CHAPTER THREE
THE ROOTS OF THE WASHINGTON THREAT CONSENSUS

Jacques E. C. Hymans

In the months leading up to the Iraq war, many American foreign policy elites spoke out against the First Strike Doctrine that was declared in the September 2002 National Security Strategy of the United States of America (henceforth the Strategy). But overwhelmingly these elites—even political opponents of the Bush administration—did not criticize the threat assessment that underlies the doctrine. What I will call the “Washington threat consensus”—a broad-based agreement about the nature of the contemporary threat environment—was not primarily the result of “obvious” external realities or of mean political calculation. Rather, it stemmed from the fact that the mainstream opposition—Democratic politicians, arms controllers, and even many progressive activists—had independently developed the same assessment as the Bush administration. Indeed, in many cases they had even got there first.

Five Basic Threat Perceptions Underlying the Bush “First Strike Doctrine”

The Strategy’s declaration that the United States will consider “preemptive actions” not only to respond to “a visible mobilization of armies, navies, and air forces preparing to attack,” but also to prevent “the enemies of civilization” from acquiring “the world’s most destructive technologies” explicitly rests on five basic, linked perceptions of the contemporary threat environment:

1. First, the Strategy envisages a major national security threat in an accelerating horizontal “proliferation” of destructive capacities that is projected to result from the rising technical levels of states other than the traditional great powers. It makes no distinction between the acquisition of such “destructive technologies” and the development of those technologies into usable weapons.

2. Second, the Strategy and a companion document issued in December 2002 focus on developing a policy for combating “weapons of mass destruction” (WMD). Neither document makes a distinction between nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons proliferation, either in terms of their importance or in terms of the necessary means for their control.
3. Third, the Strategy singles out the threat posed by WMD in the hands of "rogue states" as being of special concern. "Rogue states" are defined as brutal and corrupt dictatorships that violate international law, are determined to acquire WMD, sponsor terrorism, and hate the United States. As the Strategy puts it, "We must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies and friends."6

4. Fourth, the Strategy portrays the challenges posed by "rogue states" as being so novel that they require "proactive counterproliferation efforts" in the domains of defense and homeland security. Indeed, in laying out the "comprehensive strategy to combat WMD," the Strategy gives pride of place to the administration's "counterproliferation" initiatives over more traditional "nonproliferation" diplomacy.6

5. Fifth, the Strategy sows doubt about the utility of continuing reliance on deterrence. Indeed, it explicitly distinguishes between the value of deterrence against a "status quo, risk-averse" adversary such as the Soviet Union and deterrence's disutility vs. the "gambling" nature of today's enemies.7

The Strategy argues that in this threat environment, the ineluctable conclusion is that so-called preemptive actions will sometimes be necessary for the United States to undertake.

Gauging the Reaction to the Threat Assessment

To analyze the mainstream foreign policy elite reaction to the First Strike Doctrine and to the threat assessment that underlies it, I performed a content analysis on 145 opinion and editorial articles published in the New York Times and the Washington Post between June 1, 2002 (the date of President Bush's West Point address that outlined the First Strike Doctrine) and March 20, 2003 (the date of the start of the Iraq war).9

The First Strike Doctrine certainly took its lumps; I coded thirty-eight op-eds in favor, sixty-eight mixed, and thirty-nine opposed. But most of the objections to the doctrine related to its final logical leap instead of its basic contentions about the threat environment. Thus many op-eds objected to pursuing a unilateralist course (or trumpeting it too bluntly); argued that the United States could not be the world's policeman; pleaded for all diplomatic options to be fully exhausted before a war; reminded of the general unpredictability of war and its potentially counterproductive outcomes; and requested clear proof prior to invading a target state that it indeed was guilty of seeking WMD and/or supporting terrorism.

By contrast, they rarely issued fundamental challenges to the Strategy's basic picture of the contemporary threat.9 In all, a mere 21 of the 145 op-eds reviewed (14 percent of the total) took issue with at least one of the five core elements of the Strategy's threat assessment. Indeed, only twelve of even the thirty-one op-eds that came out flatly against the First Strike Doctrine offered such a fundamental challenge. And just three op-eds (2 percent) issued more than one fundamental challenge. Taking the Strategy's five perceptions one by one, the notion that acquisition of WMD-related
technologies meant "proliferation" was rejected by zero op-eds; the lumping of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons together under the heading "WMD" was rejected by two op-eds (1 percent); and the claimed dangers resulting from "rogue states," from the failure of past "nonproliferation" efforts, and from the insufficiency of "deterrence" were rejected by eight op-eds each (6 percent each).

What explains this widespread consensus on the nature of the threat? Some might contend that it was the result of "obvious" world realities. But in fact, beyond the mainstream foreign policy community there was quite a lot of disagreement with the _Strategy_‘s threat assessment. For instance, significant American academic writings on international security stressed the existence of a gray area between technology acquisition and full weaponization; questioned the utility of the "WMD" heading; underscored the effectiveness of international socialization processes even on "rogue states"; argued that nonproliferation and non-use norms have grown stronger rather than weaker over time; and offered a continuing ringing endorsement of deterrence.

Moreover, a content analysis I performed on thirty-five op-eds from two British newspapers, the _Guardian_ and the _Financial Times_, also suggests that the Washington threat consensus was not universally accepted as a true picture. Twenty-five of the thirty-five British op-eds (71 percent) made a fundamental challenge to the _Strategy_‘s threat assessment, compared to the mere 14 percent of the American op-eds that did so. The left-leaning _Guardian_ offered a fundamental challenge in nineteen of twenty-three op-eds coded (83 percent), but even the _Financial Times_ did so in six of twelve (50 percent). The British op-eds were particularly critical of the American focus on "rogue states" (sixteen op-eds; 46 percent) and of its seeming abandonment of faith in deterrence (eight op-eds; 23 percent). In short, the existence of the Washington threat consensus cannot be explained by reference to "obvious" world realities.

The other typical explanation for the Washington threat consensus is that it resulted from mean political calculation. But there are serious flaws with this argument as well. As former Senator Gary Hart pointed out in the _New York Times_, it could have made political sense for the Democrats to "get a defense policy" that differentiated them starkly from the new doctrine. Large segments of the public were actually quite skeptical about the Washington threat consensus. For instance, a survey taken by the University of Maryland Program on International Public Attitudes in the flag-waving early days of the new Iraqi war (March 22–25) found huge majorities in favor of seeking better relations with the other supposedly incorrigible "rogue states," North Korea and Iran (79 percent and 80 percent, respectively). And strong pluralities (of 45 and 41 percent respectively) agreed that "the fact that the U.S. has gone to war with Iraq makes it more likely that [North Korea or Iran] will make nuclear weapons," versus only 14 and 24 percent who felt the war made such misbehavior less likely. Indeed, part of the meteoric rise of the insurgent presidential candidate Howard Dean can be attributed to the public thirst for a different security discourse.

So why didn’t more mainstream foreign policy elites offer a different threat assessment? The answer, quite simply, is that they actually agreed with the one the _Strategy_ put forth. As the former Clinton administration official Joseph S. Nye put it,
"This is what the new Bush strategy gets right." A careful comparison between the Bush Strategy and the 1996 National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement of the Clinton Administration reveals only minor differences in terms of threat assessment. The Clinton Strategy also named proliferation—not just nuclear, but "WMD" proliferation—as central to a "new era" of threats stemming in particular from "rogue nations that breed and harbor terrorists." It even stressed the need for these threats to be met by "integrated approaches" including, potentially, military force.19

Tracing the Mainstream Opposition's Independent Path to the Threat Assessment

The roots of today's Washington threat consensus go back much further even than the Clinton administration. Indeed, the three linked policy communities—Democratic politicians, arms controllers, and progressive activists—long nurtured the ideas about the threat that ended up finding their way into the Bush Strategy. This long history leads one to wonder whether Bush's team actually borrowed much of its threat assessment from its putative political opponents.

Proliferation

The first core element of the Strategy's threat assessment is the concern over "proliferation." Historically, it was liberal Democratic politicians, arms controllers, and progressive antinuclear activists who promoted the proliferation alarm and worked to widen the definition of "proliferation" to cover not only a country's acquisition of new weapons arsenals, but also its engagement in a broad array of scientific and industrial activities.

The basic bargain struck in the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (N.P.T.) was simpler: nonnuclear states would abstain from acquiring "nuclear explosive devices" in exchange for nuclear states' recognition and facilitation of their "right to participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials, and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy." But in the aftermath of India's use of imported civilian nuclear technology to produce its 1974 "peaceful nuclear explosion," Washington began hedging on its side of the NPT bargain. Forming the "Nuclear Suppliers Group" (NSG) with other Western nations in November 1975, the United States pushed NSG members not to export proliferation-enabling technologies, including uranium enrichment and fuel reprocessing. The United States also sought to become a model of self-restraint in the development of such technologies. Most dramatically, five days before the 1976 elections, President Gerald Ford delayed the startup of a new commercial fuel reprocessing plant in South Carolina.

But Ford's policy shift paled in comparison to Democratic proposals. In April 1977, President Jimmy Carter ordered a halt to domestic reprocessing altogether. He argued that the U.S. example would slow the international diffusion of reprocessing technology and "breeder reactors," thus reducing the likelihood of further proliferation. Carter also organized the "International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation," an
ultimately unsuccessful multilateral effort to find a technical solution to the "dual-use" nature of nuclear technology. He also asked Congress to crack down on a wide range of proliferation-enabling exports.23

Carter's tightening of technological restrictions went against the wishes of many powerful actors, not least the sizeable and politically well-connected domestic nuclear power industry, as well as many in the U.S. military and conservative Republicans like Ronald Reagan.24 Arms controllers were generally favorable to Carter's actions, but by themselves they were too weak to overcome the fierce defensive lobbying campaign the nuclear industry launched.25 It was Congressional liberal Democrats who largely ensured that Carter's concerns about proliferation became law. Indeed, in the 1978 Nuclear Nonproliferation Act, the Democratic Congress "unilaterally imposed even stricter conditions on U.S. exports than those originally sought by the [Carter] administration."26

The actions of Massachusetts Rep. Edward Markey exemplified Congressional Democrats' input into this process. Markey started out as a fierce opponent of domestic nuclear energy production. Elected to Congress in 1976, in Washington he realized that raising the alarm over foreign proliferation was a wedge he could use to attack nuclear power and the military–industrial complex at home. In his book, Nuclear Peril: The Politics of Proliferation, he pithily summarized his position: "The ultimate problem with nuclear power is nuclear bombs."27 Markey vigorously attacked the Carter administration's decision to renew nuclear fuel exports to India. He also pressed his activist allies in the Campaign for Safe Energy and the Solar Lobby to recognize the more general linkage between domestic nuclear energy and international nuclear proliferation. He even gained a prime time appearance at the 1980 Democratic convention to air his views.28

In sum, the rise of "proliferation" as a political issue stemmed largely from the combined 1970s efforts of Democratic politicians and antinuclear campaigners, as well as traditional arms controllers. This loose coalition has continued to bang the proliferation drum to this day, bankrolled in large measure by philanthropic foundations such as the W. Alton Jones Foundation and the Ford, Carnegie, MacArthur, and Rockefeller Funds.29 Given this long history of commitment, they were in no position to object when Bush adopted their definition of the proliferation problem as his own.

WMD

The second core element of the Strategy's threat assessment is its lumping together of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons (along with ballistic missiles) as "weapons of mass destruction" (WMD). The "weapons of mass destruction" category dates back to the beginning of the postwar era. The UN General Assembly's very first resolution, Resolution 1 (I) of January 24, 1946, established the UN Atomic Energy Commission with the purpose of "the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction."30 The key phrase to note is "adaptable to." From the start, a class of weapons' inclusion in the WMD category was based on its theoretical potential to behave like atomic bombs, rather than on the precise form weaponization took. Two years later, in 1948,
the first resolution of the Commission for Conventional Armaments added precision:

Weapons of mass destruction should be defined to include atomic explosive weapons, radioactive material weapons, lethal chemical and biological weapons, and any weapons developed in the future which have characteristics comparable in destructive effect to those of the atomic bomb or other weapons mentioned above.\textsuperscript{31}

Although the WMD concept existed throughout the Cold War, the arms control focus during that period was undoubtedly on nuclear weapons. Minor nuclear arms control agreements such as the Seabed Treaty and the Outer Space Treaty simply tacked on the phrase “and other weapons of mass destruction” as a formality. The post-World War I norm against chemical weapons generated little more than rhetorical genuflection. Indeed, superpower militaries acquired large stocks of chemical and biological weapons, which they felt free to employ as first-strike weapons in *conventional* military operations.\textsuperscript{32} Indeed, depending on one’s definition of a “lethal” weapon, one could even claim that the United States extensively used WMD in Vietnam, in the form of defoliants like Agent Orange and riot control gases like DM (a highly toxic form of tear gas).\textsuperscript{33} The Nixon administration did order the destruction of U.S. biological weapons stockpiles and a halt to new “lethal” chemical weapons production in 1969, and in 1972 it signed a toothless and ambiguous international “Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons.” But the Reagan administration’s massive chemical weapons buildup and significant reinvestment in military biotech R&D largely reversed any momentum Nixon’s measures had produced.\textsuperscript{34}

Thus, in spite of its long history, the “WMD” concept only emerged as a meaningful term of political and journalistic discourse as the Cold War wound down. Why? Part of the answer lies in the efforts of arms controllers who, finally free of the shackles of the Cold War negotiating stalemate, could pursue a more expansive disarmament agenda. For them, the Paris Conference of January 1989 was a key turning point. At the Paris Conference, U.S. and Western negotiators strategically employed the WMD concept in their condemnations of the Iran–Iraq war. As Richard Price puts it, “The discursive operation of situating chemical weapons in the category of mass destruction has the effect of reinforcing the illegitimacy of C.W.”\textsuperscript{35} Price goes on to argue that having seized the moral high ground, the Western powers railroaded recalcitrant Third World states into negotiations for a Chemical Weapons Convention, which was successfully concluded in 1993. Subsequently, their efforts shifted to biological weapons.

The arms controllers’ broadened focus beyond nuclear weapons was important, but so was the anti-WMD passion of liberal Congressional Democrats. The Democratic Congress, led this time by another Massachusetts liberal, Rep. Dante Fascell, argued through the 1980s that for the United States to hold chemical and biological weapons was both repugnant and encouraged proliferation as well. George H. W. Bush’s seemingly dramatic September 1989 proposal at the UN for a global chemical weapons ban was in fact little more than an acknowledgment that the
Congress was going to make him give up the weapons anyway. Indeed, only two months before, the House had deleted the requested appropriation for the Bigeye binary chemical bomb in the Defense Appropriations Bill, and its representatives “prevailed in conference, even threatening to block the entire Bill unless the Senate agreed to restrict the funding.”

In the 1990s, human rights activists also mobilized around the WMD issue. The focus of their campaign was the March 1988 massacre of Iraqi Kurds and Iranians at Halabja. The Iraqi military carried out many chemical attacks against both Iranians and Kurds throughout the 1980s, but Halabja stands out because of the high number of estimated deaths. A 1995 Human Rights Watch report estimated the death toll at Halabja as between 3,200 and 5,000, whereas it estimated no more than 400 deaths in any of the other 38 known chemical attacks against Kurds.

The George H. W. Bush administration did not exploit the Halabja example, even to justify the Gulf War. But the Clinton administration showed no such reticence. As Secretary of State Warren Christopher wrote in a New York Times op-ed in 1994,

Anyone who doubts that Mr. Hussein would again inflict the same cruelties on the citizens of northern Iraq should be reminded of the “Anfal campaign” of 1988, in which the Iraq Army annihilated Kurdish inhabitants in parts of northern Iraq... In the city of Halabja, more than 3,000 Kurdish men, women and children were gassed to death.

As the confrontation with Iraq deepened in the late 1990s, the Clinton administration’s rhetoric about Halabja evolved further. At a 1998 “town hall meeting” on Iraq held at the Ohio State University, Secretary of Defense William Cohen stated that Saddam had used “weapons of mass destruction” against the Kurds. The use of the “WMD” term in place of “chemical weapons” to describe the Halabja massacre subsequently became commonplace. In the debate over the Iraq war, “WMD” was the location of choice even for antiwar Democrats such as Michigan Senator Carl Levin, and of course it was employed extensively by the George W. Bush administration as well.

Rogue States
The Halabja example was also Exhibit A in the Clinton administration’s effort to brand Saddam Hussein’s Iraq as an international outlaw whose capacity for evil knew no bounds—in short, as a “rogue state.” Under Clinton, “rogue states” became a part of everyday Washington jargon and even a central focus of U.S. foreign policy. The administration’s list of “rogue states” included dictatorships that systematically violated human rights and pursued WMD—explicitly Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Iraq, and Libya. Its policy toward this class of states was to “isolate them diplomatically, militarily, economically, and technologically.” It even supported the 1998 Iraq Liberation Act, which made it the policy of the United States to “remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein.”

While the “rogue state” term emerged in the 1990s, the concept had much earlier roots in arms control circles. For instance, Robert McNamara employed it to explain
the Johnson administration's 1967 decision to deploy a limited antiballistic missile (ABM) system. This decision was a grievous reversal for McNamara and the broader arms control cause he espoused. Yet it fell to him to explain to the public the "national interest" justification for the decision. The result was the somewhat puzzling spectacle of McNamara's devoting the first fourteen pages of his speech to explaining the irrationality of deploying an ABM system against the Soviet Union, then concluding that the United States had to deploy an ABM system against a potential Chinese attack. In essence, McNamara's argument was that while the rational Soviets were deterrollable, the roguish Chinese might not be. This line was politically astute, but also—as Morton Halperin writes—"In announcing the decision to deploy an ABM system against China, McNamara was putting forward arguments which he believed." The real novelty of the 1990s was the idea that opposing the "rogues" was practically an ethical or moral responsibility. This was the product of painstaking efforts by human rights activists and intellectuals. For instance, in his 1999 work The Law of Peoples, the liberal philosopher John Rawls argued that "liberal societies" might be able to coexist with illiberal "hierarchical societies" so long as the latter are "well-ordered." But they must not extend a similar tolerance toward "outlaw states" that are by definition aggressively intolerant of difference. Rawls argued that well-ordered peoples could even be justified in making war on outlaw states, since the latter pose a threat both to liberal societies and to the outlaw's own citizens. As one critical review put it, "What Rawls fails to mention, however, is that his terminology is hardly original: it mirrors that which had been emerging from strategic documents in the Department of Defense."

Doubts About Nonproliferation

The first three core elements of the Strategy's threat assessment—"proliferation," "WMD," and "rogue states"—were, as we have seen, already deeply embedded in mainstream strategic discourse before Bush arrived in Washington. By contrast, the Strategy's sharp turn away from reliance on the nonproliferation regime and on deterrence were more novel. Why, then, did they also meet with little resistance from the mainstream opposition? The answer is that even though Clinton administration had continued to foreground the nonproliferation and deterrence elements of its policy, both it and its political allies had offered increasingly half-hearted justifications for doing so. Moreover, subtle policy shifts in the late Clinton era clearly anticipated the dramatic Bush doctrinal shift.

Progressive antimilitary activists had never had much faith in a nonproliferation regime that created a two-tiered system of nuclear "haves" and "have-nots." In his book, Markey flatly called such an arrangement a "hoax." But in the 1990s, even arms controllers close to the Clinton administration sounded increasingly dire warnings about the stability of the regime. Their rhetoric became particularly florid during the run-up to negotiations on the extension of the Nonproliferation Treaty in 1995. Although the NPT's extension for at least another decade was never in doubt, a coalition of arms control groups named the "Campaign for the Nonproliferation Treaty" (CNPT) made a public relations push demanding nothing less than its permanent extension. Part of this push included a television program with the
breathless title "The Nonproliferation Treaty: Dead at 25?" Even after the NPT permanent extension was achieved, the dire prognostications did not abate. It was now claimed that the cause of nonproliferation could not long survive unless related agreements could be reached on much more difficult issues, such as nuclear testing and fissile material production.52 So when the Senate rejected the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1999, by the arms controllers' own logic the nonproliferation regime could be considered as good as dead.53

The flip side of the gradual loss of faith in the NPT regime was a gradual increase in interest in more militarized responses to proliferation. As early as 1993 the Pentagon was elaborating a policy of "counterproliferation" to complement—or replace—the "nonproliferation" policies run by the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) and the State Department. By the end of the 1990s, ACDA was dead, and key Clinton Defense officials William Perry and Ashton Carter had expanded the notion of counterproliferation into a more general strategy of "preventive defense."54 Indeed, the distinction between the Perry–Carter "preventive defense" policy preference and the First Strike Doctrine of preventive war is hazy at best.55 Such ideas were never fully embraced by Clinton himself, who continued to lean toward the preferences of Foggy Bottom. Nevertheless, it is clear that the ground for the Bush emphasis on "counterproliferation" was prepared by Clinton's Pentagon.56

Doubts About Deterrence
As previously noted, arms control practitioners have long accepted in principle the notion of a class of "rogue states" that do not respond to the rational theory of deterrence. But for just as long, the antinuclear movement has attacked the theory of deterrence as it applies to any state. As Jonathan Schell put it in his polemic The Fate of the Earth,

The result of all these novel mental operations is a fantastic intellectual construct—the body of strategic theory built up over more than thirty years—in which ratiocination, unrestrained either by moral feelings or by facts, has been permitted to run wild in a riot of pure theory. On this "thinking" almost no bounds are set, and the slaughter of whole populations and the extinction of man become all too "thinkable."57

The only answer, Schell concluded, was to "rise up and cleanse the earth of nuclear weapons."58 In a 2000 Foreign Affairs article, "The Folly of Arms Control," Schell revived his case. In its new guise, his argument for abolition simply substituted the old danger of a U.S.-Soviet nuclear exchange with the new danger of rampant proliferation.59

In the 1990s, faith in deterrence theory dipped even in the citadels of arms control. In 1994, General Lee Butler, shortly after his retirement as head of the United States Strategic Command, strongly condemned the U.S.'s continued reliance on its nuclear deterrent. He and Robert McNamara joined the 1997 Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. And the "master of the game," Paul Nitze, wrote in 1999, "I see no compelling reason why we should not unilaterally get rid of our nuclear weapons. To maintain them is costly and adds nothing to our security." As for the "rogue states," Nitze counseled "eliminat[ing] their nuclear capabilities with the preemptive use of our conventional weapons."60
Bush is not the first Republican to have seen the value of adopting and then adapting such critiques of deterrence to his purposes. The Reagan Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), known as “Star Wars,” was a frank cooptation of the Nuclear Freeze movement’s anti-deterrence rhetoric of the early 1980s. Deputy National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane explicitly told the official SDI program historian that the idea for SDI had come to him as a way to “outflank the Freeze.”

Bush’s Strategy uses the perceived frailty of deterrence to justify not only missile defense, but also preventive war.

From Threat Assessment to the First Strike Doctrine

This chapter has demonstrated the close parallels between the threat assessments made by the Bush administration and by today’s mainstream opposition. It has argued that the existence of this common viewpoint explains why the opposition tended not to lodge fundamental challenges against the Bush Strategy. Certainly, many in the mainstream opposition did object to the Strategy’s policy conclusions; but others did not. After all, there is a certain logical connection between the Strategy’s assessment of the threat and the policy conclusion it derives from that assessment. Thus, it is not surprising that years before the Bush Strategy was promulgated, “old guard” arms controllers like Paul Nitze had issued calls for preventive war against rogue states developing WMD. Similar ideas had not only been floated, but also elaborated and indeed almost put into practice by the “new guard” of defense intellectuals serving under Clinton, including William Perry and Ashton Carter. The notion of war against “rogue states” had even found endorsement from defenders of human rights such as John Rawls.

Today, the Washington threat consensus is still alive and well. It is notable that in spite of the failure to discover WMD in Iraq, few mainstream voices have expressed doubt over the administration’s serious accusations against the “WMD programs” of North Korea, Iran, and other “rogues.” The First Strike Doctrine itself is less well entrenched, and the violent aftermath of major hostilities in Iraq has led many to question its wisdom. But at the same time, the administration’s commitment of American lives and prestige in line with the doctrine have produced powerful psychological and institutional incentives to maintain it. Thus not only the Washington threat consensus, but also the First Strike Doctrine itself may be here to stay.

Notes

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1. It is difficult to pin down precisely the contours of the “mainstream opposition.” There is no single formal organization or creed to which members of this group adhere. But the
existence of a loose political coalition between Democratic politicians, arms controllers, and the bulk of the progressive activist movement is beyond question.


3. Ibid., 13.


6. Ibid., 14.

7. Ibid., 14.

8. These articles were located by a Lexis-Nexis full-text search for the keywords "preempt," "preemption," "preventive," and "aggression." In all, this procedure identified 60 relevant Times op-eds and 85 relevant Post op-eds—quite enough to form judgments about the contours of the elite debate.

9. The content analysis looked for the following "fundamental challenges" to the five perceptions:

   (1) Author rejects the notion that a "proliferation" effort is indicated simply by a state's acquisition of WMD-related technologies. (2) Author rejects the notion of equating different forms of "WMD" and in particular of putting chemical and biological weapons in the same category as nuclear. (3) Author rejects the notion that incorrigible "rogue states," alone or with terrorist allies, represent the principal contemporary danger to world order. (4) Author rejects the notion that past "nonproliferation" efforts have been failing to contain would-be WMD proliferators. (5) Author rejects the notion that "deterrence" is insufficient against new WMD arsenals. Note that the emphasis in the coding is on explicit rejection of one of the five basic perceptions, rather than mere expressions of skepticism or doubt.


15. British op-eds were located and coded using the same procedures as the American op-eds.


21. It should be noted that India was not an NPT signatory and therefore did not violate the treaty. Nevertheless, the Indian case was interpreted as a challenge to the nonproliferation regime.

22. The other NSG partners did not entirely endorse this effort, which was "perceived as altering the definition of proliferation from the NPT criterion of acquiring nuclear explosive devices to acquiring capabilities." Lawrence Scheinman, "The Pendulum Swings, While the Clock Ticks," in Joseph F. Pilat, ed., The Nonproliferation Predicament (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1985), 19.


28. Ibid., 78.


31. Ibid., 28.

32. Seymour M. Hersh, Chemical and Biological Warfare: America's Hidden Arsenal (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968), 23.

33. The delicate legal dance on this point, in which the United States simultaneously claimed that these were not WMD and solemnly renounced their use "as a matter of national policy," is described in Thomas Graham Jr., Disarmament Sketches: Three Decades of Arms Control and International Law (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 25.


36. Even in that speech, he expressed his intention to hold on to 2 percent of the massive U.S. chemical arsenal until all chemical weapons-capable nations agreed to a total ban. Edward M. Spiers, Chemical and Biological Weapons: A Study of Proliferation (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 90.

37. Spiers, 90.


42. Late in the Clinton administration, it backed away from the "rogue" term, replacing it with "states of concern." But this shift was widely derided in Washington.

43. Anthony Lake, "Confronting Backlash States," Foreign Affairs vol. 73, no. 2 (March/April 1993), 45.


47. Ibid., 88.


51. Markey, 106.


55. "Counterproliferation" guru Ashton Carter embraced the "preemptive war" notion as early as 1978—before even the first North Korean nuclear crisis. See Henry D. Sokolski, Best of Intentions: America's Campaign Against Strategic Weapons Proliferation (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001), 91.


58. Ibid., 231.


61. Indeed, even Schell's "Folly of Arms Control" gave a mixed review to Bush's nuclear stance, while strongly criticizing Al Gore's.

