International Studies Perspectives (2005) **6**, 208–234.

Simplicity and Spook: Terrorism and the Dynamics of Threat Exaggeration

JOHN MUELLER
Ohio State University

It has been common, at least since 1945, to exaggerate and to overreact to foreign threats, something that seems to be continuing with current concerns over international terrorism. This paper sketches threat exaggeration during the Cold War and applies the experience from that era to the current one. Alarmism and overreaction can be harmful, particularly economically. And, in the case of terrorism, it can help create the damaging consequences the terrorists seek but are unable to perpetrate on their own. Moreover, many of the forms alarmism has taken verge on hysteria. The United States is hardly "vulnerable" in the sense that it can be toppled by dramatic acts of terrorist destruction, even extreme ones. The country can, however grimly, readily absorb that kind of damage, and it has outlasted considerably more potent threats in the past.

Keywords: terrorism, threat perception, weapons of mass destruction

---

"At the summit of foreign policy," Warner Schilling once observed, "one always finds simplicity and spook." This observation was triggered by a consideration of the process by which Japan and the United States managed to go to war with each other in 1941. Japan, he notes, launched war on the vague, unexamined hope that the United States would seek a compromise peace after being attacked, "a hope nourished in their despair at the alternatives." Meanwhile, "the American opposition to Japan rested on the dubious proposition that the loss of Southeast Asia could prove disastrous for Britain's war effort and for the commitment to maintain the territorial integrity of China—a commitment as mysterious in its logic as anything the Japanese ever conceived." And at no time, he notes, did American leaders "perplex themselves with the question of just how much American blood and treasure the defense of China and Southeast Asia was worth" (Schilling, 1965:389; see also Russett, 1972; Mueller, 1995:101–110).

It has been common, at least since 1945, for the United States to exaggerate foreign threats, and then to overreact to them, something that seems to be continuing with current concerns over international terrorism. Some of this proclivity may derive from the experience with Japan before World War II: there may have been a tendency to underestimate its capacity and its willingness to take risks, and the traumatic experience of Pearl Harbor led to embracing the over-learned lesson never to do that again.[1] It may also have derived from underestimates of Hitler in

[1]Thus, Albert Wohlstetter's highly influential thesis that the balance of power was "delicate"" rested on the assumption that the Soviet enemy could potentially come to be as clever, lucky, diabolical, and desperate as Japan was in 1941, a thesis conveniently embellished by recommendations for his wife's excellent book on Pearl Harbor (Wohlstetter (1959), and seminars conducted by him at UCLA in the early 1960s; Wohlstetter (1962)).

© 2005 International Studies Association.
Published by Blackwell Publishing, 350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148, USA, and 9600 Garsington Road, Oxford OX4 2DQ, UK

the 1930s—underestimates, however, that were inspired in part and in turn by the exaggerated an assumption that the next war would lead to human annihilation, an assumption that led to the logical conclusion that Hitler could not possibly be willing to risk one (see Mueller, 1989:ch. 3). There is danger in overlearning, and as Robert Jervis has suggested, "those who remember the past are condemned to making the opposite mistakes" (1976:275).

This article sketches threat exaggeration during the Cold War and extends that experience to the current era.

Threat Exaggeration During the Cold War

During the Cold War, it seems clear in hindsight, the United States and sometimes its allies persistently and often vastly exaggerated both the capacity of international Communism to inflict damage in carrying out its threatening revolutionary goals and its willingness to accept risk to do so.

The results of the exaggeration—or proclivity to err on the safe side—were economically and occasionally militarily costly, and they were often emotionally draining.

The Threat

None of this is to deny that Communism, a coordinated, conspiratorial, subversive, revolutionary, and state–based international movement, did pose a threat. According to its core ideology, it was out to destroy capitalism and democracy. Moreover, it explicitly and repeatedly declared that violence—in particular, revolutionary violence—would be required to accomplish this central goal. There has been a considerable debate about the degree to which ideology actually impelled Soviet policy.[2] However, over the decades prominent Soviet leaders repeatedly made statements like the following:

> Lenin: "The existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with the imperialist states for a long time is unthinkable. One or the other must triumph in the end. And before that end supervenes, a series of frightful collisions between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states will be inevitable" (Burin, 1963:337).
>
> Lenin: "As soon as we are strong enough to fight the whole of capitalism, we shall at once take it by the neck" (Leffler, 1994:17).
>
> Stalin: "The goal is to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country, using it as a base for the overthrow of imperialism in all countries" (Historicus, 1949:198).
>
> Stalin: "To eliminate the inevitability of war, it is necessary to destroy imperialism" (Taubman, 1982:224).[3]
>
> Khrushchev: "peaceful coexistence" means "intense economic, political, and ideological struggle between the proletariat and the aggressive forces of imperialism in the world arena" (Hudson, Lowenthal, and MacFarquhar, 1961:214).
>
> Khrushchev: "All the socialist countries and the international working-class and Communist movement recognize their duty to render the fullest moral and ma-

[2]For an able analysis and discussion, see Gould-Davies (1999).

[3]As Taubman points out, Stalin was referring to wars *between* capitalist states, something often neglected when the West examined this statement. Nevertheless, even taking that into account, the declaration clearly remains profoundly threatening to capitalist states. On this issue more generally, see Burin (1963).

> terial assistance to the peoples fighting to free themselves from imperialist and colonial tyranny" (Hudson et al., 1961:196).

There is some possibility, of course, that pronouncements like these are simply theological boilerplate. However, after they have been recited millions of times in speeches, books, leaflets, brochures, letterhead, tracts, training manuals, banners, pamphlets, proclamations, announcements, billboards, handbooks, bumper stickers, and T shirts, one might begin to suspect that the sentiments could just possibly actually reflect true thought processes.[4]

At any rate, as they are explicitly and lethally threatening, responsible leaders of capitalist countries ought, at least out of simple prudence, to take them seriously. And it seems clear that they did. For example, the ideological threat was stressed in the quintessential and seminal declaration of U.S. policy toward international Communism: George Kennan's, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1947. The article is concerned about Soviet military strength, but it argues that what makes that strength threatening is an essentially expansionist ideology. In the first paragraphs of the article, Kennan outlines "the outstanding features of Communist thought." According to Kennan, these include the following notions: (1) "the capitalist system of production is a nefarious one which inevitably leads to the exploitation of the working class by the capital-owning class;" (2) "capitalism contains the seeds of its own destruction" that must "result inevitably and inescapably in a revolutionary transfer of power to the working class;" (3) countries where revolutions have been successful will "rise against the remaining capitalist world;" (4) capitalism will not "perish without proletarian revolution;" and (5) "a final push" is "needed from a revolutionary proletariat movement in order to tip over the tottering structure" (1947:566–567.)

And others readily accepted that characterization. For example, in his last presidential press conference, Ronald Reagan was quite clear about what he felt the Cold War was about: "the expansionary policy that was instituted in the Communist revolution, that their goal must be a one–world Communist state."[5] And in speeches in 1989, George H. W. Bush noted that the policy of containment required "checking the Soviet Union's expansionist aims, in the hope that the Soviet system itself would one day be forced to confront its internal contradictions."[6] Similar statements were frequently made by such leading Cold Warriors as Winston Churchill, John Foster Dulles, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Margaret Thatcher, and George Shultz (see Mueller, 2004–05).

The Reality

But to say that international Communism was threatening is not to say that it had the capacity to carry the threat out.[7] For the most part it proved, as Kennan noted, to carry the seeds of its own destruction. Although there were times in which it seemed to be, in Nikita Khrushchev's phrase, "the wave of the future," it eventually collapsed of its own weight and lack of appeal and of the failure of its misguided, even romantic, world view. In retrospect, it seems clear that although policies de-

[4]For the forceful argument that the sentiments reflected real ideological zeal and importantly affected policy during the Cold War, see Macdonald (1995/96).

[5]*New York Times*, 9 December 1988:A18.

[6]*Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1989* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1990):602, see also p. 541.

[7]On this issue, see in particular Johnson (1994).

signed to contain and counter this threat may have sometimes speeded this process along, the fears the policies were based on were often excessive and overwrought and sometimes counterproductive. This is suggested by a brief sketch of some of the Cold War experience.

When the Communists successfully fomented a coup in democratic Czechoslovakia in 1948, there were great fears that this would soon be followed by further Communist takeovers in Europe, especially in Italy and France. But it was not. No coups took place, and, in fact, by that time, the appeal of Communism in Western Europe was already declining markedly, and it continued to do so. The threat of internal subversion and of revolution in the developed world proved to be minor.

Communist aggression in Korea in 1950 was deeply alarming. President Harry Truman immediately concluded that "The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war" (Shulman, 1963:150). As Bernard Brodie recalls, the Joint Chiefs "were utterly convinced that the Russians were using Korea as a feint to cause us to deploy our forces there while they prepared to a launch a 'general' (total) war against the United States through a major attack on Europe" (1973:63). They were not. In fact, the invasion seems to have been a limited probe at a point of perceived vulnerability. It is possible that a Communist success there might have been encouraged further such ventures (Mueller, 1989:130–131). However, the episode does seem to have been something of an outlier, and there have been no Koreas since Korea.

Or there was the almost hysterical reaction to the Soviet Union's dramatic launch in 1957 of Sputnik, the first artificial space satellite. Deeply alarmed by that development and by the Soviet Union's apparent economic progress, the hastily assembled, if august and authoritative, President's Commission on National Goals declared the democratic world to be in "grave danger" from Communism's "great capacity for political organization and propaganda" and from the "specious appeal of Communist doctrine to peoples eager for rapid escape from poverty" (1960:1–2). And the CIA helpfully extrapolated in 1960 that the Soviet Union's Gross National Product might be triple that of the United States by the year 2000 (Reeves, 1993:54).[8] In time, such fears, to say the least, proved absurd.

It was feared that Castro's 1959 victory in Cuba and his subsequent embrace of Soviet Communism would be repeated all over Latin America. It was not: over time, Communism in Latin America lost its appeal.

When the United States massively escalated its efforts in Vietnam in 1965, there was widespread agreement with the views of David Halberstam, a future war critic, who argued that Vietnam was a "strategic country in a key area ... perhaps one of only five or six nations in the world that is truly vital to U.S. interests," and that if America failed there "the pressure of Communism on the rest of Southeast Asia will intensify" and "throughout the world the enemies of the West will be encouraged to try insurgencies like the one in Vietnam" (Halberstam, 1965:315, 319; oddly, these passages are not included in the 1988 reprint edition of the book). Or as reporter Neil Sheehan, another future critic of American policy in Vietnam, put it in 1964, "The fall of Southeast Asia to China or its denial to the West over the next decade because of the repercussions from an American defeat in Vietnam would amount to a strategic disaster of the first magnitude." Only the United States, he argued, could meet "the Chinese Communist challenge for

[8]On the Soviet Union's apparent economic strength at the time, see Yergin and Stanislaw (1998:22, 272).

hegemony in Asia." These fears, so deadly in their consequences, proved to be exaggerated.[9]

When the Soviet Union invaded neighboring Afghanistan in 1979, many saw it as an aggressive ploy relevant to the entire Middle East and South Asia. Alarmed that the Soviet probe might merely be a prologue to further adventures in the oil-rich Persian Gulf area, President Jimmy Carter sternly threatened to use "any means necessary" to counter a further Soviet military move in the area, a threat basically reiterated by his replacement, Ronald Reagan, the next year (Halperin, 1987:45). It was the first time that Soviet forces had been sent directly into a country outside their empire since 1945; it was also the last and proved to be a disaster for the international Communist movement.

Under Carter, and even more so under his successor, Ronald Reagan, the defense budget was escalated under the popular assumption, pushed, among others, by a group of august doomsayers who ominously called themselves the Committee on the Present Danger that somehow the Soviet Union's military capacity had vastly and threateningly increased, and there were extravagant claims that the Soviet Union was willing to accept massive casualties to acquire world domination (Johnson, 1994:ch. 6). Events were to prove this budgetarily costly fear, based on what Brodie at the time labeled "worst case fantasies" (1978:68), to be much exaggerated.

Evaluating the Success of Containment

In the 1980s, under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviets did mellow their foreign policy decisively, and shortly after that the whole country imploded. It is natural to conclude from this experience that the wisdom of the containment strategy and of the defense buildup has been affirmed. But while those policies *intended* a certain desirable effect, it does not follow that they *caused* it.

In fact, the policy of containment is logically flawed. If the Soviet system really was as rotten as Kennan and others more or less accurately surmised, then the best policy would not have been to contain it, but to give it enough rope—to let it expand until it reached the point of terminal overstretch. Indeed, one of Kennan's

[9]There was also a recurring pessimism that democracy was doomed or at least stagnated. In 1975, the usually ebullient Daniel Patrick Moynihan proclaimed that democracy "increasingly tends to the condition of monarchy in the nineteenth century: a holdover form of government, one which persists in isolated or peculiar places here and there" but "which has simply no relevance to the future" (1975:6). In a similar mood, Germany's Willy Brandt was reported to believe at the time that "Western Europe has only 20 or 30 more years of democracy left in it; after that it will slide, engineless and rudderless, under the surrounding sea of dictatorship" (quoted, Crozier, Huntington, and Watanuki, 1975:2). In 1984, in the midst of what he was later to label the "third wave" of democratization, Samuel Huntington looked to the future and essentially concluded that democracy could only emerge through economic development or through force: "with a few exceptions, the prospects for the extension of democracy to other societies are not great. These prospects would improve significantly *only* if there were major discontinuities in current trends—such as if, for instance, the economic development of the Third World were to proceed at a much faster rate and to have a far more positive impact on democratic development than it has had so far, or if the United States reestablished a hegemonic position in the world comparable to that which it had in the 1940s and 1950s. In the absence of developments such as these, a significant increase in the number of democratic regimes in the world is unlikely" (1984:218, emphasis added). Similarly, Robert Dahl concluded in 1971 that, "In the future as in the past," democracy is "more likely to result from rather slow evolutionary processes" and "the transformation of hegemonic regimes" into democracies "is likely to remain a slow process, measured in generations" (1971:45, 47). In early 1989, on the brink of a major expansion of democracy as the Soviet empire collapsed, he concluded that "it would be surprising" if the proportion of the countries in the world that are democratic "were to change greatly over the next twenty years" (1989:264). And in late 1993, economist Robert Barro crisply applied an economic model of democratic development to South Africa and came to a decisive conclusion: "Considering the country's level and distribution of income, the ethnic divisions, and the political and economic experiences of most of the countries of Sub-Sahara Africa, this event would perhaps be the greatest political accomplishment in human history. To put it another way, it's not going to happen." When that country unobligingly became a democracy a few months later, an unbent Barro predicted that "The political changes in South Africa in 1994 have probably already overshot the mark, and a substantial decline of political freedom is likely after this year."

favorite quotes comes from Gibbon: "there is nothing more contrary to nature than the attempt to hold in obedience distant provinces" (Gaddis, 1982:47; Gellman, 1984:53). If that is true, an expansive country will discover this lesson faster if it is allowed to gather in new distant provinces than if it is contained. That is, if the goal was to speed the Soviet Union's inevitable rendezvous with its decadent destiny, it might have been wiser—logically, at least—to let it expand to the rotting point.

In fact, what ultimately helped to bring about the mellowing of Soviet expansionism was not containment's success, but its failure. Wherever they expanded, the Soviets sought, often brutally, to suppress religions, nationalisms, and freedoms. In 1947, Kennan, found it "unlikely" that the 100 million Soviets could permanently hold down not only their own minorities, but "some 90 millions of Europeans with a higher cultural level and with long experience in resistance to foreign rule" (Gaddis, 1982:43; Taubman, 1982:170). By the 1980s, the Soviets' empire in Eastern Europe had indeed become a severe economic drain and a psychic problem—although this, of course, cannot be credited to Western policy, which strenuously opposed the occupation from the beginning.

Then in 1975 three countries—Cambodia, South Vietnam, and Laos—toppled into the Communist camp. Partly out of fear of repeating the Vietnam experience, the United States went into a sort of containment funk and watched from the sidelines as the Soviet Union, in what seems in retrospect to have been remarkably like a fit of absent mindedness, opportunistically gathered a set of Third World countries into its imperial embrace: Angola in 1976, Mozambique and Ethiopia in 1977, South Yemen and Afghanistan in 1978, and Grenada and Nicaragua in 1979. The Soviets at first were quite gleeful about these acquisitions—the "correlation of forces," they concluded, had magically and decisively shifted in their direction (Breslauer, 1987:436–437)

However, far from whetting their appetite for more, these gains ultimately not only satiated their appetite for expansion but, given the special properties of the morsels they happened to consume, the process served to give the ravenous expanders a troubling case of indigestion. For almost all the new acquisitions soon became economic and political basket cases, fraught with dissension, financial mismanagement, and civil warfare. In 1979, the situation in neighboring Afghanistan had so deteriorated that the Soviets found it necessary to send in troops, and they then descended into a long period of enervating warfare there. As each member of their newly expanded empire turned toward the Soviet Union for maternal warmth and sustenance, many Soviets began to wonder about the wisdom of the venture. Perhaps, it began to seem, they would have been better off contained.[10]

The "internal contradictions" that the Soviets came to confront, then, were a direct result of misguided domestic and foreign policies, and these contradictions would have come about no matter what policy the West chose to pursue. Soviet domestic problems derived from decades of mismanagement, mindless brutality, and fundamental misconceptions about basic economic and social realities. Their defense dilemmas came from a conspiratorial world view that created external enemies and then exaggerated the degree to which the enemies would use war to destroy them. And their foreign policy failures stemmed from a fundamentally flawed, and often highly romantic, conception of the imperatives of history and of the degree to which foreign peoples would find appeal in Communism. It took 40 years but, plagued by economic and social disasters and changes, the Soviets were

[10]Charles Wolf and his colleagues at the RAND Corporation (1983) estimated that the cost of the Soviet empire (excluding the costs of maintaining troops in East Europe, but including the costs of the war in Afghanistan) rose enormously between 1971 and 1980 from about 1 percent of its Gross National Product to nearly 3 percent when measured in dollars, or from under 2 percent to about 7 percent when measured in rubles. (By comparison, insofar as the United States could be said to have had a comparable empire, the costs were less than one half of 1 percent of its Gross National Product.)

finally able to rise above ideology, embrace grim reality, and adopt serious reform.[11]

The Western policy of containment may have helped to keep some countries free from Communism, and it may have further reduced the already low danger of major war. But insofar as it was devised to force the Soviets to confront their inherent contradictions, the history of the Cold War suggests a curious paradox. Kennan and the other early containment theorists were correct to conclude that Soviet Communism is a singularly undesirable and fundamentally flawed form of government, and they were right to anticipate that it would inevitably have to mellow when it could no longer avoid confronting its inherent contradictions. But Soviet Communism might have reached this point somewhat earlier if its natural propensity to expand had been tolerated rather than contained.

Nuclear Anxieties

Another fear that proved exaggerated during the Cold War concerned the prospects for World War III. Throughout most of the time, there was great concern that somehow a new world war was all but inevitable due to the depth of the hostility between nuclear East and nuclear West. As the doomsday clock on the cover of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* kept suggesting, many thought calamity was imminent and/or nearly certain. The common images were of the sword of Damocles and of two scorpions in a bottle.

Thus historian Arnold Toynbee confidently proclaimed, "In our recent Western history war has been following war in an ascending order of intensity; and today it is already apparent that the War of 1939–1945 was not the climax of this crescendo movement" (1950:4). In 1945, Ambassador Joseph Grew, one of America's most perceptive diplomats, concluded that "a future war with the Soviet Union is as certain as anything in this world" (quoted, Gaddis, 1987:218n). Soviet dictator Josif Stalin concurred: "We shall recover in fifteen or twenty years and then we'll have another go at it" (quoted, Djilas, 1962:114–115). Public opinion polls conducted in the United States in the mid-1940s characteristically found very substantial percentages opining that the next world war would occur within 25 years (Mueller, 1979:303–307), and Albert Einstein was certain that "Unless we are able, in the near future, to abolish the mutual fear of military aggression, we are doomed" (1960:417). In 1960, strategist and futurist Herman Kahn wrote, "I have a firm belief that unless we have more serious and sober thought on various aspects of the strategic problem . . . we are not going to reach the year 2000—and maybe not even the year 1965—without a cataclysm" (1960:x), and C. P. Snow (1961) assured his listeners that unless nuclear weapons were restricted, it was a "certainty" that within "at the most, ten years, some of those bombs are going off." In 1979, realist Hans J. Morgenthau concluded that "the world is moving ineluctably towards a third world war—a strategic nuclear war. I do not believe that anything can be done to prevent it. The international system is simply too unstable to survive for long" (Boyle, 1985:73). Three years later, historian William McNeill advocated that a "global sovereign power willing and able to enforce a monopoly of atomic weaponry" be fabricated because the "alternative appears to be sudden and total annihilation of the human species" (1982:383–384), and Jonathan Schell, proclaimed, "One day—and it is hard to believe that it will not be soon—we will make our choice. Either we will sink into the final coma and end it all or, as I trust and believe, we will awaken to the

[11]However, it does not follow that economic and social travail necessarily lead to a mellowing of ideology. Leaders, in this case Gorbachev, had to *choose* that policy route. Faced with the same dilemmas, a conservative leader might have stuck to the faith while suffering gradual decline (like the Ottoman empire) or one might have adopted more modest reforms to maintain the essential quality of the system and the privileges of its well-entrenched elite (Rush, 1993; see also Checkel, 1997; English, 2000; Mueller, 2004–05).

truth of our peril ... and rise up to cleanse the earth of nuclear weapons" (1982:231). "Nuclear war," observed Bruce Russett in 1983, "is the central terror of our time" (1983:1). As late as the mid-1980s, polls found that 20–37 percent of the American population considered the fear of war to be the most important problem facing the country (Mueller, 1994:211; see also Mueller, 2002a:151–152).

World War III never happened, and, it seems, never even got close.[12] Huge numbers of nuclear weapons continue to exist in the arsenals of East and West, but fears that they will be massively slung at each other have vanished. We have neither cleansed the earth of nuclear weapons nor descended into Schell's "final coma."

Threat Exaggeration at the End of the Cold War

Although the central focus remained on Communism, other threats rose in concern toward the end of the Cold War.

When some 50 American diplomats were taken hostage by an unstable and ill-directed regime in Iran in 1979, the United States went through over a year of official and popular angst until the hostages were returned safely. The slogan of the time, "America Held Hostage," suggests the degree to which a relatively minor incident was exaggerated.

Similarly, in the 1980s, the Reagan administration became fixated on a handful of American hostages held by terrorists in Lebanon. At the time, Reagan's normally judicious Secretary of State, George Shultz, was proclaiming that we needed desperately to blast somebody somewhere "on a moment's notice" even without adequate evidence in order to avoid looking like the indecisive "Hamlet of nations" (Gwertzman, 1984). He apparently preferred the King Lear approach. Normally, however, only lunatics and children rail at storms; sensible people invest in umbrellas and lightning rods (Simon, 2001:180–186; see also Mueller, 1987).

As the Cold War was dissipating, there emerged a dangerous new enemy on the economic front: insidiously peaceful Japan. Those of the America-in-decline and of the FLASH! JAPAN BUYS PEARL HARBOR! schools argued that a need had suddenly arisen to fear not "missile vulnerability" but "semiconductor vulnerability." And "economics," they apparently seriously warned us, "is the continuation of war by other means" (Huntington, 1991:8, 10).[13] Danger signals arise because Japan had become the largest provider of foreign aid and because it shockingly endowed professorships at Harvard and MIT (Huntington, 1993a:77, 80). This concern soon evaporated, of course, as Japan's "threatening" economy stagnated.

Threat Exaggeration After the Cold War

When the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union and China ceased to appear threatening (or in the former case vanished altogether), the focus of alarm was fully freed to shift to other perceived threats. For example, the notion quickly took hold that international affairs had somehow become especially tumultuous, unstable, and complex, an idea repeated so often that it soon began to sound like a mantra. Thus, Bill Clinton proclaimed in his 1993 Presidential inaugural address that "the new world is more free but less stable." And a few days later, his nominee to become the head of the Central Intelligence Agency, James Woolsey, testified darkly that "we have slain a large dragon, but we live now in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes." His predecessor at the CIA, Robert Gates, fully

[12]For the argument that the world was not at all on the "brink" during the Cuban Missile Crisis, see Mueller (1989:152–155). See also Taubman (2003:563, 566–567, 573).

[13]The concept of economic war comes close to being oxymoronic. There are times when it may make some sense (as when the world coordinated to embargo Iraq in 1990), but war is substantially zero (or negative) sum while economic exchange, although not always fully fair or equal, is generally positive sum—both parties gain. See Jervis (1993:57–58).

agreed: "The events of the last two years have led to a far more unstable, turbulent, unpredictable and violent world" (1993), or as Stanley Hoffmann put it, "the problem of order has become even more complex than before" (1992:37).

Ethnic Warfare

One of Woolsey's primary snakes was ethnic war that alarmingly broke out in Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. He and many others feared that it would metastasize all over Eastern Europe, perhaps even leading to a nuclear war between Russia and Ukraine. Some analysts were soon given to arguing that "conflicts among nations and ethnic groups are escalating" (Huntington, 1993a:71), that such conflicts are "now engulfing the world" (Kober, 1993:82), that "there is a virtual epidemic of armed civil or intranational conflict" (Hamburg, 1993), and that the "breakdown of restraints" seen in Yugoslavia is part of "a global trend" (Job, 1993:71; see also Kaplan, 1991, 1993a, b; Mearsheimer, 1990; Moynihan, 1993; Huntington, 1993b, c; Brzezinski, 1993; Van Evera, 1994:36).

However, most such wars, particularly those in Europe, eventually fizzled away, and did not spread (see Mueller, 1996:113–114). Moreover, the murderous dynamic of these wars was perpetrated more by bands of thugs than by ideologues or by neighbors out to get neighbors in some sort of frenzied Hobbesian state of nature (see Collier, 2000; Mueller, 2000a, b, 2004, ch. 6; Fearon and Laitin, 2003). In fact, by 2002 the number of wars in the world had dwindled considerably (Eriksson, Wallenstein, and Stollenberg, 2003), and that trend may be continuing: the number of armed conflicts inflicting over 1,000 battle or battle-related deaths per year (a standard requirement for a conflict to be designated a "war") is now very small.

Rogue States

When big problems go away, small problems tend to be elevated in perceived importance, and in the post-Cold War era, special status was given to something called "rogue states" as if this were a new problem in international affairs. Yet there were plenty of such states—devils du jour, one might call them—during the Cold War, and some of these were variously in devious complicity with the big, threatening rogues: the Soviet Union and China. Sukarno's Indonesia, for example, was a problem for years as it engaged in a policy of military "confrontation" with some neighboring states, and it often obtained support and encouragement from one major Communist country or another (see Hilsman, 1967, part 8). Something similar was true of Nasser's Egypt, Castro's Cuba, Qaddafi's Libya, and Iran's Khomeini to say nothing of the trouble and potential danger stirred by egomaniacal and sometimes deranged leaders in far more potent states like Stalin's Soviet Union and Mao's China.

The post-Cold War problems posed by such enfeebled, impoverished, and friendless states as Iraq and North Korea pale in comparison (indeed, North Korea is far less significant a threat than during the Cold War when it was variously backed by China and the USSR). Moreover, the "rogue state" label implies that they are too irrational to be deterred by policies designed to deal with "normal" countries, and it therefore leads to an extreme version of the security dilemma as weaponry that might be obtained by such states to deter an attack is almost automatically assumed to be designed for offensive purposes even though such use would be patently suicidal for the rogues and their regimes.

Thus, despite considerable evidence to the contrary (see Sigal, 1998; Harrison, 2002; Kang, 2003; also Fallows 1994/95), the United States has consistently viewed North Korea as a continuing threat even though its neighbors, especially South Korea, do not. Having worked themselves up to a lather during the 1990s, the Americans and the British even went to war against Saddam Hussein's pathetic regime in Iraq in 2003 because, unlike all of Iraq's neighbors except Israel, their

leaders imagined a "grave and gathering" threat to lurk there. Prominent fearmongers, many of whom had previously been active in exaggerating the Soviet threat,[14] asserted that Saddam was planning to dominate the Middle East. When war broke out, his military—with which that domination was presumably to be carried out—crumbled pathetically, incoherently, and predictably.[15] Departing from the advice of John Quincy Adams in an 1821 Fourth of July speech in the House of Representatives, the United States has actively gone abroad "in search of monsters to destroy."

Weapons of Mass Destruction

During the Cold War, the phrase "weapons of mass destruction" was used only infrequently and then almost always to apply to nuclear weapons. After the Cold War, the phrase has been systematically and extensively embellished to embrace biological and chemical weapons as well. This escalation of language is highly questionable.[16]

Nuclear weapons, most decidedly, can indeed inflict massive destruction, and it is certainly reasonable to point out that an atomic bomb in the hands of a terrorist or rogue state could kill tens of thousands of people. But it may also be worthwhile to note that making such a bomb is an extraordinarily difficult task and that warnings about the possibility that small groups, terrorists, and errant states could fabricate nuclear weapons have been repeatedly uttered at least since 1947 (Allison, 2004:104) and especially since the 1950s when the "suitcase bomb" appeared to become a practical possibility. Interestingly, to generate alarm about such dangers, a recent book opens by grimly (and irrelevantly) recycling Einstein's failed half-century-old prediction about nuclear war: "Since the advent of the Nuclear Age, everything has changed except our modes of thinking and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe" (Allison, 2004:1).

Moreover, proliferation of these weapons has been remarkably slow. During the Cold War, there were many dire predictions about nuclear proliferation that proved to be greatly exaggerated. Among these are the nearly unanimous expectation in the 1950s and 1960s that dozens of countries would have nuclear weapons by now. For example, in 1958, the National Planning Association predicted "a rapid rise in the number of atomic powers . . . by the mid-1960s" (1958:42). A couple of years later, C. P. Snow sagely predicted that, "Within, at the most, six years, China and several other states [will] have a stock of nuclear bombs" (1961:259); and John Kennedy observed that there might be "ten, fifteen, twenty" countries with a nuclear capacity by 1964 (Kraus, 1962:394). This position continued after the Cold War. Over a decade ago, Christopher Layne confidently insisted that Japan by natural impulse would soon come to yearn for nuclear weapons (1993:37) while John Mearsheimer equally confidently argued that "Germany will feel insecure without nuclear weapons" (1990:38). The Japanese and the Germans themselves

[14]On this issue, see Halper and Clarke (2004). See also Johnson (1994: ch. 6).

[15]Saddam was so afraid of his own army that he would not allow it to bring heavy weapons anywhere near Baghdad out of fear that regular troops might turn and use it against his government (O'Kane, 1998). On the monumental inadequacy and incompetence of the Iraq military and its leadership during the 2003 war, see Wilson (2003); Zucchino (2003) Shanker (2004). For the pre-war argument that Iraq presented little threat, see Mearsheimer and Walt (2003); Mueller (with Lindsey) (2003). On threat exaggeration in the runup to the Iraq War, see Kaufmann (2004). Although Haiti was never elevated to "rogue state" status, President George H. W. Bush did assert that an anti-democratic coup there in 1991 somehow managed to pose "an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy and economy of the United States," a phrase his successor Bill Clinton chose to repeat when sending troops to set things right there in 1994 (*Washington Post*, September 16, 1994:A31). When what passed for democracy crumbled again in Haiti a decade later, however, the administration of Bush's son scarcely noticed.

[16]For an excellent overview of these issues, see Easterbrook (2002). See also Panofsky (1998); Mueller and Mueller (1999:45–47); Mueller and Mueller (2000:166–168).

continue uncooperatively to seem viscerally uninterested, although problems with North Korea could alter that perspective for Japan.[17]

Properly developed and deployed, biological weapons could indeed, if thus far only in theory, kill hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions, of people. The discussion remains theoretical because biological weapons have scarcely ever been used even though the knowledge about their destructive potential as weapons goes back decades, even centuries in some respects (the English, e.g., made some efforts to spread smallpox among American Indians in the French and Indian War) (Christopher, Cieslak, Pavlin, and Eitzen, 1997:412).

Belligerents have eschewed such weapons with good reason: biological weapons are extremely difficult to deploy and to control. Terrorist groups or rogue states may be able to solve such problems in the future with advances in technology and knowledge, but the record thus far is unlikely to be very encouraging to them. For example, Japan reportedly infected wells in Manchuria and bombed several Chinese cities with plague-infested fleas before and during the Second World War. These ventures may have killed thousands of Chinese, but they apparently also caused thousands of unintended casualties among Japanese troops and seem to have had little military impact.[18] In the 1990s, Aum Shinrikyo, a Japanese cult that had some 300 scientists in its employ and an estimated budget of $1 billion, reportedly tried at least nine times over 5 years to set off biological weapons by spraying pathogens from trucks and wafting them from rooftops, hoping fancifully to ignite an apocalyptic war. These efforts failed to create a single fatality—in fact, nobody even noticed that the attacks had taken place (Broad, 1998; Rapoport, 1999:57).

For the most destructive results, biological weapons need to be dispersed in very low-altitude aerosol clouds: aerosols do not appreciably settle, and anthrax (which is not easy to spread or catch and is not contagious) would probably have to be sprayed near nose level (Meselson, 1995; Panofsky, 1998; Terry, 1998). Explosive methods of dispersion may destroy the organisms. Moreover, except for anthrax spores, long-term storage of lethal organisms in bombs or warheads is difficult, and, even if refrigerated, most of the organisms have a limited lifetime. The effects of such weapons can take days or weeks to have full effect, during which time they can be countered with civil defense measures. And their impact is very difficult to predict and in combat situations may spread back on the attacker (OTA, 1993:48–49, 62; Broad and Miller, 1998; Easterbrook, 2002).

Chemical arms do have the potential, under appropriate circumstances, for panicking people; killing masses of them in open areas, however, is beyond their modest capabilities.[19] Although they obviously can be hugely lethal when released in gas chambers, their effectiveness as weapons has been unimpressive, and their inclusion in the weapons-of-mass-destruction category is highly dubious unless the concept is so diluted that bullets or machetes can also be included.[20]

Biologist Matthew Meselson calculates that it would take a ton of nerve gas or 5 tons of mustard gas to produce heavy casualties among unprotected people in an open area of 1 km^2. Even for nerve gas this would take the concentrated delivery into a rather small area of about 300 heavy artillery shells or seven 500-lb bombs (1991:13). And, this would usually require a considerable amount of time, allowing many people to evacuate the targeted area (McNaugher, 1990:31). A 1993 analysis by the Office of Technology Assessment of the U.S. Congress finds that a ton of Sarin

[17]On the slowness of the proliferation process more generally, see Mueller (1967, 1998); Meyer (1984); Graham (1991); Reiss (1995); Paul (2000).

[18]OTA (1993:60); Williams and Wallace (1989:ch. 6); Christopher et al. (1997:413); Blumenthal and Miller (1999:A10). In 1979, there was an accidental release of biological agents in the Soviet Union that killed under 100 people, and also an anthrax outbreak in Rhodesia that killed 79 and may have been deliberately caused: "Plague War," Frontline (PBS television), 13 October 1998.

[19]On the rise of the sentiment that killing by gas is peculiarly wicked and immoral (as opposed to killing by bullets and shrapnel), see Brown (1968); Price (1997).

[20]For a recognition of this point, see OTA (1993:9); also 46. See also Betts (1998:30–31); Panofsky (1998).

nerve gas perfectly delivered under absolutely ideal conditions over a heavily populated area against unprotected people could cause between 3,000 and 8,000 deaths. Under slightly less ideal circumstances—if there was a moderate wind or if the sun was out, for example—the death rate would be only 1/10th as great.[21] Nuclear weapons are considered weapons of mass destruction because a single bomb can generate great devastation. For chemical weapons to cause extensive damage, by contrast, many of them must be used, just like conventional ones.

Discussions of chemical weapons often stress their ability to cause casualties—both dead and wounded (e.g., Roberts, 1992:75–84). This glosses over the fact that historically most of those incapacitated by chemical weapons have not actually died. But clearly, to be classified as "weapons of mass destruction" they must destroy, not simply incapacitate. In the First World War, only some 2 or 3 percent of those gassed on the western front died while, by contrast, wounds caused by traditional weapons were some 10 or 12 times more likely to prove fatal.[22] Chemical weapons were used against substantially unprotected Iranians by Iraq in their 1980–1988 war, but of the 27,000 gassed through March 1987, Iran reported that only 262 died (McNaugher, 1990:19n). Similarly, when Aum Shinrikyo abandoned its biological efforts in frustration and instead released "deadly" Sarin nerve gas into a Japanese subway in 1995, the attack caused thousands of casualties, but only 12 deaths (although a more skillful attack could have killed more) (Broad, 1998). Moreover, troops wounded by gas tend to return to combat more quickly than those wounded by bullets or shrapnel (McNaugher, 1990:20n) and to suffer less (Gilchrist, 1928:47). Against well-protected troops, gas is almost wholly ineffective except as an inconvenience (Meselson, 1991:13; Roberts, 1992:81; OTA, 1993:8, 58).

Although gas was used extensively in the First World War, it accounted for less than 1 percent of the battle deaths (Gilchrist, 1928:7). In fact, on average it took over a ton of gas to produce a single fatality (Fetter, 1991:15). In the conclusion to the official British history of the war, chemical weapons are accordingly relegated to a footnote that asserts that gas "made war uncomfortable . . . to no purpose" (Edmonds and Maxwell-Hyslop, 1947:606). Defense analyst Thomas McNaugher considers this conclusion to be "overly glib," but goes on to suggest that "it is closer to the truth than the contention that chemical weapons are nearly magical devices that invariably cause large casualties and inspire panic" (1990:21).[23]

---

[21]OTA (1993:54). Another estimate is that some 300 kg of Sarin delivered under ideal circumstances might kill between 200 and 3000, a figure that drops by 90 percent if there is civil defense: Fetter (1991:22).

[22]McNaugher (1990:19n). For the United States, 2 percent of gas casualties died while 24 percent of those wounded by other weapons died. The rates for Germany were 2.9 and 43 percent, and for the British they were 3.3 and 36.6 percent. Overall, the estimates are that there were 1,009,038 gas casualties in the war, of whom 78,390 (7.7 percent) died. Gas fatalities were suffered very disproportionately by the Russians who were ill-protected against gas. However, even taking that into consideration, their ratio of gas deaths to total gas casualties, 11.7 percent, is so out of line with those found on the western front that it seems likely that the number of gas fatalities is exaggerated (Gilchrist, 1928:7–8, 48).

[23]Since that war, gas was apparently used in rather limited amounts in the 1930s by Italy in Ethiopia and by Japan in China, as well as by Egypt in the civil war in Yemen in the mid-1960s and during the Iran–Iraq War of 1980–1988 (Brown, 1968:185n; Price, 1997: ch. 5, 6; McNaugher, 1990; Fetter, 1991:15). In 1988, during the Iran–Iraq War, there was a chemical attack, apparently by Iraqi forces, on Halabja, an Iraqi town that had been the site of considerable battles between Iranians, Kurds working on their side, and Iraqis. It is said that 5,000 people were killed by chemical munitions dropped from a single airplane during a single pass in daylight (see, for example, Mackey, 2002:262). There are a number of problems with this assessment. To begin with, attacks on the city took place over several days and involved explosive munitions as well, and there is a possible confusion over deaths caused by chemical weapons and those caused by other means. Additionally, all the reports from journalists who were taken to the town by the Iranians shortly after the attack indicate that they saw at most "hundreds" of bodies, and, although some of them report the 5,000 figure, this number is consistently identified as coming from Iranian authorities who obviously had a great incentive to exaggerate. Moreover, the Iranians apparently said that an additional 5,000 were wounded by the chemical weapons when one would expect that an attack killing 5,000 would have injured far more than that. A Human Rights Watch report on the events has an appendix in which other Iraqi chemical attacks in Kurdish areas are evaluated; in two of these attacks it is suggested that 300 or 400 might have been killed, while all the other estimates are under 100, most under 20 (1995:262–264).

International Terrorism

Like international Communism, international terrorism is explicitly threatening. Some groups of terrorists focus on Israel (and therefore on U.S. policy in the Middle East), while others, as seen on September 11, 2001, feel they must target the United States itself. As with the Communist threat during the Cold War, concern is certainly justified, but alarm, hysteria, and panic are not.

That is, it makes great sense to heighten security and policing measures, and to ask people to maintain awareness—as with crime, to report any suspicious behavior to authorities. But it is important that this be done without inducing hysteria. In the extreme foreign policy events noted above, the creation of panic and hysteria was only a by-product of the concern; in the case of terrorism, it is a central objective. Thus, alarmism can be harmful, particularly economically, and it can help create the damaging consequences that the terrorists seek but are unable to perpetrate on their own.

Capacity

The capacity for small bands of terrorists to do harm is far less than was the case for the great countries behind international Communism who possessed a very impressive military (and nuclear) capacity and had, in addition, shown great skill at political subversion.

By contrast, for all the attention it evokes, terrorism, in reasonable context, actually causes rather little damage and the likelihood that any individual will become a victim in most places is microscopic. Those adept at hyperbole like to proclaim that we live in "the age of terror" (Hoagland, 2004). However, the number of people worldwide who die as a result of international terrorism is generally only a few hundred a year, tiny compared with the numbers who die in most civil wars or from automobile accidents. In fact, until 2001 far fewer Americans were killed in any grouping of years by all forms of international terrorism than were killed by lightning. And except for 2001, virtually none of these terrorist deaths occurred within the United States itself. Indeed, outside of 2001, fewer people have died in America from international terrorism than have drowned in toilets.[24]

Even with the September 11 attacks included in the count, however, the number of Americans killed by international terrorism since the late 1960s (which is when the State Department began its accounting) is about the same as the number killed over the same period by lightning—or by accident-causing deer or by severe allergic reaction to peanuts. In almost all years, the total number of people worldwide who die at the hands of international terrorists is not much more than the number who drown in bathtubs in the United States.

Some of this is definitional. When terrorism becomes really extensive, we generally no longer call it terrorism, but war. But people are mainly concerned about random terror, not sustained warfare. Moreover, even using an expansive definition of terrorism and including domestic terrorism in the mix, it is likely that far fewer people were killed by terrorists in the entire world over the last hundred years than died in any number of unnoticed civil wars during that century.

Obviously, this could change if international terrorists are able to assemble sufficient weaponry or devise new tactics to kill masses of people and if they come to do so routinely—and this, of course, is the central fear. Nonetheless, it should be kept in mind that 9/11 was an extreme event: until then, no more than 329 had ever been killed in a single terrorist attack (in a 1985 Air India explosion), and during the entire twentieth century fewer than 20 terrorist attacks resulted in the deaths of more than 100 people. The economic destruction on September 11 was also

[24]Toilet figures: Stossel (2004:77). More generally, see Chapman and Harris (2002).

unprecedented, of course. However, extreme events often remain exactly that—aberrations, rather than harbingers.[25] A bomb planted in a piece of checked luggage was responsible for the explosion that caused a PanAm jet to crash into Lockerbie Scotland in 1988. Since that time, hundreds of billions of pieces of luggage have been transported on American carriers and none has exploded to down an aircraft.[26] This does not mean that one should cease worrying about luggage on airlines, but it does suggest that extreme events do not necessarily assure repetition—any more than Timothy McVeigh's Oklahoma City bombing of 1995 has. Since its alarming release of poison gas in the Tokyo subway in 1995, the apocalyptic group, Aum Shinrikyo, appears to have abandoned the terrorism business and its example has not been followed. Some sort of terrorist inoculated Tylenol capsules with cyanide in 1982 killing seven people; however, this frightening and much publicized event (which generated 125,000 stories in the print media alone and cost the manufacturer more than $1 billion) failed to inspire much in the way of imitation (Mitchell, 2002). Moreover, although there have been many terrorist incidents in the world since 2001, all (thus far, at least) have relied on conventional methods.[27]

Interestingly, if chemical and biological attacks are so easy and attractive to terrorists, it is impressive that none have so far been used in Israel. Although there have been plenty of terrorist attacks there, all have used conventional explosives. The science with respect to chemical and biological weaponry has been known with considerable sophistication for more than a century, and that science has become massively more developed over the last hundred years. Yet, the difficulties of controlling and dispersing such substances seem to have persisted.

Actually, it is somewhat strange that so much emphasis has been put on the dangers of high-tech weapons. Some of the anxiety may derive from the post-September 11 anthrax scare even though that terrorist event killed only a few people. The bombings of September 11 by contrast were remarkably low tech, and could have happened long ago: both skyscrapers and airplanes have been around for a century now.

Responding to Terrorism

Contrary to the common wisdom, then, it appears that the 9/11 tragedy has changed little except our modes of thinking—to update, and reverse, Einstein's famous dictum. And it is this development, not terrorism itself, that is having the most substantial consequences. People have been led, or have led themselves, to develop what Leif Wenar of the University of Sheffield has aptly labeled a false sense of insecurity. Filmmaker Michael Moore happened to remark on CBS' popular *60 Minutes* on February 16, 2003, that "the chances of any of us dying in a terrorist incident is very, very, very small." His interviewer, Bob Simon, promptly admonished, "But no one sees the world like that." Both statements, remarkably, are true—the first only a bit more so than the second.

As noted, the creation of insecurity, fear, and hysteria was not particularly a goal of Communism, but it is for terrorists. That is, anything that enhances fear effectively gives in to them. Indeed, very often the costs of terrorism come much more

[25]See also Mueller (2002b, c, 2003). By contrast, in 2004 Charles Krauthammer characterized the post-9/11 period as "three years in which, contrary to every expectation and prediction, the second shoe never dropped" (2004) and Allison noted that "in the weeks and months following 9/11, the American national security community focused on what was called the question of the 'second shoe.' No one believed that the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were an isolated occurrence" (2004:6).

[26]And millions of passengers who checked bags at hotels and retrieved them before heading to the airport have routinely lied to an airline agent when answering the pointlessly obligatory question about whether their luggage had at all times been in their possession.

[27]On the preference of terrorists for weapons that they know and understand, see Rapoport (1999:51).

from hasty, ill-considered, and over-wrought reactions, or overreactions, to it than from anything the terrorists have done. For example, responding to several vicious acts of terrorism apparently perpetrated by Chechens, the Russian government in 1999 reinstituted a war against the breakaway republic that has resulted in far more destruction of Russian (and, of course, Chechen) lives and property than the terrorists ever brought about. Ronald Reagan bombed Libya in 1986 after terrorists linked to that country had blown up a Berlin discotheque killing two people, a raid that then apparently led to the blowing up of an airliner, killing 270 and toppling the airline company into bankruptcy (Simon 2001:197–200). When two American embassies in Africa were bombed in 1998, killing over 200 (including a few Americans), Bill Clinton retaliated by bombing a suspect pharmaceutical factory in Sudan, the loss of which may have led to the deaths of tens of thousands of Sudanese over time (Daum, 2001:19). Also bombed were some of Osama bin Laden's terrorist training camps in Afghanistan that caused the Afghan government, the Taliban, to renege on pledges to extradite the troublesome and egoistic bin Laden to Saudi Arabia, made him into an international celebrity, essentially created his al Qaeda organization by turning it into a magnet for funds and recruits, and converted the Taliban from reluctant hosts to allies and partners (Cullison and Higgins, 2002; Burke, 2003:167–168; Coll, 2004: 400–402, 414–415; on this process more generally, see Lake, 2002).[28]

The revolutionary, Frantz Fanon, reportedly held that "the aim of terrorism is to terrify." And the inspiration of consequent overreaction seems central to bin Laden's strategy. As it put it mockingly in a videotaped message in 2004, it is "easy for us to provoke and bait . . . . All that we have to do is to send two mujahidin . . . to raise a piece of cloth on which is written al Qaeda in order to make the generals race there to cause America to suffer human, economic, and political losses." His policy, he extravagantly believes, is one of "bleeding America to the point of bankruptcy," and it is one that depends on overreaction by the target: he triumphally points to the fact that the 9/11 terrorist attacks cost al Qaeda $500,000 while the attack and its aftermath inflicted, he claims, a cost of more than $500 billion on the United States.[29]

If this is the plan, terrorists can be defeated simply by not becoming terrified and by resisting the temptation to overreact. The shock and tragedy of 9/11 does demand a focused and dedicated program to confront international terrorism and to attempt to prevent a repetition, of course. But it seems sensible to suggest that part of this reaction should include an effort by politicians, officials, and the media to inform the public reasonably and realistically about the terrorist context instead of playing into the hands of terrorists by effectively seeking to terrify the public. What is needed, then, as one statistician suggests, is some sort of convincing, coherent, informed, and nuanced answer to a central question: "How worried should I be?" Instead, the message, as one concerned Homeland Security official puts it, is "Be scared. Be very, very scared. But go on with your lives" (Gorman, 2003a:1461–1462).

There is at present a great and understandable concern about what would happen if terrorists are able to shoot down an American airliner or two, perhaps with shoulder-fired missiles. Obviously, this would be a major tragedy in the first instance. But the ensuing public reaction to it, many fear, could come close to destroying the industry. It would seem to be reasonable for those with that fear to consider the following: how many airliners would have to crash before flying

[28]Reactions to terrorism have also often led to massive persecution. The Jewish pogroms in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century, for instance, were impelled in major part because Jews were notable in terrorist movements at the time (Rapoport, 2004:68). On the often deadly and indiscriminant overreaction to anarchist terrorism in the United States and elsewhere, see Jensen (2002).

[29]Richard Betts estimates the costs at under $1 million and more than $100 billion, respectively (2002:27)

becomes as dangerous as driving the same distance in an automobile? It turns out that someone has made that calculation. The conclusion is that there would have to be one set of 9/11 crashes a month for the risks to balance out. More generally, they calculate that an American's chance of being killed in one non-stop airline flight is about one in 13 million (even taking the September 11 crashes into account), while to reach that same level of risk when driving on America's safest roads, rural interstate highways, one would have to travel a mere 11.2 miles (Sivak and Flannagan, 2003).[30]

Or there ought to be at least some discussion of the almost completely unaddressed, but seemingly obvious, observation that, in the words of another risk analyst, David Banks, "it seems impossible that the United States will ever again experience takeovers of commercial flights that are then turned into weapons—no pilot will relinquish control, and passengers will fight." The scheme worked in 2001 because the hijackers had the element of surprise working for them: previous airline hijackings had mostly been fairly harmless as hijackers generally landed the planes someplace and released the passengers. The passengers and crew on the fourth plane on September 11 had fragmentary knowledge about what the earlier hijackings that day had led to, and they prevented the plane from reaching its target. This is likely to hold even more for any later attempted hijackings. Nonetheless, notes Banks, "enormous resources are being invested to prevent this remote contingency." There is a distinction, he argues, "between realistic reactions to plausible threats and hyperbolic overreaction to improbable contingencies" (2002:10).

Moreover, any problems caused by radiological, chemical, and perhaps biological weapons are likely to stem far more from the fear and panic they may cause than from the weapons themselves. While a "dirty bomb" might raise radiation 25 percent over background levels in an area and therefore into a range the Environmental Protection Agency officially considers undesirable, there ought to be some discussion about whether that really constitutes "contamination" or indeed much of a danger given the somewhat arbitrary and exceedingly cautious levels declared to be acceptable by the EPA. The potential use of such bombs apparently formed the main concern during the Orange Alert at the end of 2003 (Allison, 2004:56–57; "Dirty Bombs", 2004). But since all the bombs do is raise radiation levels somewhat above normal backgrounds levels in a small area, a common recommendation from nuclear scientists and engineers is that those exposed should calmly walk away. But this bit of advice has not been advanced prominently (or even, perhaps, at all) by those in charge. Effectively, therefore, they encourage panic, and, as one nuclear engineer points out, "if you keep telling them you expect them to panic, they will oblige you. And that's what we're doing" (Allison, 2004:8, 59, 220; see also Glanz and Revkin, 2002; Rockwell, 2003).

It seems to me that the efforts against terrorism should be considered more like a campaign against crime than like a war, however much the war imagery may get the juices flowing (see also Howard, 2002). Wars end, but as they are carried out by isolated individuals or by tiny groups at times of their own choosing, terrorism and crime never do. One cannot, therefore, "conquer" terrorism or "bring it to an end." Like crime, one can at best seek to reduce its frequency and destructiveness so that people feel reasonably—but never perfectly—safe from it. Of course, military measures may sometimes be useful in the campaign, as they have proved to be

[30]Three years after September 2001, domestic airline flights in the United States were still 7 percent below their pre-9/11 levels (*Financial Times*, September 14, 2004:8). During that period, some 120,000 Americans died in automobile accidents. If a small percentage of these deaths occurred to people who were driving because they feared to fly, the number of Americans who died in overreaction to 9/11 could well surpass the number who were killed by the terrorists on that terrible day. One study, in fact, has concluded that over 1000 people died this way in 2001 between September 11 and December 31 (Sivak and Flannagan, 2004).

in Afghanistan. But to frame the campaign against terror as a "war" risks the danger of raising unreasonable expectations.[31]

Opportunity Costs

Thus far, at least terrorism is a rather rare and, in appropriate context, not a very destructive phenomenon as argued above. However, the enormous sums of money being spent to deal with this threat have in part been diverted from other, possibly more worthy, endeavors. The budget for the Office of Homeland Security, for example, has now reached nearly $30 billion while state and local governments spend additional billions (see Gorman, 2004a). Some of that money doubtless would have been spent on similar ventures under earlier budgets, and much of it likely has wider benefits than simply securing the country against a rather limited threat. But much of it, as well, has very likely been pulled away from programs that do much good.

Accordingly, three key issues set out by risk analyst Howard Kunreuther require careful discussion (2002:662–663):

> How much should we be willing to pay for a small reduction in probabilities that are already extremely low?
> How much should we be willing to pay for actions that are primarily reassuring, but do little to change the actual risk?
> How can certain measures, such as strengthening the public health system, which provide much broader protection than terrorism, get the attention they deserve?

Or as Banks puts it, "If terrorists force us to redirect resources away from sensible programs and future growth, in order to pursue unachievable but politically popular levels of domestic security, then they have won an important victory that mortgages our future" (2002:10).[32]

Hysteria Versus Absorption

It would thus seem to be reasonable for someone in authority sometime to do something to explore the probabilities and to explain them to the public—in Kunreuther's words, "More attention needs to be devoted to giving people perspective on the remote likelihood of the terrible consequences they imagine" (2002:663). That would seem to be at least as important as boosting the sale of duct tape, issuing repeated and costly color-coded alerts based on vague and unspecific intelligence, and warning people to beware of Greeks, or just about anybody, bearing almanacs.[33] But we get plenty of official alarmism and almost nothing—*nothing*—about realistic risks and probabilities.

What we need is more pronouncements like the one in a recent book by Senator John McCain and Salter: "Get on the damn elevator! Fly on the damn plane! Calculate the odds of being harmed by a terrorist! It's still about as likely as being

[31]The war imagery also suggests that people should be asked somehow to make sacrifices. This popular conclusion is at least partly fanciful. Few Americans except those directly involved in the wars in Korea or Vietnam really made much of a sacrifice, and, although there were inconveniences on the homefront during World War II, consumer spending by the Greatest Generation generally surged (Mueller, 1989:83). A goal of terrorism presumably is to hamper the economy, and therefore the best response to it, hardly much of a "sacrifice," would be to go out and buy a refrigerator or to take an airplane to a vacation resort. The war imagery suggests we should be cutting back; but cutting back actually helps the terrorists.

[32]Roger Congleton calculates that measures that effectively require people to spend an additional half-hour in airports cost the economy $15 billion per year; by contrast, total airline profits in the 1990s never exceeded $5.5 billion per year (2002:62).

[33]On the almanac menace, see Eggen (2003).

swept out to sea by a tidal wave . . . . Suck it up, for crying out loud. You're almost certainly going to be okay. And in the unlikely event you're not, do you really want to spend your last days cowering behind plastic sheets and duct tape? That's not a life worth living, is it?" (2004:35–36).[34]

But admonitions like that are exceedingly rare, almost non-existent. By contrast, what we mostly get is fear-mongering, some of it bordering on hysteria. Some prominent commentators, like David Gergen (2002), argue that the United States has become "vulnerable," even "fragile." Others, like Indiana senator Richard Lugar are given to proclaiming that terrorists armed with weapons of mass destruction present an "existential" threat to the United States,[35] or even, in columnist Charles Krauthammer's view, to "civilization itself" (2004).[36] A recent best-selling book by an anonymous CIA official repeatedly assures us that our "survival" is at stake and that we are engaged in a "war to the death" (Anonymous, 2004:160, 177, 226, 241, 242, 250, 252, 263).[37]

Alarmism reached a kind of pinnacle during the Orange Alert at the end of 2003. At the time Homeland Security czar Tom Ridge was given bravely to declaring that "America is a country that will not be bent by terror. America is a country that will not be broken by fear." Meanwhile, however, General Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was assuring a television audience that if terrorists were able to engineer a catastrophic event that killed 10,000 people, they would successfully "do away with our way of life" (Kerr, 2003). The sudden deaths of that many Americans—although representing less than 4/1000ths of 1 percent of the population—would indeed be horrifying and tragic, the greatest one-day disaster the country has suffered since the Civil War. But the only way it could "do away with our way of life" would be if we did that to ourselves in reaction. The process would presumably involve repealing the bill of rights, boarding up all churches, closing down all newspapers and media outlets, burning all books, abandoning English for North Korean, and refusing evermore to consume hamburgers. By such accountings, it is not only the most-feared terrorists who are suicidal—the enemy, in fact, is us.

All societies are "vulnerable" to tiny bands of suicidal fanatics in the sense that it is impossible to prevent every terrorist act. But the United States is hardly "vulnerable" in the sense that it can be toppled by dramatic acts of terrorist destruction, even extreme ones. In fact, the country can readily, if grimly, absorb that kind of

[34]The imperatives of full disclosure require me to report that the ellipses in that statement conceal the following remarkable assertion: "Watch the terrorist alert and go outside again when it falls below yellow." Since the ever-watchful and ever-cautious Department of Homeland Security seems unlikely *ever* to lower the threat level below yellow, McCain's admonition seems effectively to contradict the spirit in the rest of the passage by encouraging everyone to cower inside for the rest of their lives. An email inquiring about this curiosity was sent to Senator McCain's office in August, 2004, but it has yet to generate a reply.

[35]*Fox News Sunday*, June 15, 2003; see also Krauthammer (2002/03:9).

[36]The threat to Israel from terrorism and from its reaction (or overreaction) to the internal terrorist challenge, however, could conceivably be existential, and this is perhaps what Krauthammer means by "civilization." See Fukuyama (2004:65).

[37]One of the book's many hysterical passages runs: "To secure as much of our way of life as possible, we will have to use military force in the way Americans used it on the fields of Virginia and Georgia, in France and on the Pacific islands, and from skies over Tokyo and Dresden. Progress will be measured by the pace of killing and, yes, by body counts. Not the fatuous body counts of Vietnam, but precise counts that will run to extremely large numbers. The piles of dead will include as many or more civilians as combatants because our enemies wear no uniforms. Killing in large number is not enough to defeat our Muslim foes. With killing must come a Sherman-like razing of infrastructure. Roads and irrigation systems; bridges, power plants, and crops in the field; fertilizer plants and grain mills—all these and more will need to be destroyed to deny the enemy its support base. Land mines, moreover, will be massively reintroduced to seal borders and mountain passes too long, high, or numerous to close with U.S. soldiers. As noted, such actions will yield large civilian casualties, displaced populations, and refugee flows." In the acknowledgments, the author thanks Ms. Christina Davidson, his editor, "who labored mightily to delete from the text excess vitriol" (Anonymous, 2004, xiii:241–242). Perhaps Ms. Davidson should have labored just a bit more mightily.

damage—as it "absorbs" some 40,000 deaths each year from automobile accidents. As RAND's Bruce Hoffman puts it, "Unfortunately, terrorism is just another fact of modern life. It's something we have to live with" (Gorman, 2003a:1463).

Thus, rather than inducing hysteria, a sensible policy approach to the problem might be to stress that any damage terrorists are able to accomplish likely can be absorbed, and that, while judicious protective and policing measures are sensible, extensive fear and anxiety over what at base could well prove to be a rather limited problem is misplaced, unjustified, and counterproductive.

The Role of Politicians and the Media

This is a difficult challenge, and a problem with getting coherent thinking on the issue is that reporters and politicians mostly find extreme and alarmist possibilities so much more appealing than discussions of broader context, much less of statistical reality. That is, although hysteria and alarmism rarely make much sense, politicians and the media are often naturally drawn to them.

There is no reason to suspect that George W. Bush's concern about terrorism is anything but genuine. However, his approval rating did receive the greatest boost for any president in history in September 2001, and it would be politically unnatural for him not to notice. His chief political adviser, Karl Rove, in fact declared in 2003 that the "war" against terrorism would be central to Bush's reelection campaign the next year (Clines, 2003; Gorman, 2003b:2781). The Democrats, scurrying to keep up, have stumbled all over each other with plans to expend even more of the federal budget on the terrorist threat, such as it is, than President Bush.

This process is hardly new. The preoccupation of the media and of Jimmy Carter's presidency with the hostages taken by Iran in 1979 to the exclusion of almost everything else may look foolish in retrospect, as Carter's Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, reflects in his memoirs (1983:380; see also Mueller, 1984). But it doubtless appeared to be good politics at the time—Carter's dismal approval rating soared when the hostages were seized.

Since 9/11, the American public has been treated to endless yammering about terrorism on the media. Politicians may feel, correctly, that, given the public concern on the issue, they will lose votes if they appear insensitively to be downplaying the dangers of terrorism (although this fear does not seem to have infected Senator McCain). But the media like to tout that they are devoted to presenting fair and balanced coverage of important public issues. I may have missed it, but I have never heard anyone on the media point out that in every year except 2001 only a few hundred people in the entire world have died as a result of international terrorism.

As has often been noted, the media appear to have a congenital incapacity for dealing with issues of risk and comparative probabilities—except, of course, in the sports and financial sections. But even in their amazingly rare efforts to try, the issue—one that would seem to be absolutely central to any sensible discussion of terrorism and terrorism policy—never goes very far. For example, in 2001 the *Washington Post* published an article by a University of Wisconsin economist that attempted quantitatively to point out how much safer it was to travel by air than by automobile even under the heightened atmosphere of concern inspired by the September attacks. He reports that the article generated a couple of media inquiries, but nothing more. Gregg Easterbrook's cover story in the October 7, 2002 *New Republic* forcefully argued that biological and especially chemical weapons are hardly capable of creating "mass destruction," a perspective relevant not only to concerns about terrorism but also to the drive for war against Iraq that was going on at the time. The *New York Times* asked him to fashion the article into an op–ed piece, but that was the only interest the article generated in the media.

In addition, it should be pointed out that the monied response to 9/11 has created a vast and often well-funded terrorism industry. Its members would be out

of business if terrorism were to be back-burnered, and accordingly they have every competitive incentive (and they are nothing if not competitive) to conclude it to be their civic duty to keep the pot boiling.

Moreover, there is more reputational danger in underplaying risks than in exaggerating them. People routinely ridicule futurist H.G. Wells' prediction that the conflict beginning in 1914 would be "the war that will end war," but not his equally confident declaration at the end of the Second World War that "the end of everything we call life is close at hand" (1968:67). Disproved doomsayers can always claim that caution induced by their warnings prevented the predicted calamity from occurring. (Call it the Y2K effect.) Disproved pollyannas have no such convenient refuge (see also Gorman, 2003a:1464).

Not only are failed predictors of doomsday rarely held to account, but they have proved remarkably agile at creative nuance and extrapolation after failure. Thus, in 2004, the terrorism industry repeatedly insisted that some Big Terrorist Event was likely in connection with (a) the Athens Olympics, (b) the Democratic Party convention in Boston, (c) the Republican convention in New York, (d) the election campaign, and/or (e) the presidential vote in November. When nothing happened (a terrorist wearing kilts did show up to disrupt the marathon in Athens briefly, but this, apparently, did not count), the argument was floated that a taped encyclical issued by bin Laden in late October somehow demonstrated that he was too weak to attack before the election. However, the tape was further taken to suggest that bin Laden was marshalling his resources and that, accordingly, the several months *after* the election had now become especially dangerous (Gorman, 2004b:3534). A notable terrorist attack during that interval would generate hundreds of thousands of news items not to mention a veritable paroxysm of breast-beating by the terrorism industry. The absence of an attack during the same time would likely scarcely be noticed.

It seems sensible to suggest that officials and the media should responsibly assess probabilities and put them in some sort of context (as they do routinely on the sports pages) rather than simply to stress extreme possibilities so much and so exclusively. But that seems unlikely to happen.

Public Perceptions

It is easy to blame politicians and the media for the distorted and context-free condition under which terrorism is so often discussed. In many respects, however, that circumstance arises not so much from their own proclivities, but rather from those of their customers. Hysteria and alarmism often sell.

The record with respect to fear about crime, for example, suggests that efforts to deal responsibly with the risks of terrorism will prove difficult. Fear of crime rose notably in the mid-1990s even as statistics were showing it to be in pronounced decline. When David Dinkins, running for reelection as Mayor of New York, pointed to such numbers, he was accused by A.M. Rosenthal of the *New York Times* of hiding behind "trivializing statistics" that "are supposed to convince us that crime is going down" (1993).[38] New Yorkers did eventually come to feel safer from crime, but this was probably less because crime rates actually declined than because of atmospherics as graffiti, panhandlers, aggressive windshield washers, and the homeless were banished or hidden from view. So it may have made sense in the months after the September 11 attacks to have armed reservists parading menacingly around in airports. It is doubtful that they prevented any terrorist attacks, and pulling them from productive jobs hardly helped the economy. But if they provided people with a sense of security, their presence may have been worth it.

[38]For data showing that crime peaked in New York in 1990 and declined steadily thereafter, see *New York Times*, February 19, 1998:A16. For a discussion of the fear of crime, see Warr (2000).

In the end, it is not clear how one can deal with the public's often irrational fears about remote dangers. Some people say they prefer dangerous forms of transportation like the private passenger automobile (the necessary cause of over 3 million American deaths during the twentieth century) to safe ones like commercial airliners because they feel they have more "control" (see also Applebaum, 2003). But they seem to feel no fear on buses and trains—which actually are a bit more dangerous than airplanes—even without having that sense of control and even though derailing a speeding train or crashing a speeding bus are likely to be much easier than downing an airliner. And people tend to be more alarmed by dramatic fatalities—which the September 11 crashes certainly provided—than by ones that cumulate statistically. Thus, in the United State the 3,000 deaths of September 11 inspire far more grief and fear than the 150,000 deaths from auto accidents that have taken place there since then.

In some respects, fear of terror may be something like playing the lottery except in reverse. The chances of winning the lottery or of dying from terrorism may be microscopic, but for monumental events that are, or seem, random, one can irrelevantly conclude that one's chances are just as good, or bad, as those of anyone else.

The communication of risk, then, is no easy task. There have been many attempts. Some analysts, for example, have calculated the chances that an individual could die over a 50-year period from an astroid impact (1 in 6,000) and used that as a benchmark to compare other risks: tornado (1 in 50,000), airplane crash (1 in 20,000), auto accident (1 in 100) (see also Chapman and Morrison, 1989: ch. 19; Broad, 1991).[39] Whether exercises like that will work is not at all clear, however. Risk analyst Paul Slovic points out that people tend greatly to overestimate the chances of dramatic or sensational causes of death, that realistically informing people about risks sometimes only makes them more frightened, that strong beliefs in this area are very difficult to modify, that a new sort of calamity tends to be taken as a harbinger of future mishaps, that a disaster tends to increase fears not only about that kind of danger but of all kinds, and that people, even professionals, are susceptible to the way risks are expressed—far less likely, for example, to choose radiation therapy if told the chances of death are 32 percent rather than that the chances of survival are 68 percent (1986).[40]

But risk assessment and communication should at least be part of the policy discussion over terrorism, something that may well prove to be a far smaller danger than is popularly portrayed. The public does not seem to be constantly on edge about the threat of terrorism (Gorman, 2003b) any more than it was during the McCarthy era about the threat of internal Communism (Stouffer, 1955: ch. 3). However, the constant unnuanced stoking of fear by politicians and the media is costly, enervating, potentially counterproductive, and unjustified by the facts.

Caveats and Conclusions

This discussion should not be taken to suggest that all extreme events prove to be the last in their line or that nothing bad ever happens, of course. At the time, World War I, called the Great War for decades, was the worst war of its type. Yet an even more destructive one followed.

Nor is it to suggest that deep concern about extreme events is unreasonable or necessarily harmful. Although I have expressed some skepticism about their

[39]In recent correspondence, astronomer Alan W. Harris suggests that on further consideration a number around one in 50,000 or so is probably more appropriate that one in 6,000. On the issue, see also Easterbrook (2003).

[40]It has also been found that even health professionals are considerably less likely to recommend discharging a mental patient when the odds the patient will commit violence are expressed as 20 out of 100 than when they are expressed as 20 percent or two chances in 10 (Slovic, Monahan, and MacGregor, 2000:288).

necessity or efficacy, it could be argued that aid and alliances in Western Europe helped to keep the area out of Communist hands, the forceful response in Korea to dissuade the Communists from further direct military probes, anti-Castro efforts in Latin America to prevent further Communist gains there, intervention in the Balkans to contain the conflicts. Thus, efforts to confront rogue states and to reduce the incidence and destructiveness of terrorism are sensible and may be justified.

Moreover, while Aum Shinrikyo and Qaddafi may be under control, al Qaeda and like-minded terrorist groups are unlikely to die out any time soon. Like the Communists, they appear to be in it for the long haul: September 11 marked, after all, their second attempt to destroy the World Trade Center. Much of the current alarm is generated from the knowledge that many of today's terrorists simply want to kill, and kill more or less randomly, for revenge or as an act of what they take to be war. At one time, it was probably safe to conclude that terrorism was committed principally for specific political demands or as a form of political expression, and therefore in the oft-repeated observation of terrorism expert Brian Jenkins that "terrorists want a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead" (1975:15). Moreover, the suicidal nature of many attacks, while not new, can be very unsettling because deterring by threatening punishment to the would-be perpetrator becomes impossible. And, of course, terrorism itself will never go away: it has always existed and always will.

A central issue, however, is whether such spectacularly destructive terrorist acts will become commonplace. The record suggests that terrorists will find it difficult to match or top them and that terrorism's destructiveness, despite the creative visions of worst-case scenarioists, may well fail to escalate dramatically. Moreover, the extreme destruction of September 11 has raised the bar, possibly reducing the impact of less damaging attacks.

In the meantime, hysteria and hysterical overreaction about terrorism and rogue states are hardly required and can be costly and counterproductive. As during the Cold War, there are uncertainties and risks out there, and, as then, plenty of dangers and threats. But none of these is existential. The sky, as it happens, never actually fell during the Cold War, and it is unlikely to do so now.

References

ALLISON, G. (2004) *Nuclear Terrorism: The Ultimate Preventable Catastrophe*. New York: Times Books.

ANONYMOUS. (2004) *Imperial Hubris: Why the West Is Losing the War on Terror.* Dulles, VA: Brassey's.

APPLEBAUM, A. (2003) "Finding Things to Fear." *Washington Post*, September 24.

BANKS, D. L. (2002) "Statistics for Homeland Defense." *Chance* **15**(1):8–10.

BARRO, R. J. (1993) "Pushing Democracy Is No Key to Prosperity." *Wall Street Journal*, December 14.

BARRO, R. J. (1994) "Democracy: A Recipe for Growth?" *Wall Street Journal*, December 1.

BETTS, R. K. (1998) "The New Threat of Mass Destruction." *Foreign Affairs* **77**(1):6–41.

BETTS, R. K. (2002) "The Soft Underbelly of American Primacy: Tactical Advantages of Terror." *Political Science Quarterly* **117**:19–36.

BIN LADEN, O. (2004) Full transcript of bin Laden's speech. ⟨http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/79C6AF22–98FB–4A1C–B21F–2BC36E87F61F.html⟩ (2 November 2004).

BLUMENTHAL, R., AND J. MILLER (1999) "Japanese Germ-War Atrocities: A Half-Century of Stonewalling the World." *New York Times*, March 4.

BOYLE, F. A. (1985) *World Politics and International Law.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

BRESLAUER, G. W. (1987) "Ideology and Learning in Soviet Third World Policy." *World Politics* **39**:429–448.

BROAD, W. J. (1991) "Asteroids, a Menace to Early Life, Could Still Strike the Earth." *New York Times*, June 18.

BROAD, W. J. (1998) "How Japan Germ Terror Alerted World." *New York Times*, May 26.

BROAD, W. J., AND J. MILLER (1998) "Iraq's Deadliest Arms: Puzzles Breed Fears." *New York Times*, February 16.

BRODIE, B. (1973) *War and Politics*. New York: Macmillan.

BRODIE, B. (1978) "The Development of Nuclear Strategy." *International Security* **2**(4):65–83.

BROWN, F. J. (1968) *Chemical Warfare: A Study in Restraints*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
BRZEZINSKI, Z. (1993) *Out of Control: Global Turmoil on the Eve of the 21st Century.* New York: Scribner's.
BURIN, F. S. (1963) "The Communist Doctrine of the Inevitability of War." *American Political Science Review* **57**(2):334–354.
BURKE, J. (2003) *Al-Qaeda: Casting a Shadow of Terror.* New York: Tauris.
CHAPMAN, C., AND A. W. HARRIS (2002) "A Skeptical Look at September 11th." *Skeptical Inquirer* (September/October):29–34.
CHAPMAN, C., AND D. MORRISON (1989) *Cosmic Catastrophes*. New York: Plenum Press.
CHECKEL, J. T. (1997) *Ideas and International Political Change: Soviet/Russian Behavior and the End of the Cold War.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
CHRISTOPHER, G. W., T. J. CIESLAK, J. A. PAVLIN, AND E. M. EITZEN JR. (1997) "Biological Warfare: A Historical Perspective." *JAMA* **278**(5):412–17.
CLINES, F. X. (2003) "Karl Rove's Campaign Strategy Seems Evident: It's the Terror, Stupid." *New York Times*, May 10.
COLL, S. (2004) *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*. New York: Penguin.
COLLIER, P. (2000) "Doing Well out of War: An Economic Perspective." In *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, edited by M. Berdal and D. M. Malone, pp. 91–111. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
CONGLETON, R. D. (2002) "Terrorism, Interest—Group Politics, and Public Policy." *Independent Review* (Summer):47–67.
CROZIER, M., S. P. HUNTINGTON, AND J. WATANUKI, eds. (1975) *The Crisis of Democracy.* New York: New York University Press.
CULLISON, A., AND A. HIGGINS (2002) "Strained Alliance: Al Qaeda's Sour Days in Afghanistan." *Wall Street Journal*, August 2.
DAHL, R. A. (1971) *Polyarchy.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
DAHL, R. A. (1989) *Democracy and Its Critics*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
DAUM, W. (2001) "Universalism and the West: An Agenda for Understanding." *Harvard International Review* (Summer):19–23.
"DIRTY BOMBS" (2004) "'Dirty Bombs' were New Year's Worry." *USA Today,* January 8.
DJILAS, M. (1962) *Conversations with Stalin*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
EASTERBROOK, G. (2002) "Term Limits: The Meaninglessness of WMD." *New Republic*, October 7.
EASTERBROOK, G. (2003) "We're All Gonna Die." *Wired*, July.
EDMONDS, J. E. AND R. MAXWELL-HYSLOP, eds. (1947) *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1918*, Vol. 5. London: HMSO.
EGGEN, D. (2003) "Almanacs May Be Tool For Terrorists, FBI Says." *Washington Post*, December 30.
EINSTEIN, A. (1960) *Einstein on Peace*, edited by O. Nathan and H. Norden. New York: Simon and Schuster.
ENGLISH, R. D. (2000) *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War.* New York: Columbia University Press.
ERIKSSON, M., P. WALLENSTEIN, AND M. STOLLENBERG (2003) "Armed Conflict." *Journal of Peace Research* **40**:593–607.
FALLOWS, J. (1994/95) "The Panic Gap: Reactions to North Korea's Bomb." *National Interest* (Winter): 40–45.
FEARON, J. D., AND D. LAITIN (2003) "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* **97**:75–90.
FETTER, S. (1991) "Ballistic Missiles and Weapons of Mass Destruction: What is the Threat?" *International Security* **16**(1).
FUKUYAMA, F. (2004) "The Neoconservative Moment." *National Interest* (Summer): 57–68.
GADDIS, J. L. (1982) *Strategies of Containment*. New York: Oxford University Press.
GADDIS, J. L. (1987) *The Long Peace: Inquiries Into the History of the Cold War.* New York: Oxford University Press.
GATES, R. M. (1993) "No Time to Disarm." *Wall Street Journal*, August 23.
GELLMAN, B. (1984) *Contending with Kennan: Toward a Philosophy of American Power.* New York: Praeger.
GERGEN, D. (2002) "A Fragile Time for Globalism." *U.S. News and World Report*, February 11.
GILCHRIST, H. L. (1928) *A Comparative Study of World War Casualties from Gas and Other Weapons*. Edgewood Arsenal, MD: Chemical Warfare School.
GLANZ, J., AND A. C. REVKIN (2002) "Some See Panic As Main Effect Of Dirty Bombs." *New York Times*, March 7.
GORMAN, S. (2003a) "Fear Factor." *National Journal*, May 10.

GORMAN, S. (2003b) "Shaken, Not Stirred." *National Journal*, September 13.
GORMAN, S. (2004a) "On Guard, But How Well?" *National Journal*, March 5.
GORMAN, S. (2004b) "War on Terror, Phase Two." *National Journal*, November 20.
GOULD-DAVIES, N. (1999) "Rethinking the Role of Ideology in International Politics during the Cold War." *Journal of Cold War Studies* **1**(1):90–109.
GRAHAM, T. W. (1991) "Winning the Nonproliferation Battle." *Arms Control Today* (September):8–13.
GWERTZMAN, B. (1984) "Tougher Policy Against Terror Is Seen Gaining." *New York Times*, October 28.
HALBERSTAM, D. (1965) *The Making of a Quagmire*. New York: Random House.
HALBERSTAM, D. (1988) *The Making of a Quagmire*, revised ed. New York: Knopf.
HALPER, S., AND J. CLARKE (2004) *America Alone: The Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order.* New York: Cambridge University Press.
HALPERIN, M. H. (1987) *Nuclear Fallacy: Dispelling the Myth of Nuclear Strategy.* Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.
HAMBURG, D. A. (1993) *Preventing Contemporary Intergroup Violence*. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.
HARRISON, S. S. (2002) *Korean Endgame: A Strategy for Reunification and U.S. Disengagement*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
HILSMAN, R. (1967) *To Move a Nation: The Politics of Foreign Policy in the Administration of John F. Kennedy.* New York: Delta.
HISTORICUS [G. A. MORGAN] (1949) "Stalin on Revolution." *Foreign Affairs* **27**(2):175–214.
HOAGLAND, J. (2004) "In Europe, The Enemy Within." *Washington Post*, February 26.
HOFFMANN, S. (1992) "Delusions of World Order." *New York Review of Books*, April 9.
HOWARD, M. (2002) "What's in a Name?" *Foreign Affairs* **81**(1):8–13.
HUDSON, G. F., R. LOWENTHAL, AND R. MACFARQUHAR, eds. (1961) *The Sino–Soviet Dispute*. New York: Praeger.
HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH/MIDDLE EAST. (1995) *Iraq's Crime of Genocide: The Anfal Campaign Against the Kurds*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
HUNTINGTON, S. P. (1984) "Will More Countries Become Democratic?" *Political Science Quarterly* **99**:193–218.
HUNTINGTON, S. P. (1991) "America's Changing Strategic Interests." *Survival* (January/February): 3–17.
HUNTINGTON, S. P. (1993a) "Why International Primacy Matters." *International Security* **17**(4):68–83.
HUNTINGTON, S. P. (1993b) "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* **72**(3):22–49.
HUNTINGTON, S. P. (1993c) "If Not Civilizations, What?" *Foreign Affairs* **72**(5):186–194.
JENKINS, B. M. (1975) "International Terrorism: A New Mode of Conflict." In *International Terrorism and World Security,* edited by D. Carlton and C. Schaerf, pp. 13–49. New York: Wiley.
JENSEN, R. B. (2002) "The United States, International Policing and the War against Anarchist Terrorism, 1900–1991." *Terrorism and Political Violence* **13**(1):15–46.
JERVIS, R. (1976) *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
JERVIS, R. (1993) "International Primacy: Is the Game Worth the Candle?" *International Security* **17**(4):52–67.
JOB, C. (1993) "Yugoslavia's Ethnic Furies." *Foreign Policy* (June):52–74.
JOHNSON, R. H. (1994) *Improbable Dangers: U.S. Conceptions of Threat in the Cold War and After.* New York: St. Martin's.
KAHN, H. (1960) *On Thermonuclear War.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
KANG, D. C. (2003) "International Relations Theory and the Second Korean War." *International Studies Quarterly* **47**:301–324.
KAPLAN, R. D. (1991) "History's Cauldron." *Atlantic* (June):93–104.
KAPLAN, R. D. (1993a) *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History.* New York: St. Martin's.
KAPLAN, R. D. (1993b) "A Reader's Guide to the Balkans." *New York Times Book Review,* April 18.
KAUFMANN, C. (2004) "Threat Inflation and the Failure of the Marketplace of Ideas: The Selling of the Iraq War." *International Security* **29**(1):5–48.
KENNAN, G. F. [X]. (1947) "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." *Foreign Affairs* **25**(4):566–582.
KERR, J. C. (2003) "Terror Threat Level Raised to Orange." *Associated Press*, December 21.
KOBER, S. (1993) "Revolutions Gone Bad." *Foreign Policy* (Summer):63–83.
KRAUS, S., ed. (1962) *The Great Debates: Kennedy vs. Nixon, 1960*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press.
KRAUTHAMMER, C. (2002/03) "The Unipolar Moment Revisited." *National Interest* (Winter):5–17.
KRAUTHAMMER, C. (2004) "Blixful Amnesia." *Washington Post*, July 9.

Kunreuther, H. (2002) "Risk Analysis and Risk Management in an Uncertain World." *Risk Analysis* **22**:655–664.

Lake, D. A. (2002) "Rational Extremism: Understanding Terrorism in the Twenty-first Century." *Dialog–IO* (Spring):15–29.

Layne, C. (1993) "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise." *International Security* **17**(4):5–51.

Leffler, M. P. (1994) *The Specter of Communism: The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1917–1953*. New York, NY: Hill and Wang.

Macdonald, D. J. (1995/96) "Communist Bloc Expansion in the Early Cold War: Challenging Realism, Refuting Revisionism." *International Security* **20**(3):152–188.

Mackey, S. (2002) *The Reckoning: Iraq and the Legacy of Saddam Hussein*. New York: Norton.

McCain, J., and M. Salter (2004) *Why Courage Matters: The Way to a Braver Life*. New York: Random House.

McNaugher, T. L. (1990) "Ballistic Missiles and Chemical Weapons: The Legacy of the Iran–Iraq War." *International Security* **15**(2):5–34.

McNeill, W. H. (1982) *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society since A.D. 1000*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mearsheimer, J. J. (1990) "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War." *International Security* **15**(1):5–56.

Mearsheimer, J. J., and S. M. Walt (2003) "Iraq: An Unnecessary War." *Foreign Policy* (January/February):50–59.

Meselson, M. (1991) "The Myth of Chemical Superweapons." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, April, 12–15.

Meselson, M. (1995) "How Serious is the Biological Weapons Threat?" Massachusetts Institute of Technology: Defense & Arms Control Studies Program Seminar, November 29.

Meyer, S. M. (1984) *The Dynamics of Nuclear Proliferation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mitchell, M. L. (2002) "The Impact of External Parties on Brand-Name Capital: The 1982 Tylenol Poisonings and Subsequent Cases." In *Risk, Media and Stigma: Understanding Public Challenges to Modern Science and Technology*, edited by J. Flynn, P. Slovic and H. Kunreuther, pp. 203–217. London: Earthscan.

Moynihan, D. P. (1975) "The American Experiment." *Public Interest* (Fall):4–8.

Moynihan, D. P. (1993) *Pandaemonium: Ethnicity in International Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mueller, J. (1967) "Incentives for Restraint: Canada as a Nonnuclear Power." *Orbis* **11**:864–884.

Mueller, J. (1979) "Public Expectations of War During the Cold War." *American Journal of Political Science* **23**:301–329.

Mueller, J. (1984) "Lessons Learned Five Years After the Hostage Nightmare." *Wall Street Journal*, November 6.

Mueller, J. (1987) "Presidents and Terrorists Should Not Mix." *Wall Street Journal*, March 31.

Mueller, J. (1989) *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War*. New York: Basic Books (Available at ⟨http://psweb.sbs.ohio–state.edu/faculty/jmueller/links⟩).

Mueller, J., (1994) *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mueller, J. (1995) *Quiet Cataclysm: Reflections on the Recent Transformation of World Politics*. New York: HarperCollins (Available at ⟨http://psweb.sbs.ohio–state.edu/faculty/jmueller/links⟩).

Mueller, J. (1996) "Democracy, Capitalism and the End of Transition." In *Post-Communism: Four Views*, edited by M. Mandelbaum, pp. 102–167. New York: Council on Foreign Relations.

Mueller, J. (1998) "The Escalating Irrelevance of Nuclear Weapons." In *The Absolute Weapon Revisited: Nuclear Arms and the Emerging International Order*, edited by T. V. Paul, R. J. Harknett and J. J. Wirtz, pp. 73–98. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Mueller, J (2000a) "The Banality of 'Ethnic War.'" *International Security* **25**(1):42–70.

Mueller, J. (2000b) *The Banality of "Ethnic War": Yugoslavia and Rwanda*, Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, September 2. Available at ⟨http://psweb.sbs.ohio–state.edu/faculty/jmueller/links⟩.

Mueller, J. (2002a) "American Foreign Policy and Public Opinion in a New Era: Eleven Propositions." In *Understanding Public Opinion*, edited by B. Norrander and C. Wilcox, pp. 49–72. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Mueller, J. (2002b) "Harbinger or Aberration? A 9/11 Provocation." *National Interest* (Fall): 45–50.

Mueller, J. (2002c) "False Alarms." *Washington Post*, September 22.

MUELLER, J. (2003) "Blip or Step Function?" Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the International Studies Association. Portland, OR, February 27. Available at ⟨http://psweb.sbs.ohio–state.edu/faculty/jmueller/links⟩

MUELLER, J. (2004) *The Remnants of War.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

MUELLER, J. (2004–05). "What Was the Cold War About? Evidence from Its Ending." *Political Science Quarterly* **119**(4):609–31.

MUELLER, J.(WITH B. LINDSEY) (2003) "Should We Invade Iraq?" *Reason* (January):40–48. Also at ⟨http://www.reason.com/0301/fe.jm.should.shtml⟩.

MUELLER, J., AND K. MUELLER (1999) "Sanctions of Mass Destruction." *Foreign Affairs* **78**(3):43–53.

MUELLER, J., AND K. MUELLER (2000) "The Methodology of Mass Destruction: Assessing Threats in the New World Order." In *Preventing the Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction*, edited by E. Herring, pp. 163–187. London: Frank Cass.

NATIONAL PLANNING ASSOCIATION. (1958) *1970 Without Arms Control*. Washington, DC: National Planning Association.

OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT, UNITED STATES CONGRESS. (1993) *Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: Assessing the Risks, OTA–559, August*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

O'KANE, M. (1998) "Saddam Wields Terror—and Feigns Respect." *Guardian*, November 25.

PANOFSKY, W. K. H. (1998) "Dismantling the Concept of 'Weapons of Mass Destruction'." *Arms Control Today* April.

PAUL, T. V. (2000) *Power Versus Prudence: Why Nationals Forgo Nuclear Weapons*. Montreal: McGill–Queen's University Press.

PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON NATIONAL GOALS. (1960) *Goals for Americans*. New York: Prentice–Hall.

PRICE, R. M. (1997) *The Chemical Weapons Taboo*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

RAPOPORT, D. C. (1999) "Terrorists and Weapons of the Apocalypse." *National Security Studies Quarterly* **5**(1):49–67.

RAPOPORT, D. C. (2004) "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism." In *Attacking Terrorism: Elements of a Grand Strategy*, edited by A. Kurth Cronin and J. M. Ludes, pp. 46–73. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

REEVES, R. (1993) *President Kennedy: Profile of Power.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

REISS, M. (1995) *Bridled Ambition: Why Countries Constrain Their Nuclear Capabilities*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

ROBERTS, B. (1992) *Chemical Disarmament and International Security. Adelphi Paper 267*. London: International Institute for Strategic Studies.

ROCKWELL, T. (2003) "Radiation Chicken Little." *Washington Post*, September 16.

ROSENTHAL, A. M. (1993) "New York to Clinton." *New York Times*, October 1.

RUSH, M. (1993) "Fortune and Fate." *National Interest* (Spring):19–25.

RUSSETT, B. (1972) *No Clear and Present Danger: A Skeptical View of the United States' Entry into World War II*. New York: Harper and Row.

RUSSETT, B. (1983) *The Prisoners of Insecurity.* San Francisco: Freeman.

SCHELL, J. (1982) *The Fate of the Earth*. New York: Knopf.

SCHILLING, W. R. (1965) "Surprise Attack, Death, and War." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* **9**:285–290.

SHANKER, T. (2004) "Regime Thought War Unlikely Iraqis Tell U.S." *New York Times*, February 12.

SHEEHAN, N. (1964) "Much Is At Stake in Southeast Asian Struggle." *New York Times*, August 16.

SHULMAN, M. D. (1963) *Stalin's Foreign Policy Reappraised*. New York: Atheneum.

SIGAL, L. V. (1998) *Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

SIMON, J. D. (2001) *The Terrorist Trap: America's Experience with Terrorism*, 2nd ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

SIVAK, M., AND M. J. FLANNAGAN (2003) "Flying and Driving after the September 11 Attacks." *American Scientist* **91**(1):6–9.

SIVAK, M., AND M. J. FLANNAGAN (2004) "Consequences for road traffic fatalities of the reduction in flying following September 11." *Transportation Research Part F* 301–305.

SLOVIC, P. (1986) "Informing and Educating the Public about Risk." *Risk Analysis* **6**:403–415.

SLOVIC, P., J. MONAHAN, AND D. G. MACGREGOR (2000) "Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Communication: The Effects of Using Actual Cases, Providing Instruction, and Employing Probability Versus Frequency Formats." *Law and Human Behavior* **24**(3):271–296.

SNOW, C. P. (1961) "The Moral Un–Neutrality of Science." *Science*, January 27.

STOSSEL, J. (2004) *Give Me a Break*. New York: HarperCollins.

STOUFFER, S. A. (1955) *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
TAUBMAN, W. (1982) *Stalin's American Policy.* New York: Norton.
TAUBMAN, W. (2003) *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era*. New York: Norton.
TERRY, D. (1998) "Treating Anthrax Hoaxes With Costly Rubber Gloves." *New York Times*, December 29.
TOYNBEE, A. J. (1950) *War and Civilization*. New York: Oxford University Press.
VAN EVERA, S. (1994) "Hypotheses on Nationalism and War." *International Security* **18**(4):5–39.
VANCE, C. (1983) *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy.* New York: Simon and Schuster.
WARR, M. (2000) "Fear of Crime in the United States: Avenues for Research and Policy." *Criminal Justice* **4**:451–489.
WELLS, H. G. (1914) *The War That Will End War.* New York: Duffield.
WELLS, H. G. (1968) *The Last Books of H. G. Wells*. London: H. G. Wells Society.
WILLIAMS, P., AND D. WALLACE (1989) *Unit 731: Japan's Secret Biological Warfare in World War II*. New York: Free Press.
WILSON, G. C. (2003) "Why Didn't Saddam Defend His Country?" *National Journal*, April 19.
WOHLSTETTER, A. (1959) "The Delicate Balance of Terror." *Foreign Affairs* **27**(2):211–234.
WOHLSTETTER, R. (1962) *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
WOLF, C. JR., K. C. YEH, E. BRUNNER JR., A. GURWITZ, AND M. LAWRENCE (1983) *The Costs of Soviet Empire*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.
WOOLSEY, R. J. JR. (1993) Testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee, February 2.
YERGIN, D., AND J. STANISLAW (1998) *The Commanding Heights: The Battle Between Government and the Marketplace That Is Remaking the Modern World*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
ZUCCHINO, D. (2003) "Iraq's Swift Defeat Blamed on Leaders." *Los Angeles Times*, August 11.