security Council unwilling to support further means to disarm Iraq?

The Moscow Counterfactual assumes the process of Iraq War Momentum proceeds as stated until about the first week of March. The USSR and Iraq had a close relationship during the Cold War which began to change

¹⁹⁴ Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*, pp. 179-180.

¹⁹⁵ Lebow, "Review Essay of *Explaining the Iraq War*."

¹⁹⁶ Donald Rumsfeld, "Text: Rumsfeld's Pentagon News Conference," *The Washington Post*, (October 18, 2001), https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/rumsfeld_text101801.html.

¹⁹⁷ US Congress, "Tora Bora Revisited: How We Failed to get Bin Laden and Why it Matters Today," *Committee on Foreign Relations*, (November 30, 2009), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CPRT-111SPRT53709/html/CPRT-111SPRT53709.htm>.

¹⁹⁸ Jeremy Shapiro, "The Role of France in The War on Terrorism," *Brookings Institute*, (June 2016) <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/shapiro.pdf>.

¹⁹⁹ Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*, pp. 230-233, 255.

with perestroika and then was negatively affected by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.²⁰⁰ Only a few years prior, the USSR gave Iraq significant support in its war with Iran, but the end of the Cold War and Iraq's blatant subversion of international law led the USSR to back USA in condemning Iraq's actions.²⁰¹ Attempts at a diplomatic solution proved futile as USA and its coalition expelled Iraq from Kuwait and the USSR eventually dissolved.²⁰² And with its tremendous decline in geopolitical capabilities, Russia supported Iraq as best it could in the unipolar era.²⁰³

While Russia was instrumental in assisting USA in its invasion of Afghanistan after 9/11, it was strongly opposed to regime change in Iraq.²⁰⁴ Along with France, Russia was skeptical that military action was the best option for dealing with Saddam's alleged WMD program.²⁰⁵ The presence of Russian officials in Baghdad in the days and weeks before and after OIF began provide the impetus for a turning point.²⁰⁶ According to US interviews with Iraqi officials after major combat operations, Russia was passing intelligence to Iraq on the increase of US and coalition troops in the region in the weeks before the war.²⁰⁷ The counterfactual would require Saddam to be more willing to listen to the Russians and others who were warning him of USA's intentions he did not comply with international demands.

The intent of these four counterfactuals is to provide reasonable explanations for how the independent variable of this thesis, the FPE, could be manipulated in a way that US geostrategy towards Iraq would change. The first two counterfactuals, Holder and Clarke, consider preventing 9/11. The second two counterfactuals, Paris and Moscow, seek to disrupt Harvey's (2012) Iraq War Momentum. Among the infinite counterfactual possibilities,

²⁰⁰ Andrej Kreutz and Tareq Y. Ismael, "Russian-Iraqi Relations: A Historical and Political Analysis," *Arab Studies Quarterly* (September 22, 2001), <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Russian-Iraqi+Relations%3A+A+Historical+and+Political+Analysis.-a080966042>.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Galia Golan, "Russia and the Iraq War: was Putin's policy a failure?" *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 37, (2004), pp. 429-459, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48609509>.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*, p. 200.

²⁰⁶ "2003 Iraq War - The GRU Intelligence Archive," (March 17, 2022), <https://stolzuntersmenschen.blogspot.com/2022/03/2003-iraq-war-gru-intelligence-archive.html>.

²⁰⁷ Kevin M. Woods, "Iraqi Perspectives Project: A View of Operation Iraqi Freedom from Saddam's Senior Leadership," *Joint Center for Operational Analysis*, (2006), pp. 32, 89, 91, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA446305.pdf>.

these four were created for their possible impact within and upon the USA-FPE. Their purpose is to show instances where contingency and determinism can be argued depending on one's point of view.

This chapter began with introducing guidelines for creating a counterfactual to change a historical event, the antecedent, towards a particular outcome, the consequent. It was followed by establishing the independent variable, the FPE, and the dependent variable, geostrategy. The manipulation of the independent variable, the USA-FPE, is done to bring about a change in US geostrategy towards Iraq after 9/11. Harvey's concluding thoughts are instrumental:

Perhaps the only significant difference (between Gore and Bush on OIF) would have been the size of the invading force – Gore would probably have recommended a much larger troop deployment, in line with General Anthony Zinni's plan under the Clinton administration (OP PLAN 1003-98) originally approved in 1996 and updated in 1998, called for 400,000 troops.⁽²²⁾ Boosted by the confidence of deploying this many troops, and concerned about the cost of sustaining such a larger force through prolonged (and unsuccessful) inspections, Gore would have been more, not less, inclined to accept the risks of war.²⁰⁸

In conclusions, the next chapter will apply the FPE to create the conditions for a scenario arguing 300,000 US troops for the occupation of Iraq is a close call counterfactual. The utilization of State power will be embodied through a quantitative change in material and human resources deployed towards achieving US geostrategy. A geopolitical analysis that utilizes several categories of thought will be applied to anticipate and disarm the argument for X, which represents the will towards hubris that has made USA increasingly comparable to empires of the past.

²⁰⁸ Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*, p. 305.

Chapter 2: Historical Analysis and Scenario Application

ZIM: *If you wanted to teach a baby a lesson, would you cut its head off?*

HENDRICK: *Why ... no, sir!*

ZIM: *Of course not. You'd paddle it. There can be circumstances when it's just as foolish to hit an enemy city with an H-bomb as it would be to spank a baby with an ax. War is not violence and killing, pure and simple; war is **controlled** violence, for a purpose. The purpose of war is to support your government's decisions by force. The purpose is never to kill the enemy just to be killing him ... but to make him do what **you** want him to do. Not killing ... but controlled and purposeful violence. But it's not your business or mine to decide the purpose or the control. It's never a soldier's business to decide when or where or how – or **why** – he fights; that belongs to the statesmen and the generals. The statesmen decide why and how much; the generals take to from there and tell us where and when and how. **We** supply the violence; other people – “older and wise heads?” as they say – supply the control. Which is as it should be. That's the best answer I can give you.*

-Robert A. Heinlein²⁰⁹

For this thesis' counterfactual to be operationalized, its assumptions on why the Gore-FPE would react this way are stated. Harvey's prediction of a Gore-FPE aligning with OP PLAN 1003-98 on regime change operations in Iraq seems plausible based on Gore and his potential FPE's experiences and speeches from the 1990's to early 2003.²¹⁰ OP PLAN 1003-98 aligns with principles found in the Powell Doctrine which necessitates USA mobilize overwhelming military force if called upon by the President.²¹¹ This is one aspect of X1 and the other is how this geostrategic policy is announced to the USA and the world by President Gore.

Chapter two has three sections which create the conditions for USA to pursue two possible geostrategies for OIF. First, a historical analysis from the dissolution of the USSR to the civilizational destruction of 9/11 is considered. The reality of US geostrategy under unipolarity will be considered in relation to the potentiality of a different course of action. Most importantly, the reader needs to understand the historical context of the USA-FPE prior to 9/11. As a geopolitical discourse, this section will show US geostrategy in the 1990's developing towards achieving 'Full Spectrum Dominance' over the Earth and how 9/11 gave USA the opportunity to reach for it.²¹²

The second section explains the theory of a worst-case scenario forecasting Iraq fighting USA asymmetrically using guerilla warfare tactics. This is the result of a net assessment on a war with Iraq being conducted after 9/11. This counterfactual net assessment of a war with Iraq applies a theory of weapons systems which proposes improvised explosive devices (IED) being used against USA. Sources on the state of Iraq's military capabilities and its security organizations will show its conventional capacity for a potential war in 2003 is a

²⁰⁹ Robert A. Heinlein, *Starship Troopers*, (New York: G.P. Putman's Sons, 1959), pp. 64-65. [emphasis original]

²¹⁰ Wright and Reese, ON POINT II, p. 87.

²¹¹ Colin L. Powell, "U.S. Forces: Challenges Ahead," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 5 (Winter, 1992), pp. 32-45, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20045401>.

²¹² Henry H. Shelton, "Joint Vision 2020," *Department of Defense*, (Washington D.C., June 2000), p. 6, https://rdl.train.army.mil/catalog-ws/view/100.ATSC/CE5F5937-49EC-44EF-83F3-FC25CB0CB942-1274110898250/aledc_ref/joint_vision_2020.pdf.

shadow of what it was in 1991.²¹³ This reality will provide Iraq with the necessity of using asymmetric warfare against USA and its coalition.

The last section takes the counterfactual criteria previously stated and applies them to this counterfactual. The plausibility rests upon whether the argument for **X1** leading to **Y1**, as opposed to **X** leading to **Y**, is a realistic substitution using information developed in sections 2.1 and 2.2.

2.1 Conceptualizing Unipolarity

This section is an historic analysis of the USA-FPE from the end of the Cold War to 9/11. It has three sub-sections which correlate temporally with specific sources that are significant towards understanding USA's geopolitical perspective as the unipolar power in the world. In relation to the counterfactual and reality timelines, this section represents (U) and applies to both the Bush and Gore-FPE.

2.1.1 Liberal or Realist Geopolitics?

With hindsight, the end of the Cold War seems peculiar. Since 1648, has history shown an example of a peaceful change in the relative distribution of power between great powers?²¹⁴ But regardless one's discourse, the Cold War ended how it did and States theoretically had the opportunity to reconsider their foreign policy interests and preferences.²¹⁵ This first sub-section considers the early years of the unipolar world system. Jeane Kirkpatrick's *A Normal Country in a Normal Time* is a realist approach to US foreign policy that is radical in retrospect.²¹⁶ Its reaction comes from Charles Krauthammer whose Foreign Affairs article *The Unipolar Moment* expressed grave

²¹³ Pollack, *Threatening*, p. 158.

²¹⁴ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, ((1981) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

²¹⁵ Jeffrey Frieden, "Actors and Preferences in International Relations," in *Strategic Choice and International Relations*. Ed. David A Lake & Robert Powell, (Princeton University Press, 1999).

²¹⁶ Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, "A Normal Country in a Normal Time," in "America's Purpose Now," *The National Interest*, No. 21, (Fall 1990), pp. 40-44, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42894693>.

misgivings about a possible retrenchment in US geostrategy.²¹⁷ The previously cited Wolfowitz (1992), first leaked to the New York Times, will show that Krauthammer's argument won out over Kirkpatrick's.²¹⁸

The Kirkpatrick who produced *Dictatorships and Double Standards* in 1979 is certifiably Machiavellian compared to her 1990 article in *The National Interest*.²¹⁹ The end of the Cold War seemed an opportunity to attempt 'to make a good society better: more productive, more cohesive, more caring, more safe, more challenging, more serious.'²²⁰ Because USA was different from older countries with more 'complex histories,' 'there is no mystical American "mission" or purposes to be "found" independently of the U.S. Constitution and government' and anything beyond what is stated in the Constitution must be 'ratified by popular majorities.'²²¹ USA's government is a *constitutional federal republic* [emphasis mine] and its only stated purpose towards foreign policy in the Constitution is to "provide for the common defense."²²²

To Kirkpatrick, the first female US Ambassador to the UN, issues of foreign policy could be rendered unduly complex compared to domestic politics because of the threats involved.²²³ Kirkpatrick believed 'foreign policy becomes a major aspect of society only if its government is expansionist, imperial, aggressive, or when it is threatened by aggression.'²²⁴ In analyzing USA, a '*foreign-policy elite*' [emphasis mine] is identified which in the forty years following World War II had 'developed a disinterested globalist attitude which became identified with the liberal position in foreign policy.'²²⁵ The impossibility of isolationism was well understood and so Kirkpatrick sees a 'debate among the various types of internationalism' for USA at the end of the 20th century.²²⁶

²¹⁷ Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 1, America and the World, (1990/1991), pp. 23-33, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20044692>.

²¹⁸ Wolfowitz, *Defense Planning Guidance*; Patrick E. Tyler, "U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Insuring No Rivals Develop," *New York Times*, (March 8, 1992), p. 1, <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/03/08/world/excerpts-from-pentagon-s-plan-prevent-the-re-emergence-of-a-new-rival.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>.

²¹⁹ Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, "Dictatorships and Double Standards," *World Affairs*, Vol, 170, No. 2, (Fall 2007), pp. 61-73, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20672794>, originally published *Commentary*, (November 1979); Richard Christie and Florence L. Geis, *Studies in Machiavellianism*, ((1970), Academic Press, Inc.: New York, 2013), pp. 3-4.

²²⁰ Kirkpatrick, "A Normal Country," p. 40.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

²²² Central Intelligence Agency, "United States," *The World Factbook*, November 20, 2023, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/united-states/#government>; Kirkpatrick, "A Normal Country," p. 41.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

The path towards ‘cleaning up the residue of the Cold War’ entails a less expeditionary US foreign policy as commitments reduce in Europe to reflect Soviet withdrawals.²²⁷ After an interesting aside on the government’s responsibility in foreign markets and “industrial” policy, Kirkpatrick describes why democratic institutions are the best guarantee against states committing aggressive warfare.²²⁸ But she cautions against its willful exportation by USA in addition to maintaining its Cold War alliance structures.²²⁹ Her vision for what USA should do with the end of the Cold War was:

‘With a return to “normal” times, we can again become a normal nation—and take care of pressing problems of education, family, industry, and technology. We can be an independent nation in a world of independent nations.’²³⁰

Kirkpatrick does not seek repentance for USA’s past so much as consider the domestic situation more important than ‘managing the political evolution of the Soviet Union.’²³¹ Put most succinctly, Kirkpatrick believes ‘US foreign policy should support the US economy and work to strengthen democracy,’ in that order.²³²

The most interesting aspect of Charles Krauthammer’s response was his insistence on unipolarity’s eventual replacement.²³³ What was immediately relevant was USA had no comparatively ‘first-rank’ powers with which to compare.²³⁴ The totality of USA’s State power relative to all other States was recognized with the outcome of the Gulf War. Its rapid deployment of troops in August 1990 in response to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait with UN blessings, along with the discombobulated response by ‘Europe,’ identified USA as ‘at the apex of the industrial West.’²³⁵ In the future, USA must overcome the contradiction of:

‘...pseudo-multilateralism: a dominant great power acts essentially alone, but, embarrassed at the idea and still worshipping at the shrine of collective security...’²³⁶

Krauthammer saw USA’s possible collapse into post-unipolarity having strictly domestic causes.²³⁷ Domestic politics had produced a situation where entitlements had increased and taxes had decreased with the

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 43.

²³⁰ Ibid., p. 44.

²³¹ Ibid., p. 43.

²³² Ibid., p. 42.

²³³ Krauthammer, “Unipolar Moment,” p. 23.

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 24.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid., p. 25.

²³⁷ Ibid., p. 26.

government and the public living beyond their means.²³⁸ From Krauthammer's perspective, US foreign policy is detached from the domestic problems which would be the cause of USA's decline.²³⁹

The 'isolationists' had to be tested for their ability to perceive the threat posed by Iraq to USA's geostrategic interests.²⁴⁰ Realists are accused of seeing 'interests in a narrow and national manner' and therefore are incapable of realizing there is no such thing 'as normal times.'²⁴¹ International stability cannot reproduce itself except as 'the product of self-conscious actions by the great powers, and most particularly of the greatest power,' USA.²⁴² The greatest threat now, according to Krauthammer, is the proliferation of WMD which would create a "Weapon State."²⁴³ [emphasis original] The presence of strategic materials, such as oil, in certain countries had produced States where the government 'completely dominates civil society' and could acquire WMD to challenge 'the international status quo.'²⁴⁴ Krauthammer believes USA must lead 'new regimes to police these weapons and those who brandish them' to include 'denying, disarming, and defending' against the Weapon States.²⁴⁵ International agreements will provide for a choice of 'outside control or risk being physically disarmed' while defensive strategic weapons are developed.²⁴⁶ The Gulf War proved to Krauthammer that Weapon States represented the greatest threat to unipolarity; the only alternative besides chaos in the next millennium.²⁴⁷

If Kirkpatrick and Krauthammer's articles can be seen as competing over the future of US foreign policy, Wolfowitz (1992) shows that Krauthammer's perspective won.²⁴⁸ Colloquially termed the Wolfowitz Doctrine, this classified planning document was leaked to the newspaper of record and published on March 8, 1992.²⁴⁹ The anonymous leaker wanted a more public debate within USA and the reaction was swift.²⁵⁰ While the outcry forced revisions to the final product, this secret source of information was a glimpse into the geostrategic thinking within

²³⁸ Ibid., p. 27.

²³⁹ Ibid., pp. 26-27.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 28.

²⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 27-28.

²⁴² Ibid., p. 29.

²⁴³ Ibid., p. 30.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 31.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 32.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Wolfowitz, *Defense Planning Guidance*.

²⁴⁹ Tyler, "U.S. Strategy."

²⁵⁰ Patrick E. Tyler, "Lone Superpower Plan: Ammunition for Critics," *New York Times*, (March 10, 1992), p. 12, <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/03/10/world/lone-superpower-plan-ammunition-for-critics.html>.

the US Department of Defense (DOD). Interestingly enough, the month prior witnessed a collision between US and Russian nuclear-armed submarines off Russia's northwestern coast.²⁵¹ The relationship of such an incident to the historic analysis will be considered in this section's conclusions.

Wolfowitz (1992) considered the national security interests of USA through four strategic goals. The first is 'Our most fundamental goal is to deter or defeat attack from whatever source, against the United States, its citizens and forces, and to honor our historic and treaty commitments.'²⁵² Second, the strengthening of democracy would intersect with USA 'providing security at lower costs and with lower risks for all' to discourage States from 'renationalizing security policies.'²⁵³ The third and most controversial is 'to preclude any hostile power from dominating a region critical to our interests, including Europe, East Asia, the Middle East/Persian Gulf, and Latin America.'²⁵⁴ The final goal is a combination of 'limiting WMD proliferation' and 'encouraging other nations to respect the rule of law and each other's economic, social, ethnic, and political interests.'²⁵⁵ It is through 'US leadership' that multilateral responses can have positive impacts upon international security problems, but maintaining US military capabilities is the most important piece in perpetuating this world order.²⁵⁶

An important focus of Wolfowitz (1992) is the split between democratic and nondemocratic States in the international system.²⁵⁷ It appears to signal that a democratic State is a friendly State while a nondemocratic State is inherently suspicious. A great hope is the States of the former USSR be democratized and integrated 'into the defense community of democratic nations.'²⁵⁸ However, the continued existence of nondemocratic States such as North Korea and Iraq as well as the continued reality of Russian strategic assets made 'Planning for Uncertainty' of vital importance to Wolfowitz (1992).²⁵⁹ While some US politicians such as Senator Joseph Biden found parts of the leaked document sensible such as WMD proliferation, its focus on a "Pax Americana, a global security system

²⁵¹ Sebastien Roblin, "In 1992, a Russian Nuclear Attack Submarine Slammed into an American Sub (Right off Russia's Coast)," *The National Interest*, (December 13, 2016), <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/1992-russian-nuclear-attack-submarine-slammed-american-sub-18735>.

²⁵² Wolfowitz, *Defense Planning Guidance*, p. 1.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4; Patrick E. Tyler, "7 Scenarios for conflicts envisioned by Pentagon," *Baltimore Sun*, (February 17, 1992), <https://www.baltimoresun.com/1992/02/17/7-scenarios-for-conflicts-envisioned-by-pentagon/>.

where threats to stability are suppressed or destroyed by U.S. military power” seems quite expensive and detrimental to the idea of “new internationalism...of collective security.”²⁶⁰ A defense of Wolfowitz (1992) could argue, with the Gulf War as its reasoning, the basis for ‘multilateral action’ is the presence of US leadership which was absent in the years prior to World War II.²⁶¹

What was published in The New York Times article was US geostrategy towards ‘a big idea, a new world order’ with the end of the Cold War.²⁶² Wolfowitz (1992) can be seen as a repudiation of Kirkpatrick and a support for Krauthammer for the course of US foreign policy in the years to come. It agrees with Krauthammer in the belief that the only alternative to a US-led world order is one of chaos. The title of this subsection was ‘Realist or Liberal Geopolitics’ and this identifies one of each as Kirkpatrick the Realist and Krauthammer the Liberal. When considering the nuclear submarine collision in March 1992, one could ask if this is truly Liberal or Realist geopolitical behavior.

2.1.2 The Chessboard and the Project

Zbigniew Brzezinski’s *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* is vital to this historical analysis for two reasons. The first is its author who is one of three continentals who fled Europe to North America as a result of the second destruction of Europe in a generation. Along with Henry Kissinger and Madeline Albright, Brzezinski would have great influence at varying levels within the USA-FPE for decades.²⁶³ Second, Brzezinski (1997) is a culmination of European geopolitical thought intended to produce a geostrategy for a hyperpower whose influence would be fleeting if not properly managed.²⁶⁴ Through geography and history, Brzezinski (1997) reinvigorates Mackinder’s World Island thesis from a US perspective towards the perpetuation of unipolarity.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁰ Tyler, “Lone Superpower Plan;” Leslie H. Gelb, “They’re Kidding,” *New York Times*, (March 9, 1992), <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/03/09/opinion/foreign-affairs-they-re-kidding.html>.

²⁶¹ Wolfowitz, *Defense Planning Guidance*, p. 7.

²⁶² H.W. Bush, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis.”

²⁶³ Previous Work on this Subject. Aaron Smith, “The Central European Roots of Post-WW2 US Foreign Policy,” (Presentation, Charles University, 2019).

²⁶⁴ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*, (Basic Books: New York, 1997), p. xiv.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Brzezinski (1997) begins with a brief counterfactual that considers the outcome of the Axis Powers prevailing over the Allies in World War II.²⁶⁶ The victory of the Allies turned into the Cold War where USA and the USSR represented the geopolitical concept of a struggle between the leviathan and the behemoth, respectively.²⁶⁷ Due to the contradictions within its closed-system, the USSR ‘imploded and fragmented’ leaving a confused USA as sole-superpower.²⁶⁸ USA was different ‘from earlier empires’ because it utilized ‘the technique of co-optation’ to acculturate the elites of other States towards ‘democratic principles and institutions.’²⁶⁹ Brzezinski imagines a USA that is emulated by other States who revolve around its political and financial ‘interlocking universe’ because ‘D.C. is where the power game has to be played, and played according to America’s domestic rules.’²⁷⁰

The key to US primacy for Brzezinski is in identifying and ‘managing’ the ‘geopolitical pivots’ located around Eurasia.²⁷¹ Several States are categorized as geostrategic ‘players’ or ‘pivots’ which, depending on their geography, are to be utilized in the interests of USA’s global geostrategy.²⁷² The five issues of Europe, Russia, the Eurasian Balkans, China, and a possible Eurasian coalition are approached through US geostrategy.²⁷³ Europe is a bridgehead for spreading democratic institutions and its continued success requires the balancing of France and Germany while encouraging each to integrate their ‘orbits of special interest’ in Africa and Europe respectively into arrangements amicable for USA.²⁷⁴ NATO was further expanded soon after Brzezinski (1997) was published and he believed the eastward extension of its liberal ideology should eventually include Ukraine.²⁷⁵ Brzezinski imagines a belt of political, economic, and security relations overlaying the northern European plain connecting the Atlantic Ocean to the Black Sea.²⁷⁶ (Figure 5)

Russia’s geohistory since 1905 has been one of ‘horrors and tribulations’ that resulted in social conditions ‘typical of a middle-rank Third World country.’²⁷⁷ The retreat of its power after the Cold War was minimized by

²⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.; Carl Schmitt, *Land and Sea*, translated by Simona Draghici, ((1954) Plutarch Press: Washinton, D.C., 1997), p. 6.

²⁶⁸ Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, p. 9.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 19, 25.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 28.

²⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 39-40.

²⁷² Ibid., p. 41.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 57, 61-64.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 72.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 84.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 90.

Russia in stating its continued equality with USA and how global problems had no solutions without its input.²⁷⁸

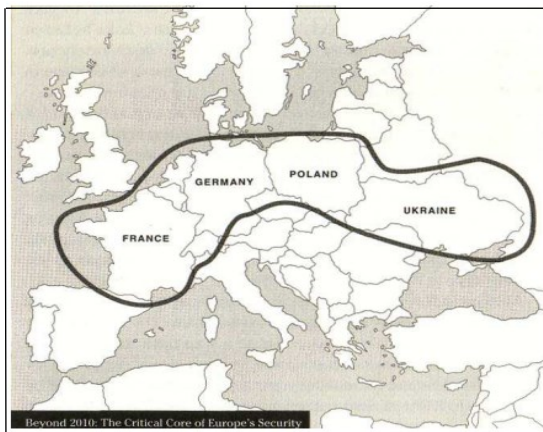
Brzezinski calls Russia's belief in the 'mature strategic partnership' delusional and contemplates a scenario where

NATO is still expanded but Russia is given "a deal it could not refuse" to support its post-Cold War westernizers.²⁷⁹

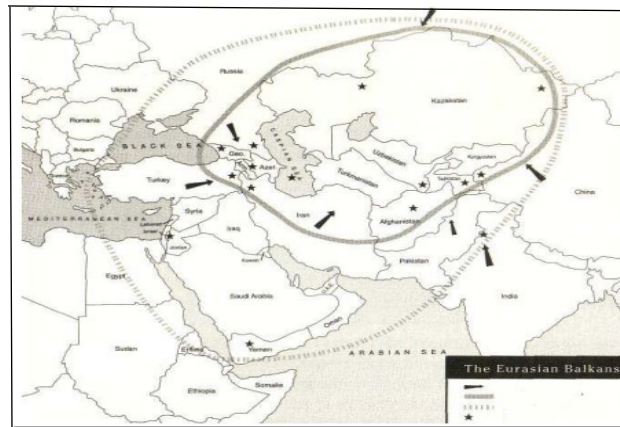
Expanding democratic Europe is Brzezinski's mission for USA and it is 'not subject to politically arbitrary

geographic limits.'²⁸⁰ The potential for conflict with Russia over this geostrategy means USA must be careful to

prevent Russia from allying with either China or Iran.²⁸¹



*Figure 5.*²⁸²



*Figure 6.*²⁸³

'The Eurasian Balkans' are conceptualized within a larger area of instability predominately located in central and western Asia that includes parts of northeastern Africa and southeastern Europe.²⁸⁴ (Figure 6) The dissolution of the USSR created new countries whose location and strategic materials are important to US geostrategy.²⁸⁵ Extracting and transporting these resources to markets in west Europe and east Asia is in the interest of USA as well as Russia, India, and China.²⁸⁶ In addition to regional powers such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Iran, small countries like Azerbaijan require USA to more effectively educate itself on this ethnically and geographically diverse part of the world.²⁸⁷

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 96.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 98, 100-101.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 119.

²⁸¹ Ibid., p. 116.

²⁸² Beyond 2010: The Critical Core of Europe's Security. Adapted from Ibid., p. 85.

²⁸³ The Eurasian Balkans. Adapted from Ibid., p. 124.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 124.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 126-130.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 145-148.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 150.

The potential for east Asia to be a core of political and economic influence or to spiral into conflict will depend on how USA can navigate its relationships with China and Japan.²⁸⁸ ‘Doctrinal reservations’ with China’s system of government and it possibly establishing a sphere of influence are considered in addition to demographic realities and possible reactions by China’s neighbors.²⁸⁹ Japan’s ability to adapt to China’s rise in relation to their shared history while clarifying its relationship with USA demonstrates a complex trinity where each actor seeks provincial goals while not intentionally pushing the other two towards unsatisfactory results.²⁹⁰ The ‘eventual reunification of Taiwan with the mainland,’ the frozen conflict on the Korean peninsula, and nuclearization of India and Pakistan show a perplexing geostrategic picture for USA.²⁹¹

The ‘manipulation and accommodation of the geostrategic players on the Eurasian chessboard’ is Brzezinski’s ideal towards perpetuating US primacy.²⁹² The chess pieces for a geostrategy which prevents a hostile coalition from displacing US primacy over Eurasia have been identified and must be put into order. The long-term goal is a ‘trans-Eurasian security system’ (TESS) which is ideologically compatible with the Euro-Atlantic space from which USA operates.²⁹³ For USA, the TESS would eventually connect west Europe and east Asia ‘to promote effective cooperation on issues critical to global stability.’²⁹⁴ This should allow USA to be relieved of some of its international obligations as this international organization, along with multinational corporations and non-government organizations, take responsibilities the US public no longer wants.²⁹⁵ It is through an emerging ‘web’ of ‘geopolitical cooperation’ that USA can accept being the ‘first and last truly global superpower.’²⁹⁶

If Brzezinski (1997) can be interpreted as the position of a liberal hawk, then its conservative equivalent is a policy paper published in 2000 called *Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategy, Force, and Resources for a New Century*.²⁹⁷ Published by the think tank the Project for a New American Century, Donnelly (2000) is considered the

²⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 152.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 152.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 184.

²⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 184-192.

²⁹² Ibid., pp. 194-195.

²⁹³ Ibid., pp. 198, 200, 208.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 209.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 211.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 215.

²⁹⁷ Thomas Donnelly, “Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategy, Force, and Resources for a New Century,” *Project for a New American Century*, (September, 2000), https://resistir.info/livros/rebuilding_americas_defenses.pdf.

most representative document of the neoconservative perspective from Harvey (2012).²⁹⁸ This ‘defense review’ raises alarm at the fact that the US military had become overextended with too few resources and too many responsibilities.²⁹⁹ If USA were to extend the unipolar moment into the future, then it must expend more State power in order to have a military prepared for any possible contingency.³⁰⁰

Donnelly’s (2000) contribution to US geostrategy is recommending higher Defense spending to prepare for multiple wars simultaneously while also upgrading its nuclear arsenal and exploiting the ‘revolution in military affairs’ (RMA).³⁰¹ In addition, USA requires a worldwide network of ‘forward operating bases’ with varying capabilities to reassure allies with difficult geopolitical situations.³⁰² These overseas forces must be interlinked with information technologies that provide a clear picture of their ‘security and political environment.’³⁰³ These represent expeditionary land power, ‘the essential link in the chain that translates U.S. military supremacy into American geopolitical preeminence.’³⁰⁴ In sum, significant investments of State power are required for the Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Army to work cohesively in order to win USA’s wars in the future.³⁰⁵

Donnelly (2000) warns of the spread of information technology and its military potential due to the lack of funding for research and development.³⁰⁶ The ‘infosphere’ is considered a national security issue along with international agreements on strategic weapons systems being rendered obsolete by the spread of WMD.³⁰⁷ The idea of “space-power” is compared to Mahan’s perspective on “sea-power” for the importance of Astropolitics in the future.³⁰⁸ “Cyberspace” and access to space are dependent on technological research and development that are poorly funded.³⁰⁹ In addition to the desire to field missile defense systems, Donnelly (2000) argues that USA will not enjoy unrestricted access nor can it effectively prevent access by an enemy to new domains of warfare in the future.

²⁹⁸ Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*, p. 98.

²⁹⁹ Donnelly, “Rebuilding America’s Defenses,” p. 1

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 19-20.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 38, 48.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-59.

Based on Donnelly's (2000) argument, the portion of the US federal budget designated towards Defense Spending is too low for USA.³¹⁰ In its reading of defense spending since World War II, USA never spent enough in its wars in Korea and Vietnam to bring about victory in these conflicts.³¹¹ The US military is incapable of 'expanding the perimeter' of overseas bases, continuing its presence in Cold War legacies, and having large enough reserves to deliver a "knockout punch" simultaneously under the post-Cold War 'peace dividend.'³¹² It can no longer rely on the investments made in the 1980's nor can it choose between weapons procurements and troop numbers.³¹³ In order to secure its global leadership and 'preserve the American peace,' USA must increase funding for its military.³¹⁴

In summarizing these two sub-sections, it is interesting to note that Kirkpatrick's (1990) argument for restraint ended with her 'respecting their decision' if the US public felt otherwise.³¹⁵ Perhaps Kirkpatrick knew she represented a minority opinion among the current and future FPE. It is ironic that of the two candidates for President in 2000, Bush argued for a foreign policy which had much in common with Kirkpatrick (1990). A position of great importance in the USA-FPE is the National Security Advisor and in Condoleezza Rice, President Bush had a realist heavily influenced by Morgenthau.³¹⁶ She was critical of the Clinton-FPE for having put the interests of the "international community" ahead of "national interests."³¹⁷ Rice (2000) agrees with the criticisms of Wolfowitz (1992) and Donnelly (2000) about the state of USA's military yet was perceived as a realist more concerned with how the balance of power affects USA's standing in the world.³¹⁸

However, it is at this point where the political perspective of Condoleezza Rice is replaced with that of Leon Fuerth, Sandy Berger, George Mitchell, and Wesley Clarke.³¹⁹ These are the most likely individuals to be approached to fill the Gore-FPE following the stunning victory in the 2000 US Presidential Election. Instead of

³¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 69-70.

³¹¹ Ibid., p. 71.

³¹² Ibid., pp. 69, 74.

³¹³ Ibid., pp. 72-73.

³¹⁴ Ibid., p. 76.

³¹⁵ Kirkpatrick, "A Normal Country," p. 44.

³¹⁶ Jacob Heilbrunn, "George W.'s Realist," *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 4, (Winter, 1999/2000), p. 51, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40209662>.

³¹⁷ Condoleezza Rice, "Promoting the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, no. 1 (January/February 2000), p. 47, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20049613>; Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*, p. 53.

³¹⁸ Rice, "Promoting the National Interest," pp. 50-51; Heilbrunn, "W.'s Realist," p. 50, 54.

³¹⁹ Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*, p. 91.

someone staring intensely at a ‘hanging chad,’ the most well-known image from this election would be of President-elect Gore triumphantly holding a newspaper from his native Tennessee which erroneously declared “BUSH WINS TENNESSEE!”³²⁰ The counterfactual created in *The Virtual Foreign Policy Executive*, following Harvey (2012), posits a President Gore inaugurated on 1/21/2001.³²¹ This is the first turning point in the timeline and is represented as **V1**. What follows is the ‘catastrophic and catalyzing event’ whose prevention feels so unlikely ever since.³²²

2.1.3 9/11

9/11 is an example of what Arquilla and Ronfeldt called ‘netwar.’³²³ This is when ‘nonstate, paramilitary, and other irregular forces,’ can access “knowledge” about a society and utilize asymmetric means towards a goal.³²⁴ Netwar is the result of Internet Communications Technology (ICT) allowing ‘small, autonomous, dispersed groups to coordinate and act jointly across great distances as never before.’³²⁵ The hijacking of airliners was a common tactic of terrorism, but the idea of ‘transforming commercial aircraft into weapons of mass destruction’ was unprecedented.³²⁶ Unfortunately, Commissions on Airline Safety, successful and failed terrorist operations in the Asia-Pacific, and fiction by Stephen King and Tom Clancy could not prompt USA’s security state to prevent 9/11.³²⁷ Globalization and ICT had created the conditions for al-Qaeda to sneak its operatives into USA and execute their suicide mission as Osama bin-Laden made good on his declaration of jihad upon USA.

In this counterfactual, the events of 9/11, **W**, remain the same and therefore at least 2,996 people from over fifty countries still die as a result.³²⁸ Of the four hijacked airliners, three reached their targets representing the

³²⁰ Ron Elving, “The Florida Recount Of 2000: A Nightmare That Goes On Haunting,” *NPR*, (November 12, 2018), (photo by Robert King), <https://www.npr.org/2018/11/12/666812854/the-florida-recount-of-2000-a-nightmare-that-goes-on-haunting>; This replicates a previous election situation. Pierce Hange, “President Harry S. Truman Holds the “Dewey Defeats Truman” Newspaper,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, (November 4, 1948), <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/photograph-records/58-358>.

³²¹ George W. Bush, “President George W. Bush’s Inaugural Address,” *The White House*, (January 20, 2001), <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/inaugural-address.html>.

³²² Donnelly, “Rebuilding America’s Defenses,” p. 63.

³²³ John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, “The Advent of Netwar,” *RAND*, (1996), MR789, p. 4, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monograph_reports/MR789/RAND_MR789.pdf.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

³²⁶ *9/11 Report*, p. 48.

³²⁷ *9/11 Report*; Stephen King, *The Running Man*, ((1982) New York: Pocket Books, 2016); Tom Clancy, *Debt of Honor*, (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1994).

³²⁸ Department of State, “9/11 – A Remembrance Honoring The World’s Fallen,” (September 11, 2006), https://web.archive.org/web/20080516171323/http://usinfo.state.gov/is/img/assets/4756/9_11onepager1.pdf.

cores of economic and military power in USA. The last plane, United Airlines Flight 93, crashed in southwest Pennsylvania less than twenty minutes flight from its target; likely the US Capitol Building, the White House, or CIA headquarters.³²⁹ While the initial reaction by the Gore-FPE may be different, its continuity of government directives are similar to those exercised by the Bush-FPE. Had Flight 93 slammed into its target, additional protocols would have placed greater power within the ‘shadow government.’³³⁰

9/11, from the perspective of its perpetrators, can be understood as a conspiracy towards a theory of its outcome. Dr. Johnson defined conspiracy as ‘a private agreement among several persons to commit some crime; a plot; a concerted treason’ and theory is defined as ‘speculation; not practice; scheme; plan or system yet subsisting only in the mind.’³³¹ Al-Qaeda’s goal was by striking USA in a spectacular fashion, this will cause the unipolar power to lash out and the result will be the weakening of governments in north Africa and west Asia. While there will remain a minority of voices calling for a less militarized response, they will be unable to stop the Gore-FPE from pursuing a geostrategy of regime change in Afghanistan and then Iraq.

This first section began with a history of USA-FPE thinking after the Cold War represented as **U**. It transitioned into the counterfactual by manipulating the outcome of the 2000 US Presidential Election whereby **VI** replaces **V** with a President Gore. Due to institutional failures, **W** occurs and the Gore-FPE has the opportunity to change US geostrategy. As a part of this geostrategy, the Gore-FPE will pursue a military strategy focused on ‘full spectrum dominance,’ meaning ‘US forces, working unilaterally or multilaterally, will defeat any adversary and control any situation across the full range of military operations.’³³² This means the US military must be capable of performing both ‘combat and noncombat military operations’ towards achieving the political goals of the State.³³³

³²⁹ *9/11 Report*, pp. 44-46.

³³⁰ White House, The Shadow Government, “Continuity of Government,” White House, <https://whitehouse.gov/continuity-plan/>.

³³¹ Samuel Johnson, [https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/views/search.php?term=conspiracy](https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/views/search.php?term=conspiracy;); <https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/views/search.php?term=theory>, (Retrieved 1/2/2024).

³³² Shelton, “Joint Vision,” p. 6.

³³³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

2.2 Counterfactual and Theory Implementation

The reader is asked to imagine themselves as a US Army officer who is attached to the Office of Net Assessment (ONA) within the DOD. On the morning of 11 September 2001, you are late to work and stuck in traffic on the Capital Beltway system surrounding Washington, D.C. At 9:35 AM, EST, you turn off the music you have been listening to for the last hour to listen to the morning news as you crawl north on Interstate 395 towards the Pentagon.³³⁴ You stare dumbfounded at your car radio at hearing of planes striking both World Trade towers in New York City as a loud noise reverberates from behind you. You are momentarily numb as you glance anxiously towards Reagan National Airport to your right. At approximately 9:37:45, in your peripheral vision, a massive explosion occurs at your place of work, the Pentagon.³³⁵

Upon arrival, an injured person is brought out and you immediately transport them to the closest hospital.³³⁶ When you finally get home that evening, you stare absentmindedly at a blank television screen. You do not want to turn it on because you know what will be on every channel and all you can think about is what will come next. Soon enough, the phone rings and it is your boss. After they talk for a minute, you think to yourself ‘Iraq? It seems unlikely Saddam had anything to do with this.’ Reading your mind, your boss says, ‘Look, I know what you are thinking because I was thinking it when my boss told me. But we have orders to update OP PLAN 1003-98.’ ‘Understood, Sir (or Mam),’ you say. ‘What is my angle?’ Your boss responds, ‘I need you to take a worst-case scenario approach that does not involve WMD; someone else is handling that. If you were advising Saddam that USA will invade Iraq, how would you recommend defending the regime?’

This is the introduction for the plausible world counterfactual. The argument for why a Gore-FPE would replicate the behavior of the Bush-FPE was made in Chapter One and now the theory for how and why OIF could be different from reality (**X1** instead of **X**) will be made. The first sub-section introduces the theory of weapons systems and net assessment. The net assessment will come out of the application of *The Threatening Storm* which recommends a ‘full-scale invasion’ towards regime change in Iraq. The first sub-section will define the concepts of weapons systems and net assessment. the net assessment of a war between USA and Iraq. The second sub-section

³³⁴ Nancy Berlage, Alfred Goldberg, Sarandis Papadopoulos, Diane Putney, and Rebecca Welch, *Pentagon 9/11*, Kindle ed., (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2007), Location 239 of 4408.

³³⁵ Ibid., Location 245.

³³⁶ Ibid., Location 1776.

considers the options for military action by USA against Iraq. This leads to the worst-case scenario based on weapons systems and recommends the deployment of 300,000 US troops to mitigate this potential threat. The last sub-section discusses military tactics necessary for USA to achieve its political goals personified in the counterfactual (Y1 instead of Y).

2.2.1 Weapons Systems and Net Assessment

Carroll Quigley's unfinished work, *Weapons Systems and Political Stability*, begins with the basic needs required of human beings. These are similar to those discussed in previous works by Quigley, and the 'need for security' is stressed as 'the most necessary human need even if it is not the most important.'³³⁷ The function of complex organizations is to fulfill the security need for resolving disagreements within a group and between different groups.³³⁸ This 'resolution of conflicts of wills' is the purpose of politics and occurs via 'the exercise of power.' 'Power,' according to Quigley, 'is simply the ability to obtain the acquiescence of another person's will.'³³⁹ There are 'three aspects of power in our society which are (1) force; (2) wealth; and (3) persuasion.'³⁴⁰ [emphasis original] In conflict they are conceptualized accordingly as 'threatening or using physical force to destroy capacity to resist; using wealth to buy or bribe compliance; or persuading the other to yield through argument.'³⁴¹ A 'power relationship' is then understood between different groups and this will be applied towards States.³⁴²

Quigley's defines conflict as arising when the 'consensus' on a power relationship between two States is broken and it must be 'demonstrated what the real power relationship is in order to reestablish a consensus.'³⁴³ A worthy example is the first Gulf War in 1991. Iraq invaded Kuwait destroying the consensus and creating a situation that made USA insecure and so USA led a coalition to expel Iraq and contain it. Over the next decade, Iraq would threaten to contest this new consensus, but the continued presence of USA ensured a stable power situation existed.³⁴⁴ Quigley perceives the 'role of any conflict, including war, is to measure a power relationship so

³³⁷ Quigley, *Weapons*, pp. 2-3; Previous research on Quigley. Aaron Smith, "Civilization and Great Power," (essay, Charles University, 2019).

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 13.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

³⁴⁴ Pollack, *Threatening Storm*, p. 15.

that a consensus ... may be established.³⁴⁵ While this consensus was not a peaceful situation, it was one which satisfied USA, which had proven through military force that it was stronger than Iraq.³⁴⁶

Quigley (2013) identifies 'five factors making up the elements of force' as (1) weapons; (2) the organization of the use of such weapons; (3) morale; (4) communications; and (5) transportation and logistics.³⁴⁷ Their combination produces a 'power area' where a State controls territory.³⁴⁸ Using the Gulf War example, Iraq wanted to expand its power area to include Kuwait but this was in conflict with USA's geostrategy.³⁴⁹ USA's ability to build a coalition, communicate its demands for Iraq's withdrawal, quickly transport military power into the region, and utilize overwhelming force against Iraq is a simple application of Quigley's theory. By remaining in the region, USA sought to ensure Iraq could not seek to expand its power area.

It is the first two factors, 'weapons' and 'the organization of the use of such weapons' which Quigley defines as a weapons system.³⁵⁰ There are three dyads towards understanding weapons systems consisting of offensive and defensive, amateur and specialist, and shock and missile weapons.³⁵¹ The differentiation between offensive and defensive weapons systems is in how they are utilized. An offensive weapons system is used to compel another into compliance where a defensive weapons system is used by the other to say "No" to orders and to sustain that "No."³⁵² [emphasis original] An amateur weapons system is one that is 'cheap and easy to use' while a specialist weapons system is 'expensive to obtain and difficult to use.'³⁵³ A shock weapon is a 'fist or a hand-held weapon' that physically strikes an enemy up close.³⁵⁴ A missile can be as simple as a 'sling or bow and arrow' to modern weapons such as 'firearms, grenades, rockets, and missiles' that are hurled at the enemy from distance.³⁵⁵

³⁴⁵ Quigley, *Weapons*, p. 20.

³⁴⁶ Pollack, *Threatening*, p. 39.

³⁴⁷ Quigley, *Weapons*, p. 35.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

³⁴⁹ Pollack, *Threatening*, p. 15

³⁵⁰ Quigley, *Weapons*, p. 38.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 40-41.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

Over the next 950 pages, Quigley applies his theory of weapons systems to history from about 4,000 years ago up to the 1400's.³⁵⁶ As it relates to this thesis, the first chapter provides an additional means of 'theoretical consistency' to the counterfactual.³⁵⁷ The reader can understand how the concepts of power relationships, power areas, and weapons systems can fluctuate throughout history by their application in this counterfactual. The next step is applying Quigley's theory of weapons systems towards a net assessment of a potential war between USA and Iraq.

The definition of net assessment which is most temporally relevant is from a DOD Directive from 8/22/2001. This defines net assessment as 'the comparative analysis of military, technological, political, economic, and other factors governing the relative military capability of nations. Its purpose is to identify problems and opportunities that deserve the attention of senior defense officials.'³⁵⁸ This net assessment is created with the belief that Iraq will remain uncooperative with the international community concerning its WMD program and the Gore-FPE will find this unacceptable in the post-9/11 geopolitical environment. In order to justify a policy of 'anticipatory self-defense' necessitating regime change, a hypothesis for a worst-case scenario is considered.³⁵⁹ Prior to the application of the theory of weapons systems, the military balance between Iraq and USA must be established.

The 'template' for this net assessment is a functional comparison of the military situation between Iraq and USA in the counterfactual present of 2002.³⁶⁰ This comparison is based on information available on the military capabilities of both States and how they have changed between the Gulf War and 9/11. The vastly different geopolitical circumstances of Iraq and USA is relevant in judging the ability of each to achieve their political goals.³⁶¹ Because of the vast asymmetries which exist between Iraq and USA along with the recent history of the Gulf War, it is assumed that Iraq will recognize this fact and defend itself accordingly.³⁶² Out of this comes a worst-

³⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 1018.

³⁵⁷ Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit*, p. 56.

³⁵⁸ Paul Wolfowitz, SUBJECT: Director of Net Assessment, *Department of Defense*, Number 5111.11 (August 22, 2001), <https://webharvest.gov/peth04/20041028181520/http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/html/511111.htm>.

³⁵⁹ Pollack, *Threatening*, p. 368.

³⁶⁰ Cohen, "Net Assessment," p. 13.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Ibid., pp. 14-17.

case scenario whereby upon studying recent histories of asymmetric conflict from the previous twenty years, Iraq will choose tactics which make the costs of regime change unbearable for USA.³⁶³

2.2.2 A 'full-scale invasion' of Iraq and the 'worst-case scenario'

The Gore-FPE has similar political goals to its predecessors in it wants 'a cohesive Iraq without Saddam' (and his sons).³⁶⁴ Kenneth Pollack's two works on regime change in Iraq provide the parameters for the net assessment. The first is an article published in *Foreign Affairs* titled "Next Stop Baghdad?" and then his book published under the aegis of the Council of Foreign Relations, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq*. What is important to take from the *Foreign Affairs* article is Pollack's insistence that calls to replicate USA's recent strategy in OEF are unlikely to be successful.³⁶⁵ This strategy of committing US State power in a manner similar to Afghanistan was referred to as "the Afghan Option."³⁶⁶ USA has a great advantage over Iraq in air power, but the difference from Afghanistan is the lack of organized opposition to Saddam's regime.³⁶⁷ And even if by some miracle USA could use air power to cause a collapse of the regime, there would still be the problem of what will replace it. USA 'would be left "owning" a country of 22 million people ravaged by more than two decades of war, totalitarian misrule, and severe deprivation' without ground troops providing security.³⁶⁸ It is important to take USA's 'victory over Afghanistan' and shape the US public towards confronting a different situation in Iraq as soon as possible.³⁶⁹

Pollack's expands this argument in *The Threatening Storm* that a 'full-scale invasion' of Iraq is the best option available to USA due to the inadequacy of all the other options.³⁷⁰ Pollack (2002) starts with an important history of Iraq's region until the Gulf War in 1991.³⁷¹ This conflict is explained as a success overcome by the disappointment in the survival of Saddam's regime.³⁷² Over the next ten years, policies of containment, deterrence, and covert action were undermined due to Iraq's potential WMD development, international partners' intransience,

³⁶³ Ibid., pp. 18-19.

³⁶⁴ Pollack, *Threatening*, p. 47.

³⁶⁵ Kenneth M. Pollack, "Next Stop Baghdad?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 2, (March/April 2002), p. 37, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20033082>.

³⁶⁶ Pollack, *Threatening*, p. 293.

³⁶⁷ Pollack, "Next Stop Baghdad?" p. 38.

³⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 45.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 47.

³⁷⁰ Pollack, *Threatening*, p. 335.

³⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 6-36.

³⁷² Ibid., pp. 46-47.

and Saddam's security state respectively.³⁷³ After 9/11, it is now untenable for Saddam's regime to remain in place with the threat that it poses to US interests. With the status-quo no longer politically possible for USA, the military options for committing regime change are developed.

The first possibility is the previously mentioned Afghan Option which envisions a minimal number of US ground troops, working alongside indigenous anti-government forces and under the cover of overwhelming air power, being able to engage and defeat Iraqi forces.³⁷⁴ Based on its experiences in the Gulf War, Kosovo, and Afghanistan, the particulars of what USA wishes to achieve makes the Afghan Option suspect for Iraq.³⁷⁵ In the first two conflicts, while air power was an important element, it was the use of ground forces or the threat of their use which proved decisive in the dispensation of the Gulf War and in Kosovo.³⁷⁶ What made the Afghan Option successful was the unique circumstances of the Taliban having limited governance over Afghanistan as well as experienced opposition forces who had been fighting the Taliban for years.³⁷⁷ The biggest problem USA would have is in convincing opposition in Iraq, who had been decimated in uprisings in the immediate aftermath of the Gulf War, that USA was serious about overthrowing Saddam Hussein.³⁷⁸

If Saddam's WMD and conventional forces were not destroyed by air power, then they would pose a serious threat to US interests in the region. Knowing USA meant to overthrow his regime, Saddam would have little incentive not to use his military to the fullest extent against US allies in Iraq and its periphery.³⁷⁹ And even if Saddam and his regime were to be liquidated with air power, what then? As Pollack (2002) puts it, 'under any regime change scenario, it is the reconstruction of Iraq that is likely to be the longest, most difficult, and most costly aspect of the operation.'³⁸⁰ Whether the geostrategic goal of the Gore-FPE is only for regime change in Iraq or greater political changes in the region, the stability of post-Saddam Iraq is too important to be attempted "on the cheap."³⁸¹ [emphasis original]

³⁷³ Ibid., pp. 117-121, 162-164, 246-250.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 294.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 298-308.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 312.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 312-313.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 324-328.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 329.

³⁸¹ Ibid., p. 334.

Of the several advantages to a full-scale invasion of Iraq, Pollack (2002) emphasizes ‘the opportunity to build a new Iraq.’³⁸² The goal of a post-Saddam Iraq that is ‘a model of what a modern Arab State could be’ requires an overwhelming invasion and occupation force. To ensure USA achieves full-spectrum dominance in the combat and post-combat phases, a ‘force...anywhere from 200,000 to 300,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen (and marines)’ is required.³⁸³ This includes the forces which are trained in close combat operations but also those trained in stability and support operations which are critical to quickly rebuild ‘liberated Iraqi territory.’³⁸⁴ In order for ground forces to reach Baghdad, the assumed center of gravity of the regime, USA will have extensive lines of communication even if Turkey cooperated.³⁸⁵ And since contingencies for regime change in Iraq that do not include a northern invasion route previously existed, the focus remains on an invasion from the south.³⁸⁶ If a full-scale invasion occurs:

‘the most likely scenario would be about 1/3 of Iraq’s armed forces fighting hard, limited use of tactical WMD, and some extensive combat in a few cities. In this most likely case, the campaign would probably last 4-8 weeks and result in roughly 500-1,000 American combat deaths.’³⁸⁷

As Pollack (2002) admits, ‘the question of how the Iraqi people are likely to react’ cannot be known beforehand along with the level of resistance of the Iraqi military.³⁸⁸ It is in considering this unknown where IED as a weapons system becomes a dependent variable within the counterfactual. The potential for elements of the Iraqi security apparatus fighting USA asymmetrically causes USA to deploy a force of 300,000 troops which represents the independent variable in the counterfactual. Next, the rationale for the worst-case scenario of IED as a weapons system is made clear.

The military reasoning for predicting Iraq will organize its military to fight USA asymmetrically is based on this being the most realistic worst-case scenario for USA. If the boundaries for the net assessment excludes WMD, then there are a limited number of hypotheses one can imagine taking place once OIF begins. There appear to be three hypotheses for what the Iraqis will do once hostilities begin in 2003:

³⁸² Ibid., pp. 336-338.

³⁸³ Ibid., p. 338.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 339.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 348.

³⁸⁶ Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *The General's War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), pp. 452-454.

³⁸⁷ Pollack, *Threatening Storm*, p. 351.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 381.

1. The Iraqi military will collapse and surrender to US forces.
2. The Iraqi military will attempt to fight using tactics similar to those it tried in the Gulf War.
3. The Iraqi military will reject conventional tactics and utilize asymmetric means to fight USA.³⁸⁹

It would be much easier to assume that the Iraqis will choose either the first or second hypothesized outcome.³⁹⁰ In reality, the belief that overthrowing Saddam's regime would 'be a cakewalk' was common among neoconservatives.³⁹¹ That Iraq's military is smaller and weaker and the US military has become stronger since the Gulf War are facts the Iraqis would be aware of.³⁹² But even with years of sanctions, Iraq remains 'the most effective military power in the Gulf.'³⁹³ In addition to the horrors suffered by the Iraqi people after the Gulf War, there is the problem of Saddam's extensive security state. The Iraqi Mukhabarat 'is a vast, complex labyrinth of security organizations with their own intelligence and military units pervading all layers of Iraqi society.'³⁹⁴ This system provides the regime with defenses against outside covert actions and creates a culture of fear among the population.³⁹⁵ The Mukhabarat is the most significant factor in making the first hypothesis of Iraqis surrendering and supporting US forces unrealistic.

According to Cordesman (2002), 'the worst Iraqi option is to repeat the mistakes of the Gulf War and send its best forces out into the desert where they are most exposed and have the least air defense.'³⁹⁶ Even if such a strategy were argued, sanctions since the Gulf War had prevented Iraq from importing arms and limited its ability to domestically produce military equipment.³⁹⁷ Iraq could clandestinely purchase some arms, but this would not be

³⁸⁹ Utilizing multiple hypotheses for comparison is found in: Richards J. Heuer, Jr., *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, (Langley: Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1999), p. 97, <https://www.cia.gov/static/Psychology-of-Intelligence-Analysis.pdf>.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 96.

³⁹¹ Ken Adelman, "Cakewalk in Iraq," *Washington Post*, (February 13, 2002). https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/2002/02/13/cakewalk-in-iraq/cf09301c-c6c4-4f2e-8268-7c93017f5e93/?utm_term=.f80d7acc6064.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iraqi War Fighting Capabilities: A Dynamic Net Assessment*, (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, July 21, 2002), p. 1, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/iraqi-war-fighting-capabilities-dynamic-net-assessment>; Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iraqi Armed Forces on the Edge of War*, (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 7, 2003), p. 1, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/iraqi-armed-forces-edge-war>.

³⁹⁴ Ibrahim al-Marashi, "Iraq's Security and Intelligence Network: A Guide and Analysis," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 6, No. 3, (September, 2002), p. 1, https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/meria/ali02_01.pdf.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 13.

³⁹⁶ Cordesman, *Iraqi War Fighting Capabilities*, p. 71.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 84-86.

in quantities that would make a difference conventionally against the US military.³⁹⁸ Iraq's air and naval forces will be outmatched by the US Air Force and Navy. With the exclusion of WMD from this net assessment, it is clear that Iraq's only option is to utilize asymmetric warfare that mitigates USA's advantages.

In applying the theory of weapons systems to a scenario where Iraq plans for and deploys an asymmetric strategy of defense, the greatest threat to US and coalition forces is from IED. An IED is a 'device placed or fabricated in an improvised manner incorporating destructive, lethal, noxious, pyrotechnic or incendiary chemicals and designed to destroy, incapacitate, harass or distract.'³⁹⁹ This worst-case scenario is based on Iraqi forces realizing that its best defense is to use ambush techniques which defeat US military advantages. The utilization of ambush techniques that mimic the effects of landmines would greatly affect US military operations if USA were not prepared for this contingency. The USSR-Afghanistan War and the Russia-Chechnya War share an important factor for both Iraqi and US forces.⁴⁰⁰ In both conflicts, the more powerful actor (USSR and Russia) suffered most of its wounded as a result of conventional antitank landmines and improvised devices 'using artillery rounds, aviation munitions, grenades, and other explosives.'⁴⁰¹

While many of the analyses, predictions, and recommendations produced prior to OIF mention the potential threat of asymmetric warfare, not one could be found which specifically warns of the use of conventional landmines and other military munitions in an improvised manner to fight USA.⁴⁰² The closest is in a CIA document that warns of a 'nontraditional threat to an opponent' described as "asymmetric by intent."⁴⁰³ [emphasis original] As previously stated, the definition of a weapons system is the weapon and the organization for its use.⁴⁰⁴ If the theory of weapons systems and the idea of asymmetric warfare were combined to produce a tangible threat, it could

³⁹⁸ Cordesman, *Iraqi Armed Forces*, p. 31.

³⁹⁹ United Nations Mine Actions Service, "Improvised Explosive Device Lexicon," *United Nations*, (2017), p. 1, https://unmas.org/sites/default/files/unmas_ied_lexicon_0.pdf.

⁴⁰⁰ Lester W. Grau, "Mine Warfare and Counterinsurgency: The Russian View," *Engineer*, (March 1999), <https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/241486>.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴⁰² Cordesman, *Iraqi Armed Forces*; Cordesman, *Iraqi War Fighting Capabilities*; Steven E. Miller, "Gambling On War: Force, Order, and the Implications of Attacking Iraq," *Workshop on Terrorism and WMD*, (November 10, 2002), pp. 12-15, https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/special_section/iraq/papers/mis01/mis01.pdf; Central Intelligence Agency, *Iraq Papers for the Principals Committee*, "Iraq: Saddam's Options in a Conflict With the US," (August 12, 2002), pp. 2, 4, "Saddam's Asymmetric Options in a Conflict With the US," pp. 1, 3-5. <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/REGIONAL%20STRATEGIES%5B15807216%5D.pdf>.

⁴⁰³ Central Intelligence Agency, "Saddam's Asymmetric Options," p. 12.

⁴⁰⁴ Quigley, *Weapons Systems*, p. 38.

align with the ‘capabilities-based approach.’⁴⁰⁵ This concept was intended to focus on WMD, but it complements the counterfactual in that the ‘capabilities-based model focuses more on how an adversary might fight than who the adversary might be and where a war might occur.’⁴⁰⁶ Following 9/11, it is logical that focusing on threats that utilize ‘asymmetric warfare’ would be prudent regardless of who was President.⁴⁰⁷

While previous sources gave information on Iraqi military vehicles and artillery launchers, the best source for considering Iraq’s possible stores of landmines comes from *Landmines: A Deadly Legacy*.⁴⁰⁸ Based on Iraq’s use of landmines during and after the Gulf War, two facts can be observed. The first is while Iraq has manufacturing capabilities for landmines, a significant amount of its stockpile are of foreign origin.⁴⁰⁹ The other is that it can be expected that Iraq is in possession of millions of landmines.⁴¹⁰ And there should be no doubt that Iraq has plentiful stores of ammunition of varying calibers which can be used both as intended and as IED.

2.2.3 The Plausibility of Considering Y1

In order to create the close-call counterfactual, one of the rules described in Ferguson (1997) must be broken. To argue that IED as a weapons system could be predicted beforehand requires the introduction of another military acronym. Captured Enemy Ammunition (CEA) is ‘enemy ammunition that has not been used during a conflict and has been captured left behind unprotected or dumped by a party to an armed conflict.’⁴¹¹ The foundation for applying weapons systems in a net assessment of Iraq is based on the assumption that Iraq is replete with ammunition. It is in the securitization of Iraq’s ammunition depots that the IED aspect of OIF (Y) would be impacted by a change in troop levels (X).

It is true that Klingelhoefter (2005) was published about two years after OIF had begun and therefore this affects the counterfactual’s plausibility. However, Klingelhoefter (2005) addresses arguments ‘that no one could

⁴⁰⁵ Donald H. Rumsfeld, “Quadrennial Defense Review Report,” *Department of Defense*, (September 30, 2001), <https://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/quadrennial/QDR2001.pdf?ver=AFTs7axkH2zWUHncRd8yUg%3d%3d>.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ Cordesman, *Iraqi War Fighting Capabilities*; Human Rights Watch, *The Arms Project of Human Rights Watch and Physicians for Human Rights, Landmines: A Deadly Legacy*, (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1993).

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 187-189, 196-198.

⁴¹¹ Mark D. Klingelhoefter, “Captured Enemy Ammunition in Operation Iraqi Freedom and its Strategic Importance in Post-Conflict Operations,” *US Army War College*, (March 18, 2005), p. 15, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA431848.pdf>.

have predicted that IEDs would become the insurgency's weapon of choice.⁴¹² The previous conflicts in Afghanistan and Chechnya are not mentioned, but the use of similar tactics in Israel and Lebanon the previous twenty years are pertinent trends to a US net assessment of war with Iraq.⁴¹³ And while the use of IED could still occur with US and coalition forces securing Iraq's ammunition depots, it would be more difficult to smuggle munitions from outside sources if US troop levels were X instead of X1.⁴¹⁴ The locations across Iraq where the largest ammunition depots were being observed in early 2002 so continuing the surveillance of these depots should be a priority in the lead up to OIF.⁴¹⁵ This particular source focuses on what appears to be 'the movement of conventional munitions' from 'centralized storage locations' to other places.⁴¹⁶

The problem of Iraq 'engaging in deception,' not to hide WMD but to hide a strategy for conducting asymmetric warfare can now be considered.⁴¹⁷ If Iraq's political goal is regime survival, then its only rational option in the face of invasion by US and coalition forces is 'asymmetry by intent' that utilizes the 'capabilities' at its disposal.⁴¹⁸ Iraq must make the costs of regime change so high for USA and its coalition that their publics are unwilling to pay them. As was stated at the beginning of this section, WMD is not a factor in this net assessment. The primary factor which makes the worst-case scenario the most plausible response are the facts of Iraq's weapons systems. By applying the three dyads to IED, a strategy for its use can be pictured. The first dyad shows IED is a defensive weapon. USA will encounter great difficulty in reaching the center of gravity if it is concerned by roadside bombs which are camouflaged along the roads to Baghdad. The second dyad will have IED as an amateur weapon. Because Iraq is an urbanized State, access to the additional technologies needed besides military munitions will be easy to find. Its history in the twenty years before 2003 means the knowledge to produce IED can be easily disseminated. Most difficult for USA is that IED can be considered both a shock and missile weapon. As a missile, IED can be hidden in locations to be detonated on the unsuspecting enemy. As a shock weapon, IED can be used in a suicide-style attack similar to the Beirut bombings in 1983.

⁴¹² Ibid., p. 3.

⁴¹³ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Intelligence Community Brief, "Iraq: Unusual Logistical Activities In Preparation for an Anticipated US-Led Campaign," *National Intelligence Council*, (May 2, 2002), https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/DOC_0001327022.pdf.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., p. 5

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

⁴¹⁸ Rumsfeld, "Defense Review Report," p. 14.

2.3 A Plausible or Miracle Counterfactual

The last section of this chapter will answer the question of whether or not the counterfactual posed can be considered plausible or miracle. This will be done by applying Lebow's 9 criteria following the turning point of the 2000 Presidential election. The antecedent of this counterfactual is being changed from **X** to **X1** represented as US troop levels as assumed by Harvey (2012).⁴¹⁹ The predicted change in the consequent is the result of changes in personnel within the Gore-FPE and the theory of weapons systems. The net assessment produces a realistic worst-case scenario that encourages **X1** to be prepared for **Y**, the IED component of OIF.

The argument for **realism** in changing **X** to **X1** has its basis in the historical analysis from section 2.1 and Iraq War Momentum from Harvey (2012).⁴²⁰ In studying the USA-FPE from the end of the Cold War until 9/11, it is difficult to find evidence that would prevent 9/11 or dissuade USA from confronting Iraq. Regardless of a President Bush or Gore, regime change in Iraq meets two goals for the USA-FPE. The first is to deny Iraq from becoming a 'Weapons State' with a WMD deterrent. The second is Iraq falls within the 'Eurasian Balkans' so regime change could allow for the expansion of US interests in this geopolitical region.⁴²¹ Ensuring unencumbered access to the strategic materials in this region is more likely in a post-Saddam Iraq which is democratic and friendly with USA.

In order to bring about this geostrategic goal within the counterfactual, the path from the antecedent of **X1** to the consequent of **Y1** must be **clearly** stated. This is done through comparison with the **X** and **Y** relationship from reality. The evidence that the quantitative factor of US troop levels in the first weeks and months of OIF had a demonstrative effect on the IED aspect of the war is clear.⁴²² Therefore, a change in the antecedent should result in a change in the consequent. If the consequent in this counterfactual can be understood tangentially with asymmetric warfare, then the argument for changing troop levels to align with the argument in Pollack (2002) can be accepted.

To keep **cotenability** between the antecedent and consequent requires acceptable minimal rewrites. Based on its experiences in the Clinton-FPE, those who make up the Gore-FPE would have 'connecting principles' which point towards X1 replacing X. A potential problem for this antecedent is the fact that members of the Bush-FPE

⁴¹⁹ Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*, p. 305.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴²¹ Krauthammer, "Unipolar Moment," p. 28; Brzezinski, *Grand Chessboard*, pp. 39-40.

⁴²² Wright, ON POINT II, p. 67.

would have had high positions within the Gore-FPE. This is why the net assessment which results in a worst-case scenario is necessary. The likelihood of Saddam loyalists in the Mukhabarat utilizing asymmetric warfare is due to the realistic limitations Iraq would face against USA.⁴²³ If WMD is not available, then using the weapons systems at its disposal is the only option.

For this counterfactual, the most useful **enabling counterfactual** is Pollack (2002). The argument made by Pollack (2002) for a ‘full-scale invasion’ aligns with the reasoning for the net assessment. The most realistic means of quickly achieving USA’s political goals in Iraq are contingent upon using overwhelming force from the start.⁴²⁴ ‘Full-scale invasion’ is the most plausible option when the worst-case scenario is applied to the counterfactual. This works due to the Gore-FPE being perceived as more likely to plan for what will follow regime change in Iraq. The choices given by Pollack (2002) are a ‘Pragmatic’ or ‘Reconstruction’ approach.⁴²⁵ The change in the antecedent is supposed to bring about the most important factor to nation-building, security.

Finding **historical consistency** in this counterfactual is based on the independent variable. The USA-FPE is the only actor capable of making decisions for the foreign policy of USA. If its goals in 2002 are aligned with those found in Wolfowitz (1992) then perceiving 9/11 as an opportunity to utilize State power is consistent. Based on Harvey (2012), is it plausible that a Gore-FPE would not confront Iraq over its WMD program? The possibility of new turning points arising are contingencies which could change the enabling counterfactuals leading to the antecedent. However, without events occurring which rival 9/11 as systematic stimuli, it is difficult to overcome Iraq War Momentum.

The counterfactual of this thesis is built upon two primary **theories**. The first is the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The FPE makes foreign policy which results in geostrategy. If there were additional actors within a State who could contest the decisions of the FPE, this relationship would be less clear. However, the FPE is tantamount to the Ultimate Decision Unit and therefore acts without restraint in matters of war and peace. The second is Quigley’s (2013) conception of weapons systems and its application within a net assessment for a USA-Iraq War that results in a prediction for asymmetric warfare. These two theories are applied

⁴²³ Rumsfeld, “Quadrennial Defense Review,” pp. 13-14.

⁴²⁴ Pollack, *The Threatening Storm*, pp. 362-363.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 387-395.

to OIF because it is within this geopolitical event that responsibility and agency can be clearly defined. The USA-FPE had the choice to go to war against Iraq and the choice in what manner it did so.

The intent of this counterfactual to **avoid the conjunction fallacy** is why the antecedent and consequent are identified as troop levels and the IED aspect of the war respectively. The consequent is intended to be changed as a result of portions of USA and its coalition securing Iraq's ammunition depots immediately while other elements continue towards Baghdad. For this counterfactual to be plausible, securing the ammunition depots is the only variable towards impacting the consequent. As Pollack (2002) rightly states, producing a post-Saddam outcome which aligns with US political goals will be the longest and most difficult aspect of OIF. However, this counterfactual's antecedent can only create the conditions for its particular consequent. This is why the intended outcome is 'a set of worlds with particular characteristics.'⁴²⁶

The changes that are required between the Bush-FPE and the Gore-FPE that would result in a different antecedent consist of personnel changes. The consistency in thinking between the neoconservatives in the Bush-FPE and those who would replace them in a Gore-FPE speaks to a heterogeneity on matters of foreign policy. The argument for the **interconnectedness of causes and outcomes** is due to the theory of weapons systems being applied in a net assessment. The potential for **second order counterfactuals** disrupting the relationship between the antecedent and consequent depends on the specificity of said relationship. Assuming that the net assessment reached the FPE and had the desired effect of changing the antecedent from **X** to **X1**, the effect on the consequent depends on if Iraq's forces actually followed through on the worst-case scenario. If the regime were to distribute munitions along with requisite tools and instructions on manufacturing IED, this would seriously impact the resulting consequent. The fact that this did not actually occur in reality seems to be the result of Saddam not taking USA's threats seriously until it was too late.⁴²⁷ It is not unreasonable to imagine that Saddam would react differently to a Gore-FPE in the leadup to OIF in which Iraq is prepared to fight USA asymmetrically.

From the application of Lebow's (2010) criteria, this is a plausible-world counterfactual that can be considered 'close-call' based on its turning point of **V1**. Overcoming the reality of 9/11 is not impossible, but it has been shown that the factors which could change **W** are too complex for an individual to affect it. This does not

⁴²⁶ Lebow, *Forbidden Fruit*, p. 56.

⁴²⁷ Harvey, *Explaining the Iraq War*, pp. 244-248.

mean no contingency could exist where one person prevents 9/11; it would require not just imagination but institutional change. If equifinality requires that Iraq War Momentum would affect the Gore-FPE to the same extent as the Bush-FPE, then it is vital to identify the determinative factors. Even more so than perceiving 9/11 as an opportunity to fix the mistakes of past Presidents is the climate of fear which existed in USA in the 553 days. The scale of the failure on 9/11 is correlated to the enthusiasm to do something in response. Perhaps equifinality still applies to OIF regardless of Gore or Bush because it is so difficult to imagine a different outcome but **X** or **X1** after 9/11. Unless Saddam were removed organically, how else could Iraq prove it did not have WMD? What could a Gore-FPE say to calm USA with the media calling for a showdown with Iraq? It is difficult to imagine a scenario where Saddam could escape USA finding a pretext to use force if the domestic situation in USA remained unstable.

CONCLUSIONS

The dependent variable of geostrategy provides for comment on what the long-term goals of a foreign policy decision may be. For this counterfactual, two geostrategic goals were developed in relation to what USA's political goals were in OIF. The first goal was conceived as building a post-Saddam Iraq which respects the rights of all its citizens and is not a threat to its neighbors. It would refrain from developing WMD and could export its resources at a reasonable price. Regardless of a President Bush or Gore, this seems like a reasonable goal for USA to work towards after overthrowing Saddam's regime. Based on Pollack (2002), creating these conditions in Iraq first starts with 'establishing security throughout the country.'⁴²⁸ With 300,000 US troops on the ground, accomplishing this is more likely. In addition, part of the reason for sending almost twice as many US troops is to encourage other countries who were incapable of supporting from the outset to join the coalition and commit forces to stabilize Iraq.

The idea of a new Iraq would be a significant talking point once it was introduced by President Gore in his speech at Arlington National Cemetery following the downfall of Saddam's regime. This narrative of Iraq being a beacon of hope for the downtrodden who live under authoritarian regimes could encourage political reformation in States whose system of government is undemocratic. If the Gore-FPE were successful in utilizing State power to confront Iraq with 300,000 US troops, then it may have the choice of two geostrategies. The first aligns with USA's political goals being met in Iraq as it continues to conduct the GWOT and OEF in Afghanistan. The second geostrategy would require subterfuge on the part of the USA-FPE if it were the long-term goal. This second geostrategy would be called '7 Countries in 5 Years' and its calls for regime change after Iraq in 'Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan & Iran.'⁴²⁹ To say that such a goal is realistic seems outlandish, but it was a former US Army General who alleges to have been made aware of such a plan following 9/11.⁴³⁰

The first chapter began by introducing counterfactualism along with criteria for creating a counterfactual which can be considered a plausible rewrite of history. With Lebow (2010), one can test the counterfactuals that are

⁴²⁸ Pollack, *Threatening*, p. 403.

⁴²⁹ Wesley Clark, "We're Going to Take out 7 Countries in 5 Years: Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan & Iran..." Global Research, Centre for Research on Globalization, last modified August 9, 2020, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/we-re-going-to-take-out-7-countries-in-5-years-iraq-syria-lebanon-libya-somalia-sudan-iran/5166>.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

prevalent in modern political discourse. While there is nothing wrong with considering miracle counterfactuals, if one were inclined to study why some event happened how it did, Lebow (2010) provides an excellent toolkit for developing different hypotheses. Next, the independent and dependent variables were established in order for the parameters of a counterfactual to be stated. Geopolitics is the factor which ties the FPE and geostrategy together and makes clear how each can be applied in a counterfactual exercise.

With Harvey (2012), the enabling counterfactuals which would cause equifinality for a Gore-FPE that results in OIF were stated. It is out of this situation that a counterfactual can be created which would change a quantitative factor with the intent of a qualitative result. If OIF was inevitable after 9/11, creating a counterfactual where a post-Saddam Iraq does not descend into chaos *should* be a good thing. [emphasis mine] Instead of arguing for additional troops and a better strategy, the cause for a different outcome for OIF is based on a worst-case scenario being considered beforehand. This comes from the theory of weapons systems being applied in a net assessment that argues Iraq would fight asymmetrically against US and coalition forces. This is intended to complement Pollack (2002) for a minimal rewrite to encourage **X1** over **X**.

In conclusions, USA and its allies face great difficulties in reality. The counterfactual scenario of **V1**, **X1**, and **Y1** are not real and the consequences of **V**, **W**, **X**, and **Y** are partially responsible for explaining the present. When a State engages in preemptive warfare, such activity can be considered a 'misadventure.'⁴³¹ This only becomes obvious in hindsight, but if there is one commonality of declining States throughout history then that is most likely the State's compunction to engage in 'misadventure.' Perhaps if it is geopolitically capable enough it can get away with many mistakes over a long period of time. But on a long enough timescale, mistakes add up and other States are less likely to accept bad behavior. However, it is unclear if this can be learned while one is living in history.

⁴³¹ Richard K. Betts, "Misadventure Revisited," *The Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 3, (Summer 1983), pp. 94-113, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40256636>.

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