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# Preemption, Prevention, Prevarication

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**S**ECTION 603 OF THE 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Reorganization Act requires each US president to submit an annual report to Congress outlining the nation's strategic security objectives. This is usually a low-key affair that passes quietly under the political radar. An exception was President George W. Bush's September 2002 submission of the National Security Strategy of the United States of America (NSS 2002). That strategy document drew special notice, partly because it laid out the Bush administration's strategic thinking on the pressing issue of how to deal with the threat of mass casualty terrorism after 11 September 2001. NSS 2002 also raised eyebrows by declaring that the emergent danger posed by the "crossroads of radicalism and technology" presents "a compelling case for taking anticipatory actions to defend ourselves, *even if uncertainty remains* as to the time and place of the enemy's attack."<sup>1</sup>

Sympathetic commentators lauded NSS 2002 shortly after its publication, arguing that "acting preemptively"<sup>2</sup> was a shrewd way for the United States to seize the strategic high ground in the "war on terror."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, skeptics cautioned that by asserting a prerogative to hit first against

terrorists and states that harbor them, the Bush administration risked unraveling the fabric of international law governing the use of force.<sup>4</sup> In explaining their new strategy, Bush officials emphasized a reminder: “Preemption is not a new concept.”<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Article 51 of the United Nations (UN) Charter implicitly recognizes a right to “anticipatory self-defense,” one that has been invoked previously by nations facing imminent security threats.<sup>6</sup>

Was the Bush administration’s commitment to first-strike defense a rash gambit of historic proportions? Or was it simply a rearticulation of one military option long understood to be implicit in national security strategy? Key ambiguities in the text of NSS 2002 made it difficult to tell. It is one thing to use force in self-defense against an enemy that constitutes an imminent danger—Israel’s 1967 preemptive strike against Egyptian forces massing in the Sinai desert is a textbook example.<sup>7</sup> It is another matter to strike a potential enemy who is suspected of plotting an attack at some unspecified time and place—consider Israel’s 1981 bombardment of Iraq’s nuclear facility at Osiraq. The latter case is more accurately described as preventive—not preemptive—use of military force.<sup>8</sup> Yet as Lieutenant Colonel Arnel Enriquez observes, “the distinction between preemption and prevention is blurred in the NSS.”<sup>9</sup> By using the terms “preemptive” and “preventive” almost interchangeably, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld further clouded this distinction.<sup>10</sup> A follow-on strategy paper released by the White House two months after NSS 2002 did little to clear up precise conditions under which the United States would strike first with “preemptive measures” against adversaries suspected of developing nuclear, biological, or chemical (NBC) arms.<sup>11</sup>

Details regarding the White House’s new use-of-force doctrine emerged when the Bush administration pulled NSS 2002 off the shelf and put it to use. In a bracing series of speeches and public appearances during 2002 and 2003, Bush officials castigated Saddam Hussein’s regime as posing exactly the sort of threat that makes first use of military force prudent. As the buildup to invasion against Iraq proceeded, it became apparent that the US-led campaign would be a preventive, not preemptive, war. Public arguments advanced to justify Operation Iraqi Freedom revealed that the Bush administration’s idea of “acting preemptively” went beyond Article 51’s “anticipatory self-defense,” drifting into the area of preventive warfare to counter “gathering,” not imminent threats.<sup>12</sup>

Outright declaration of the preventive attack option in an official US strategy document challenged established rules of international conduct and raised a host of vexing policy concerns regarding alliance cohesion, intelligence capabilities, and resource trade-offs. Some continue to see assertion of this prerogative as a reckless break from established security doctrine.<sup>13</sup> Oth-

ers downplay the novelty of this turn in American security strategy, arguing that NSS 2002's version of preventive military action is a timely adaptation of the long-accepted principle of preemptive self-defense.<sup>14</sup>

*Hitting First* engages this debate by analyzing preventive attack strategies from a multidisciplinary perspective that blends insight from political science, rhetoric, and philosophy with practical knowledge drawn from work in institutional policy settings. This opening chapter frames the study by considering NSS 2002's basic dynamics in more detail, outlining the book's common terms of reference, and previewing contents of the ensuing chapters.

## **A STRATEGY FOR "THE BOYS IN LUBBOCK"**

In the fall of 2002, one year after al-Qaida's devastating suicide airline attacks, the blueprint for a new US security strategy was taking shape. While President Bush used broad strokes to outline the nascent strategy in a series of speeches to American military academies, then national security advisor Condoleezza Rice worked on a document that would express the basic concepts in finer detail. She tapped State Department official Richard Haass to write the first draft, then brought in University of Virginia professor Philip Zelikow and deputy national security advisor Stephen Hadley to help with revisions.<sup>15</sup> The result was NSS 2002, a bold and ambitious twenty-nine-page document that announced the White House's intention to "defeat global terrorism" by strengthening alliances, "igniting" economic growth, spreading democracy, and most notably, "acting preemptively" to hit enemies first, before they could mount attacks on the United States.<sup>16</sup>

Ten days after release of NSS 2002, Rice gave a speech that the White House billed as a discussion of the "President's National Security Strategy." In her introductory comments, it became apparent that she viewed the venue for the address—New York—as symbolically important on multiple levels. First, Rice linked her decision to "venture beyond Washington" for the speech with President Bush's preference that NSS 2002 should contain "plain English, not academic jargon." Regarding the strategy document, Rice quoted Bush as saying, "The boys in Lubbock ought to be able to read it."<sup>17</sup> Second, the New York audience provided an opportunity for the administration to frame NSS 2002 as a direct response to the 11 September attacks: "And after 9/11, there is no longer any doubt that today America faces an existential threat to our security. . . . President Bush's new National Security Strategy offers a bold vision for protecting our Nation that captures today's new realities and new opportunities," said Rice.<sup>18</sup>

As a rhetorical strategy for domestic mobilization, Rice's framing device proved enormously successful. The simple formula 9/11 = NSS 2002 be-

came a ubiquitous theme in public deliberation.<sup>19</sup> It was a compelling notion that played well with “the boys in Lubbock,” and also seemed to explain how Bush could transmogrify so dramatically from an advocate of “humble” US foreign policy on the 2000 campaign trail to a determined interventionist in the Oval Office two years later.<sup>20</sup> However, even as this popular narrative illuminated, it also obscured. In the words of Andrew Bacevich, “The grievous losses suffered in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon had seemingly rendered all that had gone before irrelevant.”<sup>21</sup> By fixing 11 September 2001 as the temporal starting point for discussions about US security strategy, Rice’s framing device cultivated mass amnesia about the crucial fact that the lion’s share of strategic concepts in NSS 2002 had been pilot-tested long before al-Qaida attacked the US homeland.

In this vein, consider that NSS 2002’s bureaucratic lineage can be traced to earlier planning documents, such as a 1992 Pentagon Defense Planning Guidance draft,<sup>22</sup> a 1996 strategy paper prepared for Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu,<sup>23</sup> a 1998 pressure group letter to President Bill Clinton,<sup>24</sup> and a US think-tank report published in 2000.<sup>25</sup> Each of these board-room blueprints endorsed first-strike force as a key element of defense strategy and suggested Iraq as prime target for preventive war.<sup>26</sup> However, authors of these reports, such as John Bolton, Stephen Cambone, Lewis Libby, Richard Perle, Donald Rumsfeld, Abram Shulsky, Paul Wolfowitz, David Wurmser, and Dov Zakheim, encountered resistance when, as private citizens, they attempted to translate their ideas into policy with private lobbying during the Clinton administration. Their 2000 Project for the New American Century (PNAC) report, *Rebuilding America’s Defenses*, contains a striking metaphor that likens military planners’ lack of interest in the PNAC “hit first” strategy during the 1990s to a complacent ring fighter gone soft:

[Some believe] the United States can enjoy a respite from the demands of international leadership. . . . Like a boxer between championship bouts, America can afford to relax and live the good life, certain that there would be enough time to shape up for the next big challenge. . . . But as we have seen over the past decade, there has been no shortage of powers around the world who have taken the collapse of the Soviet empire as an opportunity to expand their own influence and challenge the American-led security order.<sup>27</sup>

After Bush’s 2000 election victory ushered them into the corridors of power, Bolton, Cambone, Libby, Perle, Rumsfeld, Shulsky, Wolfowitz, Wurmser, and Zakheim took a big step toward realizing their goals, but obstacles remained. Their sweeping vision of American “dominance” through military “transformation” and “regime change” was blocked by recalcitrant quarters of the entrenched Washington bureaucracy. Yet in their 2000 planning

document, the PNAC authors presciently foresaw one scenario that could break the logjam: “Further, the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event—like a new Pearl Harbor.”<sup>28</sup> The fact that the 9/11 attacks provided just this sort of “Pearl Harbor” jolt to the system has fueled the speculation of conspiracy theorists. For example, Claremont University theology professor David Lee Griffin cites the PNAC “new Pearl Harbor” reference as one piece of evidence supporting the theory that Bush administration officials conspired to enable the 9/11 attacks.<sup>29</sup> As *Publishers Weekly* notes in a review of Griffin’s book, “Even many Bush opponents will find these charges ridiculous.”<sup>30</sup> Yet it is far more difficult to dismiss findings from the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (9/11 Commission) that PNAC-affiliated Bush administration officials such as Rumsfeld seized almost immediately on the 9/11 attacks as triggers for preventive war against Iraq. According to notes taken by Rumsfeld’s deputy Cambone, when smoke was still billowing out of the Pentagon at 2:40 P.M. on 11 September 2001, the secretary of defense hunkered down in the operations center, and “[Rumsfeld’s] instinct was to hit Saddam Hussein at the same time—not only bin Ladin.”<sup>31</sup> Other Bush officials soon followed suit; Bob Woodward reports that days later, at Camp David, Wolfowitz “seized the opportunity” of 9/11 to press his long-standing case for attacking Iraq.<sup>32</sup>

*Hitting First* explores this episode as an instance of what Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones call “policy entrepreneurship,” the practice of alert actors responding to windows of opportunity by asserting agency in the policy process.<sup>33</sup> As Chris Mackenzie notes, the policy entrepreneur is “skilled in the art of argument and persuasion, and is able to manipulate how problems and policy issues are defined, so as to mould new ‘policy images’ and exploit the many ‘policy venues’ present.”<sup>34</sup> Rumsfeld’s and Wolfowitz’s first round of policy entrepreneurship did not succeed—on 15 September 2001, Bush rebuffed their calls to invade Iraq in the immediate aftermath of 9/11.<sup>35</sup> Yet soon afterward, they regrouped with other former PNAC members to mount a much broader and more coordinated campaign that culminated in NSS 2002 and Operation Iraqi Freedom.<sup>36</sup> This campaign institutionalized key tenets of the 1992 Defense Planning Guidance draft, the 1996 “Clean Break” memorandum, the 1998 PNAC letter to Clinton, and the 2000 PNAC report. It also built public support for preventive war in Iraq through a variety of strategies involving intelligence manipulation, foreign diplomacy, and media influence. Notably, the Bush administration’s continuing commitment to preventive warfare is underscored in the National Security Strategy of 2006, which reinforces NSS 2002’s assertion of the prerogative to strike first against “gathering” threats. According to National Security Advisor Stephen Had-

ley, “The President’s [2006] strategy affirms that the doctrine of preemption remains sound and must remain an integral part of our National Security Strategy.”<sup>37</sup>

## THEORETICAL APPROACH

This volume analyzes the role of preventive military force in US security strategy in a narrow sense, exploring the Bush administration’s official codification of a preventive first-strike prerogative, and expansively, looking at how NSS 2002 relates to the broader historical record. Several discourse-oriented chapters focus on the fact that much of the Bush administration’s definition and legitimation of its preventive warfare strategy was accomplished in official speeches and public statements by cabinet members.<sup>38</sup> While NSS 2002 provided a sketch of the Bush first-strike policy, details that transformed it into a working doctrine came in key public addresses, such as President Bush’s West Point graduation speech, Vice President Richard Cheney’s address at the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Secretary of State Colin Powell’s presentation to the UN.<sup>39</sup> Analysis of these addresses helps to explain how the White House successfully sold its new military approach to key audiences.

The considerable time lag separating announcement of the proposal to invade Iraq and commencement of Operation Iraqi Freedom opened unprecedented space for US officials and sympathetic advocates to proffer public arguments justifying a specific first-strike venture prior to its execution. In a democratic society, declaratory policy expressing an official commitment to use preventive military force raises burdens of public justification for decisions to implement such policy in given instances. The significance of this process surpasses domestic political considerations, since, as Mohammed Ayoob notes, “Normative justifications, when resorted to repeatedly, lead to the emergence and consolidation of a range of international expectations that, in turn, begin to change the normative framework within which states operate.”<sup>40</sup> Some chapters in *Hitting First* take this insight as a point of departure to evaluate the history of preventive military force, its moral status, and its strategic appropriateness, especially in light of alternative security strategies that emphasize nonmilitary means of prevention. Here, study of the wider policy arena builds context necessary to assess NSS 2002’s dynamics and future prospects.

The parameters of a shared theoretical approach weaving the contributors’ research together emerged during the course of two workshops convened to organize paper drafts around common terms of reference. This task proved somewhat challenging, given that much of the nomenclature relating to the Bush administration’s embrace of preventive military strategy is itself

ambiguous. As workshop discussions proceeded, it became apparent that the imprecise character of some of the central concepts offered an important window into understanding public debate over NSS 2002, where advocates tend to stretch the meaning of elastic terms and where semantic confusion often fuels controversy. The authors of *Hitting First* adapted to this phenomenon by carefully delineating three of these malleable and contested concepts—one acronym, one distinction, and one spectrum.

## “WMD”

The official origin of the phrase “weapons of mass destruction” can be traced to a 1948 resolution passed by the UN Commission for Conventional Armaments.<sup>41</sup> However, the phrase (and its acronym, “WMD”) did not become a fixture of Cold War public dialogue until US officials deployed it to dramatize the horror of chemical weapons usage during the Iran-Iraq War. Then came the 11 September 2001 attacks, after which Bush administration officials chose “WMD” as a favored catchphrase. So many followed suit that the American Dialect Society voted “WMD” its “Word of the Year” for 2002.<sup>42</sup> According to a study by Susan Moeller of the University of Maryland’s Center for International and Security Studies, “Most journalists accepted the Bush administration’s formulation of the ‘War on Terror’ as a campaign against WMD.”<sup>43</sup>

The ubiquity of “WMD” as a term of reference has a significant effect in framing public discussion of NSS 2002, since the acronym enables advocates of preventive war to argue that first-strike force is a necessary response to a syndrome of disparate threats neatly bundled together under the umbrella of “WMD.” As Moeller observes, media reportage tended to reinforce this notion during the run-up to the 2003 Iraq War: “Most media outlets represented WMD as a monolithic menace, failing to adequately distinguish between weapons programs and actual weapons or to address the real differences among chemical, biological, nuclear, and radiological weapons.”<sup>44</sup> This semantic leveling obscures the fact that each class of weapons falling under the “WMD” umbrella varies significantly with regard to potential lethality and destructive power; the feasibility of protection and defenses; and potential missions.<sup>45</sup> When dimensions of threat are blurred in this fashion, inaccuracies are easy to introduce. For example, the rhetorical flexibility afforded by the omnibus category “weapons of mass destruction” enabled Bush administration officials to support claims of an Iraqi “WMD” threat (replete with ominous “mushroom cloud” imagery) by pointing to evidence of possible Iraqi chemical weapons development. Clearly, chemical weapons lack the capacity for nuclear destruction, yet as Wolfgang Panofsky points out,

“Linking these three classes of weapons in a single WMD category elevates the status of both biological and chemical weapons.”<sup>46</sup>

In a study that predates the Bush administration’s “WMD”-based justifications for war against Iraq, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace analyst Gert Harigel argues that the term “weapons of mass destruction” is “misleading, politically dangerous, and cannot be justified on grounds of military efficiency.”<sup>47</sup> Moeller’s more recent study concludes that fresh disclosures detailing misuse of threat intelligence in the Iraq case “have dramatically demonstrated the need for greater public understanding of the role that WMD plays in the formulation of and rhetorical justifications for US security policy.”<sup>48</sup>

The chapters in *Hitting First* are crafted to address this need, with authors focusing critical attention on how the conflation of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weaponry enacted by the acronym “WMD” frames public understanding of NSS 2002 and steers deliberation on the topic of preventive military force. This approach highlights, for example, how the relationship between chemical, biological, and nuclear threat categories plays out at the seam connecting the intelligence community (IC) to policy-makers, as well as how the monolithic “WMD” construct works rhetorically to persuade public audiences of the necessity to launch first-strike attacks. To avoid reproducing confusion created by the phrase “weapons of mass destruction,” the contributors to this volume follow Greg Thielmann’s lead, adopting the standard practice he used at the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR). At the INR, Thielmann directed analysts to eschew the acronym “WMD” when writing reports, and instead either name the specific class of weapons being referenced (for example, chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons) or, in a pinch, to use the more accurate phrase “unconventional weaponry.”

## **PREEMPTIVE VERSUS PREVENTIVE USE OF FORCE**

The distinction between preemptive and preventive use of military force is codified in an official Pentagon document,<sup>49</sup> and recognized as a key tenet of international law.<sup>50</sup> However, as we noted previously, some proponents of NSS 2002 prevaricate by using the terms “preventive” and “preemptive” interchangeably.<sup>51</sup> The resulting fog of semantic confusion facilitates a mix-and-match rhetorical strategy that defends preventive military force by linking it to the more legitimate aspects of preemptive action. As Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. observes, this tactic has proved quite effective: “Given the disrepute attached to the idea of ‘preventive’ war, the Bush administra-



tion prefers to talk about ‘preemptive’ war, and too many have followed its example.”<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, as Henry Laver argues, eliding this important distinction not only clouds understanding of the real nature of NSS 2002, it also poses tangible security risks:

Potential allies may perceive such imprecision as an American inability to recognize the subtleties and nuances of diplomacy, resulting in decreased international confidence and hindering the prospect of a united front against terrorism. Indiscriminately swapping terms can also mislead potential enemies, convincing them to accelerate development of deterrent capabilities, namely “WMD,” to counter a perceived threat from the United States when none may in fact exist.<sup>53</sup>

In making the preemptive/preventive distinction a common reference point of analysis, authors of *Hitting First* sort out this tangle of nomenclature, revisiting historical episodes and scholarly commentaries that elucidate and rehabilitate the distinction.<sup>54</sup> Conversely, scrutiny of the recent texts and practices that erode the distinction helps show how the Bush White House successfully invoked the parlance of self-defense to legitimize a manifestly offensive military strategy. For example, rhetorical analysis reveals how transmogrification of the term “imminence” enabled Bush officials to execute this persuasive maneuver in official speeches prior to the 2003 Iraq War. Looking ahead, authors analyze the possible fallout that permanent erasure of the preemptive-preventive distinction might have for the US IC, American military readiness, and the morality of US foreign policy.

## THE SPECTRUM OF FORCE

Soon after the release of NSS 2002, a US MQ-1B Predator unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) flew into Yemen, where it tracked a sport utility vehicle (SUV) being driven by suspected al-Qaida terrorists. About an hour later, a US soldier guiding the UAV, in a command center some 350 miles away in Djibouti, launched an AGM-114 Hellfire air-attack missile that destroyed the SUV and its passengers. Military analyst Bill Yenne calls this episode a “small but important turning point in military history,” because it was the first time the United States used a UAV to carry out an offensive strike mission.<sup>55</sup> This application of first-strike force, though less controversial than the 2003 Iraq War, raises a host of questions regarding “low-intensity military confrontations.” As Seyom Brown notes, we are “entering a vast unknown” where the maturation of such technology creates capabilities to use preventive force in unique ways that challenge established principles of sovereignty and political accountability.<sup>56</sup> Since these low-

intensity attacks raise different issues than full-scale military interventions with regime-change missions, any assessment of preventive military strategy must come to grips with the spectrum of force that can be applied in striking first.

The authors of *Hitting First* engage this issue by adopting preventive military strategy's spectrum of force as a common reference point of analysis. One windfall of this approach is a comprehensive history of all recorded twenty-four preventive attacks against NBC weapons targets, with the attacks sorted at various points along the spectrum, ranging from low-intensity missile strikes to high-intensity regime-change interventions. The analytical flexibility afforded by a commitment to consider different kinds of first-strike force also brings the topic of humanitarian military intervention and peacekeeping under the purview of inquiry. The resulting comparisons between traditionally low-intensity peacekeeping missions and high-intensity preventive attacks yield surprising insights. Finally, the spectrum-of-force approach colors prospective assessments of the intelligence and military capacity to implement first-strike strategies, since obviously, low-intensity warfare tends not only to be less destructive but also less resource intensive than its more elaborate counterparts on the higher end of the use-of-force spectrum.

The remainder of this chapter previews the book's content, which comes in four sections. Section one fills out the historical backdrop framing the debate over NSS 2002. The second section examines public discourse advanced to justify the theory and practice of preventive warfare. The logistical constraints complicating the implementation of NSS 2002 are considered in section three, while section four assesses the future of first-strike force in US security strategy in light of the analyses offered in these pages.

## **A WIDE ANGLE LENS: PREVENTIVE MILITARY STRATEGY IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Public memory of military conflicts is often colored vividly by iconic images that capture telling moments. The photograph of marines valiantly raising the American flag over Iwo Jima became a symbol of US commitment and fighting spirit during World War II, just as the image of naked, nine-year-old Phan Thi Kim Phuc fleeing a napalm attack dramatized the agony of war in Vietnam. On 9 April 2003, an event unfolded in Baghdad's Firdos Square that seemed flush with history-making potential—a statue of ousted Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein was pulled off its moorings, then smashed to pieces by what appeared to be a jubilant crowd of liberated Iraqis.

Since Firdos Square is adjacent to the Palestine Hotel, which housed many journalists covering the 2003 Iraq War, visual images of Hussein's top-

pling statue quickly circled the globe. American reporters punctuated “the war’s most symbolic piece of video”<sup>57</sup> with breathless commentary. Mark Phillips of CBS News described the scene from Baghdad: “This crowd has been growing. . . . It’s a scene to remember. It’s not just remarkable. It’s not just extraordinary. It is historic.”<sup>58</sup> The episode was thick with drama; “Every detail of the toppling dripped with upbeat, telegenic symbolism.”<sup>59</sup> News anchors stoked excitement back in US television studios. On the *Today* show, Katie Couric announced, “I think it’s safe to say we may be witnessing the lasting symbol of Operation Iraqi Freedom right now.”<sup>60</sup> Couric’s colleague Tom Brokaw framed the unfolding events in Cold War terms: “It is so reminiscent to me of watching the Berlin Wall coming down.”<sup>61</sup>

In a matter of hours, “the images from Firdos Square already had been condensed into easily rerun 10-second bursts: the statue falls, the crowd cheers.”<sup>62</sup> In the news cycle that followed, many echoed Brokaw’s Cold War framing of the image. On Fox News, correspondent Ceci Connolly said, “It was reminiscent, I think, of the fall of the Berlin Wall. And just sort of that pure emotional expression, not choreographed, not stage-managed, the way so many things these days seem to be. Really breathtaking.”<sup>63</sup> Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld struck a similar chord at a news conference later in the day, saying that after watching Hussein’s statue tumble, “one cannot help but think of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Iron Curtain.”<sup>64</sup>

The most evocative initial images from Firdos Square were close-in shots of excited people crowding around the statue, pulling on a rope attached to the neck of Saddam Hussein’s likeness (see figure 1). This tight vantage point seemed to validate the triumphal news narrative that described the statue takedown as a spontaneous outburst of jubilation by scores of liberated Iraqis: “The networks knew we’d be transfixed by the amazing video: This is the sort of flash from the front that plays in Peoria. The rich imagery seemed to speak volumes about the overthrow of the evil dictator.”<sup>65</sup>

Less widely circulated photographs told a different story. These images, shot from a wider angle, showed Firdos Square from a more panoramic perspective (see figure 2). From this vantage point, it became apparent that the crowd was much smaller than suggested by the tighter shots, and that Hussein’s statue was actually being pulled down by an American M88 recovery vehicle. In fact, Firdos Square itself turned out to be ringed by several US military tanks, causing some to wonder “whether the toppling of the statue of Saddam was as spontaneous as it was made to appear.”<sup>66</sup>

More doubts were raised when an internal army study disclosed that the US 305th Psychological Operations Company played a significant role in the event.<sup>67</sup> When this psychological warfare unit arrived at Firdos Square on 9 April 2003, it “started to do some PSYOP [psychological operations] broad-



FIGURE 1. (*left*) Statue of Saddam Hussein being toppled in Firdos Square, Baghdad, 9 April 2003. Photo © Patrick Robert/Corbis.

FIGURE 2. (*below*) Statue of Saddam Hussein being toppled in Firdos Square, Baghdad, 9 April 2003. Photo © REUTERS TV.



casts about bringing about a free Iraq.”<sup>68</sup> Soon thereafter, a colonel with the 4th Marine Regiment “saw the Saddam statue as a target of opportunity and decided that the statue must come down.”<sup>69</sup> Assessing things with the benefit of hindsight afforded by this broader picture, communication scholar Christopher Simpson notes, “This particular event was more of what you might call a propaganda event. It was a publicity, a photo-op if you will.”<sup>70</sup>

Part one of *Hitting First* draws back the analytical lens to cast NSS 2002 in broad historical perspective. Just as a panoramic view elucidates key parts of the 9 April 2003 scene in Firdos Square, a long view of history provides salient background for understanding the strategic, tactical, and political dimensions of preventive military force. In one respect, this approach lends perspective by clarifying NSS 2002’s origins. Bush administration strategists did not fashion a post-9/11 military doctrine from whole cloth. Rather, their ideas built on strategies and techniques honed in the Cold War struggle against the Soviet Union, as well as initiatives by several UN General Secretaries to recalibrate the relationship between national sovereignty and the use of force during the 1990s. Analysis of this historical arc sheds light on how the ideas in NSS 2002 evolved, and provides useful reference points that fill out the contextual backdrop framing understanding of the Bush administration’s emergent use-of-force doctrine. For example, consider that in 1984, secret authorization for US first-strike attacks on guerrilla forces came from classified National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 138, entitled, “Preemptive Strikes against Suspected Terrorists.”

The still-classified portions of this directive authorized the establishment of secret FBI and CIA paramilitary squads and use of existing Pentagon military units—such as the Green Berets and Navy SEALs—for conducting what amounted to guerrilla warfare against guerrillas. It authorized sabotage, killing (though not “assassination”), preemptive and retaliatory raids, deception, and a significantly expanded intelligence collection program aimed at suspected radicals and people regarded as sympathizers.<sup>71</sup>

As NSDD 138 demonstrates, Secretary Rumsfeld’s comparison of a tumbling statue in Baghdad to a crumbling wall in Berlin is not the only dimension of Operation Iraqi Freedom with deep Cold War roots. Since preventive use-of-force strategies have been proposed and implemented before, a close look at these historical correlates is warranted. Chapter 2, Dan Reiter’s “Preventive Attacks against Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Weapons Programs: The Track Record,” is a companion piece to his 1995 *International Security* article on the oft-misunderstood history of preemptive warfare.<sup>72</sup> Reiter uses a similar approach here to assess the track record of success for the twenty-four preventive attacks that have been launched against

NBC weapons programs from 1942 to 2003. He categorizes these attacks into discrete clusters, including Allied strikes on the German and Japanese unconventional weapons programs in World War II; Israeli and Iranian attacks on the Iraqi nuclear program from 1979 to 1981; Iraq's Scud attacks on Israel's nuclear program (during Operation Desert Storm) and Iran's nuclear and chemical facilities (during the Iran-Iraq War); US and coalition forces cruise missile strikes on al-Qaida NBC weapons facilities in Afghanistan and Sudan; and finally the numerous US and coalition strikes versus Iraq's NBC assets from 1991 to 2003.<sup>73</sup>

Every "track record" assessment contains normative assumptions, and Reiter makes his transparent by engaging openly the question of how one decides whether a given preventive attack "succeeds." The resulting discussion yields valuable insight regarding the selection of criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of preventive attacks on NBC weapons programs. For example, Reiter finds that one key dimension of assessment criteria involves the time horizon for evaluation. A "snapshot" approach that focuses on the immediate aftermath of a preventive attack (for example, the dome of Iraq's Osiraq nuclear facility was blown up by a 1981 Israeli raid) may heighten perception of short-term success, yet obscure the fact that over the longer term, nations often restore weapons facilities damaged in limited preventive attacks that do not achieve regime change. Reiter develops this point in an extended analysis of Israel's strike on the Osiraq reactor. A preview of Reiter's argument appears in his March 2005 letter to the editor, published in the *Atlantic Monthly*. James Fallows's response underscores the salience of Reiter's historical research in the contemporary policy debate regarding the wisdom of using preventive first-strikes to attack Iran's nuclear infrastructure.<sup>74</sup>

In chapter 3, Simon Reich's wide-angle lens for framing understanding of NSS 2002 focuses attention on the erosion of national sovereignty as an operational cornerstone of the international system. Multilateral peacekeeping missions have long relied on preventive military force to achieve humanitarian objectives. Reich shows how relatively recent changes in the operational attributes and broader mandates of peacekeeping missions have steadily diluted the principle of sovereignty.

Reich's analysis traces doctrinal shifts that have unfolded over the past two decades, amid humanitarian crises in Somalia, Rwanda, and Macedonia. Traditional peacekeeping doctrines protected sovereignty by stipulating that peacekeeping forces required consent from affected states before intervening. The rise of the "peace enforcement" paradigm, championed by a series of UN secretary generals, including Kofi Annan, narrowed this stipulation by making sovereignty conditional. Under peace enforcement, which gained adherents in the mid-1990s, states that violate universally accepted principles

of behavior—international norms—give up their right to sovereignty and become subject to the application of preventive military force without consent.

The surprising upshot of Reich's analysis is that Annan inadvertently did important spadework that laid a foundation for NSS 2002's frontal assault on the principle of national sovereignty. The doctrines of coercive humanitarian intervention and preventive military intervention are supported by different groups (primarily the UN and the Bush administration), advocate different methods (multilateralism versus unilateralism or a limited coalition), and have different objectives (the relief from ethnic conflict, genocide, or famine versus addressing a clear and present danger of unconventional weaponry or terrorism). However, Reich argues that they share an important root in that they challenge the shibboleth of sovereignty in the new millennium.

In chapter 4, Gordon Mitchell and Robert Newman study other historical precursors to NSS 2002, such as NSC-68, the 1950 planning document known as the "blueprint for Cold War defense."<sup>75</sup> Others have noted how NSC-68's endorsement of "any measures" necessary to fight the Cold War bears a similarity to NSS 2002's assertion of a first-strike prerogative.<sup>76</sup> In "By 'Any Measures' Necessary: NSC-68 and Cold War Roots of the 2002 National Security Strategy," Mitchell and Newman build on this scholarship by reconstructing the political strategies and argumentative maneuvers deployed by Paul Nitze and the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD) to ram NSC-68 through a skeptical national security bureaucracy and translate its ringing alarmism into plans for US preventive warfare against the Soviet Union. Their findings reveal argument patterns that readers may find familiar today, such as deductive logic schemes that convert absence of evidence into positive proof, reliance on defector testimony as a preferred form of intelligence data, and synthesis of disparate data points into monolithic threat constructs.

Another prominent theme of this analysis is that historically, preventive warfare and public deception go hand in hand. As one illustration, Mitchell and Newman point to Operation Northwoods, a 1962 plan by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to trick the US public into supporting a military first strike on Cuba. This plan called for the US government to create pretexts for preventive war by staging bizarre events such as rigged airline hijackings and "remember the *Maine*" incidents at sea, which would then be blamed on Fidel Castro.<sup>77</sup> General Lyman Lemnitzer, mastermind of this deception gambit, went on to join Nitze and Paul Wolfowitz in the influential 1975–1976 "Team B" experiment in competitive intelligence analysis. Mitchell and Newman show how Wolfowitz and others in the George W. Bush White House replicated this Team B strategy sixteen years later to "fix" the "intelligence and facts" around the policy of regime change in Iraq.<sup>78</sup>



## **ADLAI STEVENSON MOMENTS: PUBLIC DISCOURSE JUSTIFYING USE OF PREVENTIVE MILITARY FORCE**

One factor likely to complicate American military planning in a world of first-strike warfare is the likelihood that ad hoc coalitions will have to be assembled each time a major operation is contemplated. Allied consent not only enables US military forces to use foreign bases and gain access to airspace; it also works as political glue holding together often fragile political coalitions assembled to back particular military missions.<sup>79</sup> This challenge calls on American officials to rally potential coalition partners to the cause by proffering sufficiently persuasive evidence of a threat. But such evidence is not always easy to obtain, and interested states and other political entities can interpret it very differently.

A textbook example of successful persuasion took place in 1962, when American ambassador Adlai Stevenson shocked the world by presenting to the UN Security Council dramatic aerial photographs of Soviet nuclear missiles being unloaded in Cuba. Such evidence gave instant legitimacy to the Kennedy administration's naval blockade in the Cuban missile crisis, and led commentators to coin the phrase "Adlai Stevenson moment" to describe episodes where US officials present "incontrovertible" evidence justifying use of force in international crisis situations.<sup>80</sup>

Secretary Powell felt the historical weight of Stevenson's smashing presentation some forty years later, as he prepared his own pivotal UN address on Iraq in early 2003. "The greatest challenge was knowing that it was going to be an Adlai Stevenson moment," Powell told an interviewer. "And every reporter was getting their score sheet out."<sup>81</sup> Powell's address scored quick political points for the White House and provided a much-needed short-term boost in public support for Operation Iraqi Freedom. But over time, key elements of his case disintegrated—the probative value of satellite photography showing alleged Iraqi chemical weapons activity was discounted;<sup>82</sup> a British dossier on Iraq's terror links proved to be drawn from a plagiarized graduate student paper;<sup>83</sup> Iraq's aluminum tube imports were judged by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) scientists not to have nuclear enrichment applications;<sup>84</sup> and the single source for documentation of Iraq's alleged mobile biological weapons facilities was discredited as a "serial fabricator."<sup>85</sup> Perhaps this episode calls for coinage of a new locution—the "Colin Powell moment"—to describe instances where high-stakes justifications of US military force appear initially persuasive, but then erode under subsequent scrutiny.

In the aftermath of Operation Iraqi Freedom, considerable energy has been spent dissecting the massive intelligence failure that led to Secretary Powell's UN debacle. But another mystery has received comparatively little



attention—if Powell’s evidence was so poor, why did a raft of opinion leaders find his arguments persuasive, and why did public support for the Iraq War surge following his speech?<sup>86</sup> In the second section’s opening chapter, “Strategic Doctrine, Public Debate and the Terror War,” Tom Goodnight gains purchase on these questions by analyzing how Bush administration officials lowered the rhetorical bar for Powell’s speech by articulating details of NSS 2002 in ways that set lax proof standards for justifying use of first-strike force.

Goodnight’s analysis focuses on how Bush administration officials shifted the meaning of a pivotal term, “imminence,” in public speeches clarifying the dynamics of their new first-strike posture. In American jurisprudence, the origin point of standards for determining the legitimacy of anticipatory self-defense can be traced to an 1842 legal case involving border skirmishes with Canada, where Daniel Webster set forth criteria stipulating conditions under which a threat could be sufficiently “imminent” so as to justify preemptive warfare. Whereas Webster’s criteria for assessing a threat’s imminence emphasize factors such as the immediacy and unavailability of impending enemy attack, speeches by Bush, Rumsfeld, and Cheney lay out a subtly different formulation of imminence. Goodnight shows how this reformulated concept of imminence structured public debate on Operation Iraqi Freedom. This analysis not only helps explain the persuasiveness of Powell’s UN address, but it also lays bare some of the key working dynamics of NSS 2002. According to Goodnight, the White House’s revised imminence standard reverses the burden of proof in public argument by insisting that unless a foreign enemy proves that it does not possess unconventional weapons programs, it can be assumed to pose an imminent threat. Stephen Hartnett and Laura Stengrim classify this maneuver as an argumentative fallacy known as the *argumentum ad ignorantiam*—“the rhetorical trick of manufacturing certainty out of uncertainty.”<sup>87</sup>

When Goodnight relates these findings to the distinction between preemptive and preventive warfare, he highlights some thorny dilemmas facing officials who must juggle conflicting political and operational concerns in justifying the use of first-strike force. As an enemy threat becomes more immediate, evidence justifying a preemptive attack grows more convincing, and the political case for use of force becomes easier to make. But if would-be preempters wait too long for threat evidence to mature, they forfeit the element of surprise and give enemies an opportunity to harden their arsenals, lessening the chances that a preemptive first strike will succeed. Here a Hobson’s choice between political disrepute and operational failure bedevils first-strike planning. This dilemma takes on a slightly different form for officials contemplating use of preventive military force. In this problematic,

the opportunity to neutralize an enemy's nascent arsenal, before it has fully matured, maximizes prospects for operational success. But this in turn introduces political complications, since it may only be possible to justify preventive first-strike missions by wringing maximum proof from speculative data pointing to an enemy's early efforts to develop NBC weapons. Building on this insight, Goodnight notes how NSS 2002 contains an inbuilt impetus to exaggerate threat evidence.

While numerous official investigations have concluded that the American case for preventive war against Iraq was based on exaggerated threat evidence,<sup>88</sup> so far the Bush administration has largely escaped political accountability for these errors by blaming the IC. Rodger Payne's chapter, "Deliberate before Striking First?" revisits the Iraq War timeline and notices something startling—administration officials were exaggerating threat evidence on Iraq *before* the IC completed its National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) in October 2002. This is especially remarkable in light of the fact that key Bush administration officials were saying that Saddam Hussein was "in check" and "living on borrowed time" as late as February 2001. Noting that the "we were given bad intelligence" excuse does not account for the White House's exaggeration of threat evidence from February 2001 to October 2002, Payne searches for other explanations and discovers evidence of a systematic effort by Bush administration officials to manipulate public debate. With this effort, Payne picks up where the Senate Select Intelligence Committee stalled. That committee originally planned to follow up on its July 2004 report of the IC's role in the Iraq prewar intelligence failure with a phase two investigation that would focus on the White House's role in the fiasco. However, that follow-up probe proved difficult to execute, as the second stage of the investigation suffered through postponements, derailments, and restarts.<sup>89</sup> Payne amplifies evidence published in the annex of the committee's phase one report to detail how the White House's "communicative misdeeds" distorted public debate and may have pressured the IC to produce its flawed NIE in October 2002.

Payne frames the significance of this strategic deception campaign by examining how it sharply contradicts portions of NSS 2002 that insist on the importance of public deliberation and debate as safeguards that limit preventive war options. Clearly, US officials were concerned that other nations might cynically adopt NSS 2002's logic and use it as a "pretext for aggression." Payne shows how these concerns led the White House to attach "deliberative caveats" to its assertion of a first-strike prerogative. Drafters of NSS 2002 apparently hoped that abuse of the preventive warfare option by other nations could be curtailed by stipulating a requirement that first-strike force ought to be justified in public spheres of deliberation prior to executing

attacks. What are the consequences of the White House violating its own self-imposed deliberative requirement? This question drives the concluding portion of Payne's analysis, where he suggests that one negative security outcome may be a "Chicken Little effect," where world skepticism sown by US strategic deception complicates efforts to persuade audiences of the need to act swiftly when real threats appear on the horizon.<sup>90</sup>

In "On Justifying the First Blow," philosopher Tom Rockmore closes out part two by adding a moral dimension to the discussion of whether and how first-strike force can be justified. Echoing Goodnight, Rockmore uses the preemption-prevention distinction as a point of departure for his analysis. After rehearsing how the distinction plays out in official, scholarly, and commonsense terms, Rockmore considers the moral status of first-strike attacks by comparing how preemptive and preventive uses of military force square with various just war theories. Rockmore's conclusion circles back to Thrasymachus, the character in Plato's dialogues who simplifies moral dilemmas into a tidy axiom: "Might makes right."

## **FROM BOARDROOM TO BATTLEFIELD: CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING PREVENTIVE WAR STRATEGY**

While numerous official studies offered in-depth assessments of the logistical challenges presented by the prospect of forcible regime change in Iraq, Bush administration officials' confidence that US forces would be "greeted as liberators"<sup>91</sup> led them to ignore such advice and publicly deride those who questioned the "cakewalk" formula.<sup>92</sup> As senior White House officials noted around the time that the decision to go to war was being finalized in July 2002, "there was little discussion in Washington of the aftermath after military action."<sup>93</sup>

After sustaining thousands of US military fatalities and hundreds of billions of dollars later, it is apparent that preventive warfare's translation from boardroom to battlefield tends to be more difficult than official planners of Operation Iraqi Freedom foresaw. Part three of *Hitting First* studies this practical issue by analyzing how logistical challenges complicate efforts to pursue first-strike military strategy on three levels: intelligence, military capability, and allied diplomacy. In successive chapters, Greg Thielmann, Peter Dombrowski, and Jacques Hymans assess how material constraints in each of these areas are likely to color future attempts to protect US security through application of preventive military force.

Thielmann begins his chapter, "Intelligence in Preventive Military Strategy," by explaining how the institutional routines of US intelligence

tradecraft have evolved in ways that predispose analysts to view the world through a glass darkly. A series of traumatic surprises, ranging from Pearl Harbor to 9/11, have heaped pressure on the IC to provide more accurate warning of looming dangers. Thielmann notes that this pressure, when combined with the tendencies of hostile states to camouflage their real military capabilities and the predilection of US politicians to stretch intelligence data, generates systemic inertia to produce inflated threat assessments. He shows how all three of these factors coalesced in the Iraq case to cause a major intelligence failure. The jettisoning of caveats and official dissents from intelligence reports, conflation of chemical and nuclear threat categories, as well as Saddam Hussein's own "double game of deception" worked to paint an ominous picture of the Iraqi regime that diverged dramatically from reality.

Thielmann's experience as an intelligence insider positions him well to highlight the variegated nature of the IC and show how consensus intelligence assessments, such as the 2002 NIE on Iraq, are woven together in a give-and-take process that brings together the US government's major intelligence agencies for negotiation, and sometimes debate. To illustrate, he points to IC discussions regarding Iraq's alleged development of weaponized UAVs. In 2002, the main US intelligence entities battled over the question of whether Iraq was developing threatening UAV capability. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) analysts argued that Saddam Hussein had embarked on a developmental program to use UAVs for delivery of deadly biological agents. However, air force intelligence, later joined by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and army intelligence, disagreed with this assessment, arguing that since Iraqi UAVs were intended primarily for reconnaissance and not attack missions, CIA's ominous analysis should be discounted.

Eventually, public audiences heard only about the CIA's alarming descriptions of Iraq's UAV program. As an explanation for why the substance of the internal IC disagreement was expurgated from declassified versions of the 2002 NIE, Thielmann points to the intense political pressure put on the IC by NSS 2002 to produce actionable intelligence justifying a preventive first-strike against Iraq. In a sobering passage, Thielmann speculates that "a more faithful rendering to the public on the dearth of hard evidence concerning the existence of delivery vehicles for the 'WMD' agents of concern would almost certainly have affected public willingness to wage war."

Looking ahead, Thielmann anticipates that the endemic factors driving threat inflation will persist in the future. This poses serious problems for implementation of NSS 2002, since preventive war strategy depends on the IC to produce "near certain" assessments of incipient threats. The natural response of the IC to these demands, reasons Thielmann, is to further tilt intelligence analysis in a direction that prioritizes warning over prediction,

ironically reinforcing the underlying dynamics that produced intelligence failure prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Can this spiraling dynamic be overcome? The stakes are high, especially since reliable intelligence is essential for effective functioning of a wide array of security instruments that have little to do with preventive warfare, such as tracking and containing the spread of fissile materials and enforcement of international nonproliferation regimes. This is why rejection of the preventive war doctrine rates high on Thielmann's list of formulas for positive change. There has already been some hopeful movement toward implementation of other recommendations on his list, such as separation of the positions of CIA director and Director of Central Intelligence (DCI).<sup>94</sup> Whether this move translates into meaningful intelligence reform may depend in large part on how the new Director of National Intelligence (DNI) addresses the remaining vital areas of change that Thielmann isolates in his conclusion.

Thielmann's analysis raises grave doubts about American capability to muster the necessary intelligence resources required to implement successfully NSS 2002. In the section's second chapter, Dombrowski asks whether the Pentagon possesses the requisite military capabilities to pursue preventive military force over time. His study begins with a general assessment of the types of military hardware and personnel necessary to execute preventive strike missions. Dombrowski then identifies Syria and Iran as the most likely targets of future US first-strike attacks. His treatment of hypothetical US campaigns against Syria and Iran focuses on three parameters: geography; military balance and effectiveness; and intensity of resistance to foreign military intervention.

Does the US military have what it takes to prevail against these potential adversaries? Dombrowski is not sanguine on this point, partly because of the fact that US military capabilities seem mismatched to respond to the unique set of contingencies presented by these hypothetical war scenarios. For example, recent investment in high-technology weaponry (such as Predator and Global Hawk) maximizes US long-range strike capability. But this hardware has only limited utility versus Iran, a nation that, as Dan Reiter explains in an earlier chapter, has learned a lesson from Osiraq, dispersing and burying nuclear facilities to reduce substantially their vulnerability to standoff attack. On the other hand, if the United States decides to pursue full-scale regime change via the preventive war option, Dombrowski predicts that its overwhelming conventional firepower would probably produce a quick force-on-force victory over the much smaller Iranian army. The problem is that consolidation of this victory would likely entail substantial postconflict nation building, something the US military is not particularly well equipped or eager to do.

In a conclusion that dovetails with some of Reiter's key findings, Dombrowski notes that the distinction between limited preventive strikes and regime-changing preventive military intervention is crucial for determining the workability and credibility of first-strike strategy. Should US military spending priorities continue to shape a fighting force with capabilities that do not respond well to the resource demands presented by first-strike missions, Dombrowski contends that US military credibility will decline, and American security will be compromised. He ends by exploring possible remedies, including adding more "boots on the ground," integrating civilian capabilities into military planning, and cooperating more with allies.

Interlocking themes enable the Thielmann and Dombrowski chapters to be read as companion pieces. For example, Dombrowski notes that it may be difficult to pursue allied cooperation effectively if Washington continues to alienate security partners by distorting public debate with manipulated intelligence data. Likewise, Thielmann argues that the structural impetus for IC threat inflation will be very difficult to correct if policy-makers continue to push the envelope on NSS 2002's maxim that "our best defense is a good offense."<sup>95</sup>

As the Bush administration learned prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom, the diplomatic challenge of persuading international audiences to accept US justifications for application of preventive military force can be onerous, particularly when powerful allies mount diplomatic counteroffensives designed to frustrate US rhetorical efforts. Jacques Hymans's chapter, "A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing? France's Struggle with Preventive Force," examines the French counterdiplomacy campaign conducted during the run-up to the 2003 Iraq War. The pointed intransigence displayed by France in opposition to US arguments for Operation Iraqi Freedom caused some commentators to wonder whether the arrival of NSS 2002 opened a permanent rift in US-France relations. If correct, such assessments point to a rocky road ahead for US diplomats seeking to broaden international support for future first-strike ventures. Hymans discounts the inevitability of this scenario, using a careful analysis of the influences driving French prewar policy to elucidate factors that cast its diplomatic decision-making in a much more complex light. His approach enables one to see French opposition to Operation Iraqi Freedom less as an instance of principled rejection of US "hyperpower," and more as an approach shaped by specific contingencies, such as unique trends in the German electoral cycle and the French experience in Algeria. Allied reactions to US proposals for application of first-strike force diplomatically constrain US policy options. As a case study of the nascent phenomenon of preventive warfare diplomacy, Hymans's chapter elucidates some of these constraints and suggests how they might be overcome. These insights, which highlight

the contingent nature of French foreign policy, may provide succor to those who worry that Washington's diplomatic relationship with France is a lost cause.

## THE FUTURE OF FIRST-STRIKE STRATEGY

The 2004 US presidential election campaign provided an occasion for the nation's voters to take stock of the Bush administration's first-strike force strategy. As William Hartung notes in chapter 11, the trajectory of campaign discussion largely skirted the question of whether NSS 2002 offers a sound framework for US security in the future. However, Democrats did offer some preliminary sketches of a competing approach to post-9/11 security, and Hartung uses these as points of departure for discussion of his own "policy of preventive diplomacy," which serves as an alternative to NSS 2002. The Hartung approach stipulates that military force should remain a strategy option, but that it should be used as a last resort. Force is included as part of a "layered defense," where nonmilitary measures of prevention based on diplomacy, treaties, rigorous inspections, intelligence, law enforcement, and economic leverage take precedence. Hartung draws from reports published by prominent study groups and task forces to show how a redoubled commitment to "prevention, not intervention" offers a more promising US security strategy. Finally, Hartung explores how it might be possible to leverage political arguments for such a preventive diplomacy approach. This links the contents of his chapter back into the volume's earlier analyses of rhetorical strategies deployed by the Bush administration to privilege first-strike force at the expense of nonmilitary tools of prevention.

In the volume's concluding chapter, "Preventive Force: Untangling the Discourse," we consider whether Operation Iraqi Freedom may be a dead end for the White House's preventive war ambitions, or perhaps just an unexpected detour. Condoleezza Rice's statement that we "would never want to do another Iraq,"<sup>96</sup> coupled with her rejuvenated approach to diplomacy as secretary of state, seems to indicate that the pendulum of US foreign policy has swung back into a more moderate equilibrium. On the other hand, the operationalization of high-tech "global strike" plans by the Pentagon, along with a recycled round of bellicose rhetoric directed toward "axis of evil" states such as Iran, points to the prospect that the Bush administration may be planning an encore to Operation Iraqi Freedom. If the Bush administration does attempt to give first-strike force a second chance after the strategy's checkered debut in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, a key determinant of policy success will likely be the degree to which the White House and its public interlocutors remedy factors that contributed to mistakes in 2002–2003. Dur-

ing the run-up to Operation Iraqi Freedom, a breakdown in the marketplace of ideas resulted in widespread political support for a preventive war that was legitimated politically as an exercise in self-defense but turned out to be an instance of raw aggression against a phantom enemy. Can this error be avoided in the future? We close the book by considering this question, drawing on analyses in earlier chapters, studies of public opinion, and rhetorical theory, to suggest preliminary answers.