

**CHOOSING TO LOSE:  
HOW EX-ANTE EXPECTATIONS DETERMINE  
ASYMMETRIC CONFLICT OUTCOMES**

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## **Choosing to Lose: How Ex-Ante Expectations Determine Asymmetric Conflict Outcomes**

Thesis directed by Professor Steve Chan

This dissertation develops a theory that is explicitly cognitive in nature to explain why and when strong states retrench from ongoing conflicts with weaker opponents. The theory's fundamental premise is that states take seriously not only what they are fighting for, but also who they are fighting against. Specifically, the theory proposes that prior to militarized engagements states evaluate their power, measured primarily in terms of the number, sophistication, skill, and resilience of military assets, in relation to that of a prospective opponent and, on this basis, establish an expectation of the losses it likely will incur in a fight. The theory's central contentions are that this expectation operates as a reference point, and that states therefore will make the choice to decrease their level of commitment by scaling back objectives, circumscribing operational activity, reducing troop levels, or even effecting a full and rapid withdrawal when this reference point is violated. That is, strong-states will choose to lose asymmetric conflicts when the level of cost realized exceeds the level of cost anticipated ex-ante.

These dynamics explain not only individual cases of strong-state loss, but also the upward trend in a particular type of strong-state loss -- great power loss -- over time. Specifically, the theory suggests, rather counterintuitively, that great power loss should be both more frequent and more likely under low-polarity structures -- that is, during periods of bipolarity and unipolarity. This proposition is tested using quantitative analysis, while the theory's hypotheses about the formation of the reference point and the salience of its violation are tested directly through the use of a survey-based experiment fielded to a sample population of roughly 400 U.S. elites. These methods, coupled with illustrative studies of three post-Cold War U.S. interventions, produce results that are largely supportive of the theory's central argument: that the fact and the timing of strong-state decisions to retrench are determined by the violation of ex-ante expectations of the costs of conflict.

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## **CHAPTER I: THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

### **Why do the Strong Sometimes Lose to the Weak?**

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One of the most accepted truisms of the last twenty years is the notion that the United States is the center of world power. In 1991 columnist Charles Krauthammer first proclaimed the beginning of a “unipolar moment,” anointing the United States an “unrivaled superpower...at the apex of the industrial West.” A veritable cottage industry of work emerged soon thereafter, with pundits and professors alike concerned with understanding whether, and/or when and how the United States might come to be removed from -- or simply to fall off of -- this elevated perch, all with an eye toward avoiding, preventing, or otherwise delaying that eventuality’s arrival (Mastanduno 1997; Kupchan 1998; Copeland 2000; Brooks and Wohlforth 2002, 2005, 2008; Wohlforth 2009; Krauthammer 2002/2003; Ferguson 2005; Walt 2005). Although some, most notably prominent historian Samuel Huntington (1999), quibbled with Krauthammer’s depiction of a unipolar world, even he acknowledged “The United States, of course, is the sole state with preeminence in every domain of power – economic, military, diplomatic, ideological, technological, and cultural--with the reach and capabilities to promote its interests in virtually every part of the world.”

Huntington’s characterization of the United States provides perhaps the most concise rendering of the foundations for this seeming consensus about America’s uberpower status: an

understanding of power as control over resources, defined by both material and ideational endowment. With its “hard” variant captured in measurements of military expenditures, the size of armed forces, gross domestic product, geography and population<sup>1</sup>, and its “soft” component -- human capital, technological achievement, and cultural appeal -- left more ephemeral but not omitted, this elements-of-power approach led inexorably to the identification of America as the elephant in the room.<sup>2</sup>

Whether such an accounting continues to lead to this conclusion is the subject of rather heated debate, with a spirited back-and-forth about the rise of China<sup>3</sup>; the effects of the 2008 financial crisis (Layne 2012; Wohlforth 2012); and the United States' most recent military outings in Iraq and in Afghanistan, which for many call to mind Paul Kennedy's well-known argument about imperial overstretch -- including for Paul Kennedy himself<sup>4</sup> -- and, some argue, may long tarnish the United States' soft power.<sup>5</sup> Not surprisingly given their courses, conduct, and outcomes, these engagements often are offered both as cause and as consequence of the waning of the United States' unipolar moment. Claims of causation may prove true -- only time

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<sup>1</sup> Barry Posen further refined our understanding of hard power in his well-known "Command of the Commons" (2003), in which he understands U.S. military primacy as its getting "vastly more military use out of the sea, space, and air than do others; that it can credibly threaten to deny their use to others; and that others would lose a military contest for the commons if they attempted to deny them to the United States" (p. 8).

<sup>2</sup> For a full definition and treatment of soft power see: Nye, Joseph S. Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, (New York: Public Affairs Press), 2004

<sup>3</sup> For a good overview of, and important new contribution to, this debate see: Beckley, Michael, "China's Century? Why America's Edge Will Endure", *International Security*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (Winter 2011/12), pp. 41-78

<sup>4</sup> "American Power is on the Wane", Paul Kennedy, *The Wall Street Journal*, January 14, 2009, at: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123189377673479433.html>

<sup>5</sup> On all of the above see: Nye, Joseph S. Jr., "The Future of American Power: Dominance and Decline in Perspective", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 89, Issue 6, November/December 2010.

will reveal whether the United States really is in relative decline, and whether these wars were the culprit -- but even without the long view of history these events should raise anew an interest in explaining why it is that even the most powerful states in the system so often suffer loss at the hands of much lesser opponents.

The question of why such outcomes occur and recur in a system in which power is posited to be the commodity of first resort has, of course, not been neglected. To the contrary, a rather robust literature, to be discussed at length in Chapter II, has developed to explain these "unexpected" asymmetric conflict outcomes. This literature has focused primarily on the difficulties inherent in evaluation of state strength (Blainey, 1973), and on the identification of variables that might weaken, neutralize, or even render counterproductive an objectively stronger actor's advantage: resolve (Rosen 1972; Mack 1975), receipt of external aid (Record 2007), regime type (Merom 2003), and strategy (Summers 1982; Krepinevich 1986; Pape 1996; Biddle 2004; Arreguin-Toft 2005; Nagl 2005; Sullivan 2007, 2008; Lyall and Wilson III 2009).

These explanations, however, are unsatisfying. Individually, many make arguments that are incomplete, or from which the posited implications do not follow logically; collectively, they all rely either explicitly or implicitly upon the expected utility model of decision-making. That is, what does the heavy lifting for these theories is the rational choice proposition that states make the political choice to retrench -- that is, they choose to lose -- when the actual costs of fighting have come to equal or to exceed the expected value of the benefits of winning. I believe the historical record offers reason to call this assumption into question.

This dissertation therefore parts company with much of the literature to date by rejecting the premise that the cost-benefit ratio is the sine qua non of asymmetric conflict outcomes. In an argument developed fully in Chapter III, I accept rational choice's requirement that states have

and act in accordance with a complete and transitive preference ordering but use a cognitive framework to argue that the political choice to retrench from an ongoing conflict is precipitated not by the cost/benefit ratio, but rather by a reference point: a status quo, expected, or even desired level of a valued asset (Levy 1997a; McDermott 2004b). I identify as this reference point the anticipated costs of conflict; specifically, I propose that prior to militarized engagements, states evaluate their power in relation to that of a prospective opponent and, on the basis of this power differential, establish an expectation of the losses likely to be incurred in a fight.

The theory's central contention is that the state will choose to maintain or to escalate its level of commitment only so long as it is physically able and ex-ante expectations of the costs of conflict have not been violated. A successful outcome therefore depends upon the state's ability to achieve its original objectives prior to the crossing of the threshold between expected and realized losses. Conversely, states will make the choice to decrease the level of commitment by scaling back objectives, circumscribing operational activity, reducing troop levels, or even effecting a full and rapid withdrawal when actual losses surpass the level of loss the power differential led it to believe would be required in order to win.<sup>6</sup> These propositions are tested in Chapter IV, and their operation in the real world is illustrated in Chapter VI.

The identification of the military balance as the source of the reference point, however, has implications that should be observable not only at the bilateral level, but also at the structural level. The theory posits that states are sensitive to the extent of their power advantage over prospective opponents, and that this sensitivity is reflected in their understanding of the likely costs of war -- the greater the material advantage, the lower the anticipated costs of winning.

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<sup>6</sup> Other theories have identified leadership expectations as explaining important IR outcomes - see, for example: Copeland, Dale C., "Economic Interdependence and War: A Theory of Trade Expectations", *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Spring, 1996), pp. 5-41.

This is a relative measure of power, having to do not with how much power the state has in absolute terms, but rather with how states believe their capabilities stack up against those of a potential adversary. I argue that this bilateral comparison is causal in individual instances of strong-state loss; but I also argue that it happens within, and so is affected by, the larger context of the global distribution of power -- indeed, this is a foundational premise of the realist paradigm in international relations theory (e.g. Waltz 1979; Gilpin 1981; Layne 1993; Copeland 2000; Mearsheimer 2003).

My theory therefore also proposes that because states are attuned to how much of the system's power they possess as compared to all other states, their likelihood of believing they can prosecute conflicts at low cost in general should vary with the distribution of power at the systemic level. States, in other words, enter into bilateral evaluations with an understanding of where power resides in the system -- that is, with an understanding of whether it is concentrated or diffuse, and across which actors. In particular, states understand whether they are, or are not, themselves a great power. I argue that it is during periods in which the state is acknowledged to hold this status that its perceived power advantage over the majority of states in the system will be the most pronounced. This effect, moreover, should increase as the number of recognized great powers in the system decreases; the fewer the number of peer competitors, the greater the proportion of global power the state will hold, and the more recognizable its power advantage will be.

It is, then, states that find themselves to be great powers in low-polarity systems -- that is, in bipolar or unipolar systems -- that will be most prone to perceiving themselves to have a great power advantage over most or all other states in the system. The logical, albeit counterintuitive, implication of the theory, then, is that states should lose asymmetric conflict more often when

they are more dominant. Stated another way, states should be most likely to lose their asymmetric conflicts when they are great powers operating in a low-polarity international environment. These propositions, developed fully in Chapter III and tested in Chapter V, allow my theory to explain not only the occurrence of strong-state loss, but also variation in the frequency of a particular type of strong-state loss -- great power loss -- over time.

The dissertation thus accesses a number of important and timely debates. It contributes to the scholarly literature on the relationship between polarity and conflict in general, and on the advantages and durability of unipolarity in particular. Unlike much of this literature, however, the theory is concerned not with explaining why it is that great powers undertake adventures in the so-called "periphery", but rather with explaining why it is that those adventures so often end up being attached to the terms "ill-fated". The theory thus not only offers an explanation for unexpected asymmetric conflict outcomes, but also sounds a note of caution for the United States as it reflects upon past, and considers future, uses of force during its era of primacy.

The dissertation also engages the expected utility paradigm at its core -- as a theory of political choice -- and presents an alternative. Importantly, it is an alternative that has the potential to be progressive: because my argument defines cost-tolerance as the ratio between expected and realized costs, and not by the ratio between the actual costs of fighting and the anticipated benefits of winning, the theory makes room for the state to suffer losses in excess of the war's potential spoils before quitting, or to withdraw despite a level of loss that remains significantly below the value of the benefits sought. As a result, my theory is capable of explaining outcomes that are consistent with expected utility theories, and outcomes that are not -- those instance in which the paradigm's assumptions classify the strong-state as having quit

prematurely (actual costs < expected benefits) or, conversely, as not having known when to walk away (actual costs > expected benefits).

Moreover, where expected utility theories of asymmetric conflict termination have, to date, failed to be predictive -- that is, they have not offered a means by which to identify, ex-ante, the value of the costs of fighting that equals the value of the anticipated benefits of winning -- my theory defines the reference point in terms of measurable and observable pre-war indicators. In so doing, it not only contributes to the inter-paradigmatic debate, but also advances the prospect theory research agenda itself: by testing the hypothesis that decisions are made around a reference point; by taking on the critical task of identifying that reference point; and by challenging predictions about decision-maker behavior in the so-called "domain of losses". And, it does so without emphasizing the innate qualities, attitudes, and values of individuals, or the role of institutional structures, that tend to dominate research in the subfield of foreign policy decision-making. Rather, it identifies and explains a systematic bias in human decision-making that can shed light on an important class of international political events.

In this regard the dissertation should be of particular interest to practitioners of foreign policy. It offers an explanation for international political behavior that focuses on how observable data about the international environment -- in this case the power differential -- leads to the formation of a particular belief, and on how that belief leads in turn to real and meaningful political outcomes.<sup>7</sup> In other words, it is a theory that accommodates, rather than assumes away, perceptions and beliefs about the world in which states make decisions. As a result, it has the

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<sup>7</sup> A cognitive approach posits that decision-makers are vulnerable to error, subject to influences other than cost minimization and benefit maximization, and that they tend to be somewhat "closed-minded due to their beliefs and the way they process information [and so] tend to resist adapting to changes in the environment" (Rosati in Neack, 1995, p. 50).

potential to point policymakers toward a check on their assumptions that may help them in the future to avoid making the political choice to lose.

The theory's causal mechanism operates at the level of individual choice, and so an adequate test of the hypotheses it generates must access as directly as possible its propositions about the formation of the reference point and about the effects of the violation thereof. To achieve this, Chapter IV describes and presents the results of a survey-based experiment fielded to a sample population of roughly 400 U.S. elites. Although the use of experimentation in IR research is somewhat unusual, it is gaining traction (McDermott 2002; Hyde 2010), and it is my view that the method will only become more common, and more relevant, as the field continues to see growth in research agendas that rely upon the behavioral assumptions of the expected utility paradigm.

Chapter V uses large-n analysis to test the theory's hypothesis about the relationship between state loss, great power status, and system polarity. Two datasets are analyzed across four models to test for the posited relationship. Chapter VI then uses the "straw in the wind" (Collier 2011) approach to focus attention on evidence from real conflict events that might increase or decrease the plausibility of the theory's expectation that a state will choose to maintain or to escalate its level of commitment to an ongoing conflict only so long as it is physically able and ex-ante cost-expectations have not been violated; and, conversely, that states will make the choice to decrease the level of commitment when actual losses surpass the level of loss expected. This entails the use of process-tracing in three cases of U.S. interventions under low-polarity structures: in Panama (1989); Somalia (1992-1993); and the former Yugoslavia (1995-present).



The collective weight of the empirical evidence collected and analyzed in this study is encouraging for the theory, suggesting that it has the potential to make important advances in theorizing about conflict: it forwards a novel explanation for asymmetric conflict outcome, one that captures events that are consistent with expected utility theories and those that are anomalous for it (Lakatos and Musgrave 1970); advances the prospect paradigm by taking on successfully the "critical task" of determining "how actors identify their reference points" (Levy 2003, p. 271) in an important class of international political events; and offers a means of operationalizing the nebulous concept of "cost tolerance".

So too does the theory have potential practical implications -- although they are implications that cut two ways. In the first instance, the theory is cause for pessimism. It suggests that decision-makers contemplating asymmetric engagements cannot help but telegraph their ex-ante expectations to a potential opponent. The state's past performances provide identifiable benchmarks: the power of the adversary; and the casualties accepted prior to retrenchment. An attentive foe therefore need only locate itself on the relative power scale to arrive at an approximation of the strong-state's reference point, and so to understand roughly how much pain it must inflict in order to prevail. This means that weak states can enter asymmetric conflicts with two sizable advantages: their fight is over vital interests -- often existential interests -- that leave them willing to accept high levels of cost over an indefinite period of time; and they have available to them information that can give them a sense of how much cost they must impose in order to compel their stronger adversary to choose to lose. They can identify, in other words, a rough estimate of their opponent's cost-tolerance. These advantages together allow weak opponents to select strategies that are focused not on achieving battlefield success, but rather that are focused simply on inflicting casualties while maintaining sufficient capability

to continue to do so until the strong-state's cost threshold is met. This renders weak actors' threats to "outlast" their stronger opponent, and/or to "bleed it dry", wise strategic positioning -- not least for their plausibility.

In the second instance, however, there is reason for optimism, with the theory suggesting a means through which policymakers might avoid falling victim to this dynamic. An appreciation of the distinction between expectations and value might increase the likelihood that policymakers will make choices based not on what they think winning should cost, but rather on what they think winning actually is worth. That is, remaining cognizant of the difference between expectations and value may allow policymakers to recognize when the itch to retrench is premised on the former and not the latter, thus enabling them to overcome the impulse to pull back prematurely and increasing the likelihood that they will instead pursue the engagement through to success.

## **CHAPTER II: THE LITERATURE**

### **Explaining Strong-State Asymmetric Conflict Loss: Miscalculation, Democracy, and Strategy**

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There is a tendency among scholars and practitioners of international relations to accept the notion that those states with more capability are more likely to get their way than are those with less; that is, wars are expected to end when a stronger state succeeds in destroying the ability of a weaker opponent to fight – or at least succeeds in convincing its leaders that arrival at such point is imminent and/or inevitable. And yet resource-based indices have in the past been, and seemingly continue to be, at odds with a not-insignificant number of outcomes in the international system; indeed, in roughly 40% of the cases of inter-, extra-, and intra-state war included in the Correlates of War database the expectation of the strong overcoming the weak is disappointed (34% losses, 8% stalemates), with the frequency of such outcomes increasing over time (Arreguin-Toft 2001). These facts present a conundrum for scholars of international relations: how to explain these seemingly odd international political outcomes, in which asymmetric wars end in ways material measures of power suggest they shouldn't? And, how to explain this upward trend in strong-state failures over time?

For asymmetric as with all wars, James Fearon's rendering of the central puzzle with which scholars must contend as the fact that "wars are costly but nonetheless wars recur" (1995,

p. 379) is apt. Explanations for this counterintuitive behavior, he continues, may be reduced to two: either state leaders suffer from base irrationality, or their rational processes of cost-benefit calculation lead often to the conclusion that the latter exceed the former. Given these alternatives it is hardly surprising that theories of war in the rationalist tradition are by far the more common. Implicit in them all is the assumption that in all but perhaps a few exceptional cases, state leaders do not commit themselves to war based upon the belief that they will win simply because they want to win, because they believe a higher entity has ordained that they win, or because they believe dumb luck is sure to work in their favor. Instead, theorists generally presume that states catalogue the resources they can bring to bear in a fight, compare this tally against that of their opponent, and estimate whose reserve is larger. This suggests that wars should be avoidable, and asymmetric wars particularly so; states should recognize which has more, which has less, and, understanding that this distribution will determine the outcome of their disagreement, settle the dispute without first having to resort to violence. Where war does occur, moreover, the outcome should be consistent with the balance of power. Clearly, both propositions are faulty -- wars, even asymmetric ones, do occur and, as noted above, their results do not always affirm the utility of material power.

That wars occur both between relatively evenly matched opponents and also between highly imbalanced opponents allows the categorization of any given conflict into one of two sets: one in which the stronger side can be said to have been defeated, and one in which the stronger side can be said to have lost. The differentiation of these sets is important, for it enables distinction between strong side defeat produced by the destruction of capabilities, and strong side loss produced by the destruction of will. Strong-side defeat can take one of two forms. First, through effective strategy, brute force, or some combination of the two, a materially weaker

opponent may maintain or seize control over contested territory or; second, it can effect the severe depletion of war-fighting resources (to include the death or capture of troops and the destruction of military assets and/or the domestic means of producing them) such that the stronger state's leaders assess their likelihood of victory to be sufficiently low that they concede. Loss, by contrast, is the decision by strong-states to surrender or withdraw from war without having first involuntarily surrendered territory, suffered severe depletion of war-fighting resources, or even suffered battlefield defeats sufficient in quantity or quality to convince them that arrival at such a point is imminent or inevitable. Defeat is understood to pertain, in general, to conflicts characterized by power differentials that are not dramatically skewed, and loss to pertain, in general, to conflicts characterized by considerable power asymmetry.<sup>8</sup>

Research into strong-state loss, to date, has generally focused on the difficulties inherent in evaluation of state strength, and on the identification of variables that might weaken, neutralize, or even render counterproductive an objectively stronger actor's advantage. These explanations fall generally into one of three categories, each of which is addressed below: miscalculation of one's own, or of one's opponent's, material capabilities and/or resolve (Blainey 1973; Rosen 1972; Mack 1975); the constraints imposed by domestic constituencies, most particularly in democracies (Merom 2003; Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler 2008); and strategies that are poorly defined, designed, executed, or are in some other way inappropriate to the context in which they are applied (Summers 1982; Krepinevich 1986; Pape 1996; Biddle 2004; Arreguin-Toft 2005; Nagl 2005; Sullivan 2007, 2008; Lyall and Wilson III 2009).

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<sup>8</sup> The field has not settled on a specific measure of the threshold between "conflicts" and "asymmetric conflicts", but the latter are generally understood to be characterized by the interaction between at least two states, where only one possesses material capabilities sufficient to threaten the physical survival of the other.

## **Miscalculation:**

Over-confidence has a long and somewhat elevated standing in the conflict literature, having first taken pride of place in Geoffrey Blainey's explanation of the cause of war. Blainey takes as his premise that states, for good reasons or bad, often overestimate their prospects of success as a result of an inflated view of their state's capabilities. What is important, he asserts, is "not the actual distribution or balance of power which is vital: it is rather the way in which national leaders think [emphasis in original] that power is distributed..." (Blainey, 1973 p. 114). Blainey goes on to argue that war becomes possible when, given these subjective measures of relative power, "both rivals [believe] that they [can] achieve more through war than peace" (p. 127). States, in other words, may have a greater degree of confidence in their material superiority, and so in the likelihood of victory, than a truly objective review of the relative distribution of resources would justify.

Subsequent theorists and researchers have taken up the question of over-confidence and miscalculation, seeking to identify why -- other than sheer hubris -- leaders might have a mistakenly aggrandized view of their state's capabilities and/or a mistakenly low estimation of those of their opponent. Most prominent among the theories that has emerged is the possibility that states do not recognize their own inability to make usable the resources under their control, whether as a result of a lack of skill or the inapplicability of a particular type of resource to a particular type of interaction (Baldwin 1979).<sup>9</sup> The most obvious cases of unexpected conflict outcomes, however, including the U.S. engagements in Afghanistan and in Iraq, cast doubt upon

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<sup>9</sup> The inapplicability argument is summarized by Baldwin as "he had a great bridge hand but happened to be playing poker." Baldwin, David A., "Power Analysis and World Politics: New Trends versus Old Tendencies," *World Politics*, Vol 31, No. 2. (Jan., 1979), p. 163-164.

explanations that hinge on diagnosis of a skill deficit -- the size and sophistication of the U.S. military make it at least difficult to find this position compelling.

The other source of miscalculation that figures prominently in the literature has to do not with how national leaders conceive of their own state, but rather with how they perceive the attributes and deficits of their opponent. In particular, a number of well-known examinations of asymmetric conflict explore the importance of state willingness to suffer, and especially of an imbalance in that willingness to suffer.

An early rendering of what has become termed "preference intensity" was provided by Andrew Mack in his study of the U.S. engagement in Vietnam (1975). Mack reasoned that the distribution of capabilities in a conflict produces a concomitant but inverse distribution of interests that favors the weak actor; for the weak, that is, but not for the strong, the fight is existential, defined by the highly motivating desire to survive. This disparity is reflected in the actors' relative levels of resolve – it will be high where survival is at stake, and low where the interests being challenged are of lesser import.<sup>10</sup> Mack identifies domestic society as the location of resolve, explaining that because the stronger state's level of commitment to the conflict is limited rather than total there remains competition for resources, creating the potential for divisive public expressions of dissatisfaction with the war effort. This potential is realized when "battle casualties rise and economic costs escalate" (p. 185). For Mack, then, the key determinant of strong state loss is an increasing unwillingness of domestic society to provide the resources necessary to fight:

*"...if the war escalates dramatically...it makes a definite impact on the economic and political resources which might otherwise have been allocated to, say, public*

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<sup>10</sup> Mack understands "will" or "resolve" to be a state's "political capability to wage war." See Mack, 1975 pp. 177, 179.

*welfare projects. Tax increases may be necessary to cover the costs of the war, a draft system may have to be introduced, and inflation will be an almost certain by-product. Such costs are seen as part of the 'necessary price' when the security of the nation is directly threatened. When this is not the case, the basis for consensus disappears. In a limited war, it is not at all clear to those groups whose interests are adversely affected why such sacrifices are necessary." (pp. 185-186).*

Although Mack's proposition has an intuitive appeal, it is not clear that societies, and particularly the American society, makes tradeoff calculations in the way his theory seems to require; publics often either are unaware of or unconcerned with the accretion of national debt, for example, while the complexities and vagaries of agency – much less national – budgets make tabulation of expenditures in either/or terms difficult at best. Mack's proposition, further, that strong-states by definition do not understand asymmetric conflicts to be existential in nature is problematic -- even very powerful states may understand an asymmetric conflict to be existential as a result of "domino logic", in which "a series of individually insignificant interests are linked so that their cumulative loss constitutes a material threat to survival" (Arreguin-Toft 2005, p. 14). Indeed, this was a common refrain over the course of the U.S. engagement in Vietnam, and one invoked with regularity prior to and during the its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (Bacevich 2009).

Steven Rosen's slightly earlier (1972) work also focuses on disparities of resolve, but he focuses more closely on the operationalization of the concept in terms of punishment -- the costs a state is willing to incur. Rosen develops a formal expression of resolve as a state's willingness to absorb costs per unit of its adversary's capabilities (State A Costs/State B Capabilities and vice versa), and power as the ratio between the two (p. 169). In effect, Rosen is arguing that cost-acceptance is meaningless absent reference to the capabilities of an adversary -- how much cost a state is willing to bear matters only in relation to how much cost an opponent is able to



inflict. It is, then, the balance between this cost-tolerance ratio and the anticipated benefits of war that establishes the threshold between a strong state's decision to continue to fight and its decision to cede the war, and so to lose. The implication of both Mack's and Rosen's analysis of resolve, then, is that it is the underappreciation of an opponent's willingness to suffer relative to one's own that causes strong-states to lose. Both theories, too, also access the role domestic audiences play in determining conflict outcome, a constraint dealt with more explicitly by the treatments discussed below.

### **Domestic Constraints:**

In most if not in all cases of asymmetric conflict it is true that the materially advantaged state has at its disposal capabilities -- troop increases, air strikes, and even nuclear weapons -- that can change the dynamic of even a war that is going very badly. That these states choose not to employ such assets may say less about their applicability to specific contexts, and more about states' unwillingness to use them. Gil Merom (2003) forwards an explanation as to why this might be so, focusing specifically upon the interaction between regime type and social mobilization. For Merom, democracies are at a disadvantage in asymmetric conflict relative to their autocratic counterparts, with the latter benefitting from the ability to maintain strict control over the information available to their populations and to silence dissent should any arise. The extent of this control over society allows the state to mobilize its resources efficiently and minimizes the potential for, and consequences of, public disapproval of the rationale for war or of its execution. Leaders of democratic states, by contrast, are argued by Merom to be constrained by their society's judgment concerning the necessity of the war and the

appropriateness of its conduct, both of which are manifest in the population's willingness both to bear costs, and to impose them.

Merom develops a "tolerance curve" that represents the tradeoff a democratic society must make between the numbers of its own lives it is willing to lose in relation to the numbers of enemy lives it is willing to take, arguing that states

*"must secure their soldiers' and citizens' "acceptance" of the use of violence and the risk of being its victims. In other words, in order to fight, let alone win wars, states need their soldiers to be ready to harm others and be killed or maimed, and their citizens to accept the army's behavior and the risks their kin in arms face. Achieving a certain balance between these two requirements – the readiness to bear the cost of war and the readiness to exact a painful toll from others – is a precondition for succeeding in war" (p. 19).*

Where this balance is not met in small wars, he claims, democracies will lose.

Despite having established this relational construct between home casualties and enemy casualties, Merom's subsequent analysis and conclusions do not follow from it. Although he identifies manpower -- the lives to be put at risk -- as the essential, societally-provided resource upon which states depend, his explanation for state loss refers not to democracies' unwillingness to field soldiers, but rather to their unwillingness to "escalate the level of violence and brutality to that which can secure victory" (Merom, 2003 p. 15). That is, though he assumes that both types of tolerance are bounded, with fixed upper limits, he attributes state loss to an unwillingness to adjust only one of them. Merom thus effects a sleight of hand; by stating the argument unidirectionally, he neglects its interactive dynamic: if the number of casualties a state must impose in order to win is contingent upon the number of casualties it is willing to incur, then state loss will be produced by an unwillingness to adjust either threshold upward. The willingness to suffer costs, then, must matter at least as much as the willingness to impose them.

Perhaps the most prominent argument about domestic constraints is the "casualty phobia" proposition -- the assertion that domestic publics are disinclined to accept casualties, and particularly so in small-scale conflicts. This hypothesis applies most directly to democracies -- although there are reasons to believe autocracies are not immune (Weeks 2008) -- positing that the pressures created for elected officials by an increase in casualties and a concomitant decrease in public support cause retrenchment. A number of scholars, however, have challenged this proposition, and indeed have done so using data from the conflict considered by many to be the exemplar: the U.S. engagement in Somalia, wherein retrenchment followed very quickly on the heels of the now infamous downing of a Black Hawk helicopter and the subsequent loss of 18 troops in a pitched battle in Mogadishu. James Burk has argued that "on balance it is difficult to find strong support for the casualties hypothesis in the data for Somalia. That is striking, as this case is often supposed to provide clear-cut evidence in favor of the hypotheses...[but] it is difficult to conclude that changing public opinion had the predicted effect on political decisions to suspend the peacekeeping mission" (Burk 1998, pp. 68-69). Christopher Gelpi, Peter D. Feaver, and Jason Reifler (2005, 2009) have similarly questioned the hypothesis, also claiming that the timing of the drop in public support for the Somalia intervention does not fit: "Data...show that public support for the presence of U.S. troops in Somalia dropped from 74 percent in December 1992, at the start of the humanitarian relief operation, to 43 percent in mid-September, before the Black Hawk was downed in October" (Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler 2009, p. 38). Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler are not arguing that domestic constraints do not determine conflict outcomes, they are simply arguing that it is not casualty phobia that is the constraint that matters.

Instead, these scholars argue that it is the likelihood of victory that is the most salient influence on societal support for war. Using proprietary survey and experimental data, Gelpi,

Feaver, and Reifler produce evidence they argue demonstrates that individual cost tolerance levels are arrived at via assessment of the justifiability of conflict -- whether going to war is the “right thing” -- and of the likelihood that the effort will be successful. Casualty tolerance, in other words, is consistent with rationalist expectations: its maximum is the cost-equivalent of the anticipated benefits of conflict weighted by the probability that those benefits will be realized. This proposition predicts that support for war will not decrease as casualty levels increase unless the public also believes that the likelihood of victory has declined. This emphasis on the probability of winning, however, is problematic -- Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler do not make clear why, given their material advantage, the highly predominant power in an asymmetric conflict would ever not anticipate having a very high likelihood of victory. A more accurate characterization of this argument would seem then to be as follows: support for war will not decrease as casualty levels increase unless the public also believes that the likelihood of victory at a fixed level of resource commitment has declined.

### **Strategic Error:**

The third general category into which extant explanations for asymmetric war outcomes falls addresses the question of the matching of objectives to the means of achieving them. Among the most recent and the most intuitive strategy-based explanation for strong-state loss is that of Ivan Arreguin-Toft, whose work addresses explicitly the question of force fungibility -- the argument that emerged in the aftermath of the Vietnam war that it was the incompatibility between the composition, design, and use of the U.S. Armed Forces and the context within which they were being applied that caused failure (Summers, 1982; Krepinevich, 1986; Nagl 2005). Indeed, in his valuable 2005 book, *How the Weak Win Wars*, Ivan Arreguin-Toft argues

that it is precisely the way in which armed forces are used -- war fighting strategy -- that matters. More specifically, he contends that it is the interaction between the military strategy of the strong and that of the weak that is decisive. According to Arreguin-Toft, conflict participants choose between two types of strategy: direct and indirect. Starting from the assumption that it is the materially preponderant power that has initiated the conflict and that the conflict is occurring on the territory of the weaker actor, Arreguin-Toft identifies the direct strategy option for the strong actor as the use of conventional attacks on its opponent's armed forces, and barbarism – the “deliberate or systematic harm of noncombatants” – as the indirect strategy alternative. For the weaker side the choice is comparable but not identical, with the participant selecting either direct conventional defense that is intended to blunt assaults on its cities, armed forces, and other military resources, or indirect guerrilla warfare that targets the enemy's military assets, most especially its troops.<sup>11</sup>

Arreguin-Toft does not contend that the balance of capabilities is irrelevant to this interaction; to the contrary, he hypothesizes that by merit of material advantage stronger combatants should win conflicts in which the parties' choice of strategy is the same: direct offense vs. direct defense, and indirect offense vs. indirect defense. Conversely, this material advantage is attenuated by opposite-strategy interactions, which Arreguin-Toft claims prolong the duration of conflict to the benefit of the weak. As he explains it, the material balance leads to strong-state expectation of rapid and low-cost victory; thus, an unexpectedly protracted conflict is, by definition, an unexpectedly costly one (2005 p. 29). Arreguin-Toft concludes, therefore, that the stronger actor should be more likely to lose direct-indirect and indirect-direct exchanges.

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<sup>11</sup> Arreguin-Toft acknowledges that these are not the only choices available to the combatants, noting that a “hearts-and-minds” approach, nonviolent resistance, or terrorism might also be chosen. For a full description of strategic options see pp. 29-33.

The logical progression of this argument is that strategic interaction causes conflict duration, which in turn affects conflict costs, which then cause conflict outcome. Yet Arreguin-Toft's testing of his theory conflates these processes, examining the relationship only between strategic interaction and conflict outcome – nowhere in his analysis does he include conflict duration, or conflict costs. Even were Arreguin-Toft to produce significant correlations for the first two steps in the chain, he would still need to explain how, and why, costs cause conflict outcome.<sup>12</sup>

In her own work on mismatched conflicts, Patricia Sullivan (2007, 2008) further refines the force fungibility argument, identifying as her decisive variables what she terms the strong state's "war aims" and the extent to which achieving these depends upon the compliance of the target.<sup>13</sup> She creates a continuum of war aims that ranges from "brute force" political objectives to "coercive" political objectives, differentiating between such goals as territorial expansion or regime overthrow on the one hand, and policy change on the other. Brute force objectives require little or no target compliance, and so material capability assures strong state victory. The need for target compliance where war aims are coercive, by contrast, is high, and so in these situations material capability will matter less and resolve -- cost tolerance -- will matter more.

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<sup>12</sup> In fact, testing the relationship between strategic interaction and conflict duration produces no significant correlation. Results were generated using only Correlates of War conflicts; data therefore do not include wars involving Native Americans or those occurring after 1991. For inter-state conflict duration is provided, for extra- and intra-state wars the average of the minimum and maximum durations indicated by COW were used. Duration measured in days.

<sup>13</sup> Sullivan's study analyzes data for 122 interventions conducted by the permanent five members of the UN Security Council. She defines interventions as "the foreign deployment of at least 500 combat-ready, regular military troops (ground, air, or naval) with the intent to participate in hostile action against a target government or substate group for the purpose of achieving immediate-term political objectives" (p. 510).

The result is that the probability of strong-state losses will rise as victory becomes increasingly dependent upon the target's willingness to change its behavior.

This construct offers a convincing explanation for why states might underestimate the likely costs of a given engagement, but it does not offer a new explanation for why those costs then lead the strong-state to retrench. Rather, Sullivan's theory relies, as do all of the above approaches, on the same causal mechanism: they all accept either explicitly or implicitly the proposition that states will choose to lose when the actual costs of fighting exceed the expected value of the benefits of winning.<sup>14</sup>

### **Problems with the Use of the Expected Utility Proposition**

This balancing of the probability of achieving the benefits of victory against the costs of fighting is the well-known expected utility model. Imported from economics, expected utility theories place in relation the probability with which possible outcomes will occur as a result of a given action with the costs and benefits they produce. Though “an external re-creation of choices [and] not a representation of cognitive processes” (Morrow 1997, p. 15), the expected utility model thus offers a powerful framework for understanding why and when states might choose to opt out of an ongoing conflict. In a very appealing way, it simplifies political choice to a basic decision function: expected utility theories of asymmetric conflict termination are premised upon a discrete marker,  $\text{cost} > \text{benefit}$ , arrival at which point sets in motion an almost reflexive “sell” response. In essence, expected utility theories depict decision-makers as sober

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<sup>14</sup> This construct is also pervasive in treatments of the more general phenomena of conflict initiation and termination (Fox 1970; Wittman 1979; Mitchell and Nicholson 1983; Arquilla 1992; Goemans 2000b; Filson and Werner 2002; Reiter 2009), and conflict duration (Vuchinich and Teachman 1993; Stam 1996; Bennett and Stam 1998; Goemans 2000a).

analysts of costs, benefits, and probabilities, who use these measures to time appropriately their exit from a conflict so that they do not lose more than they stand to gain.

Yet the explanatory power of these propositions has been questioned both on the strength of experimental evidence, and because they simply do not square with some of the most prominent instances of strong-state loss. Expected utility theories, for example, have a difficult time reconciling the United States' rhetoric about and behavior in Somalia in the early 1990s. Here, rationalist approaches would lead to the expectation that the United States would have suffered more costs before retrenching than it actually did. The Clinton administration had made abundantly clear its belief that United States credibility, and a "new age" of human dignity were at stake, arguing that the success of the mission would solidify the United States' reputation for being willing to use force in response to humanitarian crises; affirm its commitment to multilateralism; promote democracy; and underscore American global leadership (Menkhaus and Ortmyer 1995, pp. 19-20). These rather expansive descriptions of the value of the Somalia mission seem unlikely to be overmatched by the loss of 29 lives.

Experimental evidence produced by researchers working from a cognitive perspective -- that is, from a perspective that understands decision-makers as being vulnerable to error, and subject to influences other than cost minimization and benefit maximization -- also offers reason to question the salience of expected utility theories. First introduced in the economics literature before crossing over into political science, Kahneman and Tversky's (1979) prospect theory is a cognitive model that challenges a number of the expected utility model's key propositions. Where expected utility theories posit that decision-makers act as a result of their ability to identify, through efficient calculation, when they have arrived at that point at which the gains expected from a given action are exceeded even slightly by realized losses, prospect theories



posit that this evaluative process is not unencumbered by psychological variables. Thus where expected utility theories contend that decision-makers engage in pure economic reasoning, focusing on gains or losses in net asset levels, prospect theories contend that decision-makers are subject to and act upon non-economic, cognitive influences. Specifically, the prospect paradigm's foundational premise is that decision-makers are sensitive not to absolute well-being, whether this is understood in terms of wealth, power, happiness, etc., but rather to changes in well-being relative to a reference point: a status quo, expected, or even desired level of the asset in question (Levy 1997a; McDermott 2004b).

What thus emerge from these two models are contradictory predictions about decision-making in war. For expected utility theories to be predictive they must identify ex-ante the value of the benefits at stake in terms of the costs caused by conflict; those emerging from the prospect paradigm must identify ex-ante decision-makers' reference point. To date, work in both research agendas has made little progress in theorizing about these conditions or in testing empirically the hypotheses to which they lead. As described in the next chapter, I seek to address this shortcoming in the prospect model by presenting a theory of reference point establishment and by testing the hypotheses it generates about asymmetric conflict outcomes.

## CHAPTER III: THE THEORY

### Power, Cost-Expectations, and Asymmetric Conflict Loss

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Wars occur between relatively evenly matched opponents and also between highly imbalanced opponents. The theory presented here makes no distinction between the decision processes involved in either scenario, or between the decision processes as they occur for the stronger or for the weaker belligerent. Rather, its fundamental premise is that all states take seriously not only what they are fighting for, but also who they are fighting against; states, in other words, are attentive to the capabilities of their opponent because it is this measure that is believed to provide information about how much achieving one's desired objectives will cost.

The costs states might bear during conflict are multiple, to include not only blood and treasure but also such ephemera as reputation, influence, moral standing, and the opportunity costs of using finite resources in one place rather than in another. It is not only possible but indeed probable that states consider all of these potential costs when contemplating whether to undertake a militarized engagement, and whether and when to abandon one. Nonetheless, I assume that states are not equally sensitive to the full universe of costs, but rather are most concerned with and responsive to their own loss of life.<sup>15</sup> The theory thus defines cost-tolerance

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<sup>15</sup> This sensitivity generally is presumed to be a product of leadership fear of the domestic consequences of high casualty rates. This position has received substantial evidentiary support, with casualties having indeed been demonstrated to be predictive of U.S. public opinion about war (Mueller, 1973; Gartner and Segura, 1998), to affect leadership approval ratings (Gartner and Segura, 2000), and to influence congressional and presidential elections as well as incumbent tenure (Carson et al., 2001; Bueno

specifically in terms of casualties, here used to refer only to the number of troops killed and not, as is the military convention, the number killed and wounded.

### **The Bilateral Hypotheses**

The theory's central commitment is that states' cost-tolerance is the product of their power advantage relative to a potential foe, a proposition that leads to the development of two hypotheses at the interstate level. I argue that strong states should enter asymmetric conflicts confident that they will win -- that is, sure of their ability to defeat their materially weaker adversary, and so to achieve their objectives. This means that rather than consider the costs they are willing to bear in order to prevail -- the cost-equivalent of the benefits to be won -- these states will have the luxury of concerning themselves only with the costs that capability indices suggest they should be required to bear. In other words, the question of cost tolerance for the strong becomes adjusted to ask not "how much are the benefits worth?" but rather "are the benefits worth at least as much as the power differential suggests it will cost to achieve them?"

In practice, strong state assessment of the power of a weak opponent will begin, but not end, with evaluation of the size, sophistication -- to include nuclear capability -- and professionalism of its armed forces or elements (in the case of non-state actors), and the strength of the industrial sectors required to equip them. Factored into this evaluation are the capabilities of allies and the likelihood of their direct involvement, as well as anticipated indirect support in

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de Mesquita et al. 2003; Gartner et al. 2004; Voeten and Brewer 2006; Karol and Miguel, 2007). The logic of domestic punishment has been theorized, moreover, not to be confined to liberal states but rather to be applicable across regime types (Desch, 2002; Arreguin-Toft 2005). H.E. Goemans' *War and Punishment* (2000), for example, proposes and presents evidence in support of the idea that the leaders of liberal and illiberal regimes alike will terminate conflicts for fear overthrow -- or worse -- at the hands of dissatisfied internal constituencies. Jessica Weeks (2008) similarly explores the generation of domestic audience costs in nondemocratic contexts, and concludes that they exist and operate for authoritarian leaders much as they do for their democratic counterparts.

the form of material flows from these allies or otherwise sympathetic third parties. Where such contingencies exist, they are internalized into the power differential, and so affect the strong state's cost estimate.<sup>16</sup>

These indicators are used by states to form an understanding of just what they are up against -- states, in other words, recognize that that a fight against the neighborhood bully will exact more in blood and treasure than will a fight against the neighborhood wimp, and form expectations accordingly. Where an objective might be valued at \$1B, for example, and near that amount is likely actually to be required in order to defeat the bully, that same objective is likely to be achievable in a fight against the wimp for only \$500M. In other words, small power differentials will produce high estimates, high power differentials low estimates. Note that the contention is not that states always estimate a discrete number, although sometimes they do, but rather that they at a minimum identify a rough order of magnitude. This evaluation of relative capabilities, then, produces the reference point, and leads to the theory's first hypothesis:

***H<sub>1</sub>***: *Ceteris paribus*, decision-maker cost-expectations will decrease as the state's power advantage relative to an opponent increases.

The consequences of the theory's framing of cost tolerance in this way are twofold. First, this calculation, although rational, is nonetheless based upon states' focus on and confidence in their material capabilities. Thus strong-states' willingness to engage in conflicts of this nature often is characterized rightly as being the product of "wishful thinking", the "exit plan" becomes coterminous with victory, and, when things go badly, the course of the conflict is attributed to poor planning.

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<sup>16</sup> The idea that possession of military capabilities influences leaders' choices about conflict is not new to IR. For a good review of literature on this proposition, as well as a test of it, see Fordham 2004.

The second consequence is that although the stronger state has the resource capacity to absorb costs in excess of the level anticipated, and though a rational-choice accounting of the balance between the value of winning and the costs already incurred may in some cases leave room to continue to fight, the state will be unprepared to do so. Rather, states will choose to maintain or to escalate their level of commitment only so long as this is both physically possible and ex-ante expectations of the costs of conflict have not been violated. The United States' ongoing combat presence in the former Yugoslavia illustrates this proposition. The United States undertook the intervention in 1995 with the ex-ante expectation of losing as many as 50 U.S. lives over the course of a limited 12-month commitment. It in fact suffered zero casualties during this time, and subsequently extended the operation, maintaining a U.S. combat presence into the present day with the stated purpose of achieving "long-standing U.S. goals" and in the interest of "finishing the job".<sup>17</sup>

A successful outcome therefore depends upon the state's ability to achieve its original objectives prior to the crossing of the threshold between expected and realized losses. This, I argue, is what we see in the United States' 1989 intervention in Panama: having expected dozens of casualties during the first phase of its invasion but having actually suffered nine, the Bush administration chose to continue over the course of two months to seek to achieve its full retinue

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<sup>17</sup> Kim, Julie and Steven Woehrel, "Kosovo and U.S. Policy: Background to Independence", CRS Report for Congress, RL31053, June 20 2008, pp. 2-3. Troop levels subsequently declined concurrent with the U.S. actions in Afghanistan and Iraq, but without the United States indicating its mission in the former Yugoslavia had been completed. To the contrary, violent incidents in northern Kosovo in 2011 have been cited as justification for a continued U.S. presence in pursuit of the objective established in 1995 of establishing a stable and self-sustaining peace. See: "Kosovo: Current Issues and U.S. Policy", Steven Woehrel, *Congressional Research Service*, RS21721, March 13, 2012; "Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 President's Budget: Justification for Component Contingency Operations and the Overseas Contingency Operations Transfer Fund (OCOTF)", Office of the Secretary of Defense, February 2011. The United States has not had troops in Bosnia since 2004. "Bosnia: Current Issues and U.S. Policy", Steven Woehrel, *Congressional Research Service*, R40479, February 29, 2012.

of conflict objectives, leaving only after dictator Manuel Noriega was in U.S. custody and President Bush able to declare that democracy had been restored.

Conversely, the theory proposes that the state's level of commitment to an ongoing conflict will persist only so long as the actual losses suffered remain below ex-ante expectations; once this expectation -- the reference point -- is violated, states will be inclined to start to cut ties: to scale back objectives, circumscribe operational activity, reduce troop levels, or even effect a full and rapid withdrawal. This is what the United States did, for example, in the early 1990s in Somalia. In this case, U.S. ex-ante cost estimates topped out at 20; when the now-infamous downing of a Black Hawk helicopter pushed the actual casualty count to 29, the United States chose to retrench.

Importantly, the theory focuses on the fact and the timing of the decision to retrench, and not the time at which this intention is made public or the time at which the conflict ends through an acceptance of terms, discontinuation of combat operations, or the withdrawal of forces. In other words, what the theory seeks to explain is the fact and the timing of President Clinton's decision in October 1993 that the United States would end its engagement in Somalia, and not the timing of U.S. troops' physical withdrawal in March 1994. The theory's implications about the timing of strong-state decisions to retrench are captured in Hypothesis 2:

<p><b><i>H<sub>2</sub></i></b>: <i>Ceteris paribus</i>, decision-makers will choose to reduce the state's level of commitment to an ongoing conflict when realized costs exceed expected costs.</p>
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### **The Structural Hypothesis**

The theory's key proposition as developed above is that states are sensitive to the distribution of power: they are proposed to undertake evaluations of potential opponents'

capabilities; on this basis to establish expectations of just how costly it will be to best them in a fight; and to be responsive to the violation of these expectations. I argue that these dynamics can explain not only individual instances of strong-state loss, but also the upward trend in a particular type of strong-state loss over time: great power loss.

I contend that this evaluative process that is the theory's jumping-off point does not happen in a vacuum; to the contrary, it happens within the broader context of the global distribution of power. I contend, in other words, that states are aware not only of how well their state matches up against a particular opponent, but also of how well their state matches up against any opponent -- they are attuned to their state's standing in the global pecking order. Indeed, the long tradition of realist theorizing identifies this type of relative evaluation as the prime mover in international politics (e.g. Waltz 1979; Gilpin 1981; Layne 1993; Copeland 2000; Mearsheimer 2003). The logical corollary is that it is those states living at the top of the food chain -- the great powers -- for which the dynamics proposed by the theory should be most likely to obtain.

This is so because of two offsetting dynamics: the first is that the greater the state's power advantage, the lower its reference point is likely to be; the second is that, *ceteris paribus*, the lower the reference point, the more likely it is to be violated. The theory is clear that a state's perception of its power advantage is shaped, first, by the bilateral comparison between its own capabilities and those of the prospective opponent. This is a relative measure, having to do not with how much power the state has in absolute terms, but rather with how it believes its assets stack up against those of another. States, however, enter into these bilateral evaluations with an understanding of where power resides in the system -- that is, with an understanding of whether

it is concentrated or diffuse, and across which actors. In particular, they understand whether they are, or are not, themselves a "great power".

Importantly, my use of this term captures more than simply an accounting of material capabilities. Rather, I conceive of this title as a matter of status, consistent with Modelski's (1958) notion: "The status of Great Power is sometimes confused with the condition of being powerful. The office, as it is known, did in fact evolve from the role played by the great military states in earlier periods...But the Great Power system institutionalizes the position of the powerful state in the web of rights and obligations" (p141). Jack Levy (1982, p. 282) has offered further elaboration:

*A Great Power can be defined generally as a state which plays a major role in international politics with respect to security-related issues. Operational indicators of Great Power status include the following: possession of a high level of power capabilities, which provides for reasonable self-sufficiency in security matters and permits the conduct of offensive as well as defensive military operations; participation in international congresses and conferences; de facto identification as a Great Power by an international conference or organization; admission to a formal or informal organization of Powers; participation in Great Power guarantees, territorial compensation, or partitions; and, generally, treatment as a relative equal by other Great Powers (for example, protocol, alliances, negotiations, and so forth).*

Material capability, in other words, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for identification of a state as a great power; rather, these definitions identify as fundamental possession of what we now identify as the "soft" variants of power, and most especially the matter of recognition. It is during periods in which the state is widely acknowledged to hold this status, then, that its perceived power advantage -- the product of both material and non-material endowments -- over the majority of states in the system should be the most pronounced. This effect, moreover, should increase as the number of recognized great powers in the system



decreases; the fewer the number of peer competitors, the greater the "role in international politics with respect to security-related issues" the state will play.

I use here the term "polarity" to capture the number of great powers during a given period, rather than the more specific accountings of "concentration" -- which measures both the number of great powers and the balance of power among them (Mansfield 1994) -- or "polarization", which accesses the extent to which states consolidate into blocs of tight alliances (Bueno de Mesquita 1978). These more nuanced concepts may be useful -- and indeed, some argue necessary -- for inquiry into the incidence of great power war, but they do not provide distinctions that are meaningful for the theory presented here. Rather, because the study is interested in explaining the outcomes of asymmetric conflicts what is needed is simply the ability to distinguish great powers from minor powers, and to identify how many great powers exist in the global system at any point in time.

It is, then, states that find themselves to be great powers in low-polarity systems -- that is, in bipolar or unipolar systems -- that should be most prone to perceiving themselves to have a great power advantage over most or all other states in the system. States' cognizance of the system's polarity, then, may have an abstract, ambient effect on cost-expectations by inflating the great powers' confidence in their capabilities in general, but it most certainly will inform specific bilateral comparisons, in three ways. First, when polarity is low -- when there are very few great powers -- by definition the gap between the haves and the have-nots will be larger than when there are many. Second, when polarity is low, any single great power will be in possession of more hard and soft power in absolute and in relative terms than it would be under a more diffuse distribution. And, third, states will be able more easily to recognize these facts; a large literature identifies uncertainty about power as the feature that distinguishes multipolarity from lower-

polarity structures (Waltz 1964; Deutsch and Singer, 1964; Bueno de Mesquita 1975; Midlarsky and Hopf 1993; Mansfield 1993). Although these works focus their attentions primarily on the extent to which variation in polarity can explain the incidence or absence of great power war, the unifying premise nonetheless is that uncertainty about power is greater under multipolarity than under bipolarity and unipolarity. As explained by Kenneth Waltz (2000, pp. 5-6):

*Significant changes take place when the number of great powers reduces to two or one...Competition in multipolar systems is more complicated than competition in bipolar ones because uncertainties about the comparative capabilities of states multiply as numbers grow, and because estimates of the cohesiveness and strength of coalitions are hard to make.*

Bipolar and unipolar systems, in other words, are characterized by low levels of uncertainty about power differentials -- which, again, include, assessment of the capabilities of allies or otherwise sympathetic third parties and the likelihood of their direct or indirect involvement -- as compared to multipolar systems. Within the context of asymmetric war, this means that the great powers' assessments of their capabilities advantage should be higher in general -- and so also in particular cases -- when the majority of the power in the system is in the hands of few than when it is in the hands of many. Because the theory argues that the greater the power advantage the lower the reference point the implication, rather counterintuitively, is that states should lose asymmetric conflict more often when they are more dominant; stated another way loss should be both more frequent, and more likely for states that are great powers operating under low polarity structures -- bipolarity and unipolarity -- than under multipolarity. This logic produces the structural hypothesis, Hypothesis 3:

***H<sub>3</sub>***: The likelihood of asymmetric conflict loss should be higher for states that are great powers operating in a unipolar or bipolar system than for states that are great powers operating in a multipolar system.

The theory elaborated above thus takes on two important conventional wisdoms. The first is the rationalist bargaining theory of war; the second is the prospect theory's proposition about decision-maker willingness to gamble for resurrection. There also outwardly seems to be no reason why its logic would not apply to the weak as well as to the strong, leaving open the question of whether it can explain instances of state loss in general, rather than be applied specifically to the sub-set of unexpected asymmetric conflict outcomes. Each of these conceptual issues is addressed below.

### **The Reference Point Proposition vs. Bargaining Theory**

Hypothesis 2 suggests that the expectations with which states enter a conflict are fixed, that they create a “sticky” reference point that does not shift through the course of the conflict as updated information is acquired about an adversary’s ability to impose costs. This position is a decided departure from a growing and increasingly formal body of work that presents the initiation, conduct, and termination of war as components of a bargaining process (Fearon 1995; Wagner 2000; Filson and Werner 2002; Smith and Stam 2004). Of interest here are the bargaining propositions that wars begin because states lack sufficient information to predict accurately the outcome of war, and that wars end when this uncertainty is resolved; that is, when each party has acquired adequate knowledge of the other to agree upon the conflict’s likely outcome. Once this point is reached, both sides have incentive to avoid the costs of continued fighting by making that arrangement at the negotiating table today rather than arriving at it on the battlefield tomorrow.

Yet even among those working within the bargaining paradigm there is debate about the extent to which conflict termination can be attributed to gains in information. In a qualified defense of bargaining theory's ability to explain the War in Iraq -- "Two Cheers for Bargaining Theory" -- David A. Lake (2011) notes that "there are still puzzles about the Iraq War that challenge bargaining theory....Human folly is all too evident in this case. A deeper investigation into systematic biases in human decision-making may shed additional light on this and other wars [emphasis added]" (p. 178). And as Leventoglu and Slantchev (2007) point out, "...the information revelation mechanism cannot deal very well with long wars: to think that it takes many years of near constant interaction for opponents to learn enough about each other is surely stretching the theory" (p. 756). Although Leventoglu and Slantchev argue for a more prominent role for the credible commitment problem, the theory presented here is no less plausible an alternative explanation for conflict duration and the timing of retrenchment.

Robert Jervis (1973) offers another reason to doubt the learning mechanism offered by bargaining theory, one that emerges from cognitive theory. Jervis takes up the question of why and how states might change their beliefs, and in particular why this often does not happen even in the face of evidence that, to outside observers or in hindsight, seems clearly to indicate that those beliefs either are in error or no longer are accurate:

*Actors can more easily assimilate into their established image of another actor information contradicting that image if the information is transmitted and considered bit by bit than if it comes all at once. In the former case, each piece of discrepant data can be coped with as it arrives and each of the conflicts with the prevailing view will be small enough to go unnoticed, to be dismissed as unimportant, or to necessitate at most a slight modification of the image higher (p. 125).*

This description should be troubling for advocates of bargaining theory, suggesting that in fact the acquisition of information piecemeal and over time -- that is, what they consider the learning process -- should militate against updating. This dissonance is only more pronounced when considered in conjunction with a copious literature that documents the tendency of leaders to seek out, interpret, and remember information that is consistent with their pre-existing schema, and to discount information that challenges it -- the so-called schema-based errors of "selectivity" and "confirmation bias" (Darley Gross 1983; Snyder & Swann 1978; Gale and Linden 2002). As suggested by Jervis, this proclivity can manifest itself in a number of ways -- actors might deny, avoid, or ignore pieces of information that challenge what they already believe about a given circumstance, and most especially information that causes anxiety or fear (Janis 1967). Alternatively, actors might choose to interpret data in ways that defuse its negatives and/or emphasize its positives, "[altering] its implications through a process of wishful thinking" (Stein 1988, p. 258). These and other cognitive biases have been explored in the international relations literature as possible explanations for failures in strategic warning (Chan 1979); failures in intelligence analysis (Betts 1978); perception of threat (Allison 1971; Betts 1977); and as possible causes of conflict (Jervis 1976, 1985, Stein 1988). These same biases might reasonably lead to states establishing and becoming committed to an ex-ante expectation.

### **The Reference Point Proposition vs. Gambling for Resurrection**

The sticky reference point proposition also confronts one of the most intriguing findings of prospect theory: that decision-makers are not necessarily inclined to cut their losses, but rather will persist in a given behavior in hopes of returning at least to their status quo asset endowment -- even when doing so risks even greater loss. This orientation has been characterized as "risk-

acceptance in the domain of losses”, and in addition to experimental findings (Tversky and Kahneman 1991) many colorful illustrative examples of this phenomenon can be found. Robert Jervis (1994) for example offers the observation that people tend to gamble heavily on the last horserace of the day: “People who have lost money throughout the afternoon place heavy bets on the final race; they are willing to risk more money in order to gain a chance of recouping their earlier losses” (p. 25).

Both the experimental work and Jervis’ more relatable real-world example, however, deal exclusively with monetary gains and losses, and usually in the context of gambling either for recreation or for insurance – realms in which costs are concrete and so lend themselves easily to accounting, and in which the potential for recovery is known to exist. The dynamics that operate under these circumstances might reasonably transfer into some areas of international politics in the sense that states purchase things – e.g. bombers, missiles, and submarines – that can be measured against the number of these same things that other states possess. Arms races, where the costs of seeking to close an asset gap far outweigh any potential gain, might therefore be instances in which states behave in line with Jervis’ description of throwing good money after bad. It is less clear, however, that these findings are equally transferrable to decision-making during war.

Though states do spend considerable sums of money in the conduct of conflict scholars have long debated the extent to which conquest pays, leaving unclear whether the costs of fighting really can be recouped through victory; indeed, there is some reason to believe that the aftermath of victory often can impose additional costs of its own (Lieberman 1993; Brooks 1999, 2005).<sup>18</sup> At the same time, it is even less intuitive that state leaders would treat costs in terms of

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<sup>18</sup> Adam Smith was an early skeptic of the notion that colonization paid, while in the modern era, most arguments asserting the value of conquest have focused on centers of productivity – areas in which

lives in the same way -- where one dollar can be recovered by its replacement with another and nothing is lost, the acquisition of regime change does not replace lost life in a similar way. The life is still gone, and will remain so regardless of “how much” regime change one achieves. Similarly for the less tangible costs of conflict: the reputational losses of seeming ineptitude or incompetence usually persist regardless of the final outcome, and loss of moral standing often is a product not of the outcome of war but rather of the rationale for its initiation and the mode of its conduct.

Most importantly, however, the domain of losses proposition does not offer explanation for when a decision-maker would cease her risk-acceptant behavior short of the point at which she has so few resources left that she is unable to continue to gamble. As noted previously, however, history offers numerous examples in which a state maintained the material ability to continue to prosecute a conflict, but chose not to. Thus though Jervis’s assertion that prospect theory suggests that people will “persevere in losing ventures much longer than standard rationality would lead one to expect” is apt (1994, p.26), within the context of conflict this behavior might be explained not by the urge to gamble for resurrection, but rather by the location of the reference point.

### **What about the Weak?**

Within the context of a conflict of interests between the very strong and the very weak, the willingness of the strong to rely upon the specter of force and, where this fails, actually to use it, is not wholly counterintuitive; even where they assess their potential opponent as being highly

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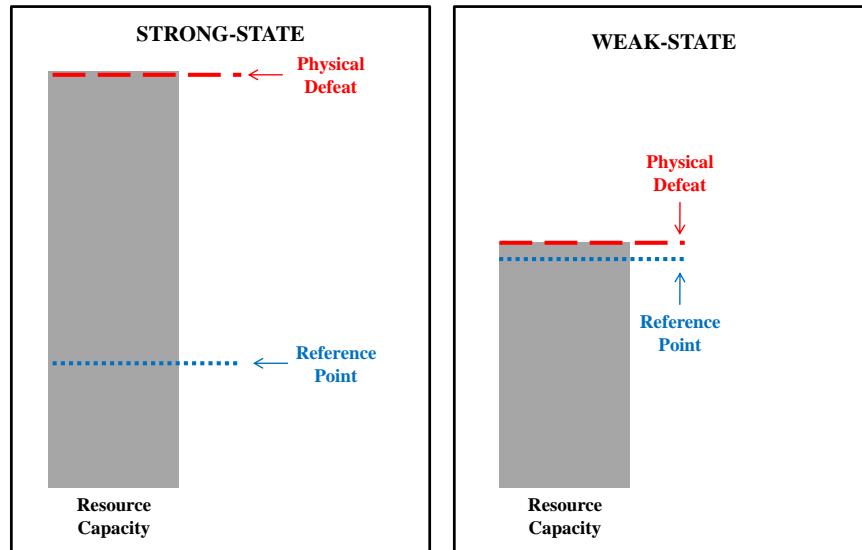
the potential for industrial power was appreciated and/or had already been realized. See discussion in Liberman, pp. 129 – 133.

resolved, the strong might conclude reasonably that the power differential is such that the adversary simply can be overpowered regardless of their level of commitment. The same cannot be said for the willingness of the weak to assume and maintain a contrary position when doing so may very well lead to a war in which they are overmatched. Scholars addressing this puzzle have presented a number of explanations for why weak states might nonetheless stand firm: though the strong do not, the weak might still believe that the imbalance of interests compensates for the imbalance of capabilities (Mack 1975); they might believe that the strong state is bluffing (Fearon 1995; Schultz 2001); the leaders of weak states may feel they personally have more to lose by conceding than they do by fighting (Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1986; Goemans 2000b); or the weak may be unable to provide sufficient information to the strong during the bargaining process for an efficient outcome to prevail (Sescher 2010).

The theory makes no effort to arbitrate among these arguments, focusing as it does not on how and why conflicts begin but rather on how and why they end. In this regard the theory's propositions hold for the weak just as they do for the strong. For the weak, however, the state's material disadvantage not only renders the probability of victory low, but also the costs to which they will most certainly be subjected in a fight exceedingly high. Because, however, the power differential is so stark, the costs they anticipate having to pay in order to win -- which, in these cases often means in order to survive -- and those they are able to pay become equivalent, or at least very nearly so. As a result, the violation of the weak-state's reference point is much less likely to occur prior to physical defeat than is the case for strong-states (Figure 1):



**Figure 1:**  
**Relation of Physical Defeat to the Reference Point**



Thus although the theory should apply to the weak as well as to the strong, the above dynamic means its implications will be difficult to observe; the same is true for conflicts between evenly matched belligerents, in which cases material defeat and the reference point should be in close proximity for both parties. In other words, it is in asymmetric conflicts that the theory posits a large gap between the reference point and the point of material defeat, and so it is in these instances that its propositions should be both most likely to obtain, and most observable.

## **Summary**

The theory elaborated above argues that a strong state will enter an asymmetric conflict confident that it will win -- that is, sure of its ability to defeat a materially weaker adversary -- and having used the power differential to establish an expectation of the level of casualties it will

be required to sustain in order to do so. This expectation will be higher when facing a more capable opponent, and lower when facing a less capable opponent. This proposition is captured in Hypothesis 1:

***H<sub>1</sub>***: *Ceteris paribus*, decision-makers' cost-expectations will decrease as their state's power advantage relative to an opponent increases.

Hypothesis 2 establishes this expectation as the state's reference point, positing that the political choice to pull back from an ongoing conflict will occur when these ex-ante expectations are violated:

***H<sub>2</sub>***: *Ceteris paribus*, decision-makers will choose to reduce the state's level of commitment to an ongoing conflict when realized costs exceed expected costs.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 address explicitly perceptions and behaviors, and so are tested together through the use of a survey-based experiment, the design and findings of which are the subject of Chapter IV.

The remaining hypothesis operates at the systemic level, and so is tested through large-n analysis in Chapter V:

***H<sub>3</sub>***: The likelihood of asymmetric conflict loss should be higher for states that are great powers operating in a unipolar or bipolar system than for states that are great powers operating in a multipolar system.

## CHAPTER IV: TESTING THE BILATERAL HYPOTHESES

### Experimental Test of the Effects of Power and Cost-Expectations on the Decision to Retrench

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The preceding chapter developed two hypotheses that operate at the bilateral level -- that is, they make claims about how states behave in individual instances of asymmetric conflict:

*H<sub>1</sub>*: *Ceteris paribus*, decision-makers' cost-expectations will decrease as their state's power advantage relative to an opponent increases.

*H<sub>2</sub>*: *Ceteris paribus*, decision-makers will choose to reduce the state's level of commitment to an ongoing conflict when realized costs exceed expected costs.

Notably, these hypotheses make no claims about the individuals making these evaluations, or the institutional or political contexts within or conditions under which they make them. This agnosticism is a decided departure from much of the work done in the subfield of foreign policy decision-making, which emphasizes the characteristics, attitudes, and values of individuals (George and George 1964; Steinbruner 1974; Larson 1994; Walker 1995; Dyson and Preston 2006, Barber 2008); the role of institutional structures (Allison 1969; Power 2001; Yetiv 2003); and the circumstances under which decisions are made (Farnham 2004, Mintz 2004). These explanations are generally considered to be non-rational -- that is, they do not begin with the assumptions that define the so-called rational choice, or expected utility, paradigm: that

actors are unitary; that they have a complete and transitive preference ordering; and that this ordering is defined by the mathematical product of the probability with which each outcome will occur and the summation of its associated costs and benefits.<sup>19</sup>

Strictly speaking, my theory too must be considered a counter to conventional understandings of rational choice, to the extent that it does not give causal weight to expected utility. It does not, however, dispense with all of the above assumptions; rather, it accepts the presumption of the unitary actor, and the notion that actors have, and behave in ways consistent with, a complete and transitive preference ordering. Given these positions, it seems reasonable to characterize the theory as one that conceives of decision-making about war as a rational process, albeit one that does not fit comfortably within the confines of the expected utility paradigm.

As do all theories that emerge from the expected utility and prospect paradigms, the theory offers a model of individual choice, and as such is equally vulnerable to the "levels of analysis" objection -- that is, to skepticism about the extent to which it can be applied at the group-level. In this instance, however, the choice under study has an identifiable decision-maker in the national executive, who alone decides whether to continue on in conflict or to retrench. Even where this decision is made in close consultation with advisers, moreover, existing research demonstrates that "Group leaders often define reference points that anchor the group's evaluation of policy options" (Berejikian 2002, p. 783), and of course the phenomenon of "group think" (Janis 1972) is now well-established in the literature. This chapter therefore offers no new justification for the transfer of individual behavior to the group level, but rather attends to the

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<sup>19</sup> Completeness refers to the ranking of actions in order from most to least preferred, inclusive of indifference; transitivity is the requirement that if *Action A* is preferred to *Action B*, and *Action B* is preferred to *Action C*, then *Action A* is preferred to *Action C*:  $A > B$ ;  $B > C$ ;  $A > C$ .

task of testing the individual model proposed by the theory. In what follows, I explain the choice of an experimental design; describe the experiment; and present and interpret its results.

### **Selecting an Appropriate Test**

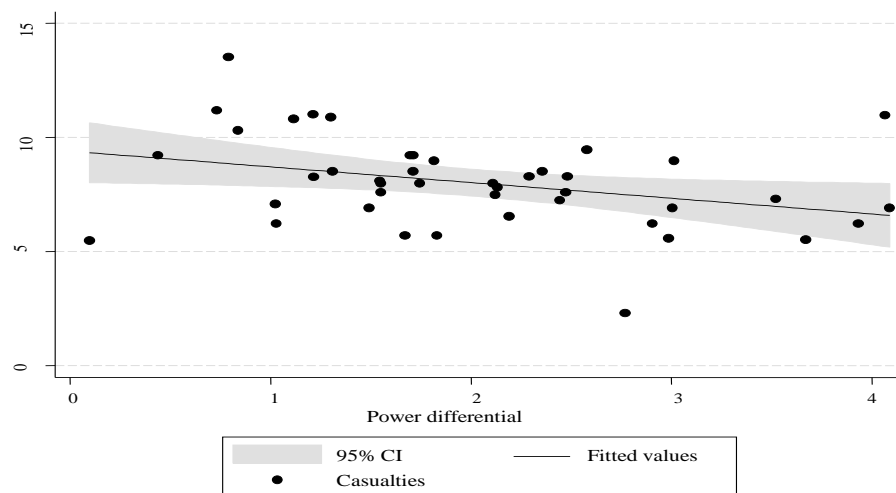
As described in the previous chapter, the theory's causal mechanism is the formation and subsequent violation of a reference point. This reference point, moreover, is ex-ante expectations of the likely costs of conflict, as measured through casualties, an estimate that is the product of a bilateral comparison of capabilities -- small power differentials are posited to produce high estimates, high power differentials low estimates. Because of the theory's emphases on the power differential and on casualties, one's first instinct very reasonably might be to test these propositions by using COW data to estimate a model with the intention of revealing the presence or absence of a relationship between the two. Such a test, however, would not be meaningful for two reasons. First, the outcome to be explained is the fact and the timing of the decision to retrench, not the timing or the fact of actual retrenchment; COW data capture the latter, but not the former. The second reason is that although they have different reasons for doing so, the causal mechanism of both my theory and of the body of theories emerging from the expected utility paradigm can be argued to predict the same result.

By way of illustration, the hypothesis above states that where strong states lose -- that is, fail to achieve their full set of stated conflict objectives -- the casualties incurred should vary inversely with the power differential. A quick test of this proposition using the measure of state capabilities and the number of state deaths provided by COW reveals this in fact to be the pattern that we see in cases of interstate asymmetric conflict: bivariate regression of the power

differential on casualties produces a negative and significant relationship ( $-0.687$ ,  $p < 0.028$ ).<sup>20</sup>

As the power differential increases, in other words, the number of casualties suffered prior to the intervention's termination decreases (Figure 2):

**Figure 2:**  
**Regressing power differential on casualties<sup>21</sup>**



<sup>20</sup> N= 44. The Military Intervention by Powerful States project (MIPS Version 2.0, Sullivan and Koch, 2008) provides data on military interventions that enable simple testing for the presence of this relationship. The data capture interventions by the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China, and Russia from 1946-2003 in which more than 500 troops were engaged, and includes the forces committed to each intervention, the number of casualties suffered by the major powers during the course of each intervention, and an outcome measure based upon the intervener's success in achieving its objectives. Eliminating cases for which no determinate outcome is coded, cases for which no ground troops were committed, and cases for which data on major power casualties are missing produces a total of 55 incidents of strong-state failure. Failure is defined as any resolution short of the major power achieving its primary political objective: codings of 1, 2, or 4: "Withdrew: Intervening state withdrew its military forces unilaterally without attaining its primary political objective"; "Completed: Intervening state completed a mission with a pre-determined end date without attaining an immediate, observable political objective"; "Negotiated: Intervening state negotiated a settlement that did not result in full attainment of the state's primary political objective". I add to this a measure of the power differential, calculated as the ratio between the belligerents' national capabilities indicator (CINC score), provided by Correlates of War interstate dataset (Ghosn, Faten, Palmer, and Bremer 2004).

<sup>21</sup> I use the natural log of the *Casualties* and *Power differential* data. This transformation corrects for heteroskedasticity ( $\chi^2 = 9.00$ ,  $p < 0.0027$ ) and is consistent with the convention of using the logarithmic measure of casualties first introduced by John Mueller (1973).

This is the same pattern, however, that one could argue is predicted by the expected utility proposition: the interests at stake when fighting a weak opponent are likely to be less in value than those at stake when fighting a stronger opponent; fewer costs must therefore accrue before the cost-benefit ratio tips in the wrong direction; and so the state will accept fewer casualties prior to retrenching when fighting a relatively weak opponent than when fighting a relatively strong one.

It is only a test that accesses the decision-making process itself, then, that can offer an appropriate, and an appropriately hard, test of the theory's casual mechanism, and/or provide a means of arbitrating between the theory's individual model of choice and that offered by alternative theories. To achieve this, I fielded a survey-based experiment that is designed to access variables posited by theory, as well as those posited by theories emerging from the expected utility paradigm; excluding these would be to introduce into the analysis omitted variable bias. The specifics of this design and discussion of its results are the subject of this chapter. Before attending to these matters, however, first a note on the limitations and advantages of the experimental method in general, and of the dissertation's use of it in particular.

### **Experimentation in International Relations Research**

The use of experimentation in the study of international politics is relatively uncommon, largely because it is unsuited to the study of many of the topics that are of interest to IR researchers: the causes and consequences of war, of the creation and destruction of international institutions, of global financial crises, and so forth. These subjects are of grand scale and scope, and are subject to the "tape of history" (Tetlock 1998) -- that is, researchers cannot generate them, control them, replicate them, or otherwise manipulate their occurrence. Experimental

designs are by comparison more compatible with examination of events that are of a more contained scale, and that can be at least approximated in the "laboratory"; for example, individual crisis situations and, as in the case of this dissertation, specific foreign policy decisions and decision-making processes.

Even these applications, however, have important limitations, most especially their inability effectively to capture the detail and complexity of the events under study, and its "atmospherics" -- the stresses, tensions, and pressures of real life. This unavoidable limitation means that experimenters must rely upon their subjects to be able and willing to suspend some measure of disbelief; that is, to accept the situations they are given, as they are given, and to react to them in isolation of other considerations as much as is possible. The artificial nature of experimental constructs, and the necessity of the suspension of disbelief, together mean that no matter how well-designed the experiment, or how ingenuous its subjects, there always will be grounds for questioning external validity: the extent to which the study's results are generalizable across populations, settings, conditions, or variables.

Experimental designs also are vulnerable to measurement error -- that is, to the extent to which the researcher may be confident that the effects observed in the laboratory were in fact caused by the variables of the experimental manipulation and not by something else. This is not a characteristic unique to experimental designs, of course; as for all quantitative analyses, the most difficult of these threats to mitigate is that of unreliable measures: the possibility that the data collected are capturing not what the researcher intended to capture, or thinks he is capturing, but rather something else, and in a nonrandom manner that produces bias.

These challenges are not without counterweight, however, and experimental research offers some decided advantages as well. Most importantly, the ability to control the recruitment



of subjects, to standardize measures, and to construct and randomize conditions enables researchers to access their posited causal mechanisms in ways not enabled by other methods: large N analysis can provide highly suggestive correlations; case studies can produce compelling qualitative evidence; but only experimentation offers a means of testing directly subjects' reasons for political behavior (McDermott 2002). It is for this ability of experimentation to access a theory's microfoundations that it was selected for use here.

As a result, the study both benefits from the strengths of the experimental method and suffers from its weaknesses. The experiment entailed exposing subjects to one of four conditions -- conflict scenarios -- and an associated survey designed specifically to test the theory's hypotheses about elite decision-making against the alternative hypotheses of the expected utility paradigm. It was fielded to a representative population, and subject exposure to experimental conditions was randomized properly. .

## **The Experiment**

The dissertation's survey-based experiment was fielded online between April 10, 2012 and May 17, 2012, using Qualtrics software.<sup>22</sup> Because the theory is concerned with decisions about war and peace -- decisions made at the highest levels of government -- the pool of potential subjects was limited to elites, defined as individuals in possession of at least a four-year college degree. The method of subject recruitment was chain-referral sampling, with the survey sent to employees of the RAND Corporation; to students and alumni of the Columbia University

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<sup>22</sup> Internet-based experimentation has a number of advantages, including facilitating access to "specific participant populations" (Schmidt, 1997. For a nice overview of the use of web-based experimentation in the social sciences see: Reips, Ulf-Dietrich, "Standards for Internet-Based Experimenting", *Experimental Psychology*, Vol. 49, pp. 243-256, 2002. Additional information about the web host used for this study can be found at: [www.qualtrics.com](http://www.qualtrics.com)

School of International Affairs (SIPA); and to a small number of graduate students in the Department of Political Science at CU Boulder with prior experience working in, and therefore connections to individuals currently working in, the national security/defense apparatus. These potential subjects were also asked to forward the survey to similarly qualified colleagues, friends, and acquaintances.<sup>23</sup> This method produced a total of 405 responses. 84 of these subjects had completed a 4-year college degree; 230 had completed or were working toward a Master's degree; 59 had completed or were working toward a PhD; and 32 had completed or were working toward a professional degree (i.e., MD, JD).<sup>24</sup> 239 (60%) were male, 166 female. At the time of their participation 24% either were employed by the Federal government, or had been previously, and 11% were at the time or had been previously members of the U.S. military. Appendix A presents a complete description of the sample.

Subjects were exposed randomly to one of four conflict scenarios; all four scenarios in full and the survey instrument are provided in Appendix B. Each scenario asked the respondent to imagine she was the President of the United States, and provided information about the nature of a potential military intervention, including the issue at stake, the relative military strength of the adversary, and non-specific indicators about the expected duration and cost in U.S. lives of

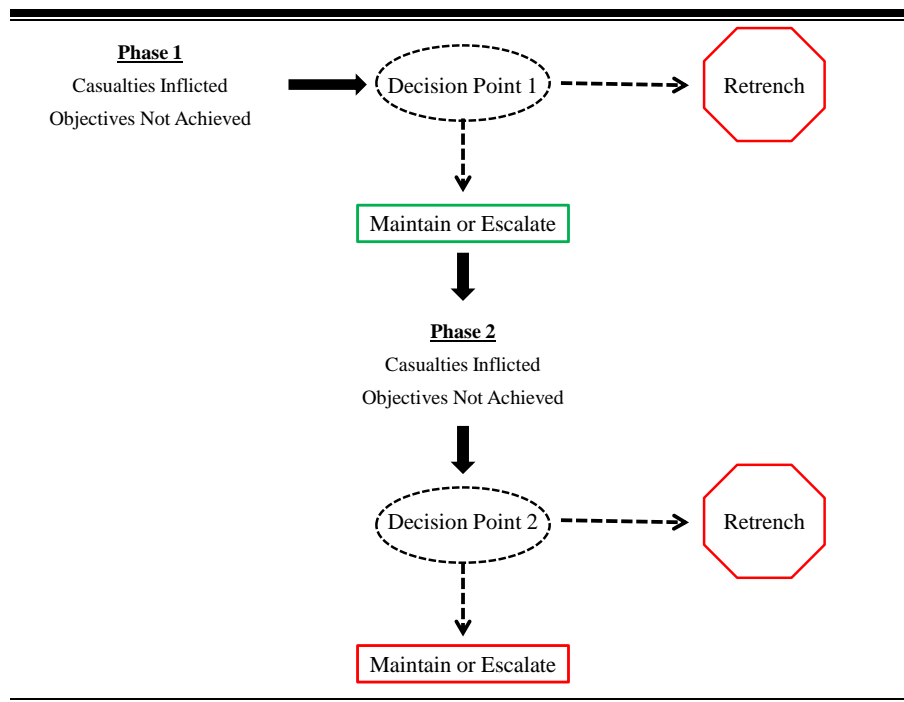
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<sup>23</sup> Chain Referral Sampling is a non-probability sampling technique, wherein the researcher identifies and recruits one or more members of the desired population, and subsequently asks those subjects to recruit friends, colleagues, and acquaintances as additional subjects. This technique is most often used to access at-risk and other difficult to access populations. See; Biernacki, Patrick and Dan Waldorf, "Snowball Sampling: Problems and Techniques of Chain Referral Sampling", *Sociological Method & Research*, Vol. 10, 1981, pp. 141-163.

<sup>24</sup> An "other" option, allowing subjects to provide a response in their own words, was offered in a number of the survey's queries; where the "other" response could be categorized reasonably as one of the four provided responses it was coded accordingly -- e.g., where "U.S. credibility" was offered a reason for not withdrawing, it was coded as "the benefits exceed the costs". Only 4 such recodings are included in the final data, however, as most of the "other" responses revealed one of the biases described above.

achieving the identified objective. Respondents were not given the opportunity to select out of conflict, but rather received the prompt: "You have decided to proceed with the military operation as described by the Secretary [of Defense]." Respondents were then presented with a short series of questions to establish their expectations about the course and costs of conflict before receiving an update that indicated the United States had not yet succeeded in achieving its objective, and that provided information about the intervention's duration and the loss of U.S. lives to date. Subjects were at that time given the option to retrench or to continue, and were asked their reasons for doing one or the other; those who did not retrench received a second update -- indicating again the duration of the conflict and an increase in realized costs -- and a second round of questions about their reasons for staying in or getting out (Figure 3).

**Figure 3:  
The Experiment**



## Results and Interpretation: Hypothesis 1

The four scenarios varied along two dimensions: the stakes (Nuclear vs. Humanitarian); and the strength of the opponent (Strong vs. Weak) (Table 1). Variation in the strength of the opponent enables the testing of Hypothesis 1, the proposition that subjects' cost-expectations should be greater when facing a strong opponent than when facing a weak. As predicted, the mean value of subjects' cost-expectations when responding to a weak opponent were lower than they were for subjects responding to a strong one ( $z = 7.38, p < 0.000$ )<sup>25</sup>.

**Table 1:**  
**Experimental Conditions in Brief**

		STAKES	
		NUCLEAR (N = 183)	HUMANITARIAN (N= 175)
POWER DIFFERENTIAL	STRONG OPPONENT (N = 178)	<b>Objective:</b> Destroy foreign country's nuclear program (N=87)	<b>Objective:</b> Defend civilian ethnic uprising against attacks by government forces (N=91)
	WEAK OPPONENT (N = 180)	<b>Objective:</b> Destroy foreign country's nuclear program (N = 96)	<b>Objective:</b> Defend civilian ethnic uprising against attacks by government forces (N=84)

<sup>25</sup>Because the DV is not normally distributed, I used the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test for mean comparison. The results indicate not only that the difference between means in the Strong and Weak groups is statistically significant, but also that mean costs anticipated in the Weak Scenarios are smaller than those ascribed to the stakes in the Strong Scenarios. This finding is confirmed through bivariate regression analysis of the dichotomous variable *Strong* -- which differentiates scenarios where the opponent is strong from those where it is weak -- on cost-expectations. The relationship is positive and significant at the 0.01 level: 0.23 (0.27).

## Results and Interpretation: Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2, by comparison, receives much more equivocal support. Here, the proposition is that there should be an inverse relationship between respondents' likelihood of retrenching and their ex-ante cost-expectations -- the greater these expectations, the less likely retrenchment should be. The experimental data enable testing of this hypothesis in three ways.

The first is to test for significant differences across treatment groups. Recall that Hypothesis 1 posits that subjects should establish higher cost-expectations when facing a strong opponent than a weak one, and that the data reveal this to be the case. Because cost-expectations in the strong scenarios are higher than in the weak, if Hypothesis 2 is correct then so too should there be a difference in the average incidence of retrenchment, at all decision points, across groups. That is, if Hypothesis 2 is correct, then subjects in the strong scenarios should on average retrench later and less than those facing a weak opponent. Analysis reveals this not to be the case; there is no evidence of a significant difference between subjects responding to a strong rather than to a weak opponent (Table 2)<sup>26</sup>.

**Table 2:**  
**Mean Likelihood of Retrenchment Across Strong/Weak Treatment Groups**

	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
Retrench at first option	1.099	<0.272
Retrench at second option	0.195	<0.845
Retrench at all	0.796	<0.426

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<sup>26</sup> These are the results of comparison across all conditions -- that is, comparing responses to the Strong Humanitarian and Strong Nuclear vs. the Weak Humanitarian and Weak Nuclear. Intra- and cross-stakes tests (e.g., Strong Nuclear vs. Weak Nuclear; Strong Nuclear vs. Weak Humanitarian) also produce insignificant results.

The second means of testing Hypothesis 2 is through regression analysis, with the incidence of retrenchment as the dependent variable. Because this is a dichotomous measure -- a respondent either chose to scale back the state's commitment or she didn't -- I estimate logit models to test for the posited relationship. Included are ordinal measures of respondents' ex-ante cost (Cost) and time (Time) expectations, and the value subjects assigned to the benefits of achieving the stated conflict objectives (Benefits) (Table 3).

**Table 3:**  
**Logit Regression Results**

<b>Likelihood of Retrenchment</b>						
	<b>Model 1<sup>27</sup></b>		<b>Model 2</b>		<b>Model 3</b>	
<i>Benefits</i>	---	---	-6.76	(0.89)***	-6.77	(0.93)***
<i>Ex-ante cost</i>	---	---	-0.74	(0.58)	-0.86	(0.60)
<i>Ex-ante time</i>	---	---	1.34	(0.59)**	1.39	(0.60)**
<i>Strong human.</i>	-0.79	(0.36)**	---	---	-0.21	(0.42)
<i>Strong nuclear</i>	-1.00	(0.35)***	---	---	0.17	(0.45)
<i>Weak nuclear</i>	-1.23	(0.34)***	---	---	-0.23	(0.41)
<b>_cons</b>	1.76	(0.28)	4.20	(0.69)	4.31	(0.71)
N = 405						
** p ≤ 0.05, *** p ≤ 0.01						
Robust standard errors reported						

Three findings emerge. First, and most importantly for Hypothesis 2, it is clear that there is no significant relationship between ex-ante cost-expectations and the likelihood of retrenchment.<sup>28</sup> Second, there is a significant and positive relationship between respondents' ex-ante expectations of conflict duration and the likelihood of the choice to retrench -- the

<sup>27</sup> The four treatment conditions differ significantly from one another. Model 1 provides this result for the Weak Humanitarian scenario; Wald tests indicate the same for each combination of the other three.

<sup>28</sup> These models were run for each point at which subjects had the option to retrench; in all cases, the relationship was insignificant. Run with robust standard errors.

longer the conflict is anticipated to take, in other words, the more likely subjects are to choose to pull back. This result is somewhat confounding; a literal interpretation is that subjects' value, and form expectations about, time per se, but it is equally possible -- and, arguably, more likely -- that time matters not in and of itself, but rather because duration is associated with cost: as the term of conflict lengthens, the costs incurred are presumed to increase. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter III, this is the premise that does much of the theoretical heavy lifting in other explanations of asymmetric conflict outcome. Given the data collected here, however, the most that can be said is that ex-ante expectations of conflict duration do seem to affect subjects' likelihood of retrenching, but the reasons for this are indiscernible.

Finally, there is a significant and negative relationship between subjects' perceptions of the value of the benefits at stake and the likelihood of retrenchment; in other words, consistent with the expected utility proposition, the higher the value ascribed to the benefits of achieving the stated conflict objective, the lower the probability of retrenchment.

This latter finding also is evident in a test for significant differences across treatment groups; in this case, the relevant treatment is variation in the stakes of conflict. Two of the experimental scenarios can be classified as falling under the rubric of national security, identifying as the objective destroying a foreign country's nuclear program (Nuclear Scenarios). The other two scenarios involved an issue that is generally understood to fall outside the scope of traditional national security interests; here, the objective was identified as defending a civilian ethnic uprising against attacks by government forces (Humanitarian Scenarios). The intention in applying this dichotomy was to provide a basis for perceived difference between the benefits of succeeding; this treatment was effective, with the mean

value of subjects' identification of the benefits of achieving conflict objectives being significantly greater in the Nuclear than in the Humanitarian Scenarios ( $z = -4.36$ ,  $p < 0.0000$ ).<sup>29</sup>

If the expected utility proposition that the decision to retrench is determined by the ratio between realized costs and anticipated benefits, then we should expect that subjects receiving the Nuclear Scenarios will on average tolerate higher levels of cost before retrenching, if they retrench at all, than their counterparts receiving a Humanitarian Scenario. Indeed, this is what we see occurring: there is a statistically significant difference between the mean likelihood of retrenching across treatment groups at each decision point, and overall (Table 4). In both cases, the mean for retrenchment is higher for the Humanitarian Scenarios, indicating that respondents receiving these scenarios were more likely to retrench than were respondents receiving the Nuclear Scenarios.

**Table 4:**  
**Mean Likelihood of Retrenching**  
**Nuclear Scenarios vs. Humanitarian Scenarios**

	z	p
Retrench at first option	2.420	< 0.016
Retrench at second option	2.041	< 0.04
Retrench at all	3.055	< 0.002

These results, however, cannot be taken entirely at face value, largely on the strength of the third test of Hypothesis 2. Recall that the survey asked respondents not only to attach a number of U.S. lives to the benefits at stake and to make choices about retrenchment, but asked

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<sup>29</sup> That the treatment conditions affected respondents' estimations of likely costs and the value of the benefits ascribed to the conflict objective renders it unsurprising that the treatment indicators were not significant in Model 3.



them also to explain why they made the choices that they did. Review of these data reveals that the findings of the regression analysis and the comparison of treatment groups discussed above are surprisingly inconsistent with subjects' own explanations of the choice to retrench: of a total 292 such decisions only 25% (72) had as the identified reason "The conflict has cost more U.S. lives than achieving the objective of [condition] is worth". By contrast 60% (176) identified "The conflict has cost more U.S. lives than expected" as their reason for retrenchment.<sup>30</sup>

The disconnect between these sets of results cannot be explained as the product of a positive correlation between ex-ante cost-expectations and the value of the benefits at stake -- that is, it is not the case that those survey respondents who expected the conflict to be costly, and so had a greater tolerance for loss, also believed that the value of the benefits to be won was high, while those who established low cost-expectations also attached a low value to the benefits of succeeding. The absence of a significant relationship between Ex-ante costs and Retrench in the regression models above indicate as much, while an additional test of Ex-ante costs and Benefits offers confirmation of the presence of no significant correlation (Pearson's  $R = -0.0816$ ).

Thus the discontinuity between the regression output and subjects' self-reported reasons for retrenchment render the experimental results equivocal at best. While the evidence produced cannot be interpreted as offering unqualified support for the theory, neither can they be interpreted as offering justification for its wholesale rejection. To present the study's results as affirmative of the expected utility paradigm weights more heavily the correlational evidence than respondents' own explanations of their choices. While not an insupportable position, given that much of the statistical analysis does comport with the

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<sup>30</sup> 8 (3%) selected "The conflict has lasted longer than expected", and 36 (12%) " You no longer think the United States can achieve the objective of expelling the foreign military".

expected utility proposition, respondents' self-identified reasons for retrenchment seem to offer an object lesson as to why correlation ought not be misconstrued as causation.<sup>31</sup>

By the same token, to interpret the experimental results as supportive of my theory on the strength of respondents' explanations of their choices would be to disregard a sizable portion of the empirical evidence collected. Doing so would be akin to asserting that the wind exists because people report having felt it, but without finding other evidence of its presence that we would expect -- rustling leaves, waving grass, and so forth.

It should also be noted that the experimental results might be the product of another explanation that can unify these seemingly disparate findings. It may be the case, for example, that decision-makers undertake an implicit cost-benefit calculation without recognizing it as such; that is, they may be sensitive to cost-expectations because these access an intuitive and non-specific sense of what an objective is worth -- or, perhaps even establish what that objective is worth. And, of course, it also is possible that these findings are an artifact of shortcomings in the experiment: that the scenarios contain misleading cues or omit important pieces of information; that the survey questions are poorly worded or ordered; or that there are other problems with the way in which the experiment is designed or presented that produce bias.

## **Summary**

The results of the experiment are both discouraging and encouraging for the theory.

Regression analysis of the experimental data does not reveal the expected relationship

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<sup>31</sup> This is true even among those who indicated their reason for retrenchment was the violation of expectations: 67 such subjects had received a Humanitarian Scenario, while only 49 had received a Nuclear Scenario. Similarly, among those who identified the cost-benefit ratio as the impetus for retrenchment, 27 were Humanitarian, 19 Nuclear.

between ex-ante cost-expectations and the likelihood of retrenchment at the same time that it does produces correlational evidence consistent with the expected utility prediction of an inverse relationship between cost tolerance and the value of the benefits to be won.

Nonetheless, the data also reveal that, as argued by the theory, subjects' cost-expectations vary with their understanding of the power differential; moreover, among those subjects who chose to retrench a full 60% explained their behavior as being caused by the dynamics predicted: they retrenched because the realized costs of conflict exceeded their ex-ante expectations. These results are strongly suggestive of the operation of the posited causal mechanism, indicating that decision-makers are attentive to the power differential; that the ex-ante cost-expectations they form on the basis of this differential operate as a reference point; and that it is the violation of this reference point that triggers the political choice to retrench. Thus although the experimental results cannot reasonably be considered conclusive, they nonetheless offer support for the theory's most central claims, and suggest that the theory might go some distance in explaining individual instances of strong state loss. In the chapter that follows, I subject to scrutiny the theory's proposed explanation for the increasing frequency of such losses over time.

## CHAPTER V: TESTING THE STRUCTURAL HYPOTHESIS

### Large-N Analysis of the Relationship between Great Power Status, Polarity, and Asymmetric Conflict Loss

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Chapter IV was devoted to testing the theory's bilateral hypotheses; this chapter turns to addressing the theory's claims about the relationship between great power status, system polarity, and asymmetric conflict loss:

***H<sub>3</sub>*:** The likelihood of asymmetric conflict loss should be higher for states that are great powers operating in a unipolar or bipolar system than for states that are great powers operating in a multipolar system.

This is the structural hypothesis, and I argue that its logical derivation from my theory's central commitments means the theory not only can explain individual instances of strong-state loss, but also can explain the upward trend in a particular type of strong-state loss over time: great power loss. In what follows below I provide a brief review of my theoretical argument before proceeding to subject Hypothesis 3 to quantitative analysis.

#### The Systemic Distribution of Power and Great Power Loss

Recall from Chapter III that the dissertation posits that states are sensitive to the distribution of power, arguing that they undertake evaluations of potential opponents' capabilities

-- with the capabilities of allies and the likelihood of their direct involvement, as well as anticipated indirect support in the form of material flows from these allies or otherwise sympathetic third parties factored in -- and on this basis establish expectations of just how costly it will be to best them in a fight. This expectation of the likely cost of war, I argue, operates as a reference point, or that value against which all gains and losses are measured, and that it is the violation of this reference point that causes states to choose to retrench.

The evaluative process that is the theory's jumping off point, however, does not happen in a vacuum; to the contrary, it happens within the broader context of the global distribution of power. I contend, in other words, that states are aware not only of how well they match up against a particular opponent, but also of how well they match up against any opponent -- they are attuned to their standing in the global pecking order. Indeed, the long tradition of realist theorizing identifies this type of relative evaluation as the prime mover in international politics (e.g. Waltz 1979; Gilpin 1981; Layne 1993; Copeland 2000; Mearsheimer 2003). The majority of these theories are devoted to explaining why and how this attentiveness to the distribution of power at the systemic level affects the likelihood, incidence, and outcome of great power war; I argue that attentiveness to this distribution also has implications for the outcomes of asymmetric conflicts, most specifically for changes in the frequency of great power loss over time.

If it is the case that states are attuned both to their dyadic advantage and to their systemic advantage, then the logical corollary is that it will be those states living at the top of the food chain -- the great powers -- for which the dynamics proposed by the theory will be most likely to obtain. Two offsetting dynamics lead to this conclusion: the first is that the greater the state's power advantage, the lower its reference point is likely to be; the second is that, *ceteris paribus*, the lower the reference point, the more likely it is to be violated. The theory is clear that a state's

perception of its power advantage is shaped, first, by the bilateral comparison between its own capabilities and those of the prospective opponent. This is a relative measure, having to do not with how much power the state has in absolute terms, but rather with how it believes its assets stack up against those of another. States, however, enter into these bilateral evaluations with an understanding of where power resides in the system -- that is, with an understanding of whether it is concentrated or diffuse, and across which actors. In particular, they understand whether they are, or are not, themselves a "great power".

Importantly, my use of this term captures more than simply an accounting of material capabilities. Rather, I conceive of this title as a matter of status, consistent with Modelski's (1958) notion: "The status of Great Power is sometimes confused with the condition of being powerful. The office, as it is known, did in fact evolve from the role played by the great military states in earlier periods...But the Great Power system institutionalizes the position of the powerful state in the web of rights and obligations" (p141). Jack Levy (1982, p. 282) has offered further elaboration:

*A Great Power can be defined generally as a state which plays a major role in international politics with respect to security-related issues. Operational indicators of Great Power status include the following: possession of a high level of power capabilities, which provides for reasonable self-sufficiency in security matters and permits the conduct of offensive as well as defensive military operations; participation in international congresses and conferences; de facto identification as a Great Power by an international conference or organization; admission to a formal or informal organization of Powers; participation in Great Power guarantees, territorial compensation, or partitions; and, generally, treatment as a relative equal by other Great Powers (for example, protocol, alliances, negotiations, and so forth).*

Material capability, in other words, is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for identification of a state as a great power; rather, these definitions identify as fundamental

possession of what we now identify as the "soft" variants of power, and most especially the matter of recognition. It is during periods in which the state is widely recognized as holding this status, then, that its perceived power advantage -- the product of both material and non-material endowments -- over the majority of states in the system should be the most pronounced. This effect, moreover, should increase as the number of recognized great powers in the system decreases; the fewer the number of peer competitors, the greater the "role in international politics with respect to security-related issues" the state will play.

I use here the term "polarity" to capture the number of recognized great powers during a given period, rather than the more specific accountings of "concentration" -- which measures both the number of great powers and the balance(s) of power between and among them (Mansfield 1994) -- or "polarization", which accesses the extent to which states consolidate into blocs of tight alliances (Bueno de Mesquita 1978). These more nuanced concepts may be useful -- and indeed, some argue necessary -- for inquiry into the incidence of great power war, but they do not provide distinctions that are meaningful for the theory presented here. Rather, because the study is interested in explaining why the particularly strong sometimes lose their asymmetric conflicts, what is needed is simply the ability to distinguish great powers from minor powers, and to identify how many great powers exist in the global system at any point in time. It is, then, states that find themselves to be great powers in low-polarity systems -- that is, in bipolar or unipolar systems -- that the theory suggest should be most prone to perceiving themselves to have a significant advantage over most or all other states in the system.

States' cognizance of the system's polarity may have an abstract, ambient effect on cost-expectations by inflating the great powers' confidence in their capabilities in general, but it most certainly will inform specific bilateral comparisons in three ways. First, when polarity is low --

when there are very few great powers -- by definition the gap between the haves and the have-nots will be larger than when there are many. Second, when polarity is low, any single great power will be in possession of more hard and soft power in absolute and in relative terms than it would be under a more diffuse distribution. And, third, states will be able more easily to recognize these facts; a large literature identifies uncertainty about power as the feature that distinguishes multipolarity from lower-polarity structures (Waltz 1964; Deutsch and Singer, 1964; Bueno de Mesquita 1975; Midlarsky and Hopf 1993; Mansfield 1993). Although these works, too, focus their attentions primarily on the extent to which variation in polarity can explain the incidence or absence of great power war, the unifying premise nonetheless is that uncertainty about power is greater under multipolarity than under bipolarity and unipolarity. As explained by Kenneth Waltz (2000, pp. 5-6):

*Significant changes take place when the number of great powers reduces to two or one...Competition in multipolar systems is more complicated than competition in bipolar ones because uncertainties about the comparative capabilities of states multiply as numbers grow, and because estimates of the cohesiveness and strength of coalitions are hard to make.*

Bipolar and unipolar systems, in other words, are characterized by low levels of uncertainty about power differentials -- which, again, include assessment of the capabilities of allies or otherwise sympathetic third parties and the likelihood of their direct or indirect involvement -- as compared to multipolar systems. Within the context of asymmetric war, this means that the great powers' assessments of their capabilities advantage should be higher in general, and so also in particular cases, when the majority of the power in the system is in the hands of few than when it is in the hands of many. Because the theory argues that the greater the power advantage the lower the reference point, the implication, rather counterintuitively, is that



states should lose asymmetric conflicts more often when they are more dominant. Stated another way, loss should be both more frequent and more likely for states that are great powers operating in a low-polarity international environment -- these are the claims made by the theory's third hypothesis.

## The Data

To test Hypothesis 3 I take state conflict outcome as the unit of analysis; that is, the outcome of interest is how each state involved in an asymmetric conflict fares -- whether it wins or loses. Because the unit of analysis is state outcome -- and not conflict outcome -- interstate conflicts are always represented in the data by more than one observation, while intra- and extra-state conflicts are represented by more than one observation only where a third-party state was involved in/joined the conflict, on either side. Table 5 illustrates:

**Table 5:**  
**Illustration of Observations**

<u>State Outcome</u>	<u>State Participant</u>	<u>Conflict</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>War Type</u>	<u>Variable n</u>
Win	Prussia	Second Schleswig-Holstein	1864	Interstate	...
Win	Austria-Hungary	Second Schleswig-Holstein	1864	Interstate	...
Loss	Denmark	Second Schleswig-Holstein	1864	Interstate	...
Loss	Russia	First Chechen War	1994	Intrastate	...
Win	United Kingdom	Mahdi (Sudanese) Uprising	1896	Extrastate	...
Win	France	Mahdi (Sudanese) Uprising	1896	Extrastate	...

To acquire the necessary data I use four sources: Arreguin-Toft's analysis of asymmetric conflict outcomes, "How the Weak Win Wars" (2001); the Correlates of War Project intra-, extra-, and inter-state datasets (Ghosn, Faten, Palmer, and Bremer 2004); the Military

Intervention by Powerful States (MIPS) Project (Sullivan and Koch 2008), which "provides detailed data on American, British, Chinese, French, and Russian uses of military force against both state and non-state targets between 1946 and 2003"; and the Polity III Project, which codes "the authority characteristics of states in the world system", accessed through EUGene.<sup>32</sup>

Arreguin-Toft's work identifies a set of wars he classifies as asymmetric. Although there is no accepted standard in the literature for asymmetry, Arreguin-Toft's operationalization has two advantages: it relies upon objective measures, and it sets a high bar.<sup>33</sup> These characteristics render the included cases "most likely" for my theory -- that is, those cases in which its dynamics should be most pronounced. If confirmatory evidence is not produced through the testing of this set, therefore, there will be substantial justification for rejection of the structural hypothesis.

Arreguin-Toft's concrete definition also enables me to add conflicts from MIPS that meet both the identified criterion for asymmetry and the COW definition of war participation as the commitment of a minimum of 1,000 troops ( $n=30$ )<sup>34</sup>. This augmentation expands the sample to capture cases that do not meet the COW minimum of 1,000 battle casualties over 12 months, but that otherwise adhere to the standard of war. These are cases for which exclusion would sit uncomfortably with our intuitions about what constitutes a serious militarized engagement -- the United States incursion into Panama in 1989, for example, did not produce the requisite number of casualties despite involving the deployment of over 25,000 members of the U.S. armed

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<sup>32</sup> EuGene: <http://www.eugeneware.org/>

<sup>33</sup> Arreguin-Toft defines asymmetry as follows: "the threshold of asymmetry that matters is  $\geq 5:1$  in favor of strong actors, where power is the halved product of a strong actor's armed forces and population at the start of conflict versus the simple product of the weak actor's armed forces and population" (p. 96). He confines his set to wars, that is, to disputes producing an average of 1,000 battle fatalities per year.

<sup>34</sup> I opted to supplement Arreguin-Toft's identified set of wars with conflicts included in MIPS rather than in the COW Militarized Interstate Disputes (MID) dataset because the former includes information about the number of troops committed to a conflict while the latter does not.

forces. Adhering to the COW definition of conflict participation but not casualties thus allows me to exclude truly small-scale operations while capturing those for which the level of commitment is high enough that the sending state reasonably can be assumed to expect to suffer some number of casualties.

This process produces a total of 213 asymmetric conflicts comprised of 342 participant-state outcomes.<sup>35</sup> For each participant state I match data from COW on conflict outcome and on country-year capabilities, and from the Polity III project I add country-year coding for level of democracy. From these combined data I construct two different sets for analysis. The first set, the Full Set, contains all 342 observations. The second set, the Great Power set (n=177), constrains observations to include only those states identified consistently in the literature as forming a structural pole during at least one period between the years 1816 and 2011: the Austro-Hungarian Empire; France; Germany; Italy; Japan; the United Kingdom; USSR/Russia; and the United States (Levy 1982; Monteiro 2011).<sup>36</sup> The list of observations in each set can be found in Appendix C.

### **Testing Hypothesis 3**

The first test of the hypothesis is a simple comparison of the frequency of great power losses across the two relevant time periods: the period of multipolarity (1816-1945) and the

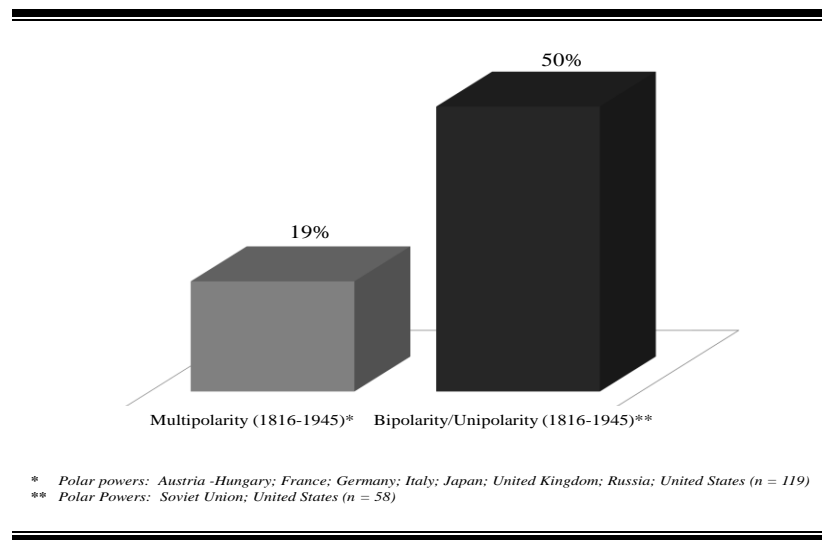
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<sup>35</sup> 94 of the conflicts identified are classified by COW as extra-state, and 40 as intra-state, the remaining 79 are interstate.

<sup>36</sup> China is not included here as a Great Power; although some studies afford it this status there is no consistency in identification of the relevant time period(s). Levy (1982), for example, classifies China as a great power from 1949-1975; Huth, Gelpi, and Bennett (1993) from 1950-1984; William Moul (2003) from 1950-1989; and Tessman and Chan (2004) consider china a "major state" -- one of "the handful or so most powerful members of the international system" -- from 1949-1995.

subsequent period of low-polarity (1946-present). The results, displayed in Figure 4, are consistent with the predicted difference between multipolarity and bipolarity/unipolarity:

**Figure 4:**  
**Great Power Loss as % of Total Conflicts**



The second test of the hypothesis that the likelihood of great power loss will be higher under low-polarity structures than under multipolarity is regression analysis, where the dependent variable is the likelihood of failure to achieve conflict objectives -- that is, the likelihood of state loss. Both the COW and MIPS projects provide ordinal codings of conflict outcomes; the conversion of these to a dichotomous measure, *Loss*<sup>37</sup>, is fairly straightforward: states are credited with success (0) when COW identifies that state as having "won", and/or MIPS indicates that the state achieved its full set of conflict objectives; states are credited with a loss (1) when the COW and/or MIPS set identifies that state as having accepted any resolution

<sup>37</sup> Full Set: mean = 0.40, SD = 0.5; Great Powers Set: mean = 0.29, SD = 0.46

short of achieving its primary conflict objectives, including a loss<sup>38</sup>, a compromise settlement, or a stalemate.<sup>39</sup>

As discussed above, I argue that states' belief that they can prosecute any given conflict at low cost should vary not only with the dyadic balance of power, but also with the distribution of power at the structural level. That is, states' ex-ante cost-expectations should vary with their global power position -- great powers will have a larger power advantage relative to all other states in the system and, as a result, should in general establish lower cost-expectations when facing any prospective opponent than should minor powers. This divergence should be more pronounced when there are few great powers rather than many. Stated another way, the theory suggests that a state should have lower cost-expectations when it is one of only a very few great powers than when it is one of many, and so it is during these periods that it should be most likely to lose its asymmetric conflicts.

This logic argues not simply for consideration of great power status and of system polarity as independent influences, but rather of the interaction between the two; these therefore comprise the study's explanatory variables of interest: *Great power*<sup>40</sup>; *Low polarity*<sup>41</sup>; and Great

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<sup>38</sup> Recall that a loss in the asymmetric context is not the same as the material defeat of the state; rather, it is an indication that the strong-state was unwilling to commit additional resources to prosecuting the fight. Thus it is truly a "loss", and not a "defeat", and so is a political choice -- the phenomenon the theory seeks to explain.

<sup>39</sup> This includes MIPS codings of 1, 2, or 4: "Withdrew: Intervening state withdrew its military forces unilaterally without attaining its primary political objective"; "Completed: Intervening state completed a mission with a pre-determined end date without attaining an immediate, observable political objective"; "Negotiated: Intervening state negotiated a settlement that did not result in full attainment of the state's primary political objective" (MIPS Codebook, 2008); and COW codings of loss (1, or 2), compromise (3), or stalemate (6).

<sup>40</sup> Full Set: mean = 0.40, SD = 0.5; Great Powers Set: mean = 0.76, SD = 0.42

<sup>41</sup> Full Set: mean = 0.56, SD = 0.5; Great Powers Set: mean = 0.67, SD = 0.47

*power\*Low polarity*<sup>42</sup>. *Great power* is a dichotomous variable capturing the state's great power status by year -- Italy, for example, is coded as a great power (1) from 1860-1943, and as a minor power (0) during all other periods. The polarity of the system is represented in the dichotomous *Low polarity* variable, which is coded as multipolar (0) from 1816-1945, and as bipolar/unipolar (1) thereafter. The interaction term is the product of the two: *Great power\*Low polarity*

The other independent variables included for analysis control for alternative explanations of asymmetric conflict outcome. The proposition that there should be a positive correlation between relative state capability and the likelihood of success is captured by the COW National Capabilities Index (CINC score). The CINC score is not an absolute measure, but rather captures each state's share of global power; the higher the score, the more power the state has relative to all others.<sup>43</sup> It is included in the model as the variable *Capabilities*<sup>44</sup>. If the capabilities proposition is correct, then, it will be the case that high CINC scores are correlated with success in achieving conflict objectives. I also account for the nature of the war being fought extra- (0), intra- (.5), or inter-state (1) in the *War type*<sup>45</sup> variable.

Two additional explanations are tested; the first is Gil Merom's (2003) regime-type hypothesis. According to Merom, strong democracies face constraints in the conduct of their conflicts that their autocratic counterparts do not. Merom's central premise is that non-

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<sup>42</sup> Full Set: mean = 0.34, SD = 0.47; Great Powers Set: mean = 0.66, SD = 0.48

<sup>43</sup> The precise definition: "Annual values for the computed Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) score...[are] generally computed by summing all observations on each of 6 capability components for a given year, converting each state's absolute component to a share of the international system, and then averaging across the 6 components."

<sup>44</sup> Full Set: range = 0.000147 - 0.336089, mean = 0.76, SD = 0.087; Great Powers Set: range = 0.009785-0.336089, mean = 0.13, SD = 0.89

<sup>45</sup> Full Set: mean = 0.63, SD = 0.45; Great Powers Set: mean = 0.49, SD = 0.48

democracies benefit from the ability to maintain strict control over the information available to their populations and to silence dissent should any arise. The extent of this control over society allows the state to mobilize its resources efficiently and minimizes the potential for, and consequences of, public disapproval of the rationale for war or of its execution.

Leaders of democratic states, by contrast, are argued by Merom to be constrained by their society's judgment concerning the necessity of the war and the appropriateness of its conduct -- making military endeavors that either are, or at least can be argued to have the appearance of being imperial increasingly unsupportable over time and thus explaining the incidence of retrenchment. For Merom, these domestic constraints are manifest both in the population's willingness to bear the costs of conflict, and to impose them. The contention thus is that democratic states are less likely to win their wars than are their autocratic counterparts; stated another way, Merom's hypothesis is that being a democracy decreases the likelihood of the state being able to prosecute its asymmetric wars in ways and for durations that enable it to achieve its full set of conflict objectives. This proposition is incorporated into the models estimated here through the transformation of the Polity III ten-point measure of democracy into the dichotomous variable *Democracy*<sup>46</sup>; Polity III scores of 5 or less are coded as non-democracies (0), and scores of 6 or greater coded as democracies (1).

The second competing explanation is Arreguin-Toft's theory of strategic interaction. Stated briefly, Arreguin-Toft's argument is that it is the interaction between the military strategy of the strong and that of the weak that determines conflict outcomes. According to Arreguin-Toft, conflict participants choose between two types of strategy: direct and indirect. For the weaker side the choice is comparable but not identical, with the participant selecting either direct

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<sup>46</sup> Full Set: mean = 0.333, SD = 0.47; Great Powers set: mean = 0.48, SD = 0.50

conventional defense that is intended to blunt assaults on its cities, armed forces, and other military resources, or indirect guerrilla warfare that targets the enemy's military assets, most especially its troops.<sup>47</sup> This is included in the model via Arreguin-Toft's (2001) coding of the *Strategic interaction* variable.<sup>48</sup>

## Data Limitations

The data described above do have some limitations. First, Arreguin-Toft's *Strategic interaction* variable is missing for a number of cases; as he explains, "Many civil and colonial wars recorded neither the quantity of forces committed nor the strategies employed" (2001, p. 112), preventing him from making a supportable designation.<sup>49</sup> This problem is compounded by the inclusion of cases from MIPS, for which I did not attempt to reproduce Arreguin-Toft's coding rules; this brings the total number of missing for Strategic interaction to 70 for the Full Set, and to 53 for the Great Powers Set. As a result, my models likely underestimate the effects of this alternative explanatory variable, most particularly for the post-World War II period.

Second, the inclusion of cases from the MIPS dataset increases sample size; but so too does it introduce some inconsistency in conflict characteristics across systemic structures. The

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<sup>47</sup> Arreguin-Toft acknowledges that these are not the only choices available to the combatants, noting that a "hearts-and-minds" approach, nonviolent resistance, or terrorism might also be chosen. For a full description of strategic options see pp. 29-33.

<sup>48</sup> Full Set: mean = 0.11, SD = 0.31; Great Powers Set: mean = 0.01, SD = 0.25.

<sup>49</sup> Arreguin-Toft's codings include missing values for 45 observations. No obvious non-random reason for this presents itself. The most likely reasons for systematic non-coding would be time period or conflict type; it would be reasonable to presume that the more historical the conflict the less copious and/or detailed the available information, and that intra- and extra-state wars -- as the purview of a single state or that state and its colonies -- would be less reliably historicized than interstate wars. There is, however, no pattern over time -- the range of missing values extends from 1853-2003 -- nor is there inconsistency between the percent missing by conflict type and the percent of conflict type overall: 44% of the missing values are for extrastate conflicts; 13% for intrastate; and 42% for interstate wars; 32% of all conflicts included are extrastate; 16% intrastate; and 52% interstate.



majority of the observations analyzed come from Arreguin-Toft's study of wars occurring between 1816 and 1994. As described above, while Arreguin-Toft adheres to the COW definition of war in its entirety, I apply a somewhat lesser standard to the MIPS set, removing the requirement of 1,000 battle casualties over 12 months for those engagements in which the sending state committed at least 1,000 combat troops.<sup>50</sup> Because MIPS is confined to the post-World War II era, some number of conflicts from the period prior that would meet this standard are excluded. This choice might therefore be argued to bias the sample by including only for low-polarity periods uses of force that the state might not take as seriously as those that COW categorizes as war -- conflicts, that is, that the state might be more willing to lose. I control for this potential source of bias by analyzing both the Full Set and the Great Powers set both with and without the MIPS cases; their exclusion does not change the sign or significance of the explanatory variables. The models, the full set of results, and their implications are discussed below.

## **The Models**

The dependent variable in this study, *Loss*, is limited, assuming values of either 0 or 1. This distribution requires a probabilistic interpretation of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables; one of a number of accepted alternative methods for estimation of qualitative dependent variables, the logit model -- linearization of the parameters through use of a log function -- is selected for use here.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>The minimum commitment in the cases represented is 4,500.

<sup>51</sup> For an explanation of why OLS does not provide useful estimates of the parameters for dichotomous DVs see: Kennedy, Peter, *A Guide to Econometrics*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press), 2003, pp. 259-260.

Two models, Base and Full, are estimated for the Full and for the Great Power data sets. The first model, the Base, is comprised only of control variables; the Full model contains all control variables, the two test variables, *Great power* and *Low polarity*, and the explanatory variable of interest, the interaction term *Great power\* Low polarity*. All models, for which the equations are provided below, are run with robust standard errors.

**Base Model:**  $y(\text{loss}) = \beta_0(\text{constant}) + \beta_1(\text{capabilities}) + \beta_2(\text{war type}) + \beta_3(\text{democracy}) + \beta_4(\text{strategic interaction}) + \epsilon$

**Full Model:**  $y(\text{loss}) = \beta_0(\text{constant}) + \beta_1(\text{capabilities}) + \beta_2(\text{war type}) + \beta_3(\text{democracy}) + \beta_4(\text{strategic interaction}) + \beta_5(\text{great power}) + \beta_6(\text{low polarity}) + \beta_7(\text{greatpower*low polarity}) + \epsilon$

Hypothesis 3 makes two substantive predictions about the results of both Full Models. Recall that the inclusion of an interaction term means that the coefficients attached to the component variables -- in this case, *Great power* and *Low polarity* -- no longer represent the unique effect of each on the likelihood of state loss. Rather, these coefficients must be interpreted as the effect produced by that component variable when the other is held at its lowest value (0). Thus, the coefficient attached to *Great power* in the Full model will indicate the effect of being a great power when *Low polarity* is held at zero -- that is, when the system is multipolar. Hypothesis 3 therefore predicts that the coefficient for *Great power* in the Full Model will have a negative coefficient: the theory argues that states that are great powers should have a lower likelihood of losing their asymmetric conflicts when the system is multipolar than when it is bipolar or unipolar.

Conversely, Hypothesis 3 predicts that the interaction term, *Great power\*Low polarity*, will have a positive coefficient: loss will be more likely for a state that is a great power (*Great*

*power* = 1) operating in a bipolar or unipolar system (*Low polarity* = 1). These predictions are presented in (Table 6).

**Table 6:**  
**Predicted Signs of Coefficients for Theoretically Substantive Variables in Full Models**

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Predicted Sign</u>
Great power ( $\beta_5$ )	-
Great power*Low polarity ( $\beta_7$ )	+

## Results

Analysis of both the Full and the Great Powers dataset produces results that are consistent with these predictions, and so are supportive of Hypothesis 3. For the Full Set of asymmetric conflict participants (Table 7) the inclusion of the test variables reduces error and both *Great power* and the interaction term, *Great power\*Low polarity*, move the dependent variable in the predicted directions.

Table 7<sup>52</sup>:  
Logit Analysis: All Asymmetric Conflict Participants (N=267)<sup>53</sup>

	BASE PRE = 26%		FULL PRE = 40%	
<i>Capabilities</i> <sup>54</sup>	-3.29	(2.02)	-0.97	(2.84)
<i>War type</i>	1.16	(0.39)***	0.71	(0.42)
<i>Democracy</i>	-0.08	(0.30)	-0.21	(0.33)
<i>Strategic interaction</i>	0.65	(0.45)	0.52	(0.42)
<i>Great power</i>	--	--	<b>-0.99</b>	<b>(0.49)**</b>
<i>Low polarity</i>	--	--	0.23	(0.34)
<i>Great power*Low polarity</i>	--	--	<b>1.88</b>	<b>(0.87)**</b>
<i>cons</i>	-0.93	(0.41)	-0.58	(0.47)

\*\* p ≤ 0.05, \*\*\*p ≤ 0.01

Similar results are produced through analysis of the Great Powers data set. Here again, the inclusion of the test variables improves the model's performance, and the predicted negative and positive coefficients are associated with *Great power* and the interaction term *Great power\* Low polarity*, respectively (Table 8).

<sup>52</sup> I also account more specifically for the capabilities proposition through the use of a *Capabilities ratio* variable, where data are available. To calculate this ratio I divide each participant's CINC score by that of its opponent; the need for both scores limits observations to the 50 interstate conflict participants. Estimating these same models revealed this variable to have no effect, and the sign of *Great power* and the interaction term unchanged.

<sup>53</sup> The decrease in observations from 342-267 is caused by missing values for Arreguin-Toft's measure of strategic interaction. Dropping this variable and estimating the model again does not change the results: the coefficient for *Great power* is negative, and for *Great power\*Low polarity* it is positive; and the interaction term remains significant.

<sup>54</sup> *Capabilities* and *Great power* are, not surprisingly, correlated (Full Set: 0.72; Great Powers Set: 0.47). For the reasons discussed above, however, they are not theoretically interchangeable; nor are they statistically mutually substitutable. Using as the interaction term *Capabilities\*Multipolarity* produces no significant relationship. Moreover, the exclusion of either variable produces no changes in sign or significance of the other.

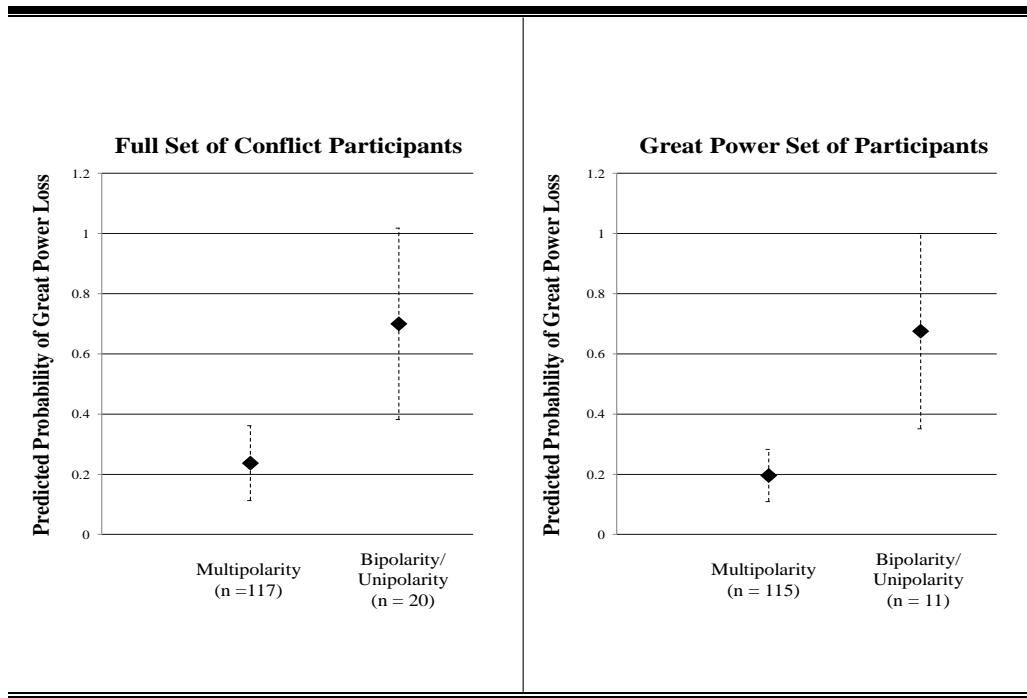
**Table 8:**  
**Logit Analysis: Great Power Asymmetric Conflict Participants (N=122<sup>55</sup>)**

	<b>BASE</b>		<b>FULL</b>	
	<b>PRE = 48%</b>		<b>PRE = 57%</b>	
<i>Capabilities</i>	-1.54	(2.90)	-2.65	(3.74)
<i>War type</i>	1.12	(0.54)**	0.35	(0.64)
<i>Democracy</i>	0.76	(0.49)	0.72	(0.57)
<i>Strategic interaction</i>	0.11	(0.93)	0.20	(0.90)
<i>Great power</i>	--	--	<b>-16.27</b>	<b>(0.91)***</b>
<i>Low polarity</i>	--	--	-15.76	(1.02)***
<i>Great power*Low polarity</i>	--	--	<b>17.99</b>	<b>(1.34)***</b>
<i>_cons</i>	-1.73	(0.74)	14.67	(1.01)
				** p ≤ 0.05, ***p ≤ 0.01

In both sets, the relationship between the interaction term and the likelihood of state loss is significant; as predicted by the theory, in other words, the likelihood of loss is significantly higher for states that are great powers when the system is bipolar or unipolar as compared to when it is multipolar (Figure 5).

<sup>55</sup> The decrease in observations from 177-122 is caused by missing values for Arreguin-Toft's measure of strategic interaction. Dropping this variable and estimating the model again does not change the results: the coefficient for *Great power* is negative, and for *Great power\*Low polarity* it is positive; and the interaction term remains significant.

**Figure 5:**  
**Predicted Probability of Loss for States that are Great Powers**  
**by System Type**



## Interpretation

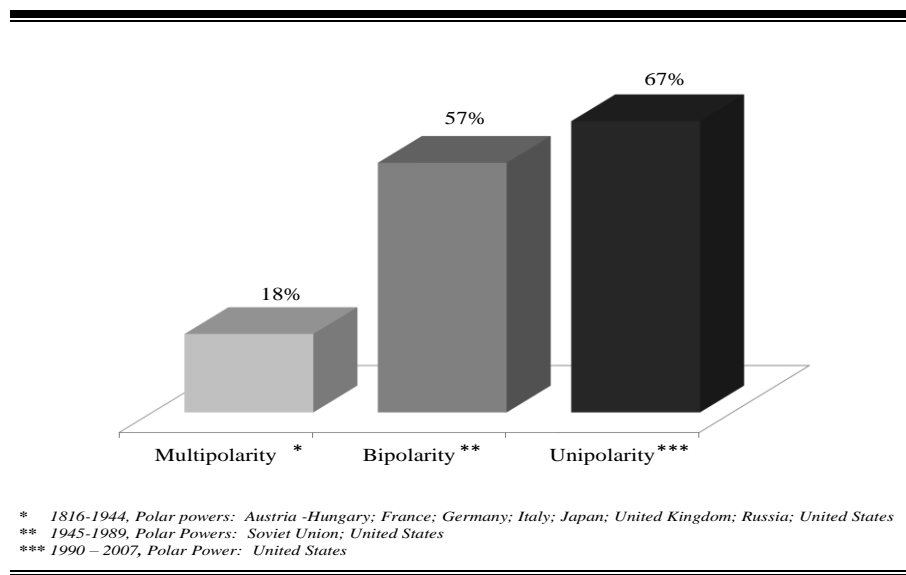
The above results are encouraging for the theory of asymmetric conflict outcome forwarded here. The comparison of the frequency of great power losses over time is supportive of the prediction of an upward trend as the system moves from being characterized by multipolarity to being characterized by bipolarity and unipolarity. The assertion that the likelihood of asymmetric conflict loss should be greater for states that are great powers operating under low-polarity systems than under multipolarity similarly receives support, with the regression analyses above revealing a significant relationship in the posited direction. That is, the results of the tests above are consistent with the theory's prediction that the smaller the number of great powers, the greater their likelihood of losing an asymmetric conflict.

This finding runs counter to conventional understandings of raw material power as the final arbiter of the resort to arms, which would expect that as the state's share of systemic power increases so too should its likelihood of victory increase. The most prominent alternative explanation in the literature, as discussed at length in Chapter II, focuses on the role of resolve -- the notion that the distribution of capabilities in a conflict produces a concomitant but inverse distribution of interests that favors the weak actor. For the weak, that is, but not for the strong, the fight is existential, defined by the highly motivating desire to survive. It is this disparity that would then explain why it is not the weak, but rather the strong, that opt out. Though this argument might explain individual cases of strong-state loss, it does not explain the increasing frequency of such events over time, nor can it explain why or how system polarity would affect relative levels of resolve. The fight either is or is not existential for any given actor -- a great power's stakes do not become less existential as it becomes more powerful, or as the number of peer competitors declines.

One possible way to square this circle might emerge from consideration of the reputational consequences of retrenchment across systemic structures. The argument here would be that under multipolarity, the great powers operate in a world of many peer competitors and so are highly sensitive to the reputational consequences of behaviors that might indicate weakness. Under low polarity structures this pressure is absent, and so they will be less resolved -- more willing to opt out when a conflict is not going their way. If the concern is opportunism by a peer competitor predicated on perceived weakness, however, then we should expect the great powers to be most sensitive to this possibility when they have only one peer rival -- who is by definition interested in, and able to be attentive to, taking advantage of missteps and the opportunities this creates. This dynamic would lead to the prediction that a great power will retrench less during

periods of bipolarity than under either multipolarity or unipolarity. The empirical record, however, demonstrates this not to be the case; disaggregating conflicts into a tripartite division of multipolarity, bipolarity, and unipolarity does not produce the expected U-shape, but rather a consistently upward trajectory (Figure 6):

**Figure 6:**  
**Great Power Loss as % of Total Conflicts Disaggregating Bipolarity and Unipolarity**



Another alternative explanation for the finding that great powers are more likely to lose under bipolar and unipolar structures than under multipolarity is that these conditions make the great powers worse at selecting into conflicts in the first place. Under bipolarity the proposition might be that intense global competition leads to intense local overreaction; and under unipolarity that the absence of the constraint imposed by a rival leads to capriciousness. These periods, however, have had the United States occupying great power status, and so these notions bump up uncomfortably against work finding democracies in fact to be particularly good at selecting into only those wars they can win (Lake 1992; Reiter and Stam 1998; Reiter and Stam,



2002). It is not clear, then, how selection-effects might explain the relationship between great power loss and system polarity identified here.

## **Summary**

The above analysis offers direct evidence in support of Hypothesis 3 which argues that the likelihood of state loss should be greater for states that are great powers under bipolarity and unipolarity than under multipolarity. These findings are consistent with the logic connecting the theory's propositions about state sensitivity to the power differential to the structure of the international environment. They also fit comfortably with the experimental results described in Chapter IV, in which subjects' cost-expectations were found to vary directly with the power differential. That is, if it is the case, as the experiment suggests, that high power differentials lead to the formulation of low reference points and, *ceteris paribus*, low reference points are more likely to be violated than high reference points, then we should see what in fact it is that we do see: the more preponderant the power, the more frequent and the more likely asymmetric conflict loss becomes. These results thus not only offer a novel explanation for the upward trend in great power loss over time, but also increase the plausibility of the theory's central commitments. Whether evidence derived from examination of real conflict events further increases the plausibility of the theory's proposed dynamics is the subject of Chapter VI.

## **CHAPTER VI: ILLUSTRATING THE DYNAMICS**

### **U.S. Interventions in Panama, the Former Yugoslavia, and Somalia**

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Chapters IV and V were devoted to subjecting the theory's hypotheses to scrutiny; this chapter is concerned with illustrating the operation of the theory's proposed dynamics in the real world. Specifically, the theory leads us to expect that states will choose to maintain or to escalate their level of commitment to an ongoing conflict only so long as it is physically able and ex-ante cost-expectations have not been violated; and, conversely, that states will make the choice to decrease the level of commitment by scaling back objectives, circumscribing operational activity, reducing troop levels, or even effecting a full and rapid withdrawal when actual losses surpass the level of loss expected. Whether we see these behaviors in cases of real conflict is the question to be addressed here. The intention is to provide neither definitive histories nor conclusive tests that might serve as a basis for confirmation or rejection of the theory's hypotheses, but rather to use the "straw in the wind" approach to focus attention on evidence that can increase, or decrease, the plausibility of the theory's key commitments (Collier 2011).

In what follows below I focus on interventions undertaken within the systemic structures in which Chapter V suggests the theory's dynamics should be most pronounced: bipolarity and

unipolarity. Using the process-tracing method,<sup>56</sup> I examine and describe three cases of militarized U.S. interventions abroad. The first case to be examined is the George H.W. Bush administration's successful action in Panama in late 1989, Operation JUST CAUSE. The theory would explain this outcome as the result of the United States' ability to achieve its full set of conflict objectives before the threshold between expected and realized costs was crossed. The second case is the United States' ongoing engagement in the former Yugoslavia. Here, there is not yet an outcome, and the theory contends that this is so because the United States neither has achieved its stated set of objectives, nor has suffered costs in excess of the level anticipated *ex ante*. The third and final case to be considered is the U.S. intervention in Somalia in 1992-1993, in Operation RESTORE HOPE. Although often identified as the "iconic" example of state loss being caused by domestic constraints, my theory offers an alternative explanation: U.S. failure was the outcome of a capabilities comparison that led to the establishment of a low reference point; this reference point was violated; and so the United States chose to retrench.

In examining each of these cases, I attend specifically to three descriptive tasks:

1. Seeking evidence that the United States undertook evaluation of its own capabilities as compared to those of the potential opponent, in the period before conflict initiation.
2. Seeking evidence that the United States subsequently established an expectation of the likely cost of conflict in U.S. lives, in the period before conflict initiation.
3. Seeking evidence that the sequence of casualties suffered and the timing and direction of decisions to continue a conflict or to retrench from it are/are not consistent with those proposed by the theory.

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<sup>56</sup> David Collier (2011) defines process-tracing as: "the systematic examination of diagnostic evidence selected and analyzed in light of research questions and hypotheses posed by the investigator".

I argue that this process produces evidence consistent with the theory's proposed sequences of events, and so increases the plausibility of the theory.

### **THE SUCCESSFUL U.S. INTERVENTION IN PANAMA (1989)**

At the time of its execution in December 1989 the United States military intervention in Panama, Operation JUST CAUSE, was hailed as a swift, low-cost, and complete victory; the operation's chief planner, General Carl Stiner, is on record as considering the invasion to have gone so well, in fact, that "there were no lessons learned"<sup>57</sup>, and it received robust public support (Larson 1996). History, too, seems generally to have judged JUST CAUSE favorably; despite the revelation of flaws and errors in planning and in execution<sup>58</sup> one recent chronicler has marveled that "Despite the fog and friction inherent in warfare, the stage for Operation JUST CAUSE had been so well set that the production was performed with comparatively few muffed lines" (Yates 2008, p. 277). A U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies monograph has described the toll in U.S. lives in particular as, at 23, being "remarkably low" given the operation's "complexity and scale" (Preysler 1994, p. 21); indeed, U.S. officials entered Panama expecting "at least 50 dead in the first phase" alone.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> "Inside the Invasion", Douglas Waller and John Barry, *Newsweek*, Vol. 115, Issue 26, pp. 28-32, 6/25/1990.

<sup>58</sup> See Phillips, R. Cody, *Operation JUST CAUSE: The Incursion into Panama*, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Publication No. 70-85-1, 2004. Accessed 3/5/12 at: <http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/Just%20Cause/JustCause.htm#Intro>

<sup>59</sup> "Pentagon took notes in Grenada to avoid error in Panama operation", Peter Almond, *The Washington Times*, December 22, 1989, p. A7.

JUST CAUSE was the product of two years of dedicated planning by the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), and involved the deployment of 22,000 soldiers, 3,400 airmen, 900 marines, and 700 sailors to face an estimated 16,000 members of the Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF). The Bush administration undertook the intervention with only marginal interests at stake, and understanding that U.S. lives would be lost -- expecting, in fact, that as many as 50 might die in the first phase of the invasion alone. In the event, only hours after the invasion the bulk of U.S. objectives had been achieved and with the loss of 9 soldiers; the United States had not yet, however, achieved its most significant objective: the capture of dictator Manuel Noriega. The fact of Noriega's escape presented the Bush administration with a decision about how much, how far, and how long to pursue him, while the difficulties encountered transitioning from combat to nation-building raised the specter of a prolonged engagement and the possibility of additional casualties. The Bush administration chose to persist in both efforts, quickly increasing U.S. troop and personnel levels. Noriega was soon located and surrendered into U.S. custody; the U.S. servicemembers and officials involved in JUST CAUSE were withdrawn from Panama only two months after its initiation, and the loss of U.S. life numbered 23.

### **Assessing the Power Differential**

The United States action in Panama was a long time in the making. Dictator Manuel Noriega had been a thorn in the side of the Reagan administration that persisted into Bush's term; by 1988 Noriega's involvement in the drug trade was difficult to ignore -- interdiction had by that time become an "urgent national issue" (Grant 1991, p.12 ) -- and his undemocratic bent was causing concern about the viability of the Panama Canal Treaty. Thus the United States escalated the severity of its policy response. Beginning with the "routine tactic of sending

signals to Noriega indicating U.S. displeasure" (Grant 1991, p. 11), and moving through his indictment on drug charges and the imposition of economic sanctions in 1988, by 1989 the Bush administration was deploying troops to protect U.S. personnel, approving covert action against Noriega, and publicly encouraging his overthrow (Grant 1991; Gilboa 1995-1996; Baker 1995). These assertive positions, according to a number of long-term officials, were reflective of the new group of policymakers' "more realistic attitude... toward the type of action that the United States might need to take, including the possibility of military intervention" (Grant 1991, p. 27).

This realism was matched by the military's preparedness; planning for a Panama contingency had been underway in earnest at SOUTHCOM since February 1988 (Cole 1995). The PDF were believed at the time to number around 14,000 men, at least a quarter of whom were well trained, professionally led, and equipped for combat. They were expected to mount a substantial defense of PDF infrastructure: its headquarters in Panama City, bases in other strategic locations, and the city's international airport. Moreover, PDF forces were assessed to be capable of sabotage, to which local U.S. military installations would be vulnerable, and of maintaining a guerilla campaign from the city's surrounding mountains and jungles (Cole 1995). In all, SOUTHCOM planners had a healthy respect for the strength and quality of resistance U.S. forces might face; certainly they did not believe the PDF could best the U.S. military -- one Lt. Col. stated unequivocally that "in this one we knew from the start who was going to win" -- but they did not assume that the PDF would simply go quietly into the night.<sup>60</sup>

After a number of iterations, the supplanting of a commander perceived to have "gone native" with one more keen to be aggressive (Woodward 1991, p. 93; Scowcroft 1999), an augmented on-the-ground force, and a change in name from the uninspiring Operation BLUE

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<sup>60</sup> "Inside the Invasion", Douglas Waller and John Barry, *Newsweek*, Vol. 115, Issue 26, pp. 28-32, 6/25/1990.

SPOON to the rather more grandiose Operation JUST CAUSE, the Pentagon, led by Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Colin Powell, had what they believed to be a workable plan (Yates 2008).

### **Establishing Ex-ante Cost-expectations**

In a meeting on December 17, 1989 Cheney and Powell assured President Bush that were the United States to proceed with the planned operation, its sophistication, and the size, skill, and readiness of already-deployed and to-be-deployed U.S. forces would bring the campaign to a rapid and successful conclusion. This confidence about the outcome, however, was not to be mistaken for sunny-eyed optimism about the conflict's course; although it was clear to all that "this was not going to be anything resembling a fair fight" (Woodward 1991, p. 165) , Powell impressed upon Bush that there was uncertainty about the likely intensity and duration of PDF resistance (Vertzberger 1998, pp. 200 - 208). Thus although JUST CAUSE did not commit the United States to a prolonged occupation, neither was it a surgical strike.<sup>61</sup> Bush should therefore be prepared for a commitment of weeks, at least, and for there to be U.S., PDF, and civilian casualties:

*"We will do everything we can to keep them at a minimum...We are going to hurt people..There will be loss of life and there will be chaos...Don't ask us in two days when we are coming home Mr. President...The PDF could surrender at the first landing and be out there with 'Welcome Yankee' signs, or there could be nasty firefights for weeks" (Powell as quoted in Woodward 1991, p. 169).*

In his own memoir Powell recalled impressing this expectation on top policymakers:

*"Brent [Scowcroft] hammered away at casualties. Numbers, he wanted. Numbers. I said I could not be specific. Obviously people were going to get hurt*

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<sup>61</sup> The operational plan for *JUST CAUSE*, Op-Plan 90-2, accounted for three days of military action against the PDF, and at least one month for the completion of stabilizing and restructuring Panama's armed forces (Yates 2008, p. 266).

*and die, soldiers and civilians, I said. A lot of real estate was going to be chewed up. We could anticipate chaos, especially in the early stages...The President himself pushed me on casualties. 'Mr. President,' I said, 'I can't be more specific'" -- (Powell 1995, p.411)*

In his own recounting of this discussion Secretary of State James Baker recalls that although Powell did not offer a precise number, he did give Bush a rough order of magnitude: "As always, the President was concerned about estimates of American deaths in a combat operation. 'There will be a few dozen casualties if we go,' Colin Powell estimated" (Baker 1995, p. 189). This account is consistent with information emanating from the Pentagon, which was reported at the time to expect 50 killed during the operation's first phase.<sup>62</sup>

### **Casualties and Decision Points**

Although the administration made no attempt to hide its distaste for Noriega, neither did it have an obvious *causus belli*.<sup>63</sup> U.S. interests in Panama were largely confined to the Canal and associated treaty process, and to protecting the U.S. servicemembers and civilians living in-country -- interests, to be sure, but by no stretch "vital" national security interests. The United States similarly could claim an interest in Panamanian democracy, though its absence seemed more of a nuisance than a threat. In the event, the Bush administration did not have to rely upon national interests as justification for military action: in late 1989 the PDF assaulted a member of the U.S. Navy and harassed his wife, and in a separate incident shot and killed a U.S. Marine.

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<sup>62</sup> "Pentagon took notes in Grenada to avoid error in Panama operation", Peter Almond, *The Washington Times*, December 22, 1989, p. A7.

<sup>63</sup> "Bush Says Panama's Noriega has 'Gone Bad'", Evans Witt, *The Associated Press*, 11 February 1988; "U.S.: Noriega Needs to Go", Don Kirk and Karen DeWitt, *USA Today*, 11 February 1988.



Seizing the moment, Bush launched Operation JUST CAUSE in the early morning hours of December 20. He announced the invasion to the American public at 7:00 a.m. EST, outlining a circumscribed set of military objectives -- the protection of U.S. lives and property, the capture of Panamanian President Manuel Noriega, and the neutralization of the PDF -- as part of the larger strategic political objectives of restoring representative government in Panama and restructuring Panama's defense apparatus to be consistent with democratic civil-military principles.<sup>64</sup> The inclusion of the rather lofty and agreeable goals of restoring democracy in Panama notwithstanding, it was Noriega himself who was the target of the invasion, both for the administration he'd antagonized and for the U.S. public for whom he'd long been represented as a villain; in Scowcroft's words, "the goal of the thing was primarily to seize Noriega"<sup>65</sup>. Thus the true barometer of success was his capture or death.

Although "the operation unfolded smoothly...and the amount of resistance was less than anticipated" (Baker 1995, p. 191), at the time of the President's speech, nine U.S. servicemembers had been killed and Noriega was still at large. The administration chose to continue to pursue Noriega to capture. He surrendered himself into U.S. custody 15 days after the invasion, 10 of which were spent seeking refuge at the Vatican Embassy. All told, the United States completed major military operations in five days, after which Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney remarked that "U.S. officials had expected the death toll to be higher"<sup>66</sup>, and achieved

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<sup>64</sup> President George H.W. Bush, "Address to the Nation on Panama", December 20, 1989. Accessed at: <http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/3422>

<sup>65</sup> Miller Center, *Interview with Brent Scowcroft*, Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, 2011. At: <http://millercenter.org/president/bush/oralhistory/brent-scowcroft>

<sup>66</sup> "Intervention by US Justified, Says Cheney", *The Straits Times*, 27 December 1989.

the capture of Noriega in 15; by that time U.S. killed numbered a total of 23 -- only two of which occurred in the interim between day one of the invasion and Noriega's surrender (Larson 1996).

## **Summary**

The above sequence of events is consistent with that proposed by the theory. The Bush administration had evaluated the strength of its Panamanian opponent, with the Pentagon assessing the PDF to be a credible force with the potential not to defeat the United States, but certainly to put up a real fight. A casualty estimate of "a few dozen" to be killed in the initial invasion alone was established, and when actual events proved otherwise the United States continued over the course of two months to seek to achieve its stated objectives of the capture of Noriega and the restoration of democracy. Whether the latter was truly fulfilled has been disputed, but not at the expense of the operation's being generally lauded as a complete success, not least because the loss of U.S. life, at 23, was at the time and has since continued to be considered unexpectedly low given the complexity and scale of the operation.

## **THE ONGOING U.S. INTERVENTION IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA (1995-Present)<sup>67</sup>**

In December of 1990, Croatia and Slovenia announced plans to secede from Yugoslavia. Serb nationalists were not keen for the dissolution of the state, and expressed this preference with

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<sup>67</sup> The air campaigns are included in MIPS, the peacekeeping operations are not: "We also do not create an intervention case for operations conducted by multilateral organizations (e.g., the UN, NATO, OAS) unless one major power could be identified as the primary motivating and contributing force (e.g., the U.S. in the NATO air campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999), campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999)." This is surprising given that at its height the United States provided one half of the 60,000-member force, and led the Dayton negotiations.

incidents of violence that increased in frequency and intensity over the summer months. By the fall of that year the violence had escalated from isolated skirmishes to city sieges, and the West was starting to pay attention to the brutality of the growing conflict. By 1992, the scale of the political and humanitarian crisis had become fully appreciated in Washington, and debate about a military intervention began in earnest.

By the time Bill Clinton assumed office in January 1993 the situation had deteriorated badly, and credible journalists and observers were reporting Serb actions that were comparable in criminality and inhumanity to those perpetrated by the Nazis. Calls for Western action intensified, and there was reason to think that the United States might comply: candidate Clinton had taken a tough line on Bosnia policy during the campaign, suggesting such measures as arming Bosnia's Muslim-led government and conducting airstrikes on Serb artillery; and, in his first comment on the subject as Secretary of State, Warren Christopher announced earnestly that what was happening in Bosnia was a "dark period of terror" and that "our conscience revolts at the idea of passively accepting such brutality" (Halberstam 2001, p. 200). Christopher had gone on to describe the U.S. interests in the former Yugoslavia as, "strategic", asserting that what was happening in Bosnia challenged "the principle that internationally recognized borders should not be altered by force", might produce a "river" of refugees into Western Europe, and had the potential to "become a greater Balkan war, like those that preceded World War 1". As such, he concluded,

*"This is an important moment for our nation's post-Cold War role in Europe and the world. In the face of great suffering and the imperative of our own interest, we cannot afford to miss any further opportunities to help pursue a resolution of this conflict."*<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> "New Steps Toward Conflict Resolution in the Former Yugoslavia", Speech by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, U.S. Department of State Dispatch, 15 February 1993.

Despite the forward-leaning nature of this rhetoric, the administration struggled as it sought a course that balanced the competing pressures of a fragile NATO alliance; the need to "distinguish its policy toward the crisis in the former Yugoslavia from that of the Bush administration"<sup>69</sup>; a public it viewed as wanting the United States to "do more...in a prudent way"<sup>70</sup>; and its own reluctance to use force (Halberstam 2001, p. 199; Drew 1994, p. 145). Clinton ultimately settled on a policy option that addressed the first three tensions while kicking the can down the road on the fourth; in early February he signed on to the Vance-Owen plan. Under Vance-Owen, the United States would send a special envoy to join negotiations for peace; would apply pressure on Bosnian Serbs and Muslims to arrive at an agreement; and, in the event an agreement was reached, would offer as many as 25,000 American troops as part of a multinational military operation to enforce terms. Importantly, this commitment was made before events in Somalia made clear the potential for disaster such missions carried attendant.

Vance-Owen, however, was moot, as the United States and its European allies continued to be unable to arrive at a mutually satisfactory means of applying pressure on the Bosnian Serbs and Muslims that was adequate to force them to the negotiating table; the Europeans were unwilling to bomb the Serbs to incentivize a settlement, and the United States was unwilling to send ground troops until a settlement was in place.

This impasse held, for the next two and a half years, until the siege of Sarajevo and the terrible events in Srebrenica in the summer of 1995 changed the dynamic. New French president Jacques Chirac started to take a much more aggressive line on Bosnia and was pushing the United States to do the same (Halberstam 2001, pp. 303-304). Concurrent with this renewed

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<sup>69</sup> "Bosnia Mediators Urging U.S. to Join Peace Force", Paul Lewis, *The New York Times*, 5 February 1993.

<sup>70</sup> "U.S. May Send Troops to Bosnia", *Buffalo News*, from News Wire Services, 10 February 1993.

international pressure, the Clinton White House was looking toward an election year, and there was the growing sense that continuing to stand by on the former Yugoslavia was an untenable position (Halberstam 2001, p. 311). American casualties, however, remained an even more untenable position; the administration still considered the use of ground troops a "nonstarter" because "the fear of body bags was always there" (Drew 1994, p. 275; Halberstam 2001, pp. 258-259).

Nonetheless, in August the Europeans and the Americans were able to arrive at a joint strategy, deciding to use airpower; the first major NATO bombing campaign against the Serbs took place at the end of the month. Scholar Mark Peceny has characterized Clinton's decision to commit to carpet bombing Serb forces as being driven almost singularly by the need to avoid the other available options, all of which put at risk U.S. troops.<sup>71</sup> According to Peceny, "Clinton used the air strikes not to defeat the Bosnian Serbs, but to pressure them to negotiate a peace settlement". Clinton did this knowing that any peace settlement would involve the deployment of U.S. troops to serve in a peacekeeping capacity; still, he had "decided that the risks posed to U.S. troops as part of a peacekeeping force would be less than the risks posed by [other available policy options]" (Peceny 1998).<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> The most prominent option was to lift the arms embargo and send U.S. troops to aid in the extraction of UN troops already in-country.

<sup>72</sup> In fact, however, the Clinton administration was not so wed to its Vance-Owen commitment as Peceny suggests. Indeed, during the period of Serb-Muslim negotiation that occurred in the fall of 1993 - only months after signing on to Vance-Owen -- the administration was so wary of U.S. casualties that it considered backing away from its commitment to send troops. 13 soldiers had by then been killed in Somalia, demonstrating that the risks of peacekeeping operations were real and serious, and so the administration recognized that "there were likely to be casualties of any peacekeeping effort in Bosnia" (Drew 1994, p. 282). As it turned out, Clinton was relieved of having to make a decision as, at the end of September, the peace talks fell through.

The NATO bombing campaign had the intended effect; battlefield, and so political, conditions deteriorated for Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic, and military vulnerability in concert with considerable international pressure were together sufficient to draw him to the negotiating table (Daalder 2000, p. 135). The result, in November 1995, was the Dayton Agreement, which established the semi-independent Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Serb Republic. The Dayton Agreement made good on the terms first outlined in Vance-Owen, calling for the United States to send 25,000 troops to Bosnia as part of NATO Operation JOINT ENDEAVOR. The United States thus would not be inserting its forces into an ongoing civil war, but this did not mean it would not have to contend with "vengeful soldiers, and Islamic militants"<sup>73</sup> -- capable, and dangerous, resistance forces.

### **Assessing the Power Differential**

The U.S. military's high-ranking officials had long been wary of any involvement in the former Yugoslavia, though their concern was not borne of a fear of military failure.<sup>74</sup> To the contrary, even in the absence of a preceding peace agreement, senior officials were "confident of the initial success of any American military moves" and comfortable that even "a direct confrontation with the Serb-dominated Yugoslav National Army would be no problem" (Halberstam 2001, pp. 34-35). The worry thus was not that those agitating for intervention, most

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<sup>73</sup> "U.S. Troops Will Face High Expectations From Bosnians", Thomas Ginsberg, *The Associated Press*, 1 December 1995.

<sup>74</sup> "Powell Delivers a Resounding No On Using Limited Force in Bosnia", Michael R. Gordon, *The New York Times*, September 28, 1992; "Bosnia Reconsidered -- Where Candidate Clinton saw a Challenge, the President Sees and Insoluble Quagmire", Thomas L. Friedman, *The New York Times*, April 08, 1993; "Pentagon is Wary of Role in Bosnia", Michael R. Gordon, *The New York Times*, March 15, 1994.

notably in the State Department<sup>75</sup>, were overestimating the likelihood of U.S. success, but rather that they were underestimating how much achieving it would cost.

Specifically, there was the sense in the Pentagon that the toughness and resilience of Serb fighters -- long storied successfully to have resisted Germany's attempted incursions into the Yugoslav mountains during WWII, and now fighting a "blood war of survival" (Halberstam 2001, p. 36) -- was being discounted.<sup>76</sup> These factors seemed to have been recognized by military planners and analysts at the time; news reports quoted Pentagon sources as describing Serb fighters as "grimly determined militiamen able to disappear into the countryside"<sup>77</sup>, and as understanding clearly that the terrain facing ground troops would be highly unfavorable -- the area was described by one Pentagon analyst as being "ribbed by successive lines of mountains that look like crumpled foil...a 'no go' for armor"<sup>78</sup>. Adding to these sources of pessimism was a 1993 CIA assessment (NIE 93-23/II) that U.S. involvement might in fact embolden the Bosnian Serbs, rather than weaken their resolve (Daalder 2000, p. 83). These factors were reflected in the Pentagon's troop estimates for a full-fledged invasion -- these, invariably, never fell below

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<sup>75</sup> "12 in State Dept. Ask Military Move Against the Serbs", Michael R. Gordon, *The New York Times*, 23 April, 1993

<sup>76</sup> "Military Prospects Grim for Yugoslavia", Donald M. Rothberg, *Baltimore Sun*, 9 August 1993.

<sup>77</sup> "If it Comes to War, Battle Plans Differ -- Fast NATO Raids vs. Digging in by Serbs", Paul Quinn-Judge, *The Boston Globe*, 16 February 1994.

<sup>78</sup> "Heavy Force will Face a Tough Road in Bosnia: Experts Worry that the 'Meanest Dog in Town' Might Wind up Chained by the Hostile Terrain", Michael E. Ruane, *The Orange County Register*, 3 November 1995.

200,000 (Halberstam 2001, p. 36).<sup>79</sup> Indeed, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Colin Powell is on record placing the number at 500,000.<sup>80</sup>

For Powell in particular, interventionists were overlooking these realities and so were neglecting to address the "what ifs" which, importantly, included "What if there were American casualties" produced by Serbs that, rather than simply "folding their hand" after suffering losses in battle "broke their forces down into smaller guerrilla-like units, and used the harsh terrain to their advantage and continued to attack" (Halberstam 2001, p. 35). Keeping these "what ifs" readily at hand, Powell thus remained "immune to most of the pleas for aggressive U.S. action... To him the interventionists were talking a policy based on hope rather than reality, a hope that things could be affected with a minimum, casualty-free application of military power" (p. 141). Overall, then, there was within the military and intelligence apparatus the pervasive sense that U.S. and allied troops on the ground would face an historically tenacious, dangerous, and skilled resistance that was advantaged by terrain that effectively neutralized the United States' favored heavy armor. Thus although the Serb opposition would not be capable of defeating the U.S. and allied forces, it certainly would be capable of inflicting casualties.

### **Establishing Ex-ante Cost-expectations**

The administration acknowledged publicly that a U.S. deployment to the former Yugoslavia would entail risk, and likely cost U.S. lives. In a December 1995 briefing to the House International Relations Committee, Powell's replacement as CJCS, General John Shalikashvili, made clear that "the mission will be tough and there's no doubt about it, and we

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<sup>79</sup> E.g., "Pentagon Advice Gives Cold Comfort to Clinton", Thomas E. Ricks, *The Wall Street Journal*, 28 April 1993

<sup>80</sup> "Action in Bosnia Poses Many Risks, Experts Say", Ruth Sinai, *Associated Press*, 25 April 1993.



have to be prepared for casualties"<sup>81</sup>. Clinton made a similar pronouncement while maintaining his conviction that "the size of the NATO-led force, the high quality of American and NATO troops and equipment, and the rules of engagement" created "conditions that would offer the minimum possible risks" to U.S. soldiers.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, U.S. troops would leave Bosnia after 12 months,<sup>83</sup> a duration judged adequate to allow the objectives of the mission to be achieved: implementing the basic military aspects of the peace agreement; and allowing "an internal balance of power among the remaining military forces" to obtain (Daalder 2000, p. 150-151).<sup>84</sup> In fact, the military believed the tasks involved in guaranteeing the implementation of the peace agreement could be completed in six months, but "offered to do so in twelve just to be on the safe side" (Daalder 2000, p. 150). Deployment began in early December of 1995, with over 24,000 U.S. soldiers in place by Valentine's Day (Phillips 2005).

While the administration did make clear that the deployment put U.S. soldiers at risk, they provided nothing resembling an estimate of just how many U.S. lives might be lost. In a nine-page letter to Republican Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich about the Dayton Agreement, Clinton stated that "it is not possible to make meaningful casualty predictions", and

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<sup>81</sup> "Deployment to Require More Money, Troops", Donald M. Rothberg, *Los Angeles Daily News*, 1 December 1995.

<sup>82</sup> "Clinton to tell troops Bosnia Mission not risk free", Steve Holland, *Reuters News*, 1 December 1995; "Clinton Makes Case to Congress for Putting U.S. Troops in Bosnia", Elaine Sciolino, November 15, 1995.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> The major military aspects of the agreement included: "monitoring and enforcing the parties' compliance with key provisions detailed in Annex 1A of the Accords, including maintaining the cessation of hostilities, separating forces along a zone of separation, withdrawing forces from territories to be exchanged between the entities, deploying heavy weapons and forces to cantonment and barrack areas and demobilizing the remainder, ensuring the withdrawal of all foreign forces, and providing for the exchange of prisoners" (Daalder 2000, p. 150).

in a briefing later that month when asked "What's a minimal amount of casualties that you estimate that we can get away with", White House spokesman Mike McCurry responded by saying

*"...that is not something you define in numbers. You define in what the nature of the mission is and what the perceived risk is, and how you minimize that risk and ensure that commanders have the right type of rules of engagement to respond to any perceived threat...in any event, the planning that goes into that type of work is something that is done within the province of the military."*<sup>85</sup>

McCurry seems to have been correct at least on the latter count as, in hearings two weeks later, CJCS Shalikashvili told the House Committee on International Relations and the House Committee on National Security that "casualties would be no greater than those suffered by U.N. peacekeepers in the former Yugoslav republic in the past 3 1/2 years"; at the time, total combat deaths numbered 80.<sup>86</sup> In a hearing shortly thereafter with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Shalikashvili revised this estimate downward, stating that based on "past peacekeeping operations" he would anticipate that "there could be about 50 deaths in a year".<sup>87</sup> Applied to the 12-month commitment to the former Yugoslavia, Shalikashvili's estimate indicates the administration expected the loss of up to 50 U.S. servicemembers during the one-year course of JOINT ENDEAVOR.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.; "Transcript of White House Press Briefing, Nov. 22 by Mike McCurry", *U.S. Newswire*, 24 November 1995.

<sup>86</sup> "GOP Lawmakers to Back Clinton on Troops in Bosnia", Stanley Meisler, *Los Angeles Times*, December 1, 1995.

<sup>87</sup> "Fear of Casualties Drives Bosnia Debate: After Recent Troop Missions, Americans Expect Almost Bloodless Battles", Dana Priest, *The Washington Post*, 2 December 1995. A British officer, Lieutenant General Sir Micahel Rose, who had for a year prior commanded UN troops in the former Yugoslavia, estimated that casualties might even exceed those experienced during the Gulf War, on the order of hundreds (Holbrooke 1999, p. 218).

## Casualties and Decision Points

Shalikashvili's ex-ante casualty estimate was not realized; between 20 December 1995 and 20 December 1996, the total toll in U.S. lives was 8, and none of these servicemembers died as a result of hostile action.<sup>88</sup> Gideon Rose (1998) has pointed out that the 30,000 American troops were "actually...safer in Bosnia than they would have been conducting routine training exercises" a fact, he says, of which the administration took advantage to "bolster the case for a longer deployment" (pp. 65-66). The U.S. presence in the former Yugoslavia was extended first for 18 months, and then indefinitely, though it did, in 1997, reduce the size of its forces.<sup>89</sup> This half-measure was explained as being the product, simultaneously, of initial operational success and of the need to continue to pursue the mission's full set of objectives<sup>90</sup>:

*"Our initial security goals in Bosnia have been achieved. We have ended the fighting, separated the forces, and improved confidence...Reconstruction is underway and economic growth has resumed. But 18 months after Dayton it is not enough to say that the war is over. Too much remains undone... Our goal is to ensure that when our forces depart Bosnia, they can do so without the fear that renewed violence threatening our interests might one day require them to return"*  
-- Secretary of State Madeleine Albright<sup>91</sup>

6,700 U.S. troops remained to conduct operations in Bosnia and its environs into 1999, when another region of the former Yugoslavia moved from being a potential to an actual flashpoint.

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<sup>88</sup> "Military interventions by U.S. Forces from Vietnam to Bosnia: Background, Outcomes, and 'Lessons Learned' for Kosovo", Nina M. Serafino, Congressional Research Service, May 20, 1999.

<sup>89</sup> "U.S. Troops to Remain in Bosnia Past Deadline", Associated Press, *The Washington Post*, 26 April 1996.

<sup>90</sup> "NATO May Cut Troops in Bosnia", *The Associated Press*, 14 July 1999.

<sup>91</sup> Speech by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright at the North Atlantic Council Ministerial Meeting, Sintra Portugal, 29 May 1997.

In 1997 the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), a previously under-organized group with secessionist ambitions, formed into a meaningful social and military force and began to effect guerrilla-style strikes on Serb units. The Serbs fought back, and by the end of the year the conflict was going on in the open, and in earnest. In the spring of 1998 Washington started to pay attention, most especially Secretary of State Madeleine Albright who moved relatively quickly to considering the use of force in support of the Kosovars (Halberstam 2001, p. 378). The bulk of the administration, however, did not go with her, and so a veritable replay of the early debate about Bosnia began anew.

The administration's equivocation did, at least, this time progress more rapidly, as General Wesley Clark, at the time the Supreme Commander in Europe (SACEUR), took a more hawkish position than had the military's top brass earlier in the decade. Just as in Bosnia, it was clear that the United States would not insert ground troops into an ongoing conflict. But, at Clark's urging, in late 1998 Washington and its NATO allies were able to agree to communicate to Milosevic that, unless he curtailed Serb violence in Kosovo, the consequences would be air strikes. Despite stark warnings Milosevic played coy into early 1999, and Serb violence continued.

On March 24, 1999, NATO moved forward with the threatened bombing of Serb forces in Kosovo, a campaign that lasted until Milosevic's signing of a peace proposal on 4 June. The agreement provided for the withdrawal of all Serb forces from Kosovo, and the introduction of a peacekeeping force under the authority of NATO. The United States contributed 7,000 troops to Operation JOINT GUARDIAN and the Clinton administration made clear both that the Kosovo operation was a continuation of U.S. efforts in Bosnia and that the U.S. servicemembers

deployed there would once again be at risk<sup>92</sup>. The Army's Chief of Staff, General Eric K. Shinseki pronounced that "the risk of casualties in Kosovo is high"<sup>93</sup>, while in his own address to the country about the United States' ongoing engagement in the former Yugoslavia Clinton emphasized that "this next phase also will be dangerous. Bitter memories will still be fresh and there may well be casualties."<sup>94</sup> These statements seem to indicate that the cost estimate arrived at prior to the initiation of U.S. involvement in the former Yugoslavia was unlikely to have been revised downward. Indeed, well-regarded scholar of military strategy and doctrine Barry Posen (2000) suggests that, if anything, the Serb army had in fact improved its capabilities during the preceding four years:

*The Serb army...has depth and can take a beating and still retain combat power. The combat forces in the field expect to operate in a dispersed fashion against greatly superior forces, and thus must be adept at all the time-honored tactics necessary to facilitate lengthy resistance against a superior foe -- camouflage, cover, concealment, deception, and mobility. The military infrastructure of the Serb armed forces -- its bases, fuel dumps, depots, and the like -- is hardened, camouflaged, and dispersed. The Serb military is supported by a national scientific, engineering, and industrial base. Although it is by no means capable of autonomously producing the full range of modern weaponry, it produces many basic items such as army weaponry and ammunition, and can adapt and repair more sophisticated items of equipment...In Bosnia, Serb soldiers had both shot down NATO aircraft and evaded their attacks. In the Bosnia endgame, many experienced sustained NATO air attacks and, at least around Sarajevo, did not crack. The British government has revealed that the Serbs benefited from extensive conversations with the Iraqi military about...military issues during the six months prior to the war." (Posen pp. 55-56)*

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<sup>92</sup> "Excerpts of President's Speech at Air Force Academy", *The Associated Press*, 2 June, 1999.

<sup>93</sup> "U.S. Peacekeepers to Complete Deployment to Kosovo by late July", Robert Burns, *The Associated Press*, 24 June, 1999.

<sup>94</sup> "Clinton Declares Victory, Says U.S. Forces Face Risks", *Reuters News*, 10 June 1999; "Pentagon Sees Risk in Going into Kosovo", Elizabeth Becker, *The New York Times*, 11 February 1999.

Despite these rather dire assessments, during the subsequent 13 years the United States has not lost a single servicemember to hostile action as it has maintained its presence in the former Yugoslavia to "achieve long-standing U.S. goals" and in the interest of "finishing the job".<sup>95</sup> During his term, George W. Bush explained the ongoing commitment as necessary to achieve the intervention's objectives, with now-Secretary of State Colin Powell noting the United States' commitment to peace in the Balkans, and making clear that short of achieving this goal the United States might reduce troop levels if conditioned stabilized, but that it would not "cut and run".<sup>96</sup> Troop levels subsequently declined concurrent with the U.S. actions in Afghanistan and Iraq, but without the United States indicating its mission in the former Yugoslavia had been completed. To the contrary, violent incidents in northern Kosovo in 2011 have been cited as justification for a continued U.S. combat presence in pursuit of the objective established in 1995 of establishing a stable and self-sustaining peace.<sup>97</sup>

## Summary

The characteristics of the U.S. intervention in the former Yugoslavia are consistent with the dynamics posted by the theory. U.S. decision-makers undertook evaluation of the strength of the Serb opponent, and established ex-ante cost-expectations. When these expectations were not

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<sup>95</sup> Kim, Julie and Steven Woehrel, "Kosovo and U.S. Policy: Background to Independence", CRS Report for Congress, RL31053, June 20 2008, pp. 2-3.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.; "Bush, In Kosovo, Tells U.S. Troops Role is Essential", David E. Sanger, *The New York Times*, July 25, 2001.

<sup>97</sup> "Kosovo: Current Issues and U.S. Policy", Steven Woehrel, *Congressional Research Service*, RS21721, March 13, 2012; "Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 President's Budget: Justification for Component Contingency Operations and the Overseas Contingency Operations Transfer Fund (OCOTF)", Office of the Secretary of Defense, February 2011. The United States has not had troops in Bosnia since 2004. "Bosnia: Current Issues and U.S. Policy", Steven Woehrel, *Congressional Research Service*, R40479, February 29, 2012.

violated, the timeline for intervention was extended. Still, the absence of specificity of the theory's key explanatory variable at the second decision point of the intervention -- ex-ante expectations of the costs of engaging in peacekeeping in Kosovo -- weakens the theory's position somewhat. Although Clinton, Shinseki, and other officials warned publicly that the use of ground troops in Kosovo would be difficult, dangerous, and potentially costly, others argued that the Kosovo operation might present less risk than that in Bosnia, under the premise that Serb fighters might leave the region for fear of retribution.<sup>98</sup> These conflicting views and the absence of a definitive statement by any member of the administration leaves ambiguous the extent to which decision-makers' expectations were maintained from 1995 or modified in light of more recent events.

It must also be noted that the dimensions of the case are not inconsistent with the expected utility proposition, which would explain the ongoing presence of U.S. troops in the former Yugoslavia as an indication that the costs of the intervention have not yet come to equal or to exceed the anticipated value of the benefits of achieving the operation's full set of objectives. While the process-tracing undertaken here cannot arbitrate fully between these explanations, my theory does at least offer the important advantage of being predictive. That is, my theory identifies 50 casualties over the twelve month period judged necessary to achieve the intervention's objectives as being the reference point established prior to the United States' intervention in the former Yugoslavia in 1995. In the absence of information that indicates this expectation has changed, the theory predicts that the United States should be willing to maintain a troop presence, operating with the mission of achieving its conflict objectives, until that threshold is reached. Thus the theory will be falsified if: the death of less than 50 U.S. troops

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<sup>98</sup> "Keeping the Peace will be Difficult Job -- Troops Face Threats from Several Sides", *Charleston Daily Mail*, 11 June 1999

precipitates retrenchment; or, the death of more than 50 U.S. troops does not precipitate retrenchment. By comparison, it is not obvious how the expected utility paradigm might offer a similar view on the future -- what cost would equal the benefits of fulfilling the intervention's objectives?

### **THE FAILED U.S. INTERVENTION IN SOMALIA (1992-1993)**

The events of the early 1990s in Somalia loom large in the recent history of U.S. military engagements abroad. Despite its considerable success in providing much-needed sustenance to hundreds of thousands of Somalis, Operation RESTORE HOPE is widely considered to have been a military failure for the United States. Indeed, it is most remembered for the manner in which 18 soldiers lost their lives in the Black Hawk incident of October 1993; the U.S. withdrawal that followed; and Somalia's subsequent and ongoing stagnation as a failing, if not failed, state.

At the time of the intervention and in its immediate aftermath much was made of the failure's implications for humanitarian assistance, for multilateral peacemaking and peacekeeping operations, for nation-building, and for the United States' role in the "new world order" (Clarke and Herbst 1996).<sup>99</sup> So too did Somalia quickly become what has since been described as an "iconic example of 'casualty phobia'" (Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler 2009, p. 37), the assertion that the American public is highly intolerant of combat casualties and that this intolerance constrains decision-making both before and during conflict. From this perspective, the United States'

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<sup>99</sup> Carpenter, Ted Galen, "Setting a Dangerous Precedent in Somalia", Foreign Policy Briefing No. 20, *CATO Institute*, 18 December 1992. Accessed 11/11/10 at: <http://www.cato.org/pubs/fpbriefts/fpb-020.html>; Sommer, John G., *Hope Restored? Humanitarian Aid in Somalia 1990-1994*, Refugee Policy Group, Center for Policy Analysis and Research on Refugee Issues, November 1994.



inability to achieve its objectives in Somalia was caused not by the depletion of its ability to continue the mission, but instead by leaders' responsiveness to a public that was at the time unfavorably disposed to doing so.

My theory offers an alternative explanation: the Bush administration entered Somalia understanding it would face a weak, poorly organized, ill-trained, and underequipped opposition force. It therefore believed that U.S. goals there could be achieved on the cheap: at a cost of less than 20 American lives. These expectations were not scrutinized by the incoming Clinton administration, and so were not updated despite changing conditions on the ground, including the loss of U.S. soldiers to hostile action. Thus when the new administration faced the very public and very gruesome deaths of 18 soldiers in a single event in October 1993, a toll not only severe in itself but one that also pushed total U.S. combat casualties to 29, it chose to retrench.

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Mired in civil strife since the late 1980s, it was the 1991 overthrow of dictator Siad Barre that ushered Somalia into a period of pronounced chaos; clan warfare exacerbated ongoing famine, with disastrous consequences for the Somali population. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) responded by authorizing United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I), tasked with the combined missions of providing humanitarian aid, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and state-building.

By the middle of 1992 it was clear that UNOSOM I was having limited success at best, and the humanitarian crisis continued unabated. Members of the Bush administration were not only increasingly galvanized by the scale of human suffering in Somalia, but also were receiving with increasing frequency and intensity calls from the international community for a more

robust U.S. role in mitigating the disaster. Indeed, the Bush administration was facing mounting criticism for its inaction not only in Somalia but also in Bosnia; no less an international figure than General Secretary of the United Nations (UN) Boutros Boutros-Ghali had informed President Bush in May 1992 that Muslims were "aroused by...the failure to protect their coreligionists" in both countries, and asked President Bush if he couldn't at least "do something about Somalia" (Oberdorfer 1992; Hirsch and Oakley 1995).

The Bush administration, too, was sensitive to the simultaneity of the humanitarian crises in Somalia and in Bosnia. Though the administration was, initially, reticent to turn to a military solution for the former, it was even more so for the latter. In the Balkans, the complexity of the civil war and the "toughness" of Serb aggressors were fully appreciated by high-level decision-makers, and military estimates of the costs of combat consistently high -- figures outlining the necessary troop commitment never fell below 200,000 (Halberstam 2001, p. 36). By comparison, a Somalia operation seemed manageable, able to be executed rapidly, at low cost, and with a very high probability of success. Thus by the end of 1992 the military option was put fully on the table.

### **Assessing the Power Differential**

In a November Deputy-level meeting, then-Vice Chairman of the JCS Admiral David Jeremiah stated unequivocally that were they to be activated, U.S. military forces would be able to take control of the environment in Somalia such that much-needed aid could be distributed safely and efficiently (Cusimano 1995, p. 9). This assertion reflected the Pentagon's conclusion that local terrain was conducive to U.S. operations and assets, and its concurrence with CIA assessments of clan forces as being underequipped, "poorly organized and trained, [with]

inconsistent morale and motivation” (Cusimano 1995 p. 8). Indeed, in a press briefing on 4 December 1992, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney stated that U.S. forces would not be going in expecting to "be engaged in heavy combat against well-armed, hostile forces...they are not that well organized. You do not have a coordinated military force...There should be no doubt about who would prevail in the event there are hostilities."<sup>100</sup> The military's confidence was such that one official is quoted as saying that an intervention “would not be terribly hard...” (Menkhaus and Ortmyer 1995, pp. 7-8).<sup>101</sup>

Administration statements also made clear that they did not believe the Somali resistance was particularly resolved. One official dismissed the gunmen in Somalia as being prepared to "steal blankets at feeding centers" but not to oppose "an organized force of well-armed troops", and General Powell described the environment not as a civil war but rather "just general lawlessness...there are some armed groups belonging to different faction leaders, but there is also a large number of, frankly, youngsters who are armed with weapons, so there is a degree of lawlessness, and I think that degree of lawlessness can be dealt with by sizable forces...being there and looking like they can handle anything that comes their way."<sup>102</sup> The expectation, in other words, was that the simple fact of the United States' obvious military superiority would

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<sup>100</sup> U.S., Dept. of Defense, *Special Briefing Regarding Somalia*, 4 Dec., 1992, accessed 17 July 2012 at: <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/35538-1>; Don Oberdorfer, "U.S. Plans Short Stay for Forces in Somalia," *Washington Post* 1 Dec. 1992: A29.

<sup>101</sup> "U.S. Planners Foresee Operation in Somalia as Not Too Difficult", Barton Gellman, *The Washington Post*, 28 November 1992.

<sup>102</sup> U.S., Dept. of Defense, *Special Briefing Regarding Somalia*, 4 Dec., 1992, accessed 17 July 2012 at: <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/35538-1>; Oberdorfer, "U.N. Chief Weighs Use of U.S. Troops in Somalia"; Smith Hempstone, "Think Three Times Before You Embrace the Somali Tarbaby," *U.S. News and World Report*, 14 Dec. 1992, vol. 113, no. 23: 30; Lawrence S. Eagleburger, interview, *This Week with David Brinkley*, ABC, 6 Dec. 1992, transcript, Lexis-Nexis, online source, American Broadcasting Company, Inc., 14 Dec. 1992 Don Oberdorfer, "U.S. Plans Short Stay for Forces in Somalia," *Washington Post* 1 Dec. 1992: A29.

cause the Somali opposition to fold, allowing for the resumption of aid and, ultimately, a full handoff of responsibility from U.S. forces to the United Nations.<sup>103</sup>

### **Establishing Ex-ante Cost Expectations**

The plan that emerged was, in the words of Powell, to be “like the cavalry coming to the rescue, straightening things out for a while and then letting the marshals come back in to keep things under control,” (Cusimano 1995, p. 11). In December an initial marine landing was to secure Mogadishu’s port and airfield in advance of the arrival of 31,000 troops, which would then be dispatched quickly to secure supply routes and major aid centers. Once these areas were well in hand, the operation would be transferred to a multinational force under UN command, with only a small contingent of U.S. forces remaining at its disposal.

White House officials claimed that this could be achieved over the course of weeks, suggesting that the operation might be over by the time Bush was to leave office in January.<sup>104</sup> The President himself “told House and Senate leaders that the Pentagon anticipates little serious resistance, that commanders have broad leeway to defend themselves if threatened, and that the costs of the operation will be offset, at least in part, by foreign donations”.<sup>105</sup> The Pentagon’s estimates were more cautious – logistics alone would extend that timeline to somewhere between three and six months – and Powell acknowledged that the removal of troops would be contingent upon the extent to which conditions in Somalia were under the control of the incoming UN

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<sup>103</sup> Miller Center, *Interview with Admiral David Jeremiah*, Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, 2011. At: <http://millercenter.org/president/bush/oralhistory/david-jeremiah>

<sup>104</sup> Gordon, Michael R., “Mission to Somalia: U.N. Backs a Somalia Force as Bush Vows a Swift Exit, Pentagon Sees Longer Stay,” *New York Times*, Friday, December 4, 1992

<sup>105</sup> Wines, Michael, “Mission to Somalia: Bush Declares Goal in Somalia to ‘Save Thousands’”, *New York Times*, Saturday, December 5 1992.

forces.<sup>106</sup> In an interview with scholar Matthew A. Baum, U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) General Joseph Hoar, the Commander of U.S. Central Command before and during the Somalia operation, stated that in a briefing he gave to President Bush on the military's concept of operations for RESTORE HOPE, he "estimated the likely number of U.S. fatalities at about 20" (Baum 2004, p. 199).

Some more serious notes of caution were raised; most notably, Ambassador to Kenya, Smith Hempstone, was widely credited with the wry one-liner, "if you liked Beirut, you'll love Mogadishu", and warned gravely that "Somalis...are natural-born guerrillas...they will not be able to stop the convoys from getting through. But they will inflict -- and take -- casualties".<sup>107</sup> Acting Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger responded by noting that the administration had "considered" these views, but "decided that [Hempstone] probably exaggerated things substantially and we were going to go ahead".<sup>108</sup> For Eagleburger, Somalia was "a tragedy of massive proportions, and, underline this, one that we could do something about"<sup>109</sup>, a notion seconded by National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, who considered the intervention "very limited, doable" (Baum 2004, p. 198-199). Indeed, these sentiments were widespread throughout the administration, which generally believed that American troops would have little

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<sup>106</sup> Powell's concerns about the intervention, however, ought not be overstated. To the contrary, he has been described as having "made little effort to challenge illusions about the efficacy of military intervention with regard to Somalia, even though after January 20, 1993, he would be the most senior official with responsibility for the deployment still serving in the new administration" (O'Sullivan 2009, p. 108).

<sup>107</sup> "Think Three Times Before you Embrace the Somali Tarbaby", *U.S. News and World Report*, December 6, 1992.

<sup>108</sup> Lawrence S. Eagleburger, interview, *This Week with David Brinkley*, ABC, 6 Dec. 1992, transcript, Lexis-Nexis, online source, American Broadcasting Company, Inc., 14 Dec. 1992.

<sup>109</sup> Oberdorfer 1992.

difficulty protecting themselves, and that the intervention would be limited, controlled, and contained (Halberstam 2001, pp 251-252).

### **Casualties and Decision Points**

On 4 December, 1992, President Bush announced U.S. command over a multinational United Task Force (UNITAF) that would be used to create the conditions necessary for humanitarian aid to reach its intended recipients. 37,000 US troops were to be deployed, with the expectation that other nations would contribute some number of their own forces in support of the mission.

In the interim between the RESTORE HOPE landing in December 1992 and the presidential transition during the early months of 1993, events in Somalia received little high-level attention. The incoming Clinton team, which had been supportive and apprised of the decision to intervene, accepted the outgoing administration's optimistic assessments of the course of the engagement, and so it turned its attention to other matters (Hirsch and Oakley 1995, pp. 151-152).<sup>110</sup> During this time UNITAF did achieve initial success, and that May the transition to the follow-on UN command, UNOSOM II, began. 14,000 international troops remained in Somalia, 4,000 of which were American.

As the summer progressed, however, conditions in-country degraded as UNOSOM II's efforts to empower a transitional government met with resistance from clan warlords. Violence escalated and, in June, 24 Pakistani UN troops on patrol in Mogadishu were killed at the behest of one of them, Mohammed Farrah Aidid. In response, President Clinton, with input from CJCS

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<sup>110</sup>“U.S. Plans Short Stay For Forces in Somalia,” Don Oberdorfer, *The Washington Post*, 1 Dec. 1992: A29; “U.S. Ahead of Schedule in Somalia”, Don Oberdorfer, *The Washington Post*, 30 Dec. 1992: A1. See also Statements by George Stephanopoulos during Press Briefing in Little Rock Arkansas, 4 December 1992, at: <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/35539-1>

Powell, authorized the use of U.S. forces to pursue Aidid. This policy shift was preceded by "no detailed discussions of how [it] would change U.S. military operations on the ground (Dobbins et al. 2008, p. 47), and there is no evidence that it occasioned an update in the number of U.S. casualties expected; it did, however, produce an uptick in the casualties actually incurred.

In August, ten U.S. soldiers were killed and in September there were three more U.S. deaths; together, this amounted to a tripling of total U.S. casualties in the span of only two months. The total of 13, however, remained below the ex-ante expectation of 20, and the Clinton administration remained resolute in its intention to continue the U.S. action in Somalia -- it did not want to remove U.S. forces. To the contrary, the Clinton team tried actively to keep Congress from ordering a withdrawal (Drew 1994, p. 281), with administration officials arguing a need to continue to pursue the objectives established by Bush, and asserting that "U.S. troops must remain in Somalia until Aideed and his forces are subdued or else the country would return to the state of anarchy and widespread hunger and misery" that had occasioned the intervention in the first place.<sup>111</sup> This position did not change through August and September; it did in October.

The White House during this period has been described as having not "adequately understood that the Somalia operation had been for several months...a high-risk military endeavor" (Woods 1997, p. 165); indeed, upon assuming office the new group "held no formal policy review...[and] top level decision-making remained informal" (Dobbins et. Al, 2008, pp. 46-47), and as late as June 1993 was describing the Somalia policy to Congress as "one that could be carried out without serious repercussions" (Johnston and Dagne 1997, p. 199). But on October 3, 1993, the hunt for Aidid resulted in the now-infamous downing of a Black Hawk

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<sup>111</sup> "U.S. Vows to Stay in Somalia Force Despite an Attack", Eric Schmitt, *The New York Times*, 26 September, 1993; "Clinton Seeks Shift of Focus on Somalia", Ann Devroy and Julia Preston, *The Washington Post*, 29 September 1993

helicopter and the very public loss of 18 U.S. soldiers, bringing total U.S. combat deaths to 29. Upon being notified of the Blackhawk incident President Clinton expressed surprise and anger. As described by veteran Washington observer Elizabeth Drew, "Clinton was very upset. 'How could this happen?' he demanded of his advisers...he complained that [his] administration hadn't been given a 'realistic assessment'...of 'what we were up against'. He said, 'No one told me about the downside'" (Drew 1994, p. 317).

After a short period of deliberation Clinton announced that the United States would first commit an additional 1,300 troops to Somalia before withdrawing the entire force by three months later.<sup>112</sup> One set of chroniclers has characterized the principal mission of U.S. and U.N. troops during those months as "ensuring their own security...The deployment of additional forces for six months was, therefore, little more than a face-saving gesture intended to cover a U.S. exit strategy" (Menkhaus and Ortmayer 1995, p. 21). General Hoar, a participant in a number of the strategy meetings that occurred in the aftermath of the downed Black Hawk, recalled that the tenor of the meetings that produced this policy was that "...they got burned [and] the trick was to ... put out the fire, finish it and get out of town as quickly as possible" (Baum, p. 219). Redeployment to the United States began in earnest in December, with all troops removed before the stated March 31 deadline (Dobbins et al. 2008, p. 47).

### **Alternative Explanations**

My theory argues that Clinton decided to retrench from Somalia because the expected costs of intervention had been exceeded -- instead of the maximum of 20 casualties anticipated,

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<sup>112</sup> "Remarks by President Clinton on the Situation in Somalia," October 7 1993.



the events of early October brought the total cost in U.S. lives to 29. Two alternative explanations, however, merit consideration here.

The first is the argument that Clinton's decision to retrench was caused by the rapid and severe decline in public support that followed the Black Hawk incident. Available evidence, however, does not support this claim. To the contrary, the timing of the drop in public support for the Somalia intervention does not fit: "Data...show that public support for the presence of U.S. troops in Somalia dropped from 74 percent in December 1992, at the start of the humanitarian relief operation, to 43 percent in mid-September, before the Black Hawk was downed in October" (Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler 2009, p. 38). Indeed, James Burk finds that "on balance it is difficult to find strong support for the casualties hypothesis in the data for Somalia. That is striking, as this case is often supposed to provide clear-cut evidence in favor of the hypotheses...[but] it is difficult to conclude that changing public opinion had the predicted effect on political decisions to suspend the peacekeeping mission" (Burk 1998, pp. 68-69).

The second alternative explanation is that derived from the expected utility paradigm: that the loss of the 18 Rangers in October tipped the cost-benefit ratio in the wrong direction. Clinton alludes to this calculation in his own recollection of this period:

*"If getting [Aidid] was worth eighteen dead and eighty-four wounded Americans, wasn't it worth finishing the job? The problem with that line of reasoning was that if we went back in and nabbed Aidid, dead or alive, then we, not the UN would own Somalia and there was no guarantee that we could put it together politically any better than the UN had...Moreover, there was no support in Congress for a larger military role in Somalia...I didn't mind taking Congress on, but I had to consider the consequences of any action that could make it even harder to get congressional support for sending American troops to Bosnia and Haiti, where we had far greater interests at stake...the value of the prize was not worth the risk of significant casualties and the certain consequences of changing the nature of our mission in the eyes of both Somalis and Americans...I didn't believe the emotional, political, or strategic benefits of catching or killing Aidid justified further loss of life on either side, or a greater shifting of responsibility*

*for Somalia's future from the UN to the United States" (Clinton 2004, pp. 550 - 554).*

Clinton's narrative seems to emphasize the factors incorporated into the expected utility paradigm -- costs; probability of success; and the value of succeeding. Yet it is notable that Clinton here defines the value of winning -- the "prize" -- much more narrowly than he and others in his administration did at the time. Not two months before the Blackhawk incident U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeline Albright described the stakes in Somalia as follows:

*"Success is important not only for the Somalis...but also because anarchy may produce refugees, uncontrolled arms peddling and targets of opportunity for terrorists and their state sponsors...The decision we must make is whether to pull of stakes and allow Somalia to fall back into the abyss or to stay the course and help lift the country and its people from the category of a failed state into that of an emerging democracy. For Somalia's sake, and our own, we must persevere".<sup>113</sup>*

Even beyond these practical justifications, the administration had taken pains to cast the potential gains of persistence in terms of the United States' credibility and its designs for a "new age" -- pursuing the mission, it was argued, would solidify the United States' reputation for being willing to use force in response to humanitarian crises; affirm its commitment to multilateralism; promote democracy; and underscore American global leadership (Menkhaus and Ortmayer 1995, pp. 19-20). Indeed, President Clinton himself described Somalia as providing an "important chapter in the international annals of peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance".<sup>114</sup> These rather

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<sup>113</sup> "Yes, There is a Reason to Be in Somalia", Madeleine K. Albright, *The New York Times*, 10 August 1993.

<sup>114</sup> Bill Clinton, "Address to Troops Returning From Somalia," 5 May 1993, Lexis-Nexis, online service, Federal News Service.

expansive descriptions of the value of the Somalia mission seem unlikely to be overmatched by the loss of 29 U.S. lives.

Finally, it is worth noting that both the decision to withdraw from Somalia and Clinton's expressed reasons for doing so run counter to prospect theory's propositions about decision-maker behavior in the domain of losses. Specifically, Clinton's recounting of the decision-making process evidences no inclination to “gamble for resurrection” – although already operating in the domain of losses, he evidenced a cognizance of the likelihood of continued action generating not recovery from initial setbacks, but rather the imposition of additional losses.

## **Summary**

The historical record makes clear that upon assuming office the Clinton Administration undertook no formal assessment of the Somalia intervention, and did not update the expectations about the engagement's course initially established by the Bush team in late 1992: the U.S. military could execute missions in Somalia essentially at will, and at little to no risk to its soldiers. The Black Hawk incident violated these expectations, producing in one, very gruesome and very public stroke, casualties close to Hoar's ex-ante estimate of 20. Thus though the United States certainly materially was able to do more – and indeed, some argued, could have done more to its own benefit – its leadership proved unwilling to do so.

## CONCLUSIONS

The weight of the above evidence is supportive of the theory of asymmetric conflict forwarded here. In each of the three cases the United States undertook evaluation of its own capabilities as compared to those of the potential opponent; established an expectation of the likely cost of conflict in U.S. lives; and made decisions to continue or retrench in the predicted directions. In Panama, a healthy respect for opposition forces led to ex-ante expectations of a minimum of 50 combat casualties; these expectations were not met and the United States was willing and able to achieve its stated objectives before this reference point was violated. In the former Yugoslavia, decisionmakers understood that the strength and resilience of Serb fighters might cost the United States 50 lives over the course of one year. Instead, not one U.S. combat death occurred. Decisionmakers dispensed with the timeline for withdrawal, and the United States continues to this day to pursue the intervention objectives of "establish[ing] and maintain[ing] a secure environment" in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>115</sup> And in Somalia the opponent was judged weak, ill-trained, and ill-equipped, and so ex-ante cost-expectations were limited to 20. When U.S. casualties exceeded this expectation, ultimately numbering 29, policymakers chose to retrench. These data are summarized in Table 9 below.

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<sup>115</sup> Other objectives include: "Monitor, verify and when necessary, enforce compliance with the conditions of the Military Technical Agreement and the UCK Undertaking" and Provide assistance to the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), including core civil functions until they are transferred to UNMIK". See: <http://www.nato.int/kfor/docu/about/objectives.html>

**Table 9:**  
**Data Gathered through Process Tracing**

	<b>OPPONENT STRENGTH</b>	<b>EX-ANTE COST- EXPECTATION</b>	<b>ACTUAL COST</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b>
<b>Panama</b>	Moderate	> 50	23	Success
<b>Somalia</b>	Low	< 20	29	Failure
<b>Former Yugoslavia</b>	Moderate	< 50/year	0	Ongoing

Although this evidence cannot be considered confirmatory, it nonetheless is encouraging for the theory, increasing its plausibility and thus providing a substantial basis for further inquiry.

## **CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSIONS**

### **Findings, Extensions, and Implications**

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The preceding chapters introduced and tested empirically a new theory to explain asymmetric conflict outcome -- to explain why it is that materially preponderant states sometimes choose to retrench from an ongoing armed intervention in the absence of the actual or prospective destruction of their ability to fight. The theory offers a framework that is grounded in rationality but that accounts also for cognitive influences, positing that the fact and the timing of decisions to opt-out are precipitated by the violation of states' ex-ante cost-expectations. Specifically, the theory argues:

1. that states use the power differential to establish cost-expectations prior to entering conflict;
2. that these expectations operate as a reference point around which the actual costs of fighting are then evaluated; and
3. that the decision to retrench occurs because, and when, the actual costs of fighting have come to equal or to exceed the level anticipated.

These propositions generate three testable hypotheses, two that access directly the proposed causal mechanism, and one that addresses the logical implications of the theory as they operate at the systemic level of analysis. The results of the empirical analysis undertaken here

offer encouraging, albeit mixed, support for the former, affirm the latter, and demonstrate the theory itself to be plausible.

## **Findings**

Chapter IV presented experimental evidence that, as proposed by the theory, decision-makers do form ex-ante cost-expectations about a prospective conflict and that those expectations vary with the strength of the potential opponent. Consistent with the theory, subjects facing a strong opponent anticipated incurring greater costs than did their counterparts facing a weak opponent, and a full 60% of all subjects who chose to retrench identified that decision as having been precipitated by the violation of expectations. These results are promising both for the theory as an independent line of research, and for the larger prospect paradigm of which it is a part. Covariation between cost-expectations and the strength of the opponent affirms the theory's notion of how the reference point is formed -- in this case, around the power differential -- while the fact that subjects first established cost-expectations and then responded to their violation bolsters the prospect paradigm's identification of the reference point as decisive.

The study's implications for the prospect theory proposition about behavior in the "domain of losses", however, is not equally as sanguine. Consistent with the theory's challenge to this component of the prospect paradigm, 68% of all respondents chose to retrench -- considerable *prima facie* evidence that decision-makers are not nearly so likely to become addicted to conflict, or to "gamble for resurrection", as the domain of losses proposition supposes. Moreover, among the 114 subjects who did not choose to retrench, only 28 offered

reasons suggestive of these impulses, giving as rationale a desire for troops not to have "died in vain", or that, once committed to conflict, the United States needed to "see it through to the end".

The experimental findings thus offer important support for my theory's most central features; this support, however, is not unqualified. Although the theory's prediction that subjects facing a strong opponent would form a higher reference point than would those facing a weak opponent was borne out, it was not the case that this higher reference point led subjects to retrench later and/or with lesser frequency, as my theory would expect. Moreover, analysis revealed a significant negative correlation between the value ascribed to the benefits of succeeding in achieving the conflict objective and the likelihood of retrenchment -- the greater the perceived benefits, the less likely retrenchment became. There is thus a marked discontinuity between the experiment's statistical output and subjects' self-reported reasons for retrenchment. This somewhat confounding result and the absence of direct support for the theory's ancillary propositions are problematic, and suggests a need for additional research.

Large-n analysis of two datasets across four logit models in Chapter V, by contrast, produces rather substantial support for the theory's implications at the systemic level. The comparison of the frequency of great power losses over time is supportive of Hypothesis 3's prediction of an upward trend as the system moves from being characterized by multipolarity to being characterized by bipolarity and unipolarity. The assertion that the likelihood of loss should be greater for states that are great powers operating under low-polarity systems than under multipolar systems similarly receives support. For both datasets analysis revealed a significant relationship, in the posited direction, between the probability of loss, great power status, and system polarity: the likelihood of asymmetric conflict loss is greater for states that are great powers operating in a low-polarity international environment than for those that are great powers



operating in a multipolar international environment. This finding, which is consistent with the logic of the theory developed here, is not well-explained by extant theories of conflict, or of conflict termination.

Finally, the process tracing undertaken in Chapter VI affirms the plausibility of the theory's key commitments. In Panama, the United States' ex-ante cost-expectations of dozens of casualties caused a realized casualty count of 23 U.S. servicemembers to be perceived as remarkably low, and so the United States persisted in prosecuting the conflict until it had achieved its stated objectives, most importantly the capture of dictator Manuel Noriega. In Somalia, the equation was inverted: the expectation of very low costs was disappointed and so a total of 29 U.S. killed led to rapid withdrawal. And in the former Yugoslavia, the expectation of as many as 50 U.S. casualties over the course the one-year needed to achieve the United States' objectives did not materialize, allowing first the Clinton administration, and then those subsequent, to maintain a U.S. presence long beyond the initial 12 month commitment -- indeed, U.S. combat troops remain, conducting operations, in the former Yugoslavia to this day.

The summation of the empirical evidence collected and evaluated in this study thus is encouraging for the theory's most central contentions: that states are attentive to the power differential; that the ex-ante cost-expectations they form on the basis of this differential operate as a reference point; and that it is the violation of this reference point that triggers the political choice to retrench. Although the study's findings cannot be considered confirmatory, they do suggest that additional research in this vein is both merited and potentially productive. Indeed, a number of interesting extensions present themselves.

### **Extension: Other U.S. Conflicts**

The first and most apparent course would be to undertake examination of other cases of great power intervention during periods of bipolarity and unipolarity to further assess the plausibility of the theory's core claims. Some *prima facie* evidence from other of the United States' most prominent such engagements indicates this pursuit may be fruitful.

The United States' engagement in Korea in 1950, for example, was premised upon the Truman administration's edict that the 38th parallel not be crossed. This limitation was imposed to preclude Chinese and Soviet engagement, and so to ensure the fight would be against only the North Korean military, the strength and skill of which was largely discounted. The United States thus entered Korea believing the war would be brought to a rapid and successful close, and at relatively low cost (Halberstam 2007, pp. 139-140; Reiter 2009, p. 78). In October, of course, after the parallel had been crossed China did get involved, and the number of U.S. casualties climbed upward. Shortly thereafter Truman began the process of retrenchment, scaling back U.S. objectives behind closed doors by taking further "military action beyond the 38th parallel...essentially off the table" (Reiter 2009, p. 81).

A similar progression characterized the United States' next notable militarized engagement abroad, this time in Vietnam. Much as did Truman, President Lyndon Johnson elected to scale back the United States' conflict objectives far prior to the war's actual termination. It was in fact in late 1965 that Johnson first sought a negotiated settlement -- this at a time when U.S. killed in action remained below 10,000 (Ferguson 2004, p. 99), and long before public opinion turned so markedly and vociferously against the intervention.

More recently, the contrast between the outcomes of the U.S. actions in the Persian Gulf (1991) and Iraq (2003) is particularly suggestive of the theory's dynamics. In the former, the

United States anticipated that expelling Iraqi forces from Kuwait would be quite costly; in actuality, pre-war casualty estimates exceeded by a great margin those that actually occurred.

The United States not only achieved its original objectives, but in fact considered expanding its war aims. In 2003, by contrast, the United States entered Iraq anticipating that the short-term goals of removing Saddam Hussein and eliminating Iraq's WMD capabilities, and the long-term objective of building "a new Iraq that is prosperous and free", also could be achieved easily.<sup>116</sup>

Military analyst and defense expert Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution, using "leaked Pentagon war plans from the summer of 2002", in fact estimated that "the United States and any other foreign militaries that ultimately participate in a war to change regimes in Baghdad could together lose anywhere from about 100 to 5,000 personnel...The upper ranges appear relatively unlikely to occur but cannot be dismissed [emphasis added]" (O'Hanlon 2003). By the end of 2005 the number of soldiers killed in combat for the United States alone numbered 2,181<sup>117</sup>, and the administration had scaled back its objectives to "an attainable form of success even if it did not match the initial lofty goals"(Metz 2010, p. 9; Desch 2011, p. 186, p. 187)<sup>118</sup>.

Moreover, although commentators differ about its outcome, they nonetheless generally agree that the 2007 "surge" of additional U.S. troops into Iraq was not a redoubling of effort to achieve success as originally envisioned, but rather as a means of avoiding complete failure (Ricks 2009; Metz 2010; Feaver 2011; Desch 2011). Whatever its effects, the surge did not prevent the U.S. casualty count from increasing, and as this number continued to move upward

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<sup>116</sup> "President Bush Address to the Nation, March 17, 2003", accessed 1/12/12 at: [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/white\\_house/jan-june03/bush\\_3-17.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/white_house/jan-june03/bush_3-17.html)

<sup>117</sup> <http://icasualties.org/iraq/index.aspx>

<sup>118</sup> Thomas Ricks quotes a senior political adviser to General David Petraeus as explaining "We defined success in a much more modest way as 'sustainable stability'"; Ricks quotes another official as calling this 'a tolerable level of violence'. See Ricks 2009, pp. 155, 215

U.S. objectives and troop levels were revised downward, culminating in the announcement on 11 October, 2011 of a full withdrawal. U.S. casualties at that time numbered 4,478.<sup>119</sup>

### **Extension: Other Great Powers**

Extension of analysis to other great powers is another necessary step. Here again a superficial probe of the Soviet experience in Afghanistan produces evidence that is promising. Armed with post-Cold War access to a growing body of primary source documents, scholars have begun to reconstruct key moments in the Soviet decision-making process. Oft remarked upon is the Soviet leadership's ex-ante expectation that their conflict objectives in Afghanistan could be achieved quickly and at low cost. One scholar states simply that "Soviet leaders did not expect a protracted and costly involvement in Afghanistan when they approved the Soviet military intervention in December 1979" (Kalinovsky 2009, p. 51), while another notes more wryly that:

On the military side, the goal appears to have been not to destroy the opposition but to reduce its activities substantially, make the main cities and highways safe and seal the frontier with Pakistan. Improbable as it may seem in retrospect, the Soviet leadership appears to have operated with a time scale of some months or at most a year or two for all this to be achieved. The central belief of the Soviet leadership was that these goals could be met by the 'limited' Soviet contingent (Halliday 1999, pp. 679-680).

This expectation, however "improbable" in retrospect, likely seemed far less so at the time given the Soviets' recent experiences in Hungary and in Czechoslovakia where it suffered a total of 669 and 96 killed, respectively (Grau and Yahya, 1995). These accounts go on to describe the Soviet leadership as nonetheless coming rather quickly to recognize that there

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<sup>119</sup> "Daily U.S. Casualties", *Associated Press*, 21 October 2011.

"could not, as originally intended, be a quick military victory" and that the "cost was much higher than originally anticipated" (Halliday 1999, p. 680).<sup>120</sup> In 1981 the Politburo approved a proposal to pursue UN mediation of the conflict, and high level consideration of withdrawal had begun by 1983 (Kalinovsky pp. 61-69, 2011), at which time the Soviet Army had suffered 6,262 killed (Grau and Yahya, 1995). Whether these pieces of evidence can be connected in a causal chain of course cannot be determined without further research, but their juxtaposition is suggestive.

### **Extension: Public Opinion**

In addition to the above lines of inquiry, the theory may have implications for the study of public opinion about conflict. Specifically, if further testing of the theory provides support for the claim that state leaders establish and respond to cost-expectations, then it may also be the case that these expectations are transmitted to the electorate. This explanation is outwardly consistent with the pattern of U.S. public opinion about the Korean war: "The pattern of opinion on the war was fairly straightforward, with very high support for the war at the outset...followed by a steep drop in support after Chinese intervention, and from then on support that maintained roughly the same moderate level until the end of the war, even in the face of escalating casualties" (Reiter 2009, p. 87). That is, the theory implies that the public became less responsive to increases in casualties in Korea because ex-ante expectations of the costs of conflict had already been violated – the imposition of costs subsequent to that point would not have a similarly deleterious effect. If there is support for this extension of the theory, it will

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<sup>120</sup> See also: Kalinovsky, Artemy M. *A Long Goodbye: The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 2011; and Hughes, Geraint, "The Soviet-Afghan War, 1978-1989: An Overview", *Defence Studies*, Vol. 8, No 3, pp. 326-350, 2008.

mean that, contrary to assertions that "casualty phobia" plagues democracies, it may be the violation of a specific and identifiable reference point that explains the public's tolerance, or lack thereof, for a given intervention.

## **Implications**

Strong states sometimes lose wars against considerably weaker opponents. The literature to date offers a number of thoughtful and compelling theories to explain this phenomenon; but, to a one, these explanations rely explicitly or implicitly upon the assumptions of the expected utility model of decisionmaking. This dissertation offers an alternative explanation, based upon an alternative model that recognizes policymakers as rational actors who nonetheless are subject to cognitive influences. In its most spare form, the argument is that these cognitive influences are systematic -- they are understandable, predictable, and avoidable.

The tests undertaken here are suggestive, and offer justification for continued research. If my theory receives additional empirical support, it will have made a novel and exciting contribution to the academic study of international relations: it will have operationalized the nebulous concept of "cost tolerance"; forwarded a new explanation for asymmetric conflict outcome; demonstrated itself to be capable of explaining outcomes that are consistent with expected utility theories, but also outcomes that are anomalous for it (Lakatos and Musgrave 1970); and advanced the prospect paradigm by taking on successfully the "critical task" of determining "how actors identify their reference points" (Levy 2003, p. 271) in an important class of international political events.

In practical terms, the theory offers a cautionary tale for great powers -- and most especially for the United States as today's lone superpower. A measure of confidence in its

material capabilities may be rational and warranted, and given its current advantages the United States may be unable to avoid succumbing to some measure of overconfidence. What will matter, then, is the ability of its policymakers to distinguish between the expectations borne of its preponderant power and the value of the objectives at stake -- such an appreciation might help the United States to make decisions about whether and when to retrench based not on beliefs about what winning should cost, but rather on beliefs about what winning actually is worth.

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## APPENDIX A: EXPERIMENTAL DATA

### Mean Indices

#### 1. Benefits

Mean = 0.46, Standard Deviation = 0.27

Alpha = 0.89

405

##### General Benefits

Mean = 0.55

SD = 0.26

The benefits of succeeding in [condition] are:

	N	%
Very small	23	5.7
Small	64	15.8
Moderate	166	41.0
Large	108	26.7
Very large	44	10.9

##### Specific Benefits

Mean = 0.37

SD = 0.36

The benefits of succeeding in [condition] are worth:

	N	%
Less than 1,000 U.S. lives	152	37.5
More than 1,000 U.S. lives but less than 3,000 U.S. lives	68	16.8
More than 3,000 U.S. lives but less than 6,500 U.S. lives	75	18.5
More than 6,500 U.S. lives but less than 10,000 U.S. lives	62	15.3
Very More than 10,000 U.S. lives	48	11.8

#### 2. Cost expectations

Mean = 0.51, Standard Deviation = 0.30

Alpha = 0.88

405

##### General Cost

Mean = 0.60

SD = 0.35

How much do you think it will cost in U.S. lives to achieve the objective of [Condition]?

	N	%
Very little	65	16.05
A moderate amount	195	48.15
A lot	145	35.80

##### Specific Cost

Mean = 0.42

SD = 0.34

How many U.S. lives do you think it will cost to achieve the objective of [Condition]?

	N	%
Less than 1,000 lives	111	27.41
More than 1,000 U.S. lives but less than 2,500 U.S. lives	117	28.89
More than 2,500 U.S. lives but less than 5,000 U.S. lives	110	27.16
More than 5,000 U.S. lives	67	16.54

## APPENDIX A: EXPERIMENTAL DATA

### Mean Indices

#### 2. Time expectations

Mean = 0.61, Standard Deviation = 0.30

Alpha = 0.92

405

##### General Time

Mean = 0.57

SD = 0.33

How much time do you think it will take the United States to achieve the objective of [Condition]?

	N	%
Very little time	64	15.80
A moderate amount of time	220	54.32
A long time	121	29.90

##### Specific Time

Mean = 0.65

SD = 0.33

How long do you think it will take the United States to achieve the objective of [Condition]?

	N	%
Less than 1 month	34	8.40
More than 1 month but less than 3 months	62	15.31
More than 3 months but less than 6 months	73	18.02
More than 6 months but less than 1 year	99	24.44
More than 1 year	137	33.83

## APPENDIX A: EXPERIMENTAL DATA

### Descriptive Data

#### Randomization Test Statistics

$$y(\text{scenario}) = \beta_0(\text{constant}) + \beta_1(\text{gender}) + \beta_2(\text{age}) + \beta_3(\text{military}) + \beta_4(\text{degree}) + \beta_5(\text{political affiliation}) + \epsilon$$

	Prob > F
Gender	0.82
Age	0.44
Military	0.32
Highest Degree Attained	0.10
Political Affiliation	0.16

#### You Will 1

Mean = 0.64

SD = 0.35

You will:

	N	%
Continue the operation with the U.S. troop commitment as -is	71	17.53
Continue the operation and send additional troops	146	38.83
Continue the operation but begin to withdraw some U.S. troops	40	9.88
Begin to withdraw all U.S. troops	52	12.84
Scale back the objective from [condition] to [condition]	96	23.70

#### Not Retrench Reason 1

Mean = 0.69

SD = 0.34

The primary reason why you will not scale back the objective or withdraw U.S. troops is:

	N	%
You do not want U.S. troops to have died in vain	70	32.36
3,000 U.S. lives lost is within expected levels	24	11.06
Your credibility as a leader is at stake	21	9.68
The benefits of achieving the objective of [condition] outweigh 3,000 U.S. lives lost	102	47

#### Retrench Reason 1

Mean = 0.36

SD = 0.45

The primary reason why you have decided to withdraw U.S. troops or to scale back the objective is:

	N	%
The conflict has cost more U.S. lives than expected	110	58.51
The conflict has lasted longer than expected	6	3.19
The conflict has cost more U.S. lives than achieving the objective of [condition] is worth	55	29.26
You no longer think the United States can achieve the objective of [condition]	17	9.04

#### You Will 2

Mean = 0.67

SD = 0.31

You will:

	N	%
Continue the operation with the U.S. troop commitment as -is	37	17.05

## APPENDIX A: EXPERIMENTAL DATA

### Descriptive Data

Continue the operation and send additional troops	76	35.02
Continue the operation but begin to withdraw some U.S. troops	29	13.36
Begin to withdraw all U.S. troops	13	5.99
Scale back the objective from [condition] to [condition]	62	28.57

#### Not Retrench Reason 2

Mean = 0.78

SD = 0.30

The primary reason why you will not scale back the objective or withdraw U.S. troops is:

	N	%
You do not want U.S. troops to have died in vain	28	24.76
3,000 U.S. lives lost is within expected levels	6	5.31
Your credibility as a leader is at stake	11	9.73
The benefits of achieving the objective of [condition] outweigh 3,000 U.S. lives lost	68	60.18

#### Retrench Reason 2

Mean = 0.28

SD = 0.39

The primary reason why you have decided to withdraw U.S. troops or to scale back the objective is:

	N	%
The conflict has cost more U.S. lives than expected	66	63.46
The conflict has lasted longer than expected	2	1.92
The conflict has cost more U.S. lives than achieving the objective of [condition] is worth	17	16.35
You no longer think the United States can achieve the objective of [condition]	19	18.27

#### Why Fail

Mean = 0.71

SD = 0.29

The primary reason why you believe the United States cannot achieve the objective of [condition] is:

	N	%
You now believe the foreign military will defeat the U.S. military	3	4.69
You now believe that achieving the objective of [condition] will cost more in U.S. lives than you are willing to pay.	31	48.44
You now believe that achieving the objective of [condition] will cost more in U.S. lives than the U.S. public is willing to pay.	30	46.88

## APPENDIX A: EXPERIMENTAL DATA

### Demographic Characteristics

#### Age

	N	%
18-29	182	44.94
30-39	124	30.62
40-59	76	18.77
>59	23	5.68

#### Gender

	N	%
Female	166	41.00
Male	239	60.00

#### Military Service

	N	%
No	367	90.62
Yes	38	9.38

#### Federal Govt. Service

	N	%
No	319	78.77
Yes	86	21.24

#### Education

	N	%
4-Year college	84	20.74
MA	230	56.79
PhD	59	14.57
Professional	32	7.90

#### Political Affiliation

	N	%
Democrat	203	52.45
Independent	105	27.13
Republican	35	9.04
Other	12	3.10
None	32	8.27



## APPENDIX A: EXPERIMENTAL DATA

### Statistical Analyses

#### 1. MEAN VALUE OF BENEFITS HUMANITARIAN VS NUCLEAR

$z = -4.357$ ,  $p = 0.000$

Nuke	N	Rank Sum	Expected
0	200	35517	40600
1	205	46698	41615

#### 2. MEAN VALUE OF RETRENCHMENT AT FIRST OPTION HUMANITARIAN VS NUCLEAR:

$z = 2.420$ ,  $p = 0.0155$

Retrench1	N	Rank Sum	Expected
0	200	43062.5	40600
1	205	39152.5	41615

#### 3. MEAN VALUE OF RETRENCHMENT AT SECOND OPTION HUMANITARIAN VS NUCLEAR:

$z = 2.041$ ,  $p = 0.041$

Retrench2	N	Rank Sum	Expected
0	95	11165.5	10355
1	122	12487.5	13298

#### 4. MEAN VALUE OF RETRENCHMENT OVERALL HUMANITARIAN VS NUCLEAR:

$z = 3.055$ ,  $p = 0.0023$

Retrencht	N	Rank Sum	Expected
0	200	43395	40600
1	205	38820	41615

#### 5. MEAN VALUE OF COST EXPECTATIONS STRONG VS WEAK:

$z = -7.381$ ,  $p = 0.0000$

Cost-expectations	N	Rank Sum	Expected
0	210	33543.5	42630
1	195	48671.5	39585

## APPENDIX A: EXPERIMENTAL DATA

### Statistical Analyses

#### 6. MEAN VALUE OF RETRENCHMENT AT FIRST OPTION

**STRONG VS WEAK:**

**$z = 1.099$ ,  $p = 0.2717$**

Retrench1	N	Rank Sum	Expected
0	210	43747.5	42630
1	195	38467.5	39585

#### 7. MEAN VALUE OF RETRENCHMENT AT SECOND OPTION

**STRONG VS WEAK:**

**$z = 0.195$ ,  $p = 0.8454$**

Retrench2	N	Rank Sum	Expected
0	107	11741	11663
1	110	11912	11990

#### 8. MEAN VALUE OF RETRENCHMENT OVERALL

**STRONG VS WEAK:**

**$z = 0.796$ ,  $p = 0.4263$**

Retrencht	N	Rank Sum	Expected
0	210	43357.5	42630
1	195	38857.5	39585

#### 9. LOGIT REGRESSION: Total Incidence of Retrenchment

**DV: Overall retrenchment**

**WILL RETRENCH**

**N= 405**

**Pseudo  $R^2 = 0.3592$**

<b>Benefits</b>	-6.77	(0.93)***
<b>Cost-expectations</b>	-0.86	(0.61)
<b>Time-expectations</b>	1.40	(0.60)**
<b>Nuclear, Strong</b>	0.17	(0.45)
<b>Nuclear Weak</b>	-0.23	(0.41)
<b>Humanitarian Strong</b>	-0.21	(0.42)
<b>_cons</b>	4.30	0.71

\*\*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.01$

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Survey-Based Experiment**

This appendix provides each of the four experimental conditions, and a generic rendering of the associated survey questions. I have excluded the various logics involved in the survey's online presentation; no content has been eliminated, but the progression through the survey as determined by alternate responses is omitted.

### **CONSENT**

You are being asked to participate in a study about war. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary; you may choose not to participate, or you may choose to withdraw at any time. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to read a short scenario about war, and to answer a series of approximately 15 questions. You will also be asked to provide some basic information about yourself. You will not be asked for any personally identifying information, and your participation and responses will be completely anonymous.

By selecting "yes" below, you affirm that you have been informed about this study and that your participation is voluntary.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

### **CONDITION 1: STRONG, HUMANITARIAN**

You are President of the United States. The government of a foreign country has responded with force to an ethnic uprising in its northern territories. Out of the 194 countries in the world the United States ranks 1st in military power; the foreign country ranks 6th.

The Secretary of Defense has presented a military option that he is confident can prevent a humanitarian disaster. The proposed operation would use the U.S. military to expel the foreign government's forces. It would begin with a massive air assault, followed by a ground campaign involving 575,000 U.S. troops. The Secretary reports that intelligence estimates place the foreign country's forces at approximately 320,000 troops, and describes them as being well-equipped and professionally led. The fighting would therefore be difficult, and you should expect U.S. killed, though everything possible would be done to keep this number at a minimum. Nonetheless, the sophistication and skill of the U.S. military lead him to expect the operation to be able to achieve the objective of expelling the foreign country's forces rapidly and decisively -- he cannot give you a specific timeline, but he guarantees it would not result in a prolonged occupation.

You have decided to proceed with the military operation as described by the Secretary.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Survey-Based Experiment**

#### **CONDITION 2: WEAK, HUMANITARIAN**

You are President of the United States. The government of a foreign country has responded militarily to an ethnic uprising in its northern territories. Out of the 194 countries in the world the United States ranks 1st in military power; the foreign country ranks 102nd.

The Secretary of Defense has presented a military option that he is confident can prevent a humanitarian disaster. The proposed operation would have the U.S. military expel the foreign government's forces using a total of 24,000 U.S. ground troops against the opponent's estimated 16,000. The Secretary explains that the plan takes advantage of the United States' superior personnel and equipment, night capability, and strategic surprise. This is not a surgical strike, however, and so the Secretary tells you to expect that there would be U.S. troops killed, though everything possible would be done to keep this number at a minimum. He expects the operation to be able to achieve the objective of expelling the foreign country's forces rapidly and decisively -- he cannot give you a specific timeline, but he guarantees it would not result in a prolonged occupation.

You have decided to proceed with the military operation as described by the Secretary.

#### **CONDITION 3: STRONG, NUCLEAR**

You are President of the United States. The intelligence community has informed you that the government of a foreign country is close to achieving nuclear capability. Out of the 194 countries in the world the United States ranks 1st in conventional military power; the foreign country ranks 6th.

The Secretary of Defense has presented a military option that he is confident can successfully destroy the foreign country's nuclear program. The proposed operation would begin with a massive air assault, followed by a ground campaign involving 575,000 U.S. troops. The Secretary reports that intelligence estimates place the foreign country's forces at approximately 320,000 troops, and describes them as being well-equipped and professionally led. The fighting would therefore be difficult, and you should expect U.S. killed, though everything possible would be done to keep this number at a minimum. Nonetheless, the sophistication and skill of the U.S. military lead him to expect the operation to be able to achieve the objective of destroying the foreign country's nuclear program rapidly and decisively -- he cannot give you a specific timeline, but he guarantees it would not result in a prolonged occupation.

You have decided to proceed with the military operation as described by the Secretary.

## APPENDIX B

### Survey-Based Experiment

#### CONDITION 4: WEAK, NUCLEAR

You are President of the United States. The intelligence community has informed you that the government of a foreign country is close to achieving nuclear capability. Out of the 194 countries in the world the United States ranks 1st in conventional military power; the foreign country ranks 102nd.

The Secretary of Defense has presented a military option that he is confident can successfully destroy the foreign country's nuclear program. The proposed operation uses a total of 24,000 U.S. ground troops against the opponent's estimated 16,000, and takes advantage of the United States' superior personnel and equipment, night capability, and strategic surprise. This is not a surgical strike, however, and so the Secretary tells you to expect that there would be U.S. troops killed, though everything possible would be done to keep this number at a minimum. He expects the operation to be able to achieve the objective of destroying the foreign country's nuclear program rapidly and decisively -- he cannot give you a specific timeline, but he guarantees it would not result in a prolonged occupation.

You have decided to proceed with the military operation as described by the Secretary.

#### SURVEY

How much time do you think it will take the United States to achieve the objective of **[condition]**?

- ☐ Very little time
- ☐ A moderate amount of time
- ☐ A long time

How long do you think it will take the United States to achieve the objective of **[condition]**?

- ☐ Less than 1 month
- ☐ More than 1 month but less than 3 months
- ☐ More than 3 months but less than 6 months
- ☐ More than 6 months but less than 1 year
- ☐ More than 1 year

How much do you think it will cost in U.S. lives to achieve the objective of **[condition]**?

- ☐ Very little
- ☐ A moderate amount
- ☐ A lot

How many U.S. lives do you think it will cost to achieve the objective of **[condition]**?

- ☐ Less than 1,000 U.S. lives
- ☐ More than 1,000 U.S. lives but less than 2,500 U.S. lives
- ☐ More than 2,500 U.S. lives but less than 5,000 U.S. lives
- ☐ More than 5,000 U.S. lives

The U.S. effort to **[condition]** has been underway for four months, and the United States has not yet succeeded. 3,000 U.S. troops have been killed.

## APPENDIX B

### Survey-Based Experiment

You will:

- ☐ Continue the operation with the U.S. troop commitment as-is
- ☐ Continue the operation and send additional troops
- ☐ Continue the operation but begin to withdraw some U.S. troops
- ☐ Begin to withdraw all U.S. troops
- ☐ Scale back the objective from **[condition]** to **[condition]**.

Option to scale back for the Nuclear Scenarios: "Scale back the objective from destroying the nuclear program to damaging the nuclear program.

Option to scale back for the Humanitarian Scenarios: Scale back the objective from expelling the foreign government's forces to negotiating a cease-fire.

The primary reason why you have decided to withdraw U.S. troops or to scale back the objective is:

- ☐ The conflict has cost more U.S. lives than expected
- ☐ The conflict has lasted longer than expected
- ☐ The conflict has cost more U.S. lives than achieving the objective of **[condition]** is worth
- ☐ You no longer think the United States can achieve the objective of **[condition]**
- ☐ Other

(If Other): What is the primary reason why you will withdraw U.S. troops or scale back the objective?

(If not retrenching): The primary reason why you will not scale back the objective or withdraw U.S. troops is:

- ☐ You do not want U.S. troops to have died in vain
- ☐ 3,000 U.S. lives lost is within expected levels
- ☐ Your credibility as a leader is at stake
- ☐ The benefits of achieving the objective of **[condition]** outweigh 3,000 U.S. lives lost
- ☐ Other

(If Other): What is the primary reason why you will not scale back the objective or withdraw U.S. troops?

The U.S. effort to **[condition]** has been underway for seven months, and the United States has not yet succeeded. 6,500 U.S. troops have been killed.

You will:

- ☐ Continue the operation with the U.S. troop commitment as-is
- ☐ Continue the operation and send additional troops
- ☐ Continue the operation but begin to withdraw some U.S. troops
- ☐ Begin to withdraw all U.S. troops
- ☐ Scale back the objective from **[condition]** to **[condition]**

The primary reason why you have decided to withdraw U.S. troops or to scale back the objective is:

- ☐ The conflict has cost more U.S. lives than expected

## APPENDIX B

### Survey-Based Experiment

- ☐ The conflict has lasted longer than you expected
- ☐ The conflict has cost more U.S. lives than achieving the objective of **[condition]** is worth
- ☐ You no longer think the United States can achieve the objective of **[condition]**
- ☐ Other

(If Other): What is the primary reason why you will withdraw U.S. troops or scale back the objective?

(If not retrenching): The primary reason why you will not scale back the objective or withdraw U.S. troops is:

- ☐ The benefits of achieving the objective of **[condition]** outweigh 6,500 U.S. lives lost
- ☐ 6,500 U.S. lives lost is within expected levels
- ☐ You do not want U.S. troops to have died in vain
- ☐ Your credibility as a leader is at stake
- ☐ Other

(If Other): What is the primary reason why you will not scale back the objective or withdraw U.S. troops?

(If selected "You do not want U.S. troops to have died in vain): Is there a number of U.S. killed that would lead you to scale back the objective or withdraw troops?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

(If No): What is the primary reason why there is not a number of U.S. killed that would lead you to scale back the objective or withdraw troops?

(If Yes): What is the number of U.S. killed that would lead you to scale back the objective or withdraw troops?

(If selected "You no longer think the U.S. can succeed"): The primary reason why you believe the United States cannot achieve the objective of **[condition]** is:

- ☐ You now believe the foreign military will defeat the U.S. military.
- ☐ You now believe that **[condition]** will cost more in U.S. lives than you are willing to pay.
- ☐ You now believe that succeeding in **[condition]** will cost more in U.S. lives than the U.S. public is willing to pay.
- ☐ Other

(If Other): What is the primary reason why you believe the United States cannot achieve the objective of **[condition]**?

The benefits of succeeding in **[condition]** are:

- ☐ Very small
- ☐ Small
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Large
- ☐ Very large

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Survey-Based Experiment**

The benefits of succeeding in **[condition]** are worth:

- ☐ Less than 1,000 U.S. lives
- ☐ More than 1,000 U.S. lives but less than 3,000 U.S. lives
- ☐ More than 3,000 U.S. lives but less than 6,500 U.S. lives
- ☐ More than 6,500 U.S. lives but less than 10,000 U.S. lives
- ☐ More than 10,000 U.S. lives



**APPENDIX C: THE DATASETS**  
*Full Set of Conflict Participants*

	<u>Conflict</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Start Year</u>	<u>Multipolar System</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
1	Russia vs. Georgians	RUS	1816	Yes	Win
2	British-Kandyan	UKG	1817	Yes	Win
3	British-Maratha	UKG	1817	Yes	Win
4	First Caucasus	RUS	1818	Yes	Win
5	First British-Burmese	UKG	1823	Yes	Win
6	First British-Ashanti	UKG	1824	Yes	Win
7	British-Bharatpuran	UKG	1825	Yes	Win
8	Dutch-Japanese	NTH	1825	Yes	Win
9	Russia vs. Circasians	RUS	1829	Yes	Win
10	First Murid War	RUS	1830	Yes	Win
11	Netherlands vs. Belgians	FRN	1830	Yes	Loss
12	Netherlands vs. Belgians	NTH	1830	Yes	Loss
13	Netherlands vs. Belgians	UKG	1830	Yes	Loss
14	Ottoman Empire vs. Albanians	TUR	1830	Yes	Win
15	First Polish	RUS	1831	Yes	Win
16	Ottoman Empire vs. Egyptians (First Syrian)	TUR	1831	Yes	Loss
17	Mexico vs. Texans	MEX	1835	Yes	Loss
18	British-Afghan of 1838	UKG	1838	Yes	Win
19	First British-Zulu	UKG	1838	Yes	Loss
20	First British-Afghan	UKG	1839	Yes	Loss
21	First Franco-Algerian	FRN	1839	Yes	Win
22	Ottoman Empire vs. Bosnians of 1841	TUR	1841	Yes	Win
23	British-Sind	UKG	1843	Yes	Win
24	Franco-Moroccan	FRN	1844	Yes	Win
25	First British-Sikh	UKG	1845	Yes	Win
26	Cracow Revolt	AUH	1846	Yes	Win
27	Cracow Revolt	GMV	1846	Yes	Win
28	First British-Xhosa	UKG	1846	Yes	Win
29	Austro-Sardinian	AUH	1848	Yes	Win
30	Austro-Sardinian	ITA	1848	Yes	Loss
31	Austro-Sardinian	MOD	1848	Yes	Loss
32	Austro-Sardinian	TUS	1848	Yes	Loss
33	First Schleswig-Holstein	GMV	1848	Yes	Win
34	First Schleswig-Holstein	DEN	1848	Yes	Loss
35	Second British-Sikh	UKG	1848	Yes	Win
36	Roman Republic	AUH	1849	Yes	Win
37	Roman Republic	FRN	1849	Yes	Win
38	Roman Republic	SIC	1849	Yes	Win
39	Roman Republic	PAP	1849	Yes	Loss
40	Hungarian	RUS	1849	Yes	Win
41	Second British-Xhosa	UKG	1850	Yes	Win
42	La Plata	BRA	1851	Yes	Win
43	La Plata	ARG	1851	Yes	Loss
44	Ottoman Empire vs. Montenegrins of 1852	TUR	1852	Yes	Loss
45	Second British-Burmese	UKG	1852	Yes	Win
46	Crimean	RUS	1853	Yes	Loss
47	Crimean	FRN	1854	Yes	Win
48	Crimean	UKG	1854	Yes	Win
49	French-Tukulor War	FRN	1854	Yes	Loss
50	Crimean	ITA	1855	Yes	Win

# APPENDIX C: THE DATASETS

## *Full Set of Conflict Participants*

51	Anglo-Persian	UKG	1856	Yes	Win
52	Anglo-Persian	IRN	1856	Yes	Loss
53	French Conquest of Kabylia	FRN	1856	Yes	Win
54	Second Opium	FRN	1856	Yes	Win
55	Second Opium	UKG	1856	Yes	Win
57	(Tukolor) Franco-Senegalese of 1857	FRN	1857	Yes	Win
58	First Franco-Vietnamese	FRN	1858	Yes	Win
59	Spanish-Moroccan	SPN	1859	Yes	Win
60	Spanish-Moroccan	MOR	1859	Yes	Loss
61	Italo-Roman	ITA	1860	Yes	Win
62	Italo-Roman	PAP	1860	Yes	Loss
63	China vs. Niens	CHN	1860	Yes	Win
64	China vs. Taipings	CHN	1860	Yes	Win
65	Franco-Mexican	MEX	1862	Yes	Win
66	Franco-Mexican	FRN	1862	Yes	Loss
67	China vs. Taipings	UKG	1862	Yes	Win
68	Second Polish	RUS	1863	Yes	Win
69	British-Maori	UKG	1863	Yes	Win
70	Spanish-Santo Dominican	SPN	1863	Yes	Loss
71	Lopez	BRA	1864	Yes	Win
72	Lopez	PAR	1864	Yes	Loss
73	Second Schleswig-Holstein	AUH	1864	Yes	Win
74	Second Schleswig-Holstein	GMV	1864	Yes	Win
75	Second Schleswig-Holstein	DEN	1864	Yes	Loss
76	Lopez	ARG	1865	Yes	Win
77	Spanish-Chilean	CHL	1865	Yes	Win
78	Spanish-Chilean	SPN	1865	Yes	Loss
79	British-Bhutanese	UKG	1865	Yes	Win
80	Seven Weeks	GMV	1866	Yes	Win
81	Seven Weeks	ITA	1866	Yes	Win
82	Spanish-Chilean	PER	1866	Yes	Win
83	Ottoman Empire vs. Cretans of 1866	TUR	1866	Yes	Win
84	(Ten Years) Spanish-Cuban of 1868	SPN	1868	Yes	Win
85	Second Franco-Algerian	FRN	1871	Yes	Win
86	Dutch-Achinese	NTH	1873	Yes	Win
87	Franco-Tonkin	FRN	1873	Yes	Win
88	Second British-Ashanti	UKG	1873	Yes	Win
89	Second Russo-Turkish	RUS	1877	Yes	Win
90	Third British-Xhosa	UKG	1877	Yes	Win
91	Russo-Turkoman	RUS	1878	Yes	Win
92	Second British-Afghan	UKG	1878	Yes	Win
93	Second British-Zulu	UKG	1879	Yes	Win
94	First Boer War	UKG	1880	Yes	Loss
95	Boer War of 1880	UKG	1880	Yes	Win
96	Gun War	UKG	1880	Yes	Win
97	First British-Mahdi	UKG	1881	Yes	Loss
98	Franco-Tunisian	FRN	1881	Yes	Win
99	Third Franco-Vietnamese	FRN	1882	Yes	Loss
100	First Franco-Madagascar	FRN	1883	Yes	Win
101	Sino-French	FRN	1884	Yes	Loss
102	Sino-French	CHN	1884	Yes	Loss
103	French-Mandinka	FRN	1885	Yes	Win
104	Russo-Afghan	RUS	1885	Yes	Loss

# **APPENDIX C: THE DATASETS** *Full Set of Conflict Participants*

105	Third British-Burmese	UKG	1885	Yes	Win
106	First Italian-Ethiopian	ITA	1887	Yes	Loss
107	Ottoman Empire vs. Cretans of 1888	TUR	1888	Yes	Win
108	Franco-Dahomeyan	FRN	1889	Yes	Win
109	First Franco-Dahomeyan	FRN	1890	Yes	Win
110	Belgian-Congolese	BEL	1892	Yes	Win
111	Second Franco-Dahomeyan	FRN	1892	Yes	Win
112	Franco-Thai	FRN	1893	Yes	Win
113	Franco-Thai	THI	1893	Yes	Loss
114	Third British-Ashanti	UKG	1893	Yes	Win
115	Sino-Japanese	JPN	1894	Yes	Win
116	Sino-Japanese	CHN	1894	Yes	Loss
117	Dutch-Balian	NTH	1894	Yes	Win
118	Second Franco-Madagascan	FRN	1894	Yes	Win
119	Japan-Taiwanese	JPN	1895	Yes	Win
120	Second Italian-Ethiopian	ITA	1895	Yes	Loss
121	Spanish-Cuban of 1895	SPN	1895	Yes	Loss
122	Ottoman Empire vs. Cretans of 1896	TUR	1896	Yes	Win
123	Ottoman Empire vs. Druze	TUR	1896	Yes	Win
124	(Sudanese War) Mahdi Uprising	FRN	1896	Yes	Win
125	(Sudanese War) Mahdi Uprising	UKG	1896	Yes	Win
126	Spanish-Philippino of 1896	SPN	1896	Yes	Win
127	Greco-Turkish	TUR	1897	Yes	Win
128	Greco-Turkish	GRC	1897	Yes	Loss
129	British-South Nigerian	UKG	1897	Yes	Win
130	Indian Muslim	UKG	1897	Yes	Win
131	Hut Tax	UKG	1898	Yes	Win
132	American-Philippino	USA	1899	Yes	Win
133	Second Boer War	UKG	1899	Yes	Win
134	Somali Rebellion	UKG	1899	Yes	Win
135	Sino-Russian	RUS	1900	Yes	Win
136	Sino-Russian	CHN	1900	Yes	Loss
137	Somali Rebellion	UKG	1901	Yes	Win
138	Ottoman Empire vs. VMRO Rebels (Ilinden)	TUR	1903	Yes	Win
139	Russo-Japanese	JPN	1904	Yes	Win
140	Russo-Japanese	RUS	1904	Yes	Loss
141	South West African Revolt	GMV	1904	Yes	Win
142	Maji-Maji Revolt	GMV	1905	Yes	Win
143	Third British-Zulu	UKG	1906	Yes	Win
144	Spanish-Moroccan	SPN	1909	Yes	Win
145	Spanish-Moroccan	MOR	1909	Yes	Loss
146	First Moroccan	FRN	1911	Yes	Win
147	First Moroccan	SPN	1911	Yes	Win
148	First Balkan	BUL	1912	Yes	Win
149	First Balkan	GRC	1912	Yes	Win
150	First Balkan	YUG	1912	Yes	Win
151	First Balkan	TUR	1912	Yes	Loss
152	Sino-Tibetan of 1912	CHN	1912	Yes	Loss
153	Second Moroccan	FRN	1916	Yes	Win
154	Second Moroccan	SPN	1916	Yes	Win
155	China vs. Yunnan Rebels	CHN	1917	Yes	Win
156	Sino-Tibetan of 1918	CHN	1918	Yes	Loss
157	Franco-Turkish	FRN	1919	Yes	Loss

# **APPENDIX C: THE DATASETS** *Full Set of Conflict Participants*

158	Franco-Turkish	TUR	1919	Yes	Win
159	Hungarian-Allies	CZE	1919	Yes	Win
160	Hungarian-Allies	RUM	1919	Yes	Win
161	Hungarian-Allies	HUN	1919	Yes	Loss
162	Russo-Polish	POL	1919	Yes	Win
163	Russo-Polish	RUS	1919	Yes	Loss
164	Third British-Afghan	UKG	1919	Yes	Loss
165	Lithuanian-Polish	POL	1920	Yes	Win
166	Lithuanian-Polish	LIT	1920	Yes	Loss
167	(Sanusi) Italo-Libyan	ITA	1920	Yes	Win
168	Franco-Syrian	FRN	1920	Yes	Win
169	Iraqi-British	UKG	1920	Yes	Win
170	Riff Rebellion	SPN	1921	Yes	Win
171	Italian-Sanusi	ITA	1923	Yes	Win
172	Franco-Druze	FRN	1925	Yes	Win
173	Rif Rebellion	FRN	1925	Yes	Win
174	China vs. Muslims of 1928	CHN	1928	Yes	Win
175	China vs. Communists of 1930	CHN	1930	Yes	Win
176	Manchurian	JPN	1931	Yes	Win
177	Manchurian	CHN	1931	Yes	Loss
178	Russia vs. Central Asian Rebels	RUS	1931	Yes	Win
179	Italo-Ethiopian	ITA	1935	Yes	Win
180	Italo-Ethiopian	ETH	1935	Yes	Loss
181	Third Sino-Japanese	CHN	1937	Yes	Loss
182	Third Sino-Japanese	JPN	1937	Yes	Win
183	Changkufeng	RUS	1938	Yes	Win
184	Changkufeng	JPN	1938	Yes	Loss
185	Nomonhan	RUS	1939	Yes	Win
186	Nomonhan	JPN	1939	Yes	Loss
187	Russo-Finnish	RUS	1939	Yes	Win
188	Franco-Thai	THI	1940	Yes	Win
189	Franco-Thai	FRN	1940	Yes	Loss
190	Re-occupy Vietnam post-WWII	FRN	1945	Yes	Win
191	Indonesian	UKG	1945	Yes	Loss
192	French-Indochina	FRN	1946	No	Loss
193	Re-claim Laos post-WWII	FRN	1946	No	Win
194	Third Franco-Madagascan	FRN	1947	No	Win
195	First Kashmir	IND	1948	No	Win
196	First Kashmir	PAK	1948	No	Win
197	Palestine	ISR	1948	No	Win
198	Palestine	EGY	1948	No	Loss
199	Palestine	IRQ	1948	No	Loss
200	Palestine	JOR	1948	No	Loss
201	Palestine	LEB	1948	No	Loss
202	Palestine	SYR	1948	No	Loss
203	Indo-Hyderabad	IND	1948	No	Win
204	Malayan Rebellion	UKG	1948	No	Win
205	Korean	AUL	1950	No	Loss
206	Korean	CAN	1950	No	Loss
207	Korean	PHI	1950	No	Loss
208	Korean	ROK	1950	No	Loss
209	Korean	TUR	1950	No	Loss
210	Korean	CHN	1950	No	Win

**APPENDIX C: THE DATASETS**  
*Full Set of Conflict Participants*

211	Korean	PRK	1950	No	Win
212	Korean	UKG	1950	No	Loss
213	Korean	USA	1950	No	Loss
214	Philippines vs. Huks	PHI	1950	No	Win
215	Sino-Tibetan of 1950	CHN	1950	No	Win
216	Korean	BEL	1951	No	Loss
217	Korean	COL	1951	No	Loss
218	Korean	ETH	1951	No	Loss
219	Korean	GRC	1951	No	Loss
220	Korean	NTH	1951	No	Loss
221	Korean	THI	1951	No	Loss
222	Korean	FRN	1951	No	Loss
223	British-Mau Mau	UKG	1952	No	Win
224	Franco-Tunisian	FRN	1952	No	Loss
225	Intervention in Guyana	UKG	1953	No	Loss
226	Moroccan Independence	SPN	1953	No	Loss
227	Moroccan Independence	FRN	1953	No	Loss
228	Third Franco-Algerian	FRN	1954	No	Loss
229	Resist Enosis Campaign	UKG	1955	No	Loss
230	Cameroon	UKG	1955	No	Loss
231	Bahrain riots	UKG	1956	No	Win
232	Russo-Hungarian	RUS	1956	No	Win
233	Russo-Hungarian	HUN	1956	No	Loss
234	Sinai	FRN	1956	No	Win
235	Sinai	ISR	1956	No	Win
236	Sinai	UKG	1956	No	Win
237	Sinai	EGY	1956	No	Loss
238	Suez Crisis 1956 (Sinai War)	UKG	1956	No	Loss
239	China vs. Tibetans	CHN	1956	No	Win
240	Cameroun Independence	FRN	1957	No	Win
241	Operation Blue Bat	USA	1958	No	Win
242	Protect Hussein/ Nasserism	UKG	1958	No	Win
243	Cuba vs. Castroites	CUB	1958	No	Loss
244	Republic of Vietnam vs. NLF	RVN	1960	No	Loss
245	Zaire vs. Katanga & Leftists (Congo)	BEL	1960	No	Win
246	Zaire vs. Katanga & Leftists (Congo)	ZAI	1960	No	Win
247	Cameroun Independence II	FRN	1960	No	Win
248	Battle of Bizerte	FRN	1961	No	Loss
249	Iraq vs. Kurds of 1961	IRQ	1961	No	Win
250	Republic of Vietnam vs. NLF	USA	1961	No	Loss
251	Angolan-Portugese	POR	1961	No	Loss
252	Brunei Rebellion	UKG	1962	No	Win
253	Guinean-Portugese	POR	1962	No	Loss
254	Cypriot Civil War	UKG	1963	No	Loss
255	Mozambique-Portugese	POR	1964	No	Loss
256	Operation Power Pack	USA	1965	No	Win
257	Second Kashmir	PAK	1965	No	Win
258	Second Kashmir	IND	1965	No	Loss
259	Vietnam War, Phase 2	USA	1965	No	Loss
260	Vietnamese	DRV	1965	No	Win
261	Vietnamese	AUL	1965	No	Loss
262	Vietnamese	ROK	1965	No	Loss
263	Vietnamese	RVN	1965	No	Loss

**APPENDIX C: THE DATASETS**  
*Full Set of Conflict Participants*

264	Vietnamese	PHI	1966	No	Loss
265	Six Day	ISR	1967	No	Win
266	Six Day	EGY	1967	No	Loss
267	Six Day	JOR	1967	No	Loss
268	Six Day	SYR	1967	No	Loss
269	Vietnamese	THI	1967	No	Loss
270	Prague Spring	RUS	1968	No	Loss
271	Israeli-Egyptian	ISR	1969	No	Win
272	Israeli-Egyptian	EGY	1969	No	Loss
273	Vietnamese	CAM	1970	No	Loss
274	Bangladesh	IND	1971	No	Win
275	Bangladesh	PAK	1971	No	Loss
276	Sudanese Civil War	RUS	1971	No	Loss
277	Philippines vs. Moros	PHI	1972	No	Win
278	Kurdish Rebellion 1974-1975	RUS	1973	No	Win
279	Kurdish Rebellion 1974-1975	RUS	1973	No	Win
280	Yom Kippur	ISR	1973	No	Win
281	Yom Kippur	EGY	1973	No	Loss
282	Yom Kippur	IRQ	1973	No	Loss
283	Yom Kippur	JOR	1973	No	Loss
284	Yom Kippur	SAU	1973	No	Loss
285	Yom Kippur	SYR	1973	No	Loss
286	Turco-Cypriot	TUR	1974	No	Win
287	Turco-Cypriot	CYP	1974	No	Loss
288	Ethiopia vs. Eritrean Rebels	ETH	1974	No	Loss
289	Iraq vs. Kurds of 1974	IRN	1974	No	Win
290	Iraq vs. Kurds of 1974	IRQ	1974	No	Win
291	Vietnamese-Cambodian	DRV	1975	No	Win
292	Vietnamese-Cambodian	CAM	1975	No	Loss
293	East Timorese	INS	1975	No	Win
294	Ethiopia vs. Eritrean Rebels	CUB	1976	No	Loss
295	Assert Presence	UKG	1977	No	Win
296	Ethiopian-Somalian	CUB	1977	No	Win
297	Ethiopian-Somalian	ETH	1977	No	Win
298	Ethiopian-Somalian	SOM	1977	No	Loss
299	Operation Tacaud	FRN	1978	No	Win
300	Afghanistan vs. Mujahedin	AFG	1978	No	Loss
301	Operation Barracuda	FRN	1979	No	Win
302	Sino-Vietnamese	CHN	1979	No	Win
303	Sino-Vietnamese	DRV	1979	No	Loss
304	Afghanistan vs. Mujahedin	RUS	1979	No	Loss
305	Soviet Quagmire	RUS	1980	No	Loss
306	Lebanese Civil War Involvement	USA	1982	No	Loss
307	Peru vs. Shining Path	PER	1982	No	Win
308	Operation Urgent Fury	USA	1983	No	Win
309	Support Habre/Operation Manta	FRN	1983	No	Loss
310	Sri Lanka vs. Tamils	SRI	1983	No	Loss
311	Support Habre/ Operation Epervier	FRN	1986	No	Win
312	Sino-Vietnamese	CHN	1987	No	Loss
313	Sino-Vietnamese	DRV	1987	No	Win
314	Sri Lanka vs. Tamils	IND	1987	No	Loss
315	Operation Just Cause	USA	1989	No	Win
316	Gulf War	KUW	1990	No	Win

## APPENDIX C: THE DATASETS

### *Full Set of Conflict Participants*

317	Gulf War	IRQ	1990	No	Loss
318	Gulf War	CAN	1991	No	Win
319	Gulf War	EGY	1991	No	Win
320	Gulf War	FRN	1991	No	Win
321	Gulf War	ITA	1991	No	Win
322	Gulf War	MOR	1991	No	Win
323	Gulf War	OMA	1991	No	Win
324	Gulf War	QAT	1991	No	Win
325	Gulf War	SAU	1991	No	Win
326	Gulf War	SYR	1991	No	Win
327	Gulf War	UAE	1991	No	Win
328	Gulf War	UKG	1991	No	Win
329	Gulf War	USA	1991	No	Win
330	Operation Epervier II	FRN	1991	No	Win
331	Turkey vs. Kurds	TUR	1991	No	Win
332	Yugoslavia/Serbia vs. Croats	YUG	1991	No	Loss
333	Operation Restore Hope (UNITAF)	USA	1992	No	Loss
334	Operation Continue Hope (UNOSOM)	USA	1993	No	Loss
335	First Chechnya	RUS	1994	No	Loss
336	Russia vs. Chechens	RUS	1994	No	Win
337	Comoros Coup II	FRN	1995	No	Win
338	Invasion of Afghanistan	FRN	2001	No	Loss
339	Invasion of Afghanistan	UKG	2001	No	Loss
340	Invasion of Afghanistan	USA	2001	No	Loss
341	Invasion of Iraq	UKG	2003	No	Loss
342	Invasion of Iraq	USA	2003	No	Loss

**APPENDIX C: THE DATASETS**  
*Great Power Set of Conflict Participants*

	<u>Conflict</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Start Year</u>	<u>Multipolar System</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
1	Russia vs. Georgians	RUS	1816	Yes	Win
2	British-Kandyan	UKG	1817	Yes	Win
3	British-Maratha	UKG	1817	Yes	Win
4	First Caucasus	RUS	1818	Yes	Win
5	First British-Burmese	UKG	1823	Yes	Win
6	First British-Ashanti	UKG	1824	Yes	Win
7	British-Bharatpuran	UKG	1825	Yes	Win
8	Russia vs. Circasians	RUS	1829	Yes	Win
9	First Murid War	RUS	1830	Yes	Win
10	Netherlands vs. Belgians	FRN	1830	Yes	Loss
11	Netherlands vs. Belgians	UKG	1830	Yes	Loss
12	First Polish	RUS	1831	Yes	Win
13	British-Afghan of 1838	UKG	1838	Yes	Win
14	First British-Zulu	UKG	1838	Yes	Loss
15	First British-Afghan	UKG	1839	Yes	Loss
16	First Franco-Algerian	FRN	1839	Yes	Win
17	British-Sind	UKG	1843	Yes	Win
18	Franco-Moroccan	FRN	1844	Yes	Win
19	First British-Sikh	UKG	1845	Yes	Win
20	Cracow Revolt	AUH	1846	Yes	Win
21	Cracow Revolt	GMY	1846	Yes	Win
22	First British-Xhosa	UKG	1846	Yes	Win
23	Austro-Sardinian	AUH	1848	Yes	Win
24	Austro-Sardinian	ITA	1848	Yes	Loss
25	First Schleswig-Holstein	GMY	1848	Yes	Win
26	Second British-Sikh	UKG	1848	Yes	Win
27	Roman Republic	AUH	1849	Yes	Win
28	Roman Republic	FRN	1849	Yes	Win
29	Hungarian	RUS	1849	Yes	Win
30	Second British-Xhosa	UKG	1850	Yes	Win
31	Second British-Burmese	UKG	1852	Yes	Win
32	Crimean	RUS	1853	Yes	Loss
33	Crimean	FRN	1854	Yes	Win
34	Crimean	UKG	1854	Yes	Win
35	French-Tukulor War	FRN	1854	Yes	Loss
36	Crimean	ITA	1855	Yes	Win
37	Anglo-Persian	UKG	1856	Yes	Win
38	French Conquest of Kabylia	FRN	1856	Yes	Win
39	Second Opium	FRN	1856	Yes	Win
40	Second Opium	UKG	1856	Yes	Win
42	(Tukulor) Franco-Senegalese of 1857	FRN	1857	Yes	Win
43	First Franco-Vietnamese	FRN	1858	Yes	Win
44	Italo-Roman	ITA	1860	Yes	Win
45	Franco-Mexican	FRN	1862	Yes	Loss
46	China vs. Taipings	UKG	1862	Yes	Win
47	Second Polish	RUS	1863	Yes	Win
48	British-Maori	UKG	1863	Yes	Win
49	Second Schleswig-Holstein	AUH	1864	Yes	Win
50	Second Schleswig-Holstein	GMY	1864	Yes	Win
51	British-Bhutanese	UKG	1865	Yes	Win



**APPENDIX C: THE DATASETS**  
*Great Power Set of Conflict Participants*

52	Seven Weeks	GMY	1866	Yes	Win
53	Seven Weeks	ITA	1866	Yes	Win
54	Second Franco-Algerian	FRN	1871	Yes	Win
55	Franco-Tonkin	FRN	1873	Yes	Win
56	Second British-Ashanti	UKG	1873	Yes	Win
57	Second Russo-Turkish	RUS	1877	Yes	Win
58	Third British-Xhosa	UKG	1877	Yes	Win
59	Russo-Turkoman	RUS	1878	Yes	Win
60	Second British-Afghan	UKG	1878	Yes	Win
61	Second British-Zulu	UKG	1879	Yes	Win
62	First Boer War	UKG	1880	Yes	Loss
63	Boer War of 1880	UKG	1880	Yes	Win
64	Gun War	UKG	1880	Yes	Win
65	First British-Mahdi	UKG	1881	Yes	Loss
66	Franco-Tunisian	FRN	1881	Yes	Win
67	Third Franco-Vietnamese	FRN	1882	Yes	Loss
68	First Franco-Madagascan	FRN	1883	Yes	Win
69	Sino-French	FRN	1884	Yes	Loss
70	French-Mandinka	FRN	1885	Yes	Win
71	Russo-Afghan	RUS	1885	Yes	Loss
72	Third British-Burmese	UKG	1885	Yes	Win
73	First Italian-Ethiopian	ITA	1887	Yes	Loss
74	Franco-Dahomeyan	FRN	1889	Yes	Win
75	First Franco-Dahomeyan	FRN	1890	Yes	Win
76	Second Franco-Dahomeyan	FRN	1892	Yes	Win
77	Franco-Thai	FRN	1893	Yes	Win
78	Third British-Ashanti	UKG	1893	Yes	Win
79	Sino-Japanese	JPN	1894	Yes	Win
80	Second Franco-Madagascan	FRN	1894	Yes	Win
81	Japan-Taiwanese	JPN	1895	Yes	Win
82	Second Italian-Ethiopian	ITA	1895	Yes	Loss
83	(Sudanese War) Mahdi Uprising	FRN	1896	Yes	Win
84	(Sudanese War) Mahdi Uprising	UKG	1896	Yes	Win
85	British-South Nigerian	UKG	1897	Yes	Win
86	Indian Muslim	UKG	1897	Yes	Win
87	Hut Tax	UKG	1898	Yes	Win
88	American-Philippino	USA	1899	Yes	Win
89	Second Boer War	UKG	1899	Yes	Win
90	Somali Rebellion	UKG	1899	Yes	Win
91	Sino-Russian	RUS	1900	Yes	Win
92	Somali Rebellion	UKG	1901	Yes	Win
93	Russo-Japanese	JPN	1904	Yes	Win
94	Russo-Japanese	RUS	1904	Yes	Loss
95	South West African Revolt	GMY	1904	Yes	Win
96	Maji-Maji Revolt	GMY	1905	Yes	Win
97	Third British-Zulu	UKG	1906	Yes	Win
98	First Moroccan	FRN	1911	Yes	Win
99	Second Moroccan	FRN	1916	Yes	Win
100	Franco-Turkish	FRN	1919	Yes	Loss
101	Russo-Polish	RUS	1919	Yes	Loss
102	Third British-Afghan	UKG	1919	Yes	Loss
103	(Sanusi) Italo-Libyan	ITA	1920	Yes	Win
104	Franco-Syrian	FRN	1920	Yes	Win

**APPENDIX C: THE DATASETS**  
*Great Power Set of Conflict Participants*

105	Iraqi-British	UKG	1920	Yes	Win
106	Franco-Druze	FRN	1925	Yes	Win
107	Rif Rebellion	FRN	1925	Yes	Win
108	Manchurian	JPN	1931	Yes	Win
109	Russia vs. Central Asian Rebels	RUS	1931	Yes	Win
110	Italo-Ethiopian	ITA	1935	Yes	Win
111	Third Sino-Japanese	JPN	1937	Yes	Win
112	Changkufeng	RUS	1938	Yes	Win
113	Changkufeng	JPN	1938	Yes	Loss
114	Nomonhan	RUS	1939	Yes	Win
115	Nomonhan	JPN	1939	Yes	Loss
116	Russo-Finnish	RUS	1939	Yes	Win
117	Franco-Thai	FRN	1940	Yes	Loss
118	Re-occupy Vietnam post-WWII	FRN	1945	Yes	Win
119	Indonesian	UKG	1945	Yes	Loss
120	French-Indochina	FRN	1946	No	Loss
121	Re-claim Laos post-WWII	FRN	1946	No	Win
122	Third Franco-Madagascan	FRN	1947	No	Win
123	Malayan Rebellion	UKG	1948	No	Win
124	Korean	UKG	1950	No	Loss
125	Korean	USA	1950	No	Loss
126	Korean	FRN	1951	No	Loss
127	British-Mau Mau	UKG	1952	No	Win
128	Franco-Tunisian	FRN	1952	No	Loss
129	Intervention in Guyana	UKG	1953	No	Loss
130	Moroccan Independence	FRN	1953	No	Loss
131	Third Franco-Algerian	FRN	1954	No	Loss
132	Resist Enosis Campaign	UKG	1955	No	Loss
133	Cameroon	UKG	1955	No	Loss
134	Bahrain riots	UKG	1956	No	Win
135	Russo-Hungarian	RUS	1956	No	Win
136	Sinai	FRN	1956	No	Win
137	Sinai	UKG	1956	No	Win
138	Suez Crisis 1956 (Sinai War)	UKG	1956	No	Loss
139	Cameroun Independence	FRN	1957	No	Win
140	Operation Blue Bat	USA	1958	No	Win
141	Protect Hussein/ Nasserism	UKG	1958	No	Win
142	Cameroun Independence II	FRN	1960	No	Win
143	Battle of Bizerte	FRN	1961	No	Loss
144	Republic of Vietnam vs. NLF	USA	1961	No	Loss
145	Brunei Rebellion	UKG	1962	No	Win
146	Cypriot Civil War	UKG	1963	No	Loss
147	Operation Power Pack	USA	1965	No	Win
148	Vietnam War, Phase 2	USA	1965	No	Loss
149	Prague Spring	RUS	1968	No	Loss
150	Sudanese Civil War	RUS	1971	No	Loss
151	Kurdish Rebellion 1974-1975	RUS	1973	No	Win
152	Kurdish Rebellion 1974-1975	RUS	1973	No	Win
153	Assert Presence	UKG	1977	No	Win
154	Operation Tacaud	FRN	1978	No	Win
155	Operation Barracuda	FRN	1979	No	Win
156	Afghanistan vs. Mujahedin	RUS	1979	No	Loss
157	Soviet Quagmire	RUS	1980	No	Loss

**APPENDIX C: THE DATASETS**  
*Great Power Set of Conflict Participants*

158	Lebanese Civil War Involvement	USA	1982	No	Loss
159	Operation Urgent Fury	USA	1983	No	Win
160	Support Habre/Operation Manta	FRN	1983	No	Loss
161	Support Habre/ Operation Epervier	FRN	1986	No	Win
162	Operation Just Cause	USA	1989	No	Win
163	Gulf War	FRN	1991	No	Win
164	Gulf War	ITA	1991	No	Win
165	Gulf War	UKG	1991	No	Win
166	Gulf War	USA	1991	No	Win
167	Operation Epervier II	FRN	1991	No	Win
168	Operation Restore Hope (UNITAF)	USA	1992	No	Loss
169	Operation Continue Hope (UNOSOM)	USA	1993	No	Loss
170	First Chechnya	RUS	1994	No	Loss
171	Russia vs. Chechens	RUS	1994	No	Win
172	Comoros Coup II	FRN	1995	No	Win
173	Invasion of Afghanistan	FRN	2001	No	Loss
174	Invasion of Afghanistan	UKG	2001	No	Loss
175	Invasion of Afghanistan	USA	2001	No	Loss
176	Invasion of Iraq	UKG	2003	No	Loss
177	Invasion of Iraq	USA	2003	No	Loss